



SUPREME AUDIT INSTITUTION OF INDIA
लोकहितार्थ सत्यनिष्ठा
Dedicated to Truth in Public Interest

**Report of the
Comptroller and Auditor General of India
for the period ended March 2024**



**Government of Punjab
Report No. 7 of 2025
(Compliance Audit Report – Civil)**

**Report of the
Comptroller and Auditor General of India
for the period ended March 2024**

**Government of Punjab
Report No. 7 of 2025
(Compliance Audit Report – Civil)**

Table of Contents

Description	Reference to	
	Paragraph	Page
Preface	iii	
Overview	v-x	
Chapter-I: General		
Introduction	1.1	1
Budget Profile	1.2	1
Authority for Audit	1.3	3
Planning and Conduct of Audit	1.4	3
Lack of Response of Government to Audit	1.5	4
Response of Departments to Draft Audit Observations	1.6	5
Follow-up on Audit Reports	1.7	5
WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION DEPARTMENT		
Chapter-II: Implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission	2.1 to 2.8	9-48
HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT		
Chapter-III: Implementation of Emergency Response Support System – ‘Dial 112’ in Punjab	3.1 to 3.11	49-64
Chapter-IV: Compliance Audit Observations (Departments)		
HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA)		
Undue Financial Burden on Punjabi University, Patiala due to Payment of Goods and Services Tax and Interest from its Own Sources	4.1	65
PUBLIC WORKS (BUILDINGS & ROADS) AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION & INDUSTRIAL TRAINING DEPARTMENTS		
Non-realisation of Intended Benefits due to Incomplete Buildings of Multi-Disciplinary Academy	4.2	67
Appendices		71-74

Preface

This Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India on Compliance Audit for the period ended March 2024 has been prepared for submission to the Governor of Punjab under Article 151(2) of the Constitution of India.

The Report contains significant results of the Compliance Audit of the Departments/Autonomous Bodies of Government of Punjab.

The instances mentioned in this Report are those which came to notice in the course of test audit done during the period 2024-25 as well as those which came to notice in earlier years but could not be reported in previous Audit Reports; and instances relating to the period subsequent to 2024-25 have also been included, wherever necessary.

The audit has been conducted in conformity with the Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

Overview

Overview

This Report consists of two Subject Specific Compliance Audit viz. 'Implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission' and 'Implementation of Emergency Response Support System – 'Dial 112' in Punjab'. There are two audit observations arising out of Compliance Audit of Departments/Autonomous Bodies involving financial implications of ₹ 28.40 crore.

Chapter-I: General

As against the total budget outlay of ₹ 2,96,345 crore, the application of resources was ₹ 3,00,517 crore during the year 2023-24. The total expenditure¹ of the State increased by 29.51 *per cent* from ₹ 94,471 crore to ₹ 1,22,346 crore during the period 2019-20 to 2023-24.

Revenue expenditure of the State increased by 54.77 *per cent* from ₹ 75,860 crore in 2019-20 to ₹ 1,17,407 crore in 2023-24. However, the revenue expenditure constituted 80-96 *per cent* of the total expenditure while capital expenditure ranged between four *per cent* and eight *per cent* during 2019-2024 except for the year 2019-20 when it was 19 *per cent* due to conversion of Ujjwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY) loans amounting to ₹ 15,628 crore into equity capital in Punjab State Power Corporation Limited.

During the period from 2019-20 to 2023-24, revenue expenditure increased at compound annual growth rate of 11.54 *per cent* whereas revenue receipts grew at compound annual average rate of 9.71 *per cent*.

(Paragraph 1.2, Page 1)

The heads of the offices are required to reply to the audit observations contained in the Inspection Reports (IR) within four weeks from the date of receipt of the IRs. Serious financial irregularities are reported to the heads of the Department and the Government.

As of June 2024, 17,245 Inspection Reports containing 67,816 observations (issued up to March 2024) having money value of ₹ 73,534.62 crore, were not settled, of which 12,608 IRs containing 38,934 observations having money value of ₹ 34,646.13 crore pertained to the period prior to April 2019 i.e., more than five years old.

The lack of action on these audit observations weakens accountability and raises the risk of loss of revenue. Increasing pendency of audit paragraphs merits urgent attention of the Government for addressing the issues consistently raised by Audit.

(Paragraph 1.5, Page 4)

¹ Total of Revenue Expenditure, Capital Expenditure and Loans & Advances.

As many as 575 audit observations involving money value of ₹ 62.91 crore were settled in 45 Audit Committee meetings held with 26 auditee units under 15 Departments during 2023-24.

(Paragraph 1.5.1, Page 5)

Chapter-II: Implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission

The Compliance Audit titled ‘Implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission’ (JJM) in Punjab showed that JJM encountered several structural and operational challenges.

The State was unable to fully utilise allocated funds which stemmed from the inaccurate preparation of Annual Action Plans, which were prepared in the absence of re-verified baseline data, Village Action Plans and the State Action Plan, and inflated reporting.

Audit observed that the re-verification of Baseline Data, that was crucial for effective planning and preparation of Village Action Plans, was required to be completed by March 2020. However, the household survey was planned by the State Water Sanitation Mission (SWSM) in December 2020, nine months after the required timeline. Despite having a plan to conduct a survey to gather baseline data, the SWSM decided in July 2023 not to get it conducted, as the State by then had reported 100 *per cent* Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) coverage. Baseline data was available as Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) which was to be reverified as per Operational Guidelines of JJM. Although the reverification was planned nine months after the required timeline, yet the same was not done.

As per Operational Guidelines of JJM, a Village Action Plan (VAP) was to be prepared based on baseline survey, resource mapping and needs identified to ensure provision of FHTC for all rural households. These VAPs were to be consolidated into District Action Plans (DAP), which were further to be integrated into the State Action Plan (SAP) based on which AAPs were to be prepared. It was noticed that the SWSM prepared AAPs without having prepared the SAP and re-verifying baseline data. In absence of VAPs and baseline data re-verification, the SWSM overlooked 11.27 lakh households that had arranged their own drinking water source without any assistance which were initially proposed for coverage under JJM but later incorrectly included in FHTC coverage reports, without actually providing them with piped drinking water from water supply schemes of SWSM leading to preparation of inflated proposals.

Groundwater extraction in Punjab was not only maximum among all the States of India but was also significantly higher compared to neighboring States. Out of 23 Districts of Punjab, as far as groundwater extraction was concerned, only

two Districts (nine *per cent*) were safe, whereas, 18 Districts were over-exploited (78 *per cent*), two were critical (nine *per cent*), and one was semi-critical (four *per cent*).

The SWSM, in departure from the Vision/Mission of JJM and knowing about the already over-exploited groundwater resources in the State, proceeded with planning groundwater-based schemes under JJM.

Against the plan of training 8,118 workers, only 5,162 workers were imparted training as of September 2023 and that too at an expenditure of ₹ 1.56 crore met from JJM support activity funds. The National Jal Jeevan Mission (NJJM) advised (September 2023) the SWSM to incur expenditure on trainings for skill development from funds provided by the 15th Finance Commission.

Between 2019 and 2024, water quality data analysis revealed significant contamination on various parameters in Punjab. Arsenic levels exceeded the safe limit of 0.01 PPM in 815 to 593 habitations, with Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Tarn Taran being the worst affected. Nitrate contamination (69 to 20 habitations) surpassed the 45 PPM limit, particularly in Ferozepur, Ludhiana and Roopnagar. Iron contamination (45 to 14 habitations) exceeded 1.0 PPM, with Amritsar, Ferozepur and Roopnagar being the most impacted. Other metal contamination (134 to 22 habitations) surpassed limits, affecting Fazilka and Patiala the most. Fluoride levels exceeded safe limits (319 to 195 habitations), with Patiala and Fatehgarh Sahib being the worst affected. Uranium contamination (252 to 174 habitations) was detected in Fazilka, Ferozepur and Moga, surpassing the BIS and Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) safety limits.

As on 31 March 2024, there was one State Laboratory, 17 District Laboratories, six Regional Laboratories, seven Block Laboratories and two Mobile Laboratories in the State. There was 95 *per cent* shortage of Block Laboratories as against 153 Blocks, there were only seven Block Level Laboratories.

Against the annual target of 3,000 tests for the District Water Testing Laboratories, there was a shortfall ranging between 33 *per cent* and 95 *per cent* during 2021-2024. These District Level Laboratories were required to forward confirmed positive cases to the State Laboratory immediately for further testing on advanced parameters. Audit noticed that during 2021-2024, out of 588 samples tested positive in four test-checked Districts, only the District Laboratory in Ludhiana sent 11 (2.83 *per cent*) samples to the State Laboratory, while the other District Laboratories failed to comply with the Drinking Water Quality Monitoring & Surveillance Framework (DWQMS) guidelines.

During 2021-22 and 2022-23, results of water quality testing of as many as 45.57 per cent and 62.99 per cent samples, respectively were declared after 31 days of receiving the sample, thereby making the chances of timely intervention nearly impossible.

Recommendations:

The State Government may ensure:

- *Structured planning based on verified baseline data;*
- *Regularising the functioning of key Committees and adopt a formal Operation & Maintenance strategy along with integration of Internet of Things, Geographic Information System mapping and smart monitoring systems; and*
- *Conducting required number of tests, expanding the number of water testing laboratories and introducing real-time monitoring technologies to ensure supply of contamination-free drinking water.*

Chapter-III: Implementation of Emergency Response Support System – ‘Dial 112’ in Punjab

The Compliance Audit titled ‘Implementation of Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) – ‘Dial 112’ in Punjab’ showed that the delayed formation of key Committees, lack of monitoring and inadequate funding hampered the implementation of ERSS in the State.

The ERSS Guidelines provide for constitution of a State Apex Committee (SAC) comprising eleven members under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary. Though the State Government had received first instalment of grant-in-aid from GoI in March 2017 for implementation of ERSS, the SAC was constituted in February/April 2018 as per the structure defined in the Guidelines i.e., after more than two years from issue of the guidelines. It was further noticed (August 2024) that as against the requirement of 24 meetings till March 2024, only one meeting of the SAC was held (March 2018).

As per ERSS Guidelines, the State was required to set up a State Steering Committee (SSC) comprising of eight members from different prescribed departments under the chairmanship of the Director General of Police. Audit observed (August 2024) that the SSC was initially constituted in November 2015 with members solely from the Police Department, lacking representation from other Departments. The SSC was subsequently reconstituted in March 2024, aligning with the ERSS Guidelines, more than eight years after issuance of guidelines by GoI (August 2015). It was observed (June-September 2024) that no DMCs were constituted even after nine years of the issuance of the guidelines (August 2015).

The ERSS Guidelines mandate the State to define the State level Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for responding to emergency calls by the State Call Centre as well as field units. Audit observed (June 2024) that the State had not prepared the SOP defining operations of ERSS in the State (November 2024) even after a lapse of more than nine years of issuance of ERSS Guidelines by GoI. In the absence of a clearly defined SOP, the State's ability to address emergency situations in a timely and organised manner could be hindered, potentially impacting public safety and the overall effectiveness of the ERSS system.

ERSS Guidelines required integration of existing emergency services such as firefighting, ambulance and other emergency services with 'Dial 112'. Delays in the constitution of various committees and non-release of essential funds by the State hampered the timely implementation and operationalisation of ERSS in the State. This hindered effective integration with other emergency services, potentially compromising coordination, efficiency and resource utilisation, thereby undermining the objectives of the 112-based Emergency Response System.

The State was responsible for providing sufficient number of two-wheelers and four-wheelers for dispatch in case of emergency. As per ERSS Guidelines, each State was to be provided with an average of six Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) *per* police station for the actual number of vehicles available. Against the requirement of 1,866 vehicles, only 258 vehicles were deployed under ERSS, thereby depicting a substantial shortfall of 1,608 (86 *per cent*) vehicles.

Analysis of ERSS quality parameters during the period 2021-2024 highlighted significant delays in key stages of the emergency response, including call forwarding, dispatcher response, vehicle response times and incident resolution, thereby impairing the objective of the Scheme to provide immediate emergency services to the people in distress.

Recommendations:

The State Government may ensure:

- *Timely formation and operationalisation of mandated Committees to strengthen governance and oversight of ERSS;*
- *Development and implementation of comprehensive SOPs for ERSS operations, and emergency response protocols across the State;*
- *Integration of other emergency services like Fire, Health, Women's Helpline, etc. with ERSS- 'Dial 112'; and*
- *Implementation of measures to reduce delays at all stages of emergency response, including call forwarding, dispatcher response, vehicle deployment and incident resolution, to enhance service delivery.*

Chapter-IV: Compliance Audit Observations (Departments)

Failure of the Punjabi University, Patiala to comply with the provisions of the Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017 led to a payment of ₹ 2.19 crore (which includes interest of ₹ 1.08 crore) on collection of College Affiliation Processing Fee, from its own sources. Of this, ₹ 0.35 crore was recovered from certain colleges, leaving the University with a financial burden of ₹ 1.84 crore. Additionally, a liability of ₹ 0.12 crore remains outstanding due to pending GST payments along with accrued interest.

(Paragraph 4.1, Page 65)

Non-provision of adequate funds by the Public Works Department (B&R) and Inder Kumar Gujral Punjab Technical University (IKGPTU) coupled with allotment of work by the Executive Engineer before obtaining technical sanction and ensuring availability of sufficient funds from the client department resulted in non-completion of work even after lapse of 14 years from the scheduled date of completion, thereby rendering the expenditure of ₹ 19.05 crore incurred on six incomplete blocks of Multi-Disciplinary Academy as idle, besides non-realisation of the intended benefits of improving the living standards of people in remote village areas through technical education.

(Paragraph 4.2, Page 67)

Chapter-I

General

Chapter-I

General

1.1 Introduction

This Report covers matters arising out of the Compliance Audit of the Departments of the State Government. The primary purpose of this Report is to bring to the notice of the Legislature the important results of audit. Findings of audit are expected to enable the Executive to take corrective action and to frame policies and directives that will lead to improved financial management of the organisations contributing to better governance.

The Report has been organised in four chapters as under:

Chapter-I contains a brief profile of the State Government with the budget profile for the year 2023-24, the authority for audit, planning and conduct of audit, response of the Government to various audit products namely Inspection Reports, individual observations/paragraphs and follow-up action on Audit Reports.

Chapter-II contains Subject Specific Compliance Audit on ‘Implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission’.

Chapter-III contains Subject Specific Compliance Audit on ‘Implementation of Emergency Response Support System – ‘Dial 112’ in Punjab’.

Chapter-IV contains individual observations relating to Compliance Audit of Departments.

1.2 Budget Profile

There are 43 departments and 60 autonomous bodies in the State¹. The status of budget estimates and actual expenditure incurred by the State Government during 2019-2024 is given in **Table 1.1**.

¹ Social, General and Economic Departments (other than Revenue Departments and Public Sector Undertakings).

