

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report contains chapters on General, Social and Economic Sectors comprising two Performance Audits, eight compliance audit paragraphs and a paragraph on functioning of Public Sector Undertakings. The findings are based on the audit of certain selected programmes and activities of the Government departments and Public Sector Undertakings.

According to the existing arrangements, draft audit findings are sent by the Principal Accountant General (Audit) to the concerned Secretaries of the State Government with a request to furnish replies within six weeks. Replies were received from the State Government to both the Performance Audits and all eight compliance audit paragraphs in this Report.

A synopsis of the important findings contained in this Report is presented below:

GENERAL SECTOR

Performance Audit

Performance Audit of Management of Prisons in Meghalaya

Performance Audit of Management of Prisons in Meghalaya revealed several deficiencies with regard to management of prisons in Meghalaya. There was more occupancy than capacity with overcrowding of inmates in four out of five district jails in the State due to lodging the convicts and under trial prisoners together and prolonged detention of people without trial, especially in Shillong and Jowai district jails. Construction of new jails was delayed, forcing the inmates of the existing jails to live in inhuman conditions without safe drinking water and adequate number of toilets. Young offenders were housed along with adult offenders. There was shortage of security staff and absence of proper security infrastructure such as CCTVs, search lights *etc.*, and security staff were not adequately trained. Convicts were not issued uniforms and Counsellors and female doctors were not available in any of the district jails. Educational programmes were not made available for the inmates. State Advisory Board and Sentence Review Board, which are meant to improve the functioning of the Prisons have not been constituted in the State. The Board of Visitors, which was responsible to look after the welfare of the prisoners, neither made monthly visit to the district jails nor held any meetings to discuss the related issues. The Assam Jail Manual, 1894 as adopted by Meghalaya has not been updated and does not reflect and address contemporary issues.

State Government needs to bring about reforms in the prisons and ensure that prisoners are provided with the basic minimum amenities to live with dignity. Literacy programmes should be encouraged and correctional services should be put in place to ensure that the prisoners start a new life after serving out their sentence.

(Paragraph 1.2)

Compliance Audit Paragraph

Members of Legislative Assembly did not submit utilisation certificates in respect of discretionary grants amounting to ₹ 10.73 crore in violation of the scheme guidelines.

(Paragraph 1.3)

SOCIAL SECTOR

Compliance Audit Paragraphs

Due to non-execution of Annual Maintenance Contract for maintenance of MRI machine, the Department incurred an avoidable expenditure of ₹ 1.50 crore towards its repair besides depriving the patients the benefit of its services for almost three years.

(Paragraph 2.2)

Failure to operationalise the Blood Storage Units and Blood Component Separation Laboratory resulted in non-achievement of the objective of strengthening blood bank services.

(Paragraph 2.3)

Lack of urgency in completing civil works of water supply schemes by Public Health Engineering Department and its inability to coordinate with Meghalaya Power Distribution Corporation Limited to ensure timely availability of power, resulted in denial of piped water to targeted population for six to eight years, despite incurring an expenditure of ₹ 2.22 crore.

(Paragraph 2.4)

ECONOMIC SECTOR

Performance Audits

Performance Audit of 'Implementation of rural connectivity projects with NABARD loans'

Performance audit of NABARD funded rural connectivity projects brought out several lacunae in planning, prioritisation and execution of roads and bridge works. Project proposals and DPRs were not submitted on time to avail of funding from NABARD. DPRs were not comprehensive and were not prepared based on site survey, resulting in deviations from designs and sanctioned estimates. Payments were released to contractors without proper scrutiny of bills and records leading to undue financial benefit to the latter. Projects were also shown as 'physically completed' without executing important items of works provided for in the DPRs. Five out of the six Divisions sampled in Audit did not test the material before its utilisation for the RIDF works. Monitoring and follow-up was inadequate and the project completion certificates/reports were also not submitted. Impact of these projects on the socio-economic development of the rural areas where these were implemented, was not carried out during the five year period of audit coverage.

NABARD, on its part, failed to scrutinise the project plans and proposals for compliance with its guidelines and monitor the effective implementation of the projects funded by it to the envisaged standards.

(Paragraph 3.2)

Compliance Audit Paragraphs

Audit of utilisation of 13 Finance Commission (13 FC) funds by the State revealed that funds recommended by 13 FC under 'State Specific Needs' category were not received in full due to non-submission of utilisation certificates by the State on time. Fulfillment of the objective of increasing the production of top quality planting material of horticulture crops within four years could not be verified in audit. Further, Public Health Engineering Department could not complete augmentation of water supply schemes in Tura even after seven years of receiving administrative approval, despite availability of 13 FC funds.

(Paragraph 3.3)

Agriculture Department incurred an extra expenditure of ₹ 2.60 crore by awarding contracts to firms that had quoted higher rates for supply of bamboo and agar planting materials, despite their failure to submit requisite documents. Besides, it also extended undue favour to the firms by issuing supply orders even where they had not bid for a particular species.

(Paragraph 3.4)

Applications for subsidy claims of ₹ 5.41 crore under Meghalaya Industrial & Investment Promotion Scheme (MIIPS), 2016 were irregularly admitted even before the MIIPS was notified.

(Paragraph 3.5)

Poor project formulation led to wasteful expenditure of ₹ 66.68 lakh and non-achievement of objectives of generating cleaner energy and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for rural community.

(Paragraph 3.6)