Table 1.1: Budget and actual expenditure of the State during 2019-2024

(₹ in crore)

Expenditure	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
	Budget Estimates	Actuals								
Revenue expenditure										
General Services	39,449.00	38,614.35	43,540.25	43,253.01	47,421.79	47,239.77	53,617.47	54,002.90	56,234.55	57,118.45
Social Services	21,878.19	19,483.85	24,982.03	21,674.90	29,329.73	25,334.31	31,046.22	28,849.10	33,504.05	31,960.96
Economic Services	18,754.94	14,551.12	17,532.96	15,445.40	20,944.10	20,203.74	27,801.13	26,996.39	28,013.81	25,031.91
Grants-in-aid and Contributions	6,519.95	3,210.32	6,717.05	5,971.31	4,749.91	3,858.69	4,989.16	3,812.28	4,999.05	3,296.07
Total	86,602.08	75,859.64	92,772.29	86,344.62	1,02,445.53	96,636.51	1,17,453.98	1,13,660.67	1,22,751.46	1,17,407.39
Capital expenditure	19,641.30	17,827.73	6,821.68	4,382.32	10,078.80	8,009.98	8,513.20	6,667.21	6,406.29	4,742.81
Loans and Advances disbursed	820.87	783.88	923.63	955.79	1,592.76	1,575.81	1,412.14	1,381.67	292.61	195.82
Repayment of Public Debt (including Ways and Means Advances)	44,632.68	39,573.90	39,482.08	34,633.53	22,358.95	19,278.55	59,946.00	58,375.71	69,626.00	73,451.79
Contingency Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Public Account disbursements*	16,014.61	64,328.24	59,068.32	74,470.97	91,442.87	87,659.49	81,881.10	97,620.01	97,268.67	94,561.12
Closing Cash Balance	--	2,125.06	--	9,247.83	--	6,871.64	--	9,009.46	--	10,158.43
Total	81,109.46	2,76,358.09	1,06,295.71	1,23,690.44	1,25,473.38	1,23,395.47	1,51,752.44	1,73,054.06	1,73,593.57	1,83,109.97
Grand Total	1,67,711.54	2,00,498.45	1,99,068.00	2,10,035.06	2,27,918.91	2,20,031.98	2,69,206.42	2,86,714.73	2,96,345.03	3,00,517.36

Source: Annual Financial Statements and Explanatory Memorandum of the Budget of the Government of Punjab

* Excludes transactions of investment of cash balances, departmental cash in chests and deposits with Reserve Bank of India.

As against the total budget outlay of ₹ 2,96,345 crore, the application of resources was ₹ 3,00,517 crore during the year 2023-24. The total expenditure² of the State increased by 29.51 per cent from ₹ 94,471 crore to ₹ 1,22,346 crore during the period 2019-20 to 2023-24. Revenue expenditure of the State increased by 54.77 per cent from ₹ 75,860 crore in 2019-20 to ₹ 1,17,407 crore in 2023-24. However, the revenue expenditure constituted 80-96 per cent of the total expenditure while capital expenditure ranged between four per cent and eight per cent during 2019-2024 except for the year 2019-20 when it was 19 per cent due to conversion of Ujjwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY) loans amounting to ₹ 15,628 crore into equity capital in Punjab State Power Corporation Limited.

During the period from 2019-20 to 2023-24, revenue expenditure increased at compound annual growth rate of 11.54 per cent whereas revenue receipts grew at compound annual average rate of 9.71 per cent.

² Total of Revenue Expenditure, Capital Expenditure and Loans & Advances.

1.3 Authority for Audit

Authority for audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) is derived from Articles 149 and 151 of the Constitution of India and the CAG's (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Act, 1971 (DPC Act). The CAG conducts audit of expenditure of State Government Departments under Section 13³ of the CAG's DPC Act. In addition, CAG also conducts audit of other Autonomous Bodies which are substantially financed by the Government under Section 14⁴ of DPC Act. Section 16 of the CAG's DPC Act authorises CAG to audit all receipts (both revenue and capital) of the Government of India and of Government of each State and of each Union Territory having a legislative assembly and to satisfy himself that the rules and procedures are designed to secure an effective check on the assessment, collection and proper allocation of revenue and are being duly observed. Principles and methodologies for various audits are prescribed in the Regulations on Audit and Accounts (Amendments), 2020 and Auditing Standards issued by the Indian Audit and Accounts Department.

1.4 Planning and Conduct of Audit

The audit process commences with a risk assessment of various departments, autonomous bodies, schemes/projects, considering the criticality/complexity of activities, level of delegated financial powers, internal controls, concerns of stakeholders and previous audit findings. Based on this risk assessment, the scope of audit is decided and an Annual Audit Plan is formulated.

After completion of audit, an Inspection Report containing audit findings is issued to the head of the office with the request to furnish replies within four weeks. Whenever replies are received, audit findings are either settled or further action for compliance is advised. Important audit observations pointed out in these Inspection Reports are processed for inclusion in the Audit Reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India which are to be submitted to the Governor of Punjab under Article 151(2) of the Constitution of India.

During 2023-24, compliance audit of 980 entities (including implementing units) of the State was conducted by the office of the Principal Accountant General (Audit), Punjab. An amount of ₹ 0.06 crore was recovered during

³ Audit of (i) all expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of State; (ii) all transactions relating to Contingency Fund and Public Accounts; and (iii) all trading, manufacturing, profit and loss accounts, balance-sheets and other subsidiary accounts.

⁴ Several non-commercial autonomous/semi-autonomous bodies, established to implement Schemes for employment generation, poverty alleviation, spread of literacy, health for all and prevention of diseases, environment, etc., and substantially financed by the Government, are audited under Section 14.

2023-24 by various Departments after being pointed out by Audit through Inspection Reports.

1.5 Lack of Response of Government to Audit

The Principal Accountant General (Audit), Punjab (PAG) conducts periodic inspection of the Government Departments to test-check the transactions and verify the maintenance of important accounts and other records as prescribed in the rules and procedures. These inspections are followed up with Inspection Reports (IR) incorporating irregularities detected during the inspection and not settled on the spot, which are issued to the heads of the offices inspected with copies to the next higher authorities for taking prompt corrective action.

The heads of the offices are required to reply to the audit observations contained in the IRs within four weeks from the date of receipt of the IRs. Serious financial irregularities are reported to the heads of the Department and the Government.

As of June 2024, 17,245 Inspection Reports containing 67,816 observations (issued up to March 2024) having money value of ₹ 73,534.62 crore, were not settled, of which 12,608 IRs containing 38,934 observations having money value of ₹ 34,646.13 crore pertained to the period prior to April 2019 i.e., more than five years old. The year-wise position of outstanding Inspection Reports/observations along with their money value is given in **Table 1.2**.

Table 1.2: Outstanding Inspection Reports/observations

Particulars	Prior to April 2019	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Total
Inspection Reports	12,608	1,335	721	1,012	802	767	17,245
Observations	38,934	6,754	3,905	5,836	5,848	6,539	67,816
Money value (₹ in crore)	34,646.13	10,239.84	8,820.82	7,680.63	8,335.22	3,811.98	73,534.62

Source: Office records

The purpose of audit is to check whether prescribed rules, laws and procedures are being adhered to and to highlight cases of non-compliance, systemic weaknesses and failures. The large number of pending IRs and audit observations pending settlement indicate inadequate response to audit observations. The lack of action on these audit observations weakens accountability and raises the risk of loss of revenue. Increasing pendency of audit paragraphs merits urgent attention of the Government for addressing the issues consistently raised by Audit. The departmental officers did not take action on observations contained in IRs within the prescribed time frame, resulting in erosion of accountability. It is recommended that the Government should ensure prompt and proper response to audit observations.

1.5.1 Departmental Audit Committee Meetings

The Government has set up Departmental Audit Committees to monitor and expedite progress of the settlement of the audit observations contained in the Inspection Reports.

As many as 575 audit observations involving money value of ₹ 62.91 crore were settled in 45 Audit Committee meetings held with 26 auditee units (AU) under 15 Departments⁵ during 2023-24.

The Government may ensure holding Audit Committee meetings at regular intervals with all the Departments.

1.6 Response of Departments to Draft Audit Observations

In the last few years, Audit has reported on several significant deficiencies in implementation of various programmes/activities as well as on the quality of internal controls in selected Departments adversely impacting the success of programmes and functioning of the Departments. The focus was on auditing specific programmes/schemes in order to offer suitable recommendations to the Executive for taking corrective action and improving service delivery to the citizens.

The draft audit observations proposed for inclusion in the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India are forwarded by the Principal Accountant General (Audit) to the Principal Secretaries/Secretaries of the Departments concerned drawing their attention to the audit findings and requesting them to send their response within six weeks. The fact of non-receipt of replies from the Departments/Government is invariably indicated at the end of such observations included in the Audit Report.

1.7 Follow-up on Audit Reports

The follow-up on Audit Reports have been found to be inadequate as given below:

1.7.1 Non-Submission of Action Taken Notes

According to the Rules and Procedure for the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), all Administrative Departments are to initiate *suo motu* action on all Compliance Audit Observations and Performance Audits featuring in the Audit Reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, regardless of whether

⁵ (i) Governance Reforms and Public Grievances (1 AU); (ii) Revenue, Rehabilitation and Disaster Management (4 AUs); (iii) Rural Development and Panchayats (3 AUs); (iv) Housing and Urban Development (1 AU); (v) Water Supply and Sanitation (1 AU); (vi) Public Works (B&R) (1 AU); (vii) Water Resources (1 AU); (viii) Industry and Commerce (1 AU); (ix) Tourism (2 AUs); (x) Social Security and Women & Child Development (1 AU); (xi) Defence Services and Welfare (1 AU); (xii) Social Justice, Empowerment and Minorities (1 AU); (xiii) Sports and Youth Services (2 AUs); (xiv) Higher Education and Languages (5 AUs); and (xv) School Education (1 AU).

these are taken up for examination by the PAC or not. They are also to furnish detailed notes, duly vetted by audit, indicating the remedial action taken or proposed to be taken by them within three months of the presentation of the Audit Reports to the State Legislature. Despite these provisions, the explanatory notes on audit observations of the Reports were being delayed inordinately.

The status regarding non-receipt of Action Taken Notes (ATN) on the observations included in the Audit Reports of Social, General and Economic Departments up to the period ended 31 March 2025 is given in **Table 1.3**.

Table 1.3: Status regarding non-receipt of ATNs on the paragraphs included in the Audit Reports

CAG Audit Report	Year	Department	Date of presentation of Audit Report in the State Legislature	Due date for receipt of ATNs	ATNs pending as of 31 March 2025
Social, General and Economic Sectors (Non-PSUs)	2016-17	Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare	22.03.2018	21.06.2018	1
		Revenue, Rehabilitation and Disaster Management			2
		Social Justice and Empowerment of Minorities			1
	2017-18	Health and Family Welfare	27.02.2020	26.05.2020	1
		Home Affairs and Justice			2
Social, General, Revenue and Economic Sectors (Non-PSUs)	2018-19	Health and Family Welfare	29.06.2022	28.09.2022	1
		Housing and Urban Development			1&
		Finance			1& 2
Compliance Audit of Social, General and Economic Sectors (Non-PSUs)	2019-20	Social Security and Women & Child Development	29.06.2022	28.09.2022	1
Compliance Audit (Civil)	2020-21	Water Supply and Sanitation	07.03.2023	06.06.2023	1
		Public Works (B&R)			1
		Technical Education and Industrial Training			3
	2021-22	Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development and Fisheries	04.09.2024	03.12.2024	1
		Forest and Wild Life Preservation			1*
		Higher Education			1@

CAG Audit Report	Year	Department	Date of presentation of Audit Report in the State Legislature	Due date for receipt of ATNs	ATNs pending as of 31 March 2025
		Home Affairs and Justice			1
		Housing and Urban Development			1
		Labour			1
		Local Government			1
		Public Works (B&R)			1*
		Rural Development & Panchayats			1
		Technical education and Industrial Training			1@ 2
		Water Resources			1
		Sports & Youth Services			1
Performance Audit of 'Direct Benefit Transfer (Cash Transfer)'	Report No. 1 of 2022	Social Security and Women & Child Development	29.06.2022	28.09.2022	28
Performance Audit of 'Outcomes of Higher Education in Punjab'	Report No. 2 of 2022	Higher Education	29.06.2022	28.09.2022	31
Total					88

Source: Office records

& One observation of the Audit Report 2018-19 pertains to two departments.

* One observation of the Audit Report 2021-22 pertains to two departments.

@ One observation of the Audit Report 2021-22 pertains to two departments.

Chapter-II
Implementation of
Jal Jeevan Mission

Chapter-II

WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION DEPARTMENT

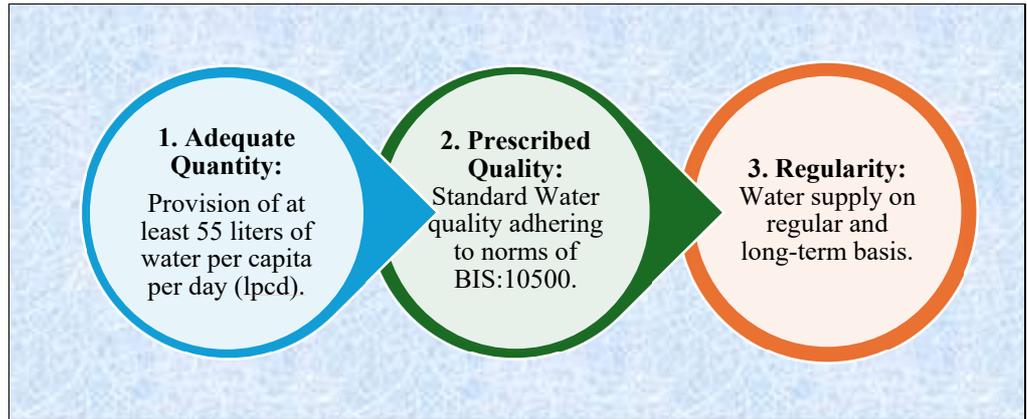
Implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission

The implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in Punjab encountered several structural and operational challenges. Annual Action Plans were inaccurate and unstructured, failing to account for households already having drinking water access. This led to underutilisation of funds, inability to meet utilisation thresholds and delays in Utilisation Certificates, hindering further release of Central Share. There was an absence of critical planning tools like the State Action Plan (SAP), resulting in unrealistic targets. Over-reliance on over-exploited groundwater with limited adoption of sustainability measures was noticed. Lack of a formal O&M strategy and inadequate handover of schemes to Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSC) was observed. Insufficient Block-Level Laboratories and shortage of trained human resources led to inadequate water quality monitoring. Minimal use of Internet of Things (IoT), Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping and solar-powered pumping was noticed affecting sustainable and efficient rural water supply management. Community contributions remained low, reflecting weak community engagement and ownership.

2.1 Introduction

With a growing population and expanding economic activities, there is an increase in demand for water in various sectors *viz.* agriculture, industry, domestic, recreation, infrastructure development, etc. The widening gap between demand and supply is further compounded by other challenges, *viz.* depletion of groundwater caused by over-extraction, poor recharge, presence of contaminants, etc.

Recognising these challenges, the Government of India (GoI) launched (August 2019) the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) as a flagship initiative to ensure sustainable access to safe and adequate drinking water. The JJM is a time bound Mission Mode Programme to ensure piped water supply to every rural household in the country through Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) by 2024. An FHTC embodies three essential characteristics:



Source: Operational guidelines for the implementation of JJM

The 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India has assigned the management of drinking water to Gram Panchayats. Under JJM, Gram Panchayats and local communities were to play a pivotal role in planning, implementation, management, operation and maintenance of in-village water supply systems including the drinking water sources. Public Health Engineering Departments (PHED)/Rural Development & Panchayati Raj/RWS Departments, in-charge of rural drinking water in States were to facilitate Gram Panchayats to perform their duties.

At the launch of JJM in August 2019, Punjab had already provided tap water connections to 16,78,558 households, accounting for 48.98 *per cent* of the total 34,26,808 rural households in the State. Punjab reported to have achieved the JJM target of providing functional tap connections to 100 *per cent* rural households by 5 April 2023.

2.2 Components of JJM

JJM is a demand driven, de-centralised and community managed programme. For this purpose, it has incorporated several components in its planning and implementation which enables it to achieve its objectives. The main components of JJM are as under:

- Development of in-village piped water supply infrastructure to provide tap water connection to every rural household;
- Development of reliable drinking water sources and/or augmentation of existing sources to provide long-term sustainability of water supply system;
- Wherever necessary, construction of facilities for bulk water transfer, treatment plants and distribution network to cater to every rural household;
- Technological interventions for removal of contaminants where water quality is an issue;
- Retrofitting of completed and ongoing schemes to provide FHTCs at minimum service level of 55 litres per capita per day (lpcd);

- Provision of support activities i.e., IEC, HRD, training, development of utilities, water quality laboratories, water quality testing & surveillance, R&D, knowledge centre, capacity building of communities, etc.; and
- Any other unforeseen challenges/issues emerging due to natural disasters/calamities which affect the goal of FHTC to every household by 2024, as per guidelines of Ministry of Finance on Flexi Funds.

2.3 Audit Objectives

Audit adopted a result-oriented approach to evaluate the extent to which the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) has achieved its goal of providing a sustainable long-term water supply to all rural households of minimum 55 lpcd that meets BIS 10500 quality standards. The objectives of the audit were to ascertain whether:

- financial resources were employed in an economic and efficient manner;
- efficient institutional framework was in place for proper planning, monitoring and sustainability of the provision of at least 55 litres per capita per day drinking water, meeting BIS 10500 quality standards for all households;
- post-operational management of the schemes was in compliance with JJM norms; and
- monitoring of water quality and its mitigation measures were adequate.

2.4 Audit Criteria

The audit findings were based upon the following criteria:

- Operational Guidelines for implementation of JJM, SDG obligations and Standard Operating Procedure for Water Sanitation & Hygiene Standards;
- *Margdarshika*¹ for Gram Panchayat & VWSC to Provide Safe Drinking Water in Rural Households;
- Water Quality Monitoring & Surveillance Framework; and
- Orders issued by the State Government and Central Government for facilitating the implementation of JJM and devolution of powers as envisaged in 73rd Amendment Act of the Constitution of India.

2.5 Audit Scope and Methodology

The audit of Jal Jeevan Mission covered the period from 2019-20 to 2023-24. A 'Performance Audit of National Rural Drinking Water Programme' covering the period from 2012-2016 was conducted during March 2017 to

1 *Margdarshika* is a compilation of guidelines for Gram Panchayats and VWSCs issued by Ministry of Jal Shakti.

February 2018. The findings related to Punjab, as reported in CAG's Audit Report No. 15 of 2018, were also reviewed during the conduct of the present audit of JJM.

This audit of JJM was conducted between July 2024 and December 2024 by selecting four Districts² (out of 23) by adopting Stratified Random Sampling Method on the basis of Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC). In these selected Districts, nine blocks³ covering 21 villages⁴ were selected by adopting the Simple Random Sampling Method. In addition to it, in these 21 villages, a beneficiary survey was carried out, covering 428 households.

Department of Water Supply and Sanitation (DWSS) is the nodal department for the implementation of Government of India's flagship programme JJM in Punjab. During audit, records of the Mission Director JJM, eight Executive Engineers, Water Supply & Sanitation Divisions having jurisdiction in the four selected Districts and the Executive Engineer Water Quality were test-checked.

An entry conference was held on 4 September 2024 with the Principal Secretary to Government of Punjab, Department of Water Supply and Sanitation wherein audit objectives, scope, criteria and audit sample were discussed.

The exit conference was conducted on 25 February 2025 with the Principal Secretary to the Government of Punjab, Department of Water Supply and Sanitation wherein audit findings were discussed. The replies given during the exit conference and subsequently received in May 2025 have been included in the report at relevant places.

2.6 Audit Findings

The audit findings have been categorised into the following five section:

- Financial Management
- Planning and Monitoring
- Post Operational Management and Sustainability
- Water Quality Monitoring and Surveillance
- Results of Survey

² (i) Ludhiana; (ii) Pathankot; (iii) Sangrur; and (iv) Tarn Taran.

³ (i) Ludhiana = Ludhiana-2, Pakhowal, Sidhwan Bet; (ii) Pathankot = Pathankot, Gharota; (iii) Sangrur = Andana, Sunam; and (iv) Tarn Taran = Chohla Sahib, Patti.

⁴ (i) Ludhiana-2 = Sasrali, Chak Kalan, Gadawal; (ii) Pakhowal = Narangwal, Kailey, Nangal Kalan; (iii) Sidhwan Bet = Khursaidpur, Sadarpura, Swaddi Khurd; (iv) Pathankot = Kuther, Napwal; (v) Gharota = Jakror, Dibku; (vi) Andana = Rampur Gujran, Chahte Gobindpura; (vii) Sunam = Chhajli, Ghasiwala; (viii) Chohla Sahib= Raniwala, Wariah; and (ix) Patti= Bangla Rai, Ubhoke.

2.6.1 Financial Management

With a view to achieve the vision of Jal Jeevan Mission, aimed at providing potable drinking water to rural communities, efficient financial management is crucial for ensuring timely allocation and effective utilisation of funds. This demands robust financial planning, systematic budgeting and rigorous monitoring. Preventing delays, underutilisation and misallocation of resources is essential for optimising fund usage and successfully meeting the Mission's objectives.

2.6.1.1 Funding and Expenditure under JJM

As per Paragraph 7.5 of the JJM Operational Guidelines, States were required to develop a Five-Year State Action Plan (SAP), outlining annual targets for providing Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) along with a corresponding financial roadmap. These targets of FHTCs were to be established through a structured planning process, beginning at the village level with Village Action Plans (VAP) based on re-verified baseline data and community needs. These plans were then to be consolidated at the district level and further aggregated into the SAP, as detailed in **Paragraph 2.6.2.2**.

As per Paragraph 7.5.3 of the Operational Guidelines of JJM, the Annual Action Plan (AAP) of the State was to emerge from the approved SAP. The AAP was to include an annual fund requirement by pooling all the available resources⁵. The funding of JJM was to be shared between the Government of India (GoI) and the Government of Punjab (GoP) in the ratio of 50:50. The allocation of Central Share was based on discussions with National Jal Jeevan Mission (NJJM) for finalisation of the AAP submitted by the State. The annual Central Share allocation was to be released in two equal instalments, each divided into two tranches, depending upon the State's fund utilisation, as detailed below:

- The first tranche of the first installment was to be released after adjusting the excess opening balance beyond 10 *per cent* of the previous year.
- The second tranche of the first instalment was to be released automatically once 80 *per cent* of available funds (opening balance + first tranche) was utilised.
- Any balance from the first installment was to be released after submission of Utilisation Certificates (UC) by the State showing 60 *per cent* utilisation of available Central Share.
- The first tranche of the second instalment was to be released upon submission of provisional UC for the current year showing at least 60 *per cent* utilisation, report of the Accountant General preceding the

⁵ Funds received from Center, State, MPLADS, MLALADS, DMDF, CSR, donations, etc.

previous year and Statement of Accounts of previous year audited by CAG's empaneled CA along with final UC for the previous year.

- The second tranche of the second instalment was to be released automatically once 80 *per cent* of total available funds (Central and State Share) were utilised.

The details of allotment of funds as Central and State Share and expenditure during the period 2019-20 to 2023-24 is given in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Allotment, release of Central and State Share and Expenditure

(₹ in crore)

Year	Opening Balance (Centre)	Central Share approved	Central Share released	State Share released	Expenditure			Unspent balance (State)	Unspent balance (Centre)
					Centre	State	Total		
2019-20	102.91 ⁶	227.46	227.46	78.20	73.27	78.20	151.47	0.00	257.10
2020-21	257.10	362.79	0.00	152.77	146.74	152.77	299.51	0.00	110.36
2021-22	110.36	1,656.39	402.24	265.70	247.83	265.70	513.53	0.00	264.77
2022-23	264.77	2,403.46	0.00	220.70	264.80	210.69	475.49	10.01	-0.03
2023-24	-0.03	479.02	119.76	315.19	103.79	166.43	270.22	148.76	15.94
Total		5,129.12	749.46	1,032.56	836.43	873.79	1,710.22		

Source: Website- <https://ejalshakti.gov.in/>

As is evident from **Table 2.1**, in addition to the opening balance of ₹ 102.91 crore, against the allocation of ₹ 5,129.12 crore, the State could avail Central Share of ₹ 749.46 crore (15 *per cent*) only during the period 2019-20 to 2023-24.

The State's inability to fully utilise allocated funds stemmed from the inaccurate preparation of Annual Action Plans (AAP), which were prepared in the absence of re-verified baseline data, Village Action Plans (VAP) and the State Action Plan (SAP) and inflated reporting. Therefore, despite targeting of 17.48 lakh FHTCs under JJM during 2019-2024, the SWSM had reported (April 2023) the State to have 100 *per cent* coverage by providing 5.55 lakh FHTCs only, as discussed in **Paragraph 2.6.2.3(a)**. In addition, the Ministry of Jal Shakti attributed (November 2024) short claiming of the allocated Central Share by the State to non-submission of documents required for its release as per JJM guidelines.

The inaccurate coverage report of targeted FHTCs by the State and lack of submission of requisite documents led to non-utilisation of allocated Central Share during 2019-2024, as discussed below:

- In 2019–20, the launch year of JJM, fund allocation was not based on the AAP; instead, ₹ 227.46 crore was released unconditionally by the GoI as Central Share.

⁶ According to Paragraph 7.4 of Operational Guidelines of JJM, unspent Central Share of NRDWP components amounting to ₹102.91 crore was carried forward as JJM's opening balance in 2019.

- At the commencement of 2020-21, the State had an unspent balance of ₹ 257.10 crore from 2019-20, which exceeded ₹ 90.70 crore (25 per cent of ₹ 362.79 crore) that was due for release as first tranche of the first instalment of 2020-21. Thus, due to insufficient fund utilisation, GoI withheld further release.
- For 2021–22, against an approved allocation of ₹ 1,656.39 crore, ₹ 414.10 crore was due as the first tranche. GoI released only ₹ 402.24 crore i.e., short by ₹ 11.86 crore. The State could utilise 48 per cent (₹ 247.83 crore) of the available ₹ 512.60 crore (₹ 110.36 crore + ₹ 402.24 crore), leading to non-releases of subsequent tranche/instalment.
- In 2022–23, due to availability of Central Share with the State, it did not seek additional Central Share, and no release was made by GoI. However, by the end of 2022-23, of ₹ 732.61 crore available with the State, it had spent ₹ 732.64 crore.
- For 2023–24, GoI released ₹ 119.76 crore as the first tranche of first instalment against an allocation of ₹ 479.02 crore. But the State submitted its UC in October 2024 i.e., after the close of financial year, resulting in non-release of further Central Share. However, as of March 2024, of the Central Share, there was an unspent balance of ₹ 15.94 crore.

The Government in its reply (May 2025) stated that notional allocation approved by GoI were substantially higher than the amounts proposed in AAPs submitted by the State. Regarding short utilisation of funds, reiterated the facts that the funds could not be utilised as planned due to unforeseen reasons including COVID-19 pandemic.

Given that the Central allocation was finalised during the meetings held for the approval of the AAPs, non-availing of allocated Central Share could be attributed mainly due to lack of absorptive capacity of already released Central Share.

2.6.1.2 Delay in Release of Funds

As per Paragraph 7.5.3 of the JJM Operational Guidelines, fund release to States begins in April, following consultations on Annual Action Plans (AAP) submitted by States in February. Further, as per Paragraph 7.9 of Operational Guidelines of JJM, State was required to transfer the funds released by the Government of India (GoI) from State Treasury to the Single Nodal Account (SNA⁷) of State Water and Sanitation Mission (SWSM) within 15 days, along with the corresponding State Share.

⁷ A dedicated bank account in a scheduled commercial bank designated to “Single Nodal Agency” by the State Government.

Short/Delayed Release of Matching State Share

The State was initially required to transfer the Central Share along with the matching State Share to the SNA within 15 days. Following a procedural revision in February 2023, the Central Share was released directly by GoI to the SNA. Under the revised norms, the State was required to transfer matching State Share to the SNA within 30 days of receiving the Central Share. Failure to do so would attract an interest penalty of seven *per cent* per annum on the delayed amount, effective from 1 April 2023, which was to be deposited into the Consolidated Fund of India.

Status of Central Share received from GoI and release of matching State Share by GoP during 2021-2024 to the SNA was, as detailed in **Table 2.2**.

Table 2.2: Transfer of matching State Share against Central Share

(₹ in crore)

Year	Receipt of Central Share in SNA		Transfer of matching State Share in SNA		Delay in release of State Share beyond	Interest accrued with effect from 1 April 2023 on delay beyond			
	Amount	Date	Amount	Date	15 Days	30 Days	Amount		
2021-22	402.24	13-12-2021	08.75	27-05-2022	150	-	-		
			33.18	07-06-2022	161	-	-		
			4.07	21-06-2022	175	-	-		
			41.24	23-06-2022	177	-	-		
			11.48	29-06-2022	183	-	-		
			123.00	11-08-2022	226	-	-		
			77.81	08-09-2022	254	-	-		
			35.37	20-12-2022	357	-	-		
			4.19	27-12-2022	364	-	-		
			16.28	29-03-2023	456	-	-		
-	-	Amount	Date	30 Days	-	-			
-	-	19.13	26-06-2023	530	56	0.21			
-	-	18.38	04-07-2023	538	64	0.23			
Total Released			392.88	-	-	-	0.44		
Not released up to 31.03.2024			9.36	-	-	335	0.60		
2023-24	113.77	13-10-2023	15.00	14-11-2023	2	2	0.01		
			5.99	16-10-2023	23.26	29-11-2023	17	17	0.08
					15.00	30-11-2023	18	18	18.00
					13.50	26-12-2023	44	44	44.00
					3.00	23-02-2024	103	103	103.00
Total			69.76	-	-	-	0.31		
Not released up to 31.03.2024			44.01	-	-	140	1.18		
2023-24	5.99	16-10-2023	-	-	-	-	-		
Not released up to 31.03.2024			5.99	-	-	137	0.16		
Grand Total			-	-	-	-	2.26		

Source: Details of transactions occurred in SNA Bank Account.

Audit observed that:

- Against the Central Share of ₹ 402.24 crore received on 13 December 2021 in the State Consolidated Fund, the Government of Punjab (GoP) released only ₹ 392.88 crore between May 2022 and July 2023 with a significant delay of up to 538 days. The State Share was also short by ₹ 9.36 crore as compared to the Central Share. This was primarily because of the State's inadequate planning, which is evident from the fact that during 2020-21 and 2021-22, the SWSM had targeted 16.47 lakh FHTCs, but only 4.76 lakh FHTCs were provided during these two years as by then 12.10 lakh households had already arranged their own drinking water and thus did not require FHTCs under JJM.
- Of these ₹ 392.88 crore, ₹ 37.51 crore was released after 1 April 2023, which attracted an interest liability of ₹ 0.44 crore and non-release of remaining matching State Share of ₹ 9.36 crore up to 31 March 2024 attracted additional interest liability of ₹ 0.60 crore.
- Similarly, against Central Share of ₹ 113.77 crore received on 13 October 2023, the GoP released ₹ 69.76 crore only as the matching State Share with delays ranging between 2 and 103 days. This delay beyond 1 April 2023 attracted an interest liability of ₹ 0.31 crore. The matching State Share of ₹ 44.01 crore that remained un-released up to 31 March 2024 also attracted interest liability of ₹ 1.18 crore.
- Further, non-release of matching State Share of ₹ 5.99 crore till 31 March 2024, which was due for release against the Central Share of ₹ 5.99 crore received on 16 October 2023 also resulted in interest liability of ₹ 0.16 crore.

As a result, in violation of JJM Operational Guidelines, matching State Shares were released in piecemeal rather than lump sum, with delays of up to 538 days, thereby creating an interest liability of ₹ 2.26 crore. Defective planning pushed the State into a vicious cycle of short utilisation of funds, causing it to miss both key prerequisites for subsequent Central Share releases: (a) achieving the required utilisation thresholds, and (b) timely submission of Utilisation Certificates.

However, the DWSS admitted (February 2025) delayed release of matching State Share in comparison to Central Share and also attributed the delay in release of funds to the financial progress.

2.6.1.3 Inadmissible Expenditure

As per Paragraph 7.10 of the Operational Guidelines of JJM, the State Government and SWSM must ensure that inadmissible expenses, such as cost escalation, tender premium, centage charges, land or vehicle purchases,

building construction/renovation, excess expenditures and salaries, are not charged to Central Share. Additionally, no expenditure on O&M viz. payment of electricity bills related to water works, etc. will be made.

Audit of data made available through Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) revealed that during 2019-2024, from the expenditure incurred on works/items in respect of 1,660⁸ schemes, ₹ 1.92 crore were inadmissible, as detailed in **Appendix-2.1**. This expenditure was reported to have been incurred on demonstrating the desirable service level for three months before handing over the scheme to VWSCs (known as Gram Panchayat Water and Sanitation Committees) under the provisions of World Bank Project. The expenditure incurred on Operation and Maintenance of the scheme for three months was as per the provisions of the World Bank Project, which was not applicable to funding under JJM. Thus, the expenditure incurred in violation of the Operational Guidelines of JJM was not admissible.

The Government stated (May 2025) that at the time of launch of JJM, Punjab was already implementing the World Bank-funded project, which permitted expenditure during a three-month trial period prior to the transfer of completed scheme to the Gram Panchayat Water and Sanitation Committees (GPWSC). Subsequently, erstwhile NRDWP was also subsumed into JJM and all works approved under NRDWP were formally integrated into the JJM. Accordingly, the guidelines governing these projects remained applicable.

The response is not acceptable, as the provisions under the World Bank Project and NRDWP were to be complied with using the respective project-specific funds. Since the JJM operational guidelines do not contain any such provision, such expenditure remained inadmissible.

2.6.2 Planning and Monitoring

Under JJM, States were to plan for achieving drinking water security and to provide FHTC to every rural household by 2024. For the effective planning, implementation, monitoring, management, operation and maintenance, every village was reckoned as a unit.

2.6.2.1 Non-Verification of Baseline Data

As per Paragraph 3.5 of Operational Guidelines of JJM, to achieve the objective of JJM, re-verification and firming of Baseline Data of household tap connections by States was required before March 2020 and reporting the same on IMIS of the Department/National Mission.

⁸ 1,079 Single Village and 581 Multi-Village.

Audit observed that the re-verification of Baseline Data, that was crucial for effective planning and preparation of Village Action Plans (VAP), was required to be completed by March 2020. However, the household survey was planned by the State Water Sanitation Mission (SWSM) in December 2020, nine months after the required timeline.

It was further seen that despite having a plan to conduct a survey to gather Baseline Data, the SWSM rather decided in July 2023 not to get it conducted, as the State by then had reported 100 *per cent* FHTC coverage. Baseline data was available as IMIS which was to be reverified as per Operational Guidelines of JJM. Although the reverification was planned nine months after the required timeline, yet the same was not done.

The Government stated (May 2025) that prior to the preparation of estimates, baseline data was re-verified for each new work, along with topographical surveys. These were further validated by the respective GPWSCs.

The response indicated that the Baseline Data remained dated as the information for taking up specific works were only re-verified. Re-verification and firming of Baseline Data of household tap connections was essential for accurate and effective planning and preparation of VAPs, which were foundational to formation of SAP.

2.6.2.2 Non/Delayed Preparation of Action Plans

As per Operational Guidelines of JJM, every village was reckoned as a unit for planning, implementation, monitoring, management, operation and maintenance. To provide FHTC to every rural household, Village Action Plan (VAP) was to be prepared⁹ based on Baseline survey, resource mapping and felt needs of the village community. The VAPs of all villages were to be aggregated in District Action Plans (DAP) and DAPs of all Districts in the State Action Plan (SAP). Further, State was to prepare an Annual Action Plan (AAP) in the month of February each year in consonance with SAP.

Audit noticed that out of 11,977 villages, VAPs of 11,877 villages were prepared by the respective Gram Panchayats by the end of March 2024, but these VAPs:

- were prepared without reverification of Baseline Data;
- were mostly completed after 20 May 2020 i.e., after submission of AAP for the year 2020-21; and

⁹ The VAPs were to be prepared by the Gram Panchayat or its sub-committee i.e., VWSC/Paani Samiti/User Group, etc. with support from ISA, PHED/RWS Department and DWSM.

- were not submitted to the respective District Water & Sanitation Mission (DWSM) for aggregation into DAPs, thereby preventing the formulation of the SAP.

Audit observed a similar situation in the test-checked 21 villages, as none of the VAPs was completed prior to 24 April 2022 (the date of submission of AAP for the year 2022-23) and no VAP was submitted to DWSM.

The Government reiterated (May 2025) that all components of the SAP had been addressed by the Department, either through the 4SAP¹⁰ or through other measures undertaken from time to time.

The reply was not tenable as 4SAP was primarily focused on monitoring SDG indicators and had a completely different structure than the one prescribed under JJM for SAP. However, the Department failed to conduct re-verification of the baseline data to form basis for preparation of VAPs, which were to be aggregated to DAPs and ultimately to SAP.

2.6.2.3 Preparation of Annual Action Plans

As per Paragraph 3.6.1 of Operational Guidelines of JJM, the Annual Action Plan (AAP) of States were to emerge from the approved State Action Plan (SAP) firming up the district-wise physical and financial targets.

As discussed in the previous paragraph, the State Water and Sanitation Mission (SWSM) had not prepared the SAP. As such, the AAPs did not emerge from the SAP, as was envisioned under JJM. Further, these AAPs had inconsistencies with reference to the Baseline Data of households having drinking water facility, as discussed in the succeeding paragraph.

(a) Preparation of incorrect Annual Action Plans

As per Operational Guidelines of JJM, a Village Action Plan (VAP) was to be prepared based on Baseline survey, resource mapping and felt needs to ensure provision of FHTC for all rural households. These VAPs were to be consolidated into DAPs, which were further to be integrated into the SAP. The State would then prepare AAPs each February in alignment with the approved SAP.

Audit noticed that the SWSM prepared AAPs without having prepared the SAP and re-verifying Baseline Data. As a result, AAPs were based on unverified

¹⁰ 4SAP was primarily focused on SDGs and included funding from NRWDP, NABARD, World Bank, and Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) and did not address key JJM-specific activities prescribed for SAP, such as water security plans, human resource requirements, ISAs, IEC activities, water quality laboratories, third-party inspections, and O&M provisions. Further, the 4SAP also lacked the necessary Village, Block and District-wise details, making it an insufficient substitute for the JJM-mandated SAP.

data, leading to inflated projections, which were also got approved from the National Jal Jeevan Mission (NJJM) without validation.

As per Ministry of Jal Shakti, at the launch of JJM, the SWSM identified 34.27 lakh rural households in Punjab, out of which 16.79 lakh already had FHTCs. Therefore, 17.48 lakh households were yet to receive FHTCs under JJM. Based on this, on the proposal of SWSM, for providing 17.48 lakh FHTCs, a Central Share of ₹ 5,129.12 crore was approved, as detailed in **Table 2.1**. However, the SWSM reported achieving of this target by incurring only ₹ 1,710.22 crore, which included Central Share of ₹ 852.37 crore.

Evidently, in the absence of VAPs and Baseline Data re-verification, the SWSM overlooked 11.27 lakh households that had arranged their own drinking water source without any assistance which were initially proposed for coverage under JJM but later incorrectly included in FHTC coverage reports, without actually providing them with piped drinking water from water supply schemes of SWSM leading to preparation of inflated proposals. Therefore, despite estimating the target of 17.48 lakh FHTCs to be covered under JJM during 2019-2024, the SWSM by providing FHTCs to only 5.55 lakh households under JJM reported (April 2023) the State to have 100 *per cent* coverage.

The Government stated (May 2025) that the State had declared 100 *per cent* coverage in accordance with the guidelines, which allowed and recognised private household tap connections as FHTCs. The IMIS portal also accepted the data entry, which ultimately led to the declaration of Har Ghar Jal (HGJ) status. Additionally, it was submitted that prior to the preparation of estimates, baseline data was re-verified for each new work, along with topographical surveys. These were further validated by the respective Gram Panchayat Water and Sanitation Committees (GPWSC).

The reply of Government could be seen in the light of the fact that AAPs prepared were incorrect, which was evident from the fact that the State had achieved the 100 *per cent* coverage status by providing 5.55 lakh FHTCs only, whereas the planned coverage was for 17.48 lakh FHTCs under JJM during 2019-2024.

(b) Delay in submission of Annual Action Plans

Paragraph 7.5.3 of Operational Guidelines of JJM stipulated that every year, States were required to prepare an AAP in the month of February, in consonance with SAP and submit the same online to National Jal Jeevan Mission (NJJM). The AAPs were to be approved by DDWS/NJJM based on consultation with the States in the month of March/April so that release of fund to States could begin from the month of April.

However, GoP submitted all the AAPs with delay during 2019-2024 as detailed in **Table 2.3**.

Table 2.3: Delay in submission of Annual Action Plans

Year	Targeted date of submission	Date of submission of AAP	Date of approval of AAP	Delay in submission* (Days)	Date of release of funds	Delay in release of funds (Days)
2019-20	February of preceding financial year	05-03-2019	28-03-2019	5	28-08-2019	119
2020-21		20-05-2020	24-06-2020	81	Not released	-
2021-22		19-04-2021	02-07-2021	49	01-12-2021	214
2022-23		20-04-2022	14-06-2022	50	Not released	-
2023-24		14-03-2023	20-03-2023	14	10-10-2023	162

Source: Departmental data

*Delay calculated from the last day of February i.e., 28th of February

As is evident from **Table 2.3**, none of the AAPs were submitted within the given timeline during 2019-2024 and the delay ranged from 5 to 81 days. Non-release and release of Central Share from GoI with delay of 119 to 214 days is also evident.

The Government stated (May 2025) that while the operational guidelines advised submission of AAPs in February, the GoI typically issued the AAP templates thereafter. Punjab had consistently submitted AAPs in line with the actual timelines communicated by NJJM. Moreover, the release of funds was linked to utilisation and compliance with documentation, not merely AAP approval dates. This broader context should be considered when evaluating delays.

The supporting documents for revised timelines for submission of AAPs as mentioned in the reply were neither found on the records nor were furnished along with the reply.

2.6.2.4 Short Collection of Community Contribution

The JJM aimed at inculcating a sense of ownership and responsibility among communities towards the community assets created by the Government. To achieve this, Paragraph 6.1.2 of the Operational Guidelines of JJM, mandated communities to contribute¹¹ to the capital cost¹² of in-village piped water supply and source development, at the rate of five *per cent* in hilly, forested, NE and Himalayan areas or villages with over 50 *per cent* SC/ST population, and 10 *per cent* in all other villages. In addition to this, at least 80 *per cent* of households must show willingness and contribute for the scheme to proceed.

Audit noticed that despite these clear guidelines of JJM (December 2019), the DWSS ordered (May 2020) to continue the previous practice (being followed under World Bank funded projects) of collecting contributions at flat rates of

¹¹ Self Help Group (SHG) contributions formed part of the community share.

¹² Capital cost, including expenses for retrofitting to meet JJM standards and developing additional infrastructure such as cattle troughs, washing blocks and rainwater harvesting systems.

₹ 800 per general category household and ₹ 400 per SC household in all villages. These rates were reduced to ₹ 400 and ₹ 200 per general/SC household in such villages with over 50 *per cent* SC population or those located in *Kandi*, *Border*, or *Waterlogged* areas. The amount of community contributions becoming due in the test-checked Districts and collection made under JJM is detailed in **Table 2.4**.

Table 2.4: Community contribution due and recovered

(₹ in crore)

District	Capital Cost	Contribution due as per norms fixed by		Actually Collected	Short collection as per norms fixed by	
		JJM	DWSS		JJM	DWSS
Ludhiana	16.21	1.27	3.31	0.18	1.09	3.13
Pathankot	9.59	0.73	0.27	0.16	0.57	0.11
Sangrur	17.26	1.68	1.80	0.42	1.26	1.38
Tarn Taran	30.14	2.92	1.29	0.25	2.67	1.04
Total	73.20	6.60	6.67	1.01	5.59	5.66

Source: Departmental data

As is evident from **Table 2.4**, the actual amount of community contribution collected by the DWSSMs from the beneficiary communities in the test-checked Districts was short by ₹ 5.59 crore with reference to the rates prescribed under JJM. The collection fell short by ₹ 5.66 crore, as compared to the flat rates fixed by the DWSS as well.

These significant shortfalls not only indicated non-compliance with JJM guidelines but also defeated the very objective of community contribution aimed at inculcating a sense of ownership and responsibility towards the community assets created by the Government.

The Government reiterated (May 2025) that under earlier World Bank projects, community contribution was not mandatory for schemes under ₹10 lakh. With the advent of JJM, contributions were being systematically collected based on fixed State-level norms and the shortfall in contributions was being met through State support.

The Government's response that community contribution was not mandatory under World Bank-funded projects was not in line to the audit observation. Further, the assertion that contributions were being collected in accordance with norms prescribed by the State Government was not factually correct, as there was a shortfall in the collection of community contributions amounting to ₹ 5.66 crore. Funding this shortfall through State support was inconsistent with the applicable guidelines, as it defeated the fundamental objective of fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility among community members towards the assets created under the programme.

2.6.3 Post-operational Management and Sustainability

Effective post-operational management and sustainability are critical for ensuring long-term success of water supply schemes implemented under the JJM. The JJM¹³ emphasised having an Operation and Maintenance (O&M) plan, handing over of commissioned Water Supply Schemes to VWSCs for O&M, taking measures like rainwater harvesting, artificial/borewell recharge and watershed management for source sustainability, community-based water management, technological innovations, and convergence with other programs to achieve the overarching goal of providing FHTCs with reliable and sustainable water supply.

2.6.3.1 Absence of Operation and Maintenance Plan and Non-handing Over of Completed Schemes to VWSCs

Paragraph 5.2 (xvii) of the Operational Guidelines of JJM mandated the Apex Committee to develop an Operation and Maintenance (O&M) strategy, including the establishment of monthly tariffs or user charges, to ensure the financial sustainability of water supply schemes. Additionally, State Governments were required to transfer all water supply schemes to Village Water Sanitation Committee (VWSC) to promote community ownership, empower local communities and ensure long-term water security.

Audit noticed that the Apex Committee had not developed any formal strategy or plan for the O&M of the water supply schemes under JJM. However, out of total 2,173 water supply schemes, only 1,459 (67 per cent) schemes were handed over to the VWSCs as of February 2025. As such, 714 schemes (33 per cent) were yet to be handed over to the VWSCs and were being managed by the Department. Incidentally, the O&M expenditure amounting to ₹ 1.92 crore was denied (February 2025) by the NJJM as the expenditure on O&M for demonstrating the desirable service level for three months before handing over the scheme to VWSCs was not permissible under JJM.

Similarly, in the test-checked four Districts, 35 per cent of the commissioned water supply schemes were yet to be handed over to VWSCs, as detailed in **Table 2.5**.

Table 2.5: Details of water supply schemes not handed over to VWSCs

District	Total schemes	Commissioned schemes	Schemes handed over to VWSCs	Percentage	Schemes yet to be handed over	Percentage
Ludhiana	177	171	73	42.69	98	57.31
Pathankot	45	43	42	97.67	01	2.33
Sangrur	77	71	49	69.01	22	30.99
Tarn Taran	89	88	78	88.64	10	11.36
Total	388	373	242	64.88	131	35.12

Source: Departmental data

¹³ Paragraph 6.1 of the JJM Operational Guidelines.

From **Table 2.5**, it is evident that out of a total of 373 commissioned water supply schemes, only 242 (65 *per cent*) schemes were handed over to the VWSCs, leaving 35 *per cent* of the schemes still being managed by the Department.

The absence of an O&M strategy and non-handing over of commissioned water supply schemes to the VWSCs undermines the financial sustainability and absolves the community's involvement in managing and sustaining the water supply schemes, defeating the key objective of JJM to that extent.

The issue of non-preparation of O&M plan was also discussed as Paragraph 4.5.1 of Union Government (Civil) Report No.15 of 2018 (Performance Audit) of National Rural Drinking Water Programme.

The Government stated (May 2025) that Punjab took early action by notifying Model Byelaws in 2015 and implementing Tripartite Agreements for sustainable O&M. These laid the foundation for community ownership and role clarity. As of March 2025, the O&M Policy had been formally approved by the SWSM. The Government further stated that handing over of scheme to VWSCs was an ongoing process, with 1,548 schemes already transferred. Remaining schemes were either stabilising or pending due to outgoing GP resistance.

The O&M policy was approved by the SWSM in March 2025. The delay in handing over of schemes completed prior to April 2024 reflected lack of timely action by the State in involving community for O&M of the water supply schemes.

2.6.3.2 Persistent Reliance on already Over-exploited Groundwater Resources

The JJM Guidelines stressed upon surface water based multi-village schemes¹⁴ over groundwater-based in places where groundwater was not abundant, especially in the designated dark Blocks and in areas affected by water quality issues.

As discussed in previous paragraphs, groundwater extraction in Punjab was not only maximum among all the States of India but was also significantly higher compared to neighboring States. Out of 23 Districts of Punjab, as far as groundwater extraction was concerned, only two Districts (nine *per cent*) were safe, whereas, 18 Districts were over-exploited (78 *per cent*), two were critical (nine *per cent*), and one was semi-critical (four *per cent*).

The source-wise and District-wise water supply schemes were, as detailed in **Table 2.6**.

¹⁴ A ground water/surface-water based scheme that caters to multiple villages.

Table 2.6: Detail of water supply schemes, source-wise and District-wise

Sr. No.	Category	District	Percentage of over-exploitation ¹⁵	Number of Households	Source of water supply schemes			
					Groundwater + Surface	Groundwater and Bulk Water-	Surface	
1.	Over-exploited	Sangrur	313.41	1,70,951	0	117	0	
2.		Malerkotla	302.39	49,881	0	88	0	
3.		Jalandhar	263.60	2,24,197	0	128	0	
4.		Kapurthala	237.40	1,11,598	0	79	0	
5.		Moga	237.22	1,44,042	0	71	80	
6.		Barnala	223.59	74,569	0	50	0	
7.		Ludhiana	221.04	3,25,877	0	247	0	
8.		Fatehgarh Sahib	215.61	78,475	0	63	0	
9.		Patiala	214.72	2,23,973	0	101	0	
10.		Tarn Taran	213.98	1,67,820	0	80	1	
			Sub Total		15,71,383	0	1,024	81
11.			Amritsar	178.11	2,13,512	0	61	3
12.			Gurdaspur	141.99	2,48,742	0	94	1
13.			Ferozepur	131.89	1,27,014	2	140	1
14.			SAS Nagar	130.00	82,024	0	35	0
15.			Faridkot	128.80	78,408	4	12	38
16.			SBS Nagar	123.24	1,10,148	0	26	0
17.			Hoshiarpur	117.58	2,73,829	0	96	1
18.		Bathinda	105.00	1,58,415	8	7	35	
19.	Critical	Mansa	98.94	1,08,594	7	5	35	
20.		Rupnagar	98.56	1,04,819	0	69	1	
21.	Semi-Critical	Fazilka	76.21	1,41,539	7	36	28	
22.	Safe	Pathankot	51.47	82,592	0	61	0	
23.		Sri Muktsar Sahib	24.13	1,25,789	1	0	46	
Total				34,26,808	29	1,666	270	

Source: Departmental data

- Audit noticed that despite 78 per cent of the Districts already facing over-exploited groundwater levels, 90 per cent of the rural water supply schemes (1,495 out of 1,666 groundwater schemes) taken up under JJM in these over-exploited Districts relied on groundwater sources.
- Of these groundwater-based rural water supply schemes, 61 per cent (1,024 out of 1,666 groundwater schemes) served the most over-exploited 10 Districts with above 200 per cent extraction levels, though these covered only 46 per cent of the households.
- Another 28 per cent of groundwater-based schemes (471 out of 1,666) catered to 38 per cent of the households in Districts with extraction levels

¹⁵ Above 100 per cent-Over Exploited, ranging 90 to 100 per cent-Critical, ranging 70 to 90 per cent-Semi-critical and less than 70 percent-Safe.

between 100 *per cent* and 199 *per cent*. The remaining 10 *per cent* groundwater-based schemes served 16 *per cent* of households in critical, semi-critical and safe Districts.

Thus, the SWSM, in departure from the Vision/Mission of JJM and knowing about the already over-exploited groundwater resources in the State, proceeded with planning groundwater-based schemes under JJM. This alarming level of over-exploitation of groundwater not only threatens the long-term viability of water supplies but also undermines the Mission's vision of ensuring water security.

The Government stated (May 2025) that the total annual groundwater extraction for domestic use is 1.05 billion cubic meters (bcm), which is less than the total annual groundwater allocation for domestic use, estimated at 1.08 bcm. Therefore, the issue of over-exploitation is not attributable to the extraction of groundwater for drinking purposes, but rather to excessive extraction for intensive agricultural activities. Converting groundwater-based schemes to surface water schemes will not address the issue of over-exploitation; instead, it will lead to increased capital investment, higher operational costs and greater manpower requirements.

The fact remains that though groundwater sources were over-exploited in the State, the water supply schemes planned under JJM remained primarily based on groundwater.

2.6.3.3 Non-implementation of Measures for Source Sustainability

JJM aimed at source sustainability to ensure that water supply schemes function throughout its full design period. To achieve source sustainability, the Operational Guidelines of JJM suggest measures like rainwater harvesting, artificial recharge, drinking water source augmentation and water treatment (for quality-affected sources). The DAPs and SAP also required inclusion of borewell recharge structures as source sustainability measure in cost estimates for groundwater-based village water supply plans.

Audit noticed that in all the test-checked 21 villages, groundwater was adopted as the only source for supply of drinking water. Though the Village Action Plans (VAP) were prepared with a delay, the status of inclusion of measures to make the water source sustainable for the designed life of the water supply schemes were, as detailed in **Table 2.7**.

Table 2.7: Status of measures proposed for source sustainability

Sr. No.	District (Percentage extraction) (Schemes)	Village	SVS/MVS	Source augmentation	Sustainability measures		Contamination 2019-2024	Water treatment	Solar powered pumping system	CGWB ¹⁶ map used	HGM ¹⁷ map used
					Borewell recharge	Rainwater harvesting					
1.	Pathankot (51.47) (61)	Dibku	MVS	No	No	No		No	No	No	No
2.		Napwal	MVS	No	Yes	No	HM	No	No	No	No
3.		Jakror	SVS	Yes	No	No		No	No	Yes	Yes
4.		Kuther	SVS	Yes	Yes	No		No	No	No	No
5.	Tarn Taran (213.98) (81)	Wariah	SVS	No	No	No	A	No	No	No	No
6.		Raniwala	SVS	No	No	No		No	No	No	No
7.		Ubhoke	SVS	No	No	No		No	No	No	No
8.		Bangla Rai	MVS	No	No	No	A	No	No	No	No
9.	Sangrur (313.41) (117)	Rampur Gujran	SVS	No	No	No	F	No	No	No	No
10.		Chathe Gobindpura	SVS	No	No	No		No	No	No	No
11.		Chhajli	SVS	Yes	No	No		No	No	No	No
12.		Ghasiwala	SVS	No	No	No		No	No	No	No
13.	Ludhiana (221.04) (247)	Sasrali	SVS	No	No	No		No	No	No	No
14.		Swaddi Khurd	MVS	No	No	No		No	No	No	No
15.		Khursaidpur	MVS	No	No	No		No	No	No	No
16.		Narangwal	SVS	No	No	No	HM	No	No	No	No
17.		Nangal Kalan	SVS	No	No	No		No	No	No	No
18.		Gadowal	SVS	No	No	No		No	No	No	No
19.		Chak Kalan	SVS	No	No	No		No	No	No	No
20.		Sadarpura	SVS	No	No	No		No	No	No	No
21.		Kailey	SVS	No	No	No		No	No	No	No
	506	HM-Heavy Metals; A-Arsenic; F-Fluoride									

Source: Departmental data

- Although all the 21 test-checked water supply schemes relied on groundwater, except for Pathankot all other three test-checked Districts had above 200 per cent extraction levels. Still 88 per cent (445 out of 506) of the rural drinking water supply schemes relied upon already over-exploited groundwater source.
- Though the groundwater source in Pathankot District was falling in the safe category with 51.47 per cent extraction, yet among the test-checked Districts, it was the only district to take most of the source sustainability measures.
- Source augmentation was planned in only three (14 per cent) of the test-checked 21 villages. This included Pathankot District, where, despite it being in the safe zone, two out of four test-checked villages had planned for source augmentation.

¹⁶ Central Ground Water Board.

¹⁷ Hydro-Geo-Morphological.

- Similarly, VAPs of only two (10 *per cent*) of the test-checked villages had provision of borewell recharge structure and that too in Pathankot District only, despite it being a safe district as far as groundwater extraction was concerned.
- The test-checked villages of Sangrur District, despite having maximum extraction level of 313.41 *per cent* in the State, had not planned for any sustainability measures for the source of drinking water to ensure longevity of the rural drinking water supply schemes. Similar trends of having no plans for sustainability measures were seen in Ludhiana and Tarn Taran where extraction levels were 221.04 and 213.98 *per cent*, respectively.
- None of the villages had planned for rainwater harvesting to ensure the sustainability of their water sources, as prescribed by the JJM guidelines.
- The DWSS reported heavy metals in village Napwal (Pathankot) and Narangwal (Ludhiana); Arsenic in Wariah (Pathankot) and Bagla Rai (Tarn Taran) and Fluoride in Rampur Gujran (Sangrur) during 2019-2024, whereas water treatment was planned for only one scheme (five *per cent*) at Kuther (Pathankot), where incidentally contamination was not reported.

Dependence on already over-exploited groundwater for drinking water supply schemes, with negligible source sustainable measures on the plan, not only posed a direct threat to long-term water sustainability but also undermines the Mission's objective of ensuring water security.

The Government while admitting (May 2025) stated that the observation regarding non-inclusion of sustainability measures is accepted in part. While some village schemes may lack formal recharge structures, the Department has prioritised surface water schemes in over-exploited zones. Moreover, the Department of Water Resources is the nodal agency for implementing rainwater harvesting and recharge programs under the 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain' initiative. DWSS complements these efforts through community education and planning coordination. Contrary to the reply, fewer than 12 *per cent* of schemes in over-exploited zones were found to have relied on surface water as the drinking-water source (Table 2.6).

2.6.3.4 Provision of Higher Service Level of Drinking Water

As per Paragraph 6.1 of the Operational Guidelines of JJM, the service level of potable drinking water supply should be at least 55 litres per capita per day (lpcd). The Guidelines further state that the States may enhance the same to higher level depending on availability of drinking water sources for which additional financial resources that may be required, will be met by the State Government or local community or donors.

Audit observed that the SWSM without having any water budget and the water security plan, continued to provide 70 lpcd under JJM through all surface and

groundwater schemes, in accordance with the Punjab State Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Policy 2014. Since the State provided higher service level of 70 lpcd against service level of 55 lpcd admissible for water supply schemes taken under JJM, the Central Share apportioned as ₹ 1,032.24 crore was reduced to ₹ 913.28 crore (January 2024), as detailed in **Table 2.8**.

Table 2.8: Details of cost difference due to service level exceeding 55 lpcd

(₹ in crore)

	Total schemes	Total Capital Cost as per 70 lpcd	Community Contribution	GOI Share as per 70 lpcd	Total Capital Cost as per 55 lpcd	Community Contribution required as per 55 lpcd	GOI share as per 55 lpcd (D-E)/2	Difference (C-F)
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G
MVS Completed	369	48.51	2.47	23.04	46.39	2.42	21.99	1.04
MVS Ongoing	287	1,696.16	28.15	834.00	1,480.37	26.45	726.96	107.04
SVS Completed	745	116.06	6.24	54.94	110.69	6.13	52.29	2.66
SVS Ongoing	564	252.65	12.19	120.26	235.71	11.64	112.03	8.23
Total	1,965	2,113.38	49.05	1,032.24	1,873.16	46.64	913.28	118.97

Source: Departmental data

Thus, the State's action of provisioning 70 lpcd without assessing availability of drinking water sources, especially when the State is already topping the list of States in over-exploiting the groundwater, which is the source of drinking water in over 90 per cent of the water supply schemes in Punjab, led to extra financial burden of ₹ 118.97 crore as 70 lpcd drinking water was provided by the State against 55 lpcd permissible under JJM.

The Government reiterated (May 2025) that the linkage between higher lpcd (70) and groundwater over-extraction was not justified. Domestic consumption accounts for only 2–4 per cent of Punjab's groundwater usage, well within permissible norms. The Water Policy of Punjab (2014), approved by the State Cabinet, predates JJM and provides for 70 lpcd. Further, under the national 'Viksit Bharat' vision, a service level of 135 lpcd is envisaged by 2047. The matter of ₹ 118.97 crore was being taken up at appropriate forums for consideration.

Reply could be seen in the context that request (May 2024) was sent by GoP for differential cost of ₹ 118.97 crore spent on provisioning higher service level of 70 lpcd. The request was rejected by the NJJM.

2.6.3.5 Non-use of Solar Power for Operation of Schemes

Paragraph 6.1 of Operational Guidelines of JJM advocated conjunctive use of solar power-based pumping to reduce rural water supply energy costs.

However, Audit noticed that none out of the 506 water supply schemes in the test-checked four Districts, as detailed in **Table 2.7**, were equipped for conjunctive use of solar power. The DWSM Pathankot reported (October 2024) to have proposed 17 schemes with solar power in *Kandi* and hilly area which were yet to be approved.

The Government reiterated (May 2025) to have noted the observation. Further, it was stated that the Department had already proposed 17 solar-powered schemes in Pathankot's hilly regions, which were awaiting approval. Further rollout was planned in other suitable regions based on feasibility and cost-benefit analyses.

2.6.3.6 Non-integration of Advanced Technologies

Paragraph 8.4 of Operational Guidelines of JJM prescribed utilisation of advanced technologies like Hydro-Geo-Morphological (HGM)¹⁸ and GIS mapping for identification of existing water sources; utilising digital 3D contour maps to identify gaps in village water supply infrastructure; use of Project Management Software for tracking implementation; Internet of Things (IoT) for capturing and transmitting the data using mobile networks for analysis; Supervisory Control and Data Access (SCADA) Systems in Multi-Village Schemes (MVS) for monitoring pressure, quality, the flow rate and distribution networks; Sensors for monitoring water level, discharge, water quality, automatic motor operation; data logger for capturing the data; and use of Real-Time Dashboards for constant monitoring of the household tap functionality.

In four test-checked Districts, 506 water supply schemes were taken up under JJM during 2019-2024, as detailed in **Table 2.9**.

Table 2.9: Detail of water supply schemes

District	Groundwater based	Surface water based	Surface & Groundwater based	Total schemes undertaken
Ludhiana	247	0	0	247
Pathankot	61	0	0	61
Sangrur	117	0	0	117
Tarn Taran	80	1	0	81
Total	505	1	0	506

Source: Departmental data

Audit noticed that despite implementing 506 water supply schemes, as detailed in **Table 2.7**, except for Pathankot, the advanced technologies such as HGM, GIS and digital 3D maps, IoT, Sensors and SCADA Systems were not found to have been integrated for enhanced water resource management, optimised infrastructure planning, and long-term sustainability of drinking water supply systems. The DWSM, Pathankot reported (October 2024) to have proposed an IoT-based project consisting of 11 schemes covering 29 villages in Block Bamial. The approval and funds for implementation of this project were yet to come (February 2025).

¹⁸ HGM maps developed by National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) to identify potential groundwater sources and recharge locations.

Thus, inadequate use of technology under JJM undermined its goals of sustainable and efficient rural water supply management.

The Government stated (May 2025) that Punjab had adopted SCADA in 16 large surface water schemes and was implementing IoT in 346 multi-village schemes. HGM and GIS tools had been utilised during planning stages. Advanced technologies were being incrementally rolled out across schemes, with due consideration to viability and regional requirements. However, use of the mandated advanced technologies were not found in any of the schemes of test-checked districts.

2.6.3.7 Achievement of Sustainable Development Goal-6

In pursuit of SDG-6, DWSS set a target (April 2019) to increase functional household tap connections (FHTC) with piped water supply from 17.59 lakh in 2019 to all the 33.16 lakh households by March 2021. Against these targets, DWSS reported to have achieved this target by the end of March 2023, as detailed in **Table 2.10**.

Table 2.10: Detail of achievement against indicators for SDG-6

Under SDG-6	As on	Baseline value		2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
		Households	FHTCs				
Indicator (Target)	April 2019	33,15,890	17,59,212	6,83,094	8,73,584	-	-
Achievement	March 2023	34,25,723	17,59,212	76,519	8,31,414	8,24,625	12,602

Source: Departmental data

Upon comparing the ‘Progress Report’¹⁹ with the ‘Status Report’²⁰ on verification of beneficiary provided with tap water supply’, Audit noticed that of the 34.27 lakh households as of April 2024, 11.27 lakh households who managed drinking water from their own source, were yet to be covered (February 2025) with piped water supply by the Government.

The Government reiterated (May 2025) that all the habitations of the State had been provided with basic water supply infrastructure except some scattered households. However, these HHs had their own source of water supply. As per JJM operational guidelines, the potable water of private sources had been considered as FHTC. Efforts were being made to provide them tap connections by augmenting existing water supply schemes.

The reply was not tenable as 11.27 lakh households were yet to be covered with piped water supply by the Government.

¹⁹ ‘Progress Report’ is prepared on indicators by the DWSS for submission to the Planning Department.

²⁰ ‘Status Report’ is the data available on IMIS.

2.6.3.8 Lack of Convergence for Skill Development

The JJM guidelines state that convergence was the key for sourcing funds from different programmes and as per Paragraph 9.4 of these guidelines, for achieving universal FHTC coverage, high-quality human resources were required at the district and village levels for which convergence with Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Kendra (PMKVK), operational in each district, was to be worked out for skill development of plumbers, masons, electricians, motor mechanics, etc.

Audit noticed that the SWSM did not converge with the PMKVK, as envisaged in the JJM guidelines. Further, the Department signed an MoU with Punjab Skill Development Mission (PSDM) in October 2021, but no trainings were imparted. The trainings only began in the quarter July-September 2023 after the SWSM partnered with Directorate of Technical Education & Industrial Training (DTE&IT). Still, against the plan of training 8,118 workers, only 5,162 workers were imparted training as of September 2023 and that too at an expenditure of ₹ 1.56 crore met from JJM support activity funds. The NJJM advised (September 2023) the SWSM to incur expenditure on trainings for skill development from funds provided by the 15th Finance Commission (15th FC).

Audit of test-checked Districts disclosed that no trainings in convergence with PMKVK were conducted to develop skills of plumbers, masons, electricians, motor mechanics, etc.

Since these skill development trainings in convergence with PMKVK were aimed at creating a high-quality human resources to become rural entrepreneurs in the water supply sector to meet the demands for technical service and ongoing O&M of the completed water supply schemes, the objective of JJM remained unachieved.

The Government reiterated (May 2025) that the training efforts had been scaled up post-pandemic through convergence with DTE&IT. The 'Nal Jal Mitra' program was being rolled out and future training would be funded under 15th FC allocations. The earlier MoU with PSDM laid the groundwork. Progress was contingent upon approval and release of funds.

2.6.4 Water Quality Monitoring and Surveillance

Water Quality Monitoring and Surveillance was a crucial aspect of JJM, ensuring that rural households receive safe and potable water that meets prescribed health standards. This involved systematic testing, continuous monitoring, and vigilant oversight at the water source, within the piped distribution network and at the delivery point to prevent contamination and to promptly address any water quality issues.

Every Gram Panchayat or its designated sub-committee²¹ was mandated to conduct presumptive tests from sources and FHTCs using Field Test Kits (FTK) to detect contamination at the local level and report contamination to the nearest water quality testing laboratory available at Block, Sub-Division, District and State level for confirmation. Each level of Laboratory was given annual testing targets with a view to test cent *per cent* sources of drinking water, including the private ones. This monitoring system was envisioned to identify the sources of waterborne disease outbreaks in a timely manner, allowing for immediate corrective action to safeguard public health. A detailed overview of rural drinking water quality status in Punjab is discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

2.6.4.1 Contamination of Drinking Water

As per Paragraph 3.2 of Drinking Water Quality Monitoring & Surveillance Framework (DWQMS) issued under Jal Jeevan Mission, Water quality refers to physical, chemical, biological and radiological characteristics of water. The safe drinking water quality standards (IS 10500:2012), specified by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), have two limits *viz.* ‘acceptable limits’ and ‘permissible limits in the absence of an alternate source’. If any parameter exceeds permissible limits, an investigation should be conducted. Where appropriate, remedial measures were to be implemented, or restrictions were to be placed on the use of the water supply for drinking until the water quality meets acceptable limits.

The annual Water Quality Report published by the Department of Water Supply & Sanitation, Punjab (DWSS) revealed that during 2019-2024, habitations affected by contaminants in rural drinking water supply reduced from 1,634 to 1,023, as detailed in **Table 2.11**.

Table 2.11: Habitations affected by contaminants in drinking water

Habitations affected by heavy metals									
Year	Arsenic	Nitrate	Iron	Selenium	Mercury	Mixed parameters including heavy metal ²²	Fluoride (1.5 ppm relaxation)	Uranium (60 ppb relaxation)	Grand Total
2019-20	815	69	45	0	0	134	319	252	1,634
2020-21	803	56	21	74	41	77	282	171	1,525
2021-22	785	30	14	49	12	62	282	147	1,381
2022-23	681	24	0	27	0	34	227	121	1,114
2023-24	593	20	0	19	0	22	195	174	1,023

Source: Annual Water Quality Report published by DWSS, Punjab

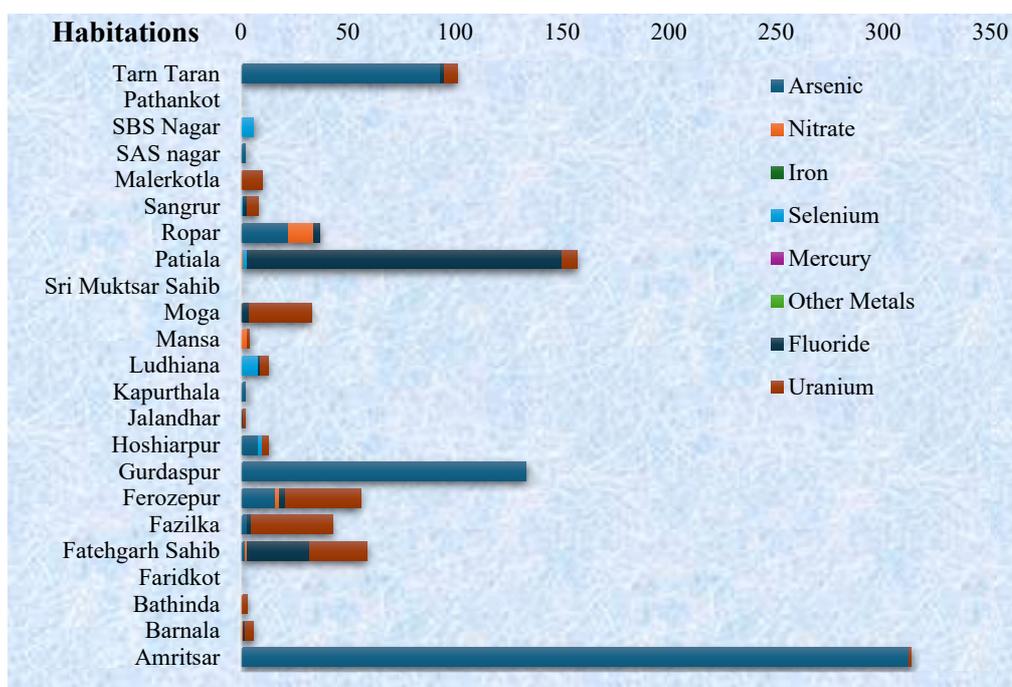
Between 2019 and 2024, water quality data analysis revealed significant contamination on various parameters in Punjab. Details given in **Table 2.11**,

²¹ Such as the Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC), Paani Samiti, or User Group.

²² Cadmium, Chromium, Aluminium, Nickel and Lead.

when read in conjunction with District-wise status given in **Appendix-2.2** shows that Arsenic levels exceeded the safe limit of 0.01 PPM in 815 to 593 habitations, with Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Tarn Taran being the worst affected. Nitrate contamination (69 to 20 habitations) surpassed the 45 PPM limit, particularly in Ferozepur, Ludhiana and Roopnagar. Iron contamination (45 to 14 habitations) exceeded 1.0 PPM, with Amritsar, Ferozepur and Roopnagar being the most impacted. Other metal contamination (134 to 22 habitations) surpassed limits, affecting Fazilka and Patiala the most. Fluoride levels exceeded safe limits (319 to 195 habitations), with Patiala and Fatehgarh Sahib being the worst affected. Uranium contamination (252 to 174 habitations) was detected in Fazilka, Ferozepur and Moga, surpassing the BIS and Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) safety limits. Notably, uranium data for 2023-24 was unavailable. The latest status of presence of contaminants across the Districts of Punjab as on 31 March 2024 was, as exhibited in the **Chart 2.1**.

Chart 2.1: Contaminants in drinking water in number habitations across Districts of Punjab



The Government stated (February/May 2025) that DWSS, committed to provide safe drinking water to all the rural habitations, conducted testing of water sources in NABL-accredited labs as per ISO 10500:2012 and got the results published in the annual report. The Government also stated that water quality being dynamic, DWSS took short-term solutions for immediate relief and long-term strategies for sustainability. These included access to potable water from nearby villages with potable sources/mitigation plants, availability of individual RO units with consumers, water supply through tankers where necessary (May 2025).

The measures taken by DWSS were not found to be adequate, as 8,16,404 households remained affected during the period April 2019 to March 2024.

2.6.4.2 Supply of Water from Contaminated Water source

The JJM operational guidelines outline a strategic approach for achieving JJM objectives. Paragraph 3.5 (x) *inter alia* prescribed that for villages with water quality issues and non-availability of suitable surface water sources in nearby areas, it may be more appropriate to transfer bulk water from long distance. In water quality-affected habitations, especially with Arsenic and Fluoride contaminants, potable water must be ensured on priority. However, SWSM was also to prioritise such areas for providing potable water through FHTC to every rural household by March 2021.

Audit observed that despite having first-hand knowledge of quality issues with the water source identified by the SWSM for supplying piped water to 1,634 habitations, water supply schemes were based on such contaminated water sources in violation of the objectives of JJM. Audit further observed that though the mitigation measures were taken, 1,114 habitations were being supplied with contaminated water as of April 2023 as detailed in **Table 2.12**.

Table 2.12: Details of habitations affected by contamination

Type of contamination	Habitations affected as on 1 st April of				Habitations where contamination mitigated during			
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Arsenic	815	803	785	681	199	18	148	642
Nitrate	69	56	30	24	9	26	12	9
Iron	45	21	14	0	11	7	10	0
Selenium	0	74	49	27	0	0	0	18
Mercury	0	41	12	0	0	0	0	0
Others Heavy Metals	134	77	62	34	24	93	136	25
Fluoride	319	282	282	227	105	0	62	223
Uranium	252	171	147	121	129	0	0	96
Total	1,634	1,525	1,381	1,114	477	144	368	1,013

Source: Annual Water Quality Report published by DWSS, Punjab

As shown in **Table 2.12**, piped water was being supplied to 815 habitations from an Arsenic-affected water source as of April 2020. Similarly, 319 habitations were receiving Fluoride-contaminated piped water. Although the number of habitations receiving contaminated water decreased over four years from 2020 to 2024, there were 101 (1,114-1,013) habitations, that were still being supplied with contaminated piped water.

Despite clear directives for the SWSM to prioritise these areas and ensure the provision of potable water through FHTCs to every rural household by

March 2024, as many as 101 habitations were still receiving contaminated water through FHTCs as of April 2024.

The Government while intimating (May 2025) that corrective measures were being taken, agreed that mitigating measures for all affected habitations were yet to be taken. However, the Government did not specify the reasons for i) identifying a water source to supply piped water to rural habitations that were contaminated with Arsenic, Fluoride, etc. and ii) non-prioritising such contaminated areas for providing potable water through FHTC to every rural household by March 2021.

2.6.4.3 Shortage of Water Quality Testing Infrastructure

As per Paragraph 6 of DWQMF, the water quality testing network included Laboratories at State, Sub-Divisional, District and Block-Level and Mobile Laboratories based on necessity.

(a) Shortage of Laboratories at Block Level

As per Paragraph 4.3 (iv) of DWQMF, water quality testing laboratories were essential for effective monitoring and surveillance. States were to establish a well-equipped laboratory network at all levels, ensuring at least one Block-level laboratory per Block, with additional laboratories for larger Blocks as needed.

Audit observed that as on 31 March 2024, there was one State Laboratory, 17 District Laboratories²³, six Regional Laboratories²⁴, seven Block Laboratories²⁵ and two Mobile Laboratories in the State. There was 95 per cent shortage of Block Laboratories as against 153 Blocks, there were only seven Block Level Laboratories.

The Government stated (May 2025) that the existing network of State, District, Regional, Block and Mobile Laboratories met testing mandates, and setting up more Block-Level Laboratories would cause unnecessary costs without added benefits. The reply was not satisfactory, as against the target of testing 12,137 water sources, on an average 35 per cent (4,251) water sources remained untested during 2022-2024. Further, in the absence of Block Level Laboratories, the onus of testing shifted to District Level Laboratories whereas these District Level Laboratories across Punjab were consistently unable to meet their own water testing targets, with significant shortages²⁶ each year viz. 54,070 tests in 2021-22, 44,384 in 2022-23 and 35,893 in 2023-24 indicating inadequate testing infrastructure.

²³ Bathinda, Barnala, Faridkot, Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka, Ferozepur, Gurdaspur, Jalandhar, Kapurthala, Ludhiana, Malerkotla, Mansa, Pathankot, Nawanshahar, Roopnagar, Sri Muktsar Sahib and Tarn Taran.

²⁴ Amritsar, SAS Nagar, Sangrur, Moga, Hoshiarpur and Patiala.

²⁵ Anandpur Sahib-Roopnagar, Abohar (Ferozepur Distt.), Batala, Garhshankar (Hoshiarpur Distt.), Khanna (Ludhiana Distt.), Malout (Sri Muktsar Sahib Distt.), Talwara (Hoshiarpur Distt.).

²⁶ Against target of 69,000 tests per year.

The Government further stated (May 2025) that the testing in DWSS laboratories had improved over the years 2022-23 and 2023-24 and that additional private/other departmental testing data was maintained in the in-house LIMS but not reflected on the WQMIS portal. This reply may be seen in the light of shortage in presumptive and advance water quality testing, as discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

(b) Shortage of Human Resource

As per Paragraph 5.2 of DWQMS framework, staff required for various levels of laboratories. Status of human resources required and Men-in-Position in the State, Sub-Divisional, District, Block Level Laboratories and Mobile Laboratories was as detailed in **Table 2.13**.

Table 2.13: Status of human resource in laboratories at various levels

Sr. No.	Post	State				Regional				District				Block*				Mobile			
		REQ	SAN	MIP	VAC	REQ	SAN	MIP	VAC	REQ	SAN	MIP	VAC	REQ	SAN	MIP	VAC	REQ	SAN	MIP	VAC
1.	Chief Chemist/ Chief Water Analyst	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2.	Sr. Chemist/ Sr. WA/Sr. Microbiologist	1	1	1	0	6	6	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3.	Chemist/WA	2	3	3	-1	12	13	9	3	23	0	0	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4.	Microbiologist/Bacteriologist	1	1	1	0	6	6	6	0	23	0	0	23	153	0	0	153	0	0	0	0
5.	Lab Assistant	3	3	1	2	18	8	4	14	46	0	1	45	153	0	0	153	0	0	0	0
6.	DEO	2	0	0	2	12	6	6	6	23	0	0	23	153	0	0	153	0	0	0	0
7.	Lab Attendant	2	0	0	2	12	0	0	12	23	0	0	23	153	0	0	153	0	0	0	0
8.	Field Assistant/MTS/driver	2	4	3	-1	12	12	10	2	46	16	14	32	153	4	6	147	2	2	0	2
9.	Jr. Chemist/Microbiologist	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-1	0	17	16	-16	153	7	7	146	1	1	0	1
Total		14	13	9	5	78	51	40	38	184	33	31	153	918	11	13	905	3	3	0	3

Source: Data provided by DWSS, Punjab

*Keeping in view 153 blocks that existed in the State as on 31 March 2024.

REQ=Required, SAN=Sanctioned, MIP=Men-in-position, VAC=Vacancy, WA=Water Analyst

The table shows shortage of human resources at District and Block levels, with many posts remaining vacant, while overstaffing in some positions indicates inefficient resource allocation as detailed below:

- Even the key post of one Chief Chemist/Chief Water Analyst required at the State level was vacant.
- There was shortage of two Senior Chemist/Senior WA/Senior Microbiologist (33 per cent) at Regional Level.
- In the post of Chemist/WA, there was vacancy of 25 per cent at Regional Level, as against the requirement of 12, only 9 posts of Chemist/WA were filled. At District Level, there was cent per cent shortage of 23 Chemists/WAs, as none of the posts were filled. One Chemist was posted in excess of the requirement at State level.

- Though the Microbiologist/Bacteriologist posts were fully filled at the State and Regional Levels, there was critical *per cent* shortage at District and Block levels (23 and 153 respectively).
- Shortage of Lab Assistants existed at all levels, rather it kept on increasing from top to bottom *viz.* State: 2 (66 *per cent*); Regional: 14 (78 *per cent*); District: 45 (98 *per cent*); and Block: 153 (100 *per cent*).
- The Data Entry Operators (DEO) were fully filled at the State level, however, there was shortage of 50 *per cent* at Regional (6), *per cent per cent* at District (23) and Block levels (153).
- Lab Attendants were not found recruited across all levels, thereby leaving a *per cent per cent* vacancy against requirement (two at State, 12 at Regional, 23 at District and 153 at Block levels).
- The post of Junior Chemist/Microbiologist were short by 95 *per cent* at Block level, as there existed vacancy of 146 against the requirement of 153.
- Mobile Laboratories were completely non-operational as against the requirement of two posts of Field Assistant/MTS/Drivers and one post of Junior Chemist/Microbiologist, none were filled.

Thus, there is an urgent need to address shortage of human resources, especially at Block and District levels, to ensure efficient functioning of laboratories and equitable service delivery.

The SWSM stated (September 2024) that a gap assessment had already been completed, and ensured to fill the vacant posts shortly, as the process of filling vacancies was underway. The Government reiterated the same in February 2025, indicating that despite having acknowledged the need for filling the vacancies and requirement of human resource as per DWQMS, still the process to fill the vacant posts was underway. The Government while intimating (May 2025) that DWQMS staffing norms were indicative and not binding, once again reiterated that gap assessment was being conducted regularly and the recruitment undertaken on functional needs. The reply was not tenable as critical shortage of staff at Block and District level required urgent intervention, especially in the light of significant shortage in water quality testing as discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

2.6.4.4 Inadequate Water Quality Testing

As per DWQMS, 100 *per cent* testing of all drinking water sources, including private ones at village level using Field Test Kits (FTK) and bacteriological (H2S) vials and wide dissemination of reports was mandatory in addition to reporting of positive samples. Further, the District Water Testing Laboratories were to conduct 3,000 tests annually, including randomly selected and positive

cases reported by Block Level Laboratories, forward confirmed positive cases to the State Laboratory, and monitor water quality hotspots.

(i) Shortfall in presumptive water quality testing at village level

As per Paragraph 4.3(v)(c) of the DWQMF, the VWSC was responsible for presumptive water quality testing using FTKs and bacteriological (H2S) vials, reporting results to the RWS/PHE Department, ensuring household water quality through regular testing, and monitoring all drinking water sources, including private ones.

Audit observed that during the period 2021-2024, there was shortfall in coverage of villages for water quality testing using Field Test Kits as shown in **Table 2.14**.

Table 2.14 Status of water quality testing done in villages using FTKs

Sr. No.	Year	Total Villages	Villages where testing was done using FTK	Shortfall	Shortfall percentage
1.	2021-22	11,972	2,704	9,268	77
2.	2022-23	11,827	10,762	1,065	9
3.	2023-24	11,863	11,078	785	7

Source: Data extracted from IMIS (DWSS, Punjab)

As can be seen from **Table 2.14**, there was significant improvement in water quality testing using FTKs, yet as many as 785 villages were being provided piped water without conducting presumptive water quality testing during 2023-24. Audit further noticed that:

- A total of 576 villages (73 per cent) were located in Ferozepur District, where water sources were found to contain hazardous levels of heavy metals, including Arsenic, Uranium, Fluoride and Nitrate.
- In Gurdaspur District, 42 villages were not covered despite having Arsenic contamination in water sources, and 38 villages in Mansa District where water sources were contaminated with Nitrate were also left untested respectively.

In May 2025, the Government reported that during 2024-25, 99.91 per cent of villages across all districts of Punjab had been covered through FTK testing. However, the reasons for persistent shortages (ranging from 7 to 77 per cent) during 2021-22 to 2023-24 were not provided.

(ii) Shortfall in advance water quality testing

The Senior Advisor (Water Quality) directed (November 2021) the collection of samples from 100 per cent DWSS sources to test heavy metals, 11 basic chemical parameters and bacteriological contamination.

Audit noticed that despite categorical instructions, there was significant shortfall in testing the sources of water across Punjab during 2022-23 and 2023-24, as detailed in **Table 2.15**, due to shortage of infrastructure and human resources.

Table 2.15: Status of testing the water quality at source across the State

Year	No. of sources	Sources tested	Shortfall	Percentage shortfall
2022-23	12,137	6,218	5,919	48.76
2023-24	12,137	9,554	2,583	21.28

Source: Data extracted from IMIS (DWSS, Punjab)

The Government assured (February 2025) compliance of audit observations and intimated that the requisite directions were issued in October 2024 to all the field laboratories to ensure adherence to the monitoring protocols. The Government further intimated (May 2025) that above data pertained to tubewells, whereas testing was being monitored on a source-wise and village-wise basis, according to which, there was minimal shortage during 2022-23 and 2023-24. The reply was not fully justified, as 85 per cent of the water supply schemes under JJM in Punjab relied on groundwater sources (**Table 2.6**), all of which were required to be tested for heavy metals, 11 basic chemical parameters and bacteriological contamination.

(iii) Shortfall in testing water samples

As per Paragraph 5.1.3.2 (xxv) of DWQMS (October 2021), District Water Testing Laboratories were required to conduct a minimum of 3,000 tests annually (at the rate of 250 water sources/samples per month), covering randomly selected sources including the referred samples declared positive by Block Level Laboratories. These District Level Laboratories were required to forward confirmed positive cases to the State laboratory. These District Water Testing Laboratories were also required to monitor and visit water quality hotspots regularly.

The status of testing of drinking water samples in four test-checked Districts during 2021-2024 was, as shown in the **Table 2.16**.

Table 2.16: Status of testing of drinking water samples in test-checked Districts

District	Ludhiana				Tarn Taran				Sangrur				Pathankot			
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Total	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Total	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Total	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Total
Target	3,000	3,000	3,000	9,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	9,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	9,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	9,000
Achieved	981	1,928	2,001	4,910	434	1,221	627	2,282	659	1,003	1,560	3,222	161	683	375	1,219
Shortfall	2,019	1,072	999	4,090	2,566	1,779	2,373	6,718	2,341	1,997	1,440	5,778	2,839	2,317	2,625	7,781
Percentage shortfall	67	36	33	45	86	59	79	75	78	67	48	64	95	77	88	86

Source: Data extracted from IMIS (DWSS, Punjab)

- (a) As shown in **Table 2.16**, against the annual target of 3,000 tests for the District Water Testing Laboratories, a shortfall ranging between 33 and 95 *per cent* during 2021-2024 was seen.
- (b) These District Level Laboratories were required to forward confirmed positive cases to the State Laboratory immediately for further testing on advanced parameters. Audit noticed that during 2021-2024, out of 588 samples tested positive in these four test-checked Districts, only the District Laboratory in Ludhiana sent 11 (2.83 *per cent*) samples²⁷ to the State Laboratory, while the other District Laboratories failed to comply with the DWQMS guidelines. The District-wise detail of samples tested positive are shown in **Table 2.17**.

Table 2.17: Detail of Samples tested positive during 2021-2024

District	Year			Total
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
Ludhiana	31	132	13	176
Tarn Taran	2	152	0	154
Sangrur	64	180	10	254
Pathankot	2	2	0	4
Grand Total				588

Source: Departmental data

The DWSM Ludhiana attributed (February 2025) the shortage of testing of samples and non-sending of positive samples to the State Laboratory to shortage of manpower and equipment. The Government assured (February 2025) compliance of the audit observation and intimated that the requisite directions were issued in October 2024 to all field laboratories to ensure adherence to the monitoring protocols.

The Government clarified (May 2025) that apart from DWSS, testing was being carried out by other departments and through FTKs/H₂S vials in the field, the results of which were not being reflected on the JJM WQMIS portal. The reply did not justify the shortfall in water quality testing at District Level laboratories, which ranged between 33 and 95 *per cent* during 2021-2024, nor did it address the inability to forward samples tested positive to State Level laboratories. Moreover, the FTKs/H₂S vials were meant for presumptive water quality testing by VWSC.

2.6.4.5 Significant Delay in Reporting Results of Water Quality Testing

As per Paragraph 6.8 of the DWQMS framework, timely test results were crucial for managing contaminated water sources. States were required to monitor turnaround times, ensuring completing of chemical tests within 24 hours and bacteriological tests within 48 hours.

²⁷ 2021-22=7, 2022-23=4.

Analysis of IMIS data showed that against the maximum permissible turnaround time of two days, the turnaround time taken by the Laboratories was much higher, as detailed in **Table 2.18**.

Table 2.18: Turnaround time of water quality testing in Laboratories

Year	Samples tested	Average turn-around time in days	Results declared within		Results declared in days			
			24 Hrs Percentage	48 Hrs Percentage	3 to 7 Percentage	8 to 15 Percentage	16 to 30 Percentage	31 and above Percentage
2021-22	14,841	48.41	37	88	769	2,770	4,414	6,763
			0.25	0.59	5.18	18.66	29.74	45.57
2022-23	24,616	73.10	218	208	1,111	2,957	4,616	15,506
			0.89	0.84	4.51	12.01	18.75	62.99
2023-24	33,559	12.40	4,605	5,291	13,961	4,249	1,998	3,455
			13.72	15.77	41.60	12.66	5.95	10.30

Source: Departmental data

Table 2.18 shows an increase in the number of water samples tested during three years. Despite this improvement in water sample testing from 14,841 in 2021-22 to 33,559 samples in 2023-24, the increase was found to be less than half the target of testing 69,000 samples per annum by the District Level Laboratories. This slow progress indicated lack of focus on water quality monitoring under the JJM, as large number of water sources remained un-tested for years, leaving households exposed to untested drinking water.

During 2021-22 and 2022-23, results of water quality testing of as many as 45.57 *per cent* and 62.99 *per cent* samples, respectively were declared after 31 days of receiving the sample, thereby making the chances of timely intervention nearly impossible.

Despite some improvement in 2023-24, test results of 10.30 *per cent* samples still took over a month, thereby not only delaying early detection and intervention but also depriving households of the assurance of safe drinking water. The Water Quality Testing Laboratories could declare results of only 13.72 *per cent* of samples within 24 hours in 2023-24. Similarly, test results of only 15.77 *per cent* samples were declared within the given turnaround time of 48 hours.

The Government attributed (February 2025) the high turnaround time to testing heavy metals in addition to the basic parameters and reporting of results only after complete analysis. However, the Government also assured that efforts would be made to meet the turnaround time by instructing the laboratories to upload results on in-house laboratory management software immediately upon completion of the testing process.

2.6.5 Results of Survey

A household survey, to assess access to Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) and identify challenges faced by households, across 21 Villages in nine Blocks spanning four test-checked Districts to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) was also conducted by audit. The

survey covered 428 households with 178 from Above Poverty Line (APL) and 250 from Below Poverty Line (BPL) households. The survey was attended by 209 females and 219 males.

The details of the survey and its key results are summarised below:

2.6.5.1 Households Not Connected with Piped Water Supply Under JJM

Out of 428 households, as many as 110 participants stated that they were not covered under JJM with piped water supply provided by SWSM even though the State had declared 100 per cent coverage of FHTC, as detailed in Table 2.19.

Table 2.19: Details of Villages, Blocks and Districts with no FHTC

Category	Sr. No.	District	SN	Blocks	Sr. No.	Villages	House holds
Households arranged water from their own Borewell or Handpump	1	Pathankot	1	Pathankot	1	Napwal	1
	2	Tarn Taran	2	Chohla Sahib	2	Raniwala	9
					3	Wariah	18
			3	Patti	4	Ubhoke	2
					5	Bangla Rai	1
					3	Sangrur	4
	7	Chahta Gobindpura	12				
	5	Sunam	8	Chhajli			19
	9	Ghassiwal	3				
Total							67
Households with no inhouse water supply or FHTC under JJM or any other scheme	1	Tarn Taran	1	Patti	1	Bangla Rai	1
					2	Ubhoke	19
			2	Chohla Sahib	3	Raniwala	3
					4	Wariah	2
	2	Sangrur	3	Andana	5	Chahta Gobindpura	8
					6	Rampur Gujran	6
			4	Sunam	7	Chhajli	1
					8	Ghassiwal	3
Total							43

Source: Household Survey

(i) Households arranged water from their own Borewell or Tubewell

Table 2.19 shows that 67 households of nine villages reported that they had arranged drinking water from their own Borewell, Handpump or other self-managed source of water supply.

(ii) Households with no water supply

There was no piped drinking water supply provided to 43 households of eight villages in Tarn Taran and Sangrur Districts even though the State had declared 100 per cent coverage of FHTC. These beneficiaries reported that they were

arranging drinking water from nearby Gurdwara, Mosque, Community-Hall, Panchayat or the neighbours, etc.

2.6.5.2 Evaluation of Services of DWSM by the Beneficiaries

For evaluating DWSM services, beneficiary households rated from one (completely dissatisfied) to five (completely satisfied). Out of 318²⁸ beneficiaries, 121 gave five marks, 179 gave four, eight gave three and nine gave one.

2.6.5.3 Lack of Community Participation

According to the Operational Guidelines of JJM, institutional arrangements were to be established with State PHE/RWS Departments, who play a key role for Mission implementation. They were mandated to support Gram Panchayats and their sub-committees in planning, implementing, managing, operating and maintaining in-village water supply systems, and instil a sense of ownership within the village community as the Mission reckoned village as a unit.

However, an audit survey of 428 households revealed several shortcomings:

(i) Community Consultation & Participation

- 85 households (20 per cent) were not consulted before inception of the Water Supply Scheme in their village.
- 319 households (75 per cent) were unaware of their share in the scheme, indicating a lack of community participation.

(ii) Inadequate IEC Efforts

- 141 households (33 per cent) were not informed about clean drinking water benefits, conservation methods and hygiene habits.
- 140 households (33 per cent) stated that no IEC activities (writings, posters, programs) were conducted in their village.

(iii) Resistance to Contribution

- 84 households (20 per cent) were unwilling to contribute their financial share to the in-village water supply scheme, reflecting insufficient IEC efforts.
- 22 households (5 per cent) refused to contribute to the Scheme's Operation & Maintenance.

²⁸ Out of total 428 beneficiaries, 67 had their own arrangement and 43 did not have FHTC.

(iv) Lack of VWSC Engagement

- 216 households (50 *per cent*) reported that the Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC) never visited their home.

This highlights gaps in community engagement, awareness initiatives and institutional support under the Mission.

2.6.5.4 Results of Village Water Sanitation Committees Survey

A survey was conducted across 21 selected Villages, covering six Multi-Village Schemes (MVS) and 15 Single-Village Schemes (SVS). Of these 21 Villages, in 13 Villages water supply schemes were completed, two of the Water Supply Schemes stood transferred to VWSCs and six were yet to be completed as of 31 March 2024.

According to Operational Guidelines of JJM, despite it being mandatory for each village to have a Village Water Sanitation Committees (VWSC) in two villages (Wariah and Ghasiwala), VWSCs were not established indicating non-compliance with institutional requirements.

(i) Institutional Framework of VWSCs

The evaluation of 19 VWSCs revealed following compliance and governance gaps, in adherence to the institutional framework prescribed under the Operational Guidelines of JJM:

- Only 15 VWSCs were constituted in an open Gram Sabha, indicating partial compliance.
- While 13 VWSCs met the criteria of having participation of at least 50 *per cent* women representatives and 25 *per cent* members from weaker sections (SC/ST), six VWSCs failed to ensure adequate representation.
- Only eight VWSCs adhered to the requirement of convening at least four meetings in a year, highlighting irregularity in governance.
- Although 17 VWSCs identified five women each for training, but only seven received the Field-Testing Kits for water quality monitoring.

These non-compliances, shortcomings and gaps in resource allocation indicated a need for stronger institutional compliance to improve the functioning of VWSCs under JJM.

(ii) Community Participation and Contribution

- Thirteen VWSCs confirmed that the DWSS provided information on economic and technical aspects of the water supply scheme during an open meeting attended by 80 *per cent* of the community, after which the Gram Sabha consented to its implementation. However, six VWSCs reported not receiving any such information.

- Only two, out of 19 VWSCs opened bank accounts to deposit community contributions for the Scheme, while the remaining 17 VWSCs did not contribute. Among these, two had initially agreed to provide contributions in the form of labour, cash or kind but failed to do so.
- Of the 19 VWSCs surveyed, eight had not mandated any community contribution for Operation and Maintenance (O&M). While 11 VWSCs had prescribed contributions for O&M, only four had opened a dedicated bank account and deposited funds accordingly.

These shortcomings in community participation, particularly in capital cost and O&M contributions, indicated a deficit in the intended sense of community ownership, thereby compromising the long-term sustainability of the JJM .

(iii) Satisfaction Levels of VWSCs

The survey results revealed 16 of the VWSCs to have complete satisfaction (5 out of 5) or high level of satisfaction (4 out of 5), only three VWSCs rated their satisfaction at 1 out of 5, expressing complete dissatisfaction.

2.6.5.5 Social Audit

As per Paragraph 5.4 (xviii) of the Operational Guidelines of JJM, Gram Panchayats and their sub-committees, including VWSCs, are responsible for conducting social audits. Audit noticed that out of the 19 VWSCs, only one (Jakror of Pathankot) had conducted a social audit, while the remaining 18 villages failed to comply with this requirement. The absence of social audits highlights a critical gap in community oversight, limiting transparency in scheme execution and fund utilisation.

2.7 Conclusion

The implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in Punjab faced various challenges, including unstructured planning leading to preparation of inaccurate Annual Action Plans, underutilisation of funds causing a shortfall in meeting required utilisation thresholds and absence of essential planning components like the State Action Plan (SAP), which resulted in unrealistic projections.

The Mission also struggled with sustainability, as there was an over-reliance of rural drinking water supply schemes on already over-exploited groundwater, with minimal adoption of conservation measures like rainwater harvesting and artificial recharge. Additionally, there was lack of a formal Operation & Maintenance (O&M) strategy and shortfall in transfer of commissioned schemes to VWSCs. Water quality monitoring was inadequate due to shortage of Block-Level Laboratories and human resources. Minimal integration of advanced technologies such as IoT, GIS mapping and use of solar-powered

pumping was also observed. Community participation remained weak, as despite deviations from prescribed norms, community contributions remained unsatisfactory.

2.8 Recommendations

With a view to enhance the efficiency, sustainability and long-term success of the Jal Jeevan Mission in Punjab, ensuring reliable and safe drinking water for all, the Government may:

- (i) Ensure structured planning based on verified Baseline Data including reverification of number of leftover households;*
- (ii) Regularise the functioning of key Committees and adopt a formal O&M strategy along with integration of IoT, GIS mapping, and smart monitoring systems;*
- (iii) Explore sustainable water sources for schemes in areas with over-exploited groundwater including implementing rainwater harvesting and artificial recharge measures;*
- (iv) Conduct the required number of tests, expand the number of water testing laboratories and introduce real-time monitoring technologies to ensure supply of contamination-free drinking water; and*
- (v) Enforce community contributions as per JJM guidelines, strengthen Gram Panchayats' role in scheme management and engage Implementation Support Agencies (ISA) for capacity-building.*

Chapter-III
**Implementation of Emergency
Response Support System –
‘Dial 112’ in Punjab**

Chapter-III

HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Implementation of Emergency Response Support System – 'Dial 112' in Punjab

The delayed formation of key Committees, lack of monitoring and inadequate funding hampered the implementation of ERSS in the State. Despite nine years since the issuance of ERSS Guidelines by the Government of India, Standard Operating Procedures were yet to be formulated. Besides, the emergency services (other than Police Services) viz. Fire (101), Health (102 & 108), Women's Helpline (181), etc. were yet to be integrated with ERSS - 'Dial 112'. Insufficient funds delayed the procurement of Emergency Response Vehicles and other infrastructure, resulting in a significant shortfall - only 258 of the required 1,866 vehicles were deployed, with just 165 equipped with Mobile Data Terminals. During the period 2021-2024, critical delays in emergency response time further undermined the scheme's effectiveness in providing timely assistance.

3.1 Introduction

In order to bridge the existing gaps and to meet the current challenges being faced by Police forces in the country for an immediate emergency response system specifically inclined towards women's issues, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India (GoI) issued guidelines (August 2015) on National Emergency Response System (NERS), referred to as Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) comprising an integrated Computer Aided Despatch System for an emergency response. The vision of ERSS was to have a nationwide unique and single emergency number, which could be used by the public in case of any emergency. The project, at State level, aimed at setting up the State-wide emergency response system which would integrate various emergency numbers of different services¹ into a single emergency number (112). The emergency number '112' would function not only as a 'receiver' of emergency calls but also as a 'responder', ensuring prompt action within a short timeframe.

The main objectives of the ERSS are to:

- Provide a single emergency response number across the State;
- Provide 24x7² efficient and effective response system which can receive

¹ 100 (Police), 101 (Fire), 102 & 108 (Health), 181 (Women's Helpline), etc.

² 24 hours and 7 days.

inputs from various voice and data services such as voice call, SMS, email, Internet of Things (IoT), panic buttons in public transport, etc. to attend to citizen in distress;

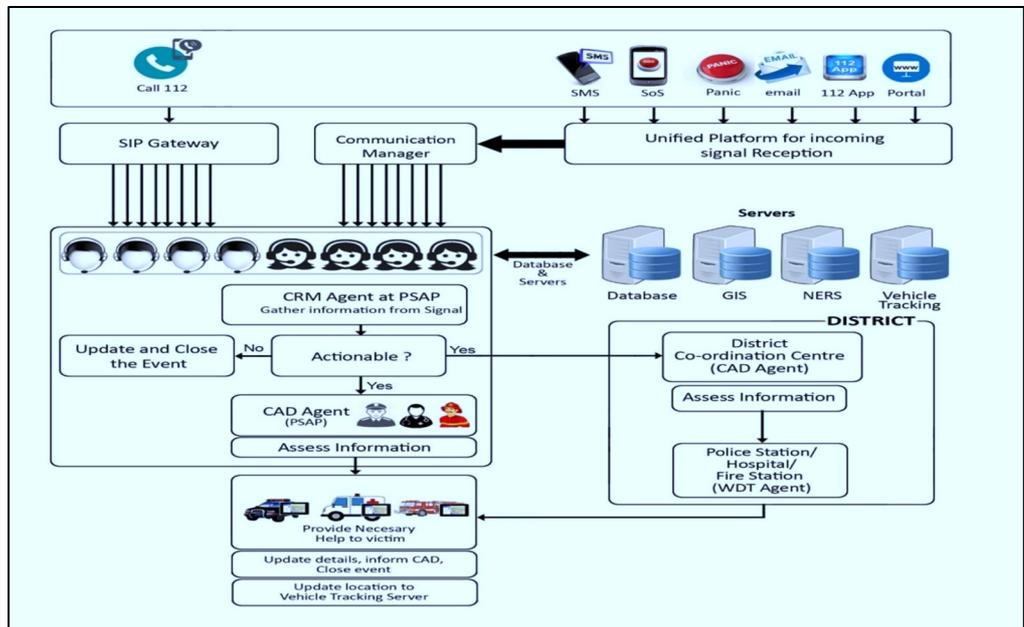
- Identify the location of person in distress connecting through voice or data with the system;
- Timely dispatch of field resources (police, health, fire, disaster management, etc.) to the location of incidence using the system;
- Locate and dispatch GPS (Global Positioning System) enabled vehicles; etc.

3.2 How does the Emergency Response Support System work?

The implementation of NERS involves setting up three major components viz. (i) **Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP)** – implementation at the State/UT Capital; (ii) **District Coordination Centres (DCC)** – extensions with associated Emergency Response Units (ERU) (vehicles fitted with mobile data terminals); (iii) **National Support Services (NSS)** – implementation at the National Capital. The functioning of these components is elaborated in **Appendix 3.1**.

The functional flowchart of NERS (ERSS) is given in **Chart 3.1**.

Chart 3.1: Functional flowchart handling of emergency signals



Source: Detailed Project Report

On receipt of a call or an SMS, email or a message in other forms, the PSAP agent creates a case file in the system and categorises the call according to pre-established grading criteria. The case information is then relayed to a dispatcher, who has real-time access to emergency vehicle availability on a Geographic Information System (GIS) map. The dispatcher consolidates all relevant details and deploys the nearest emergency vehicle to the incident site.

Once on the scene, the emergency response team reports the action taken back to the PSAP via Mobile Data Terminal (MDT). Following the incident, feedback can be solicited from the caller or provided by the PSAP agent through multiple channels, including calls, messages, email, or mobile app notifications, ensuring continuous evaluation and improvement of emergency services.

3.3 Organisational set-up

In the State, the Administrative Secretary, Department of Home Affairs, Government of Punjab (GoP) is the administrative head. The Punjab Police under the overall charge of Inspector General of Police (Law and Order) supported by Senior Superintendents of Police in the Districts is the Nodal Agency for implementation of ERSS in Punjab. The Centre for Development of Advance Computing (C-DAC³) is the Total Service Provider (TSP) for the purpose on turnkey⁴ basis.

3.4 Audit Objectives

The audit was conducted to assess:

- Whether planning and financial management was efficient and effective;
- Whether adherence to quality in Emergency Response Services was ensured; and
- Whether efficient, coordinated and effective response system, across the State 24 x 7, was implemented/put in place as envisaged in ERSS Guidelines.

3.5 Audit Scope and Methodology

The audit was conducted (June – October 2024) by test-checking the records for the period 2021-22 to 2023-24⁵ at the office of the Director General of Police (DGP), Punjab Chandigarh and in six⁶ selected Districts.

An entry conference was held (August 2024) with the Administrative Secretary, Department of Home Affairs, GoP, wherein audit objectives, scope, criteria and audit sample were discussed. Upon completion of audit, an exit conference was held (February 2025) with the Administrative Secretary, Department of Home Affairs, GoP, to discuss the audit findings. Replies of the Department received

³ C-DAC is the premier Research and Development (R&D) organisation of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), GoI for carrying out R&D in Information Technology, Electronics and associated areas.

⁴ A turnkey computer system is a complete computer including hardware, operating system and application(s) designed and sold to satisfy specific business requirements.

⁵ The financial status was examined since inception (August 2015) of ERSS project.

⁶ (i) Commissioner of Police, Amritsar; (ii) Superintendent of Police, Barnala; (iii) Superintendent of Police, Hoshiarpur; (iv) Commissioner of Police, Jalandhar; (v) Superintendent of Police, Patiala; and (vi) Superintendent of Police, SAS Nagar.

during the exit conference and subsequently in July 2025 have been suitably incorporated in the report.

3.6 Audit Criteria

The audit criteria were derived from the following sources:

- Nationwide Emergency Response System (NERS), referred to as Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) Guidelines issued (August 2015) by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), GoI.
- Detailed Project Report (DPR) of ERSS submitted (February 2018) by C-DAC (TSP) to the Nodal Agency (GoP).
- Other orders, Circulars and Notifications issued by GoI and GoP from time to time.

Audit Findings

3.7 Planning

3.7.1 Delayed/Non-constitution of various Committees for Implementation of ERSS

Paragraphs 4.2 and 6.2 of ERSS Guidelines provide for constitution of three Committees viz. State Apex Committee, State Steering Committee and District Mission Committees for proper monitoring of implementation of ERSS in the State. The status of these Committees is as under:

(i) State Apex Committee

The ERSS Guidelines provide for constitution of a State Apex Committee (SAC) comprising eleven members⁷ under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary. The SAC, the highest level Committee in the State, was responsible for overall project implementation, reporting any concern to the Steering Committee at the Centre, reviewing progress of the project, finalisation of the State level Standard Operating Procedures, taking decisions regarding adding new services/helplines in ERSS at State level and conducting periodic meetings to discuss the progress of the project, at least once a quarter as required under the guidelines.

Audit observed (June 2024) that though the State Government had received first instalment of grant-in-aid from GoI in March 2017 for implementation of ERSS,

⁷ (i) Chief Secretary (Chairperson); (ii) Principal Secretary (Home); (iii) Director General of Police; (iv) Principal Secretary (Disaster Management); (v) Principal Secretary (Women & Child Development); (vi) Principal Secretary (Health); (vii) Secretary (Information Technology); (viii) Representatives from National Informatics Centre (NIC); (ix) Representatives from MHA, GoI; (x) Any other representative based on the services added to ERSS; and (xi) ERSS Nodal Officer (Convener).

the SAC was constituted in February/April 2018⁸ as per the structure defined in the guidelines i.e., after more than two years from issue of the guidelines.

It was further noticed (August 2024) that as against the requirement of 24 meetings⁹ till March 2024, only one meeting of the SAC was held (March 2018). The Department attributed (June 2024) the reasons for convening only one meeting to administrative reasons and lockdown in the entire country.

The Department stated (July 2025) that the meetings of SAC were also held in September 2019 and February 2023¹⁰, however, the minutes of meetings were not shared. Further, the Department assured that SAC meetings would henceforth be conducted in accordance with the guidelines *ibid*.

(ii) State Steering Committee

As per ERSS Guidelines, the State was required to set up a State Steering Committee (SSC) comprising of eight¹¹ members from different prescribed departments under the chairmanship of the Director General of Police. This Committee was responsible for overall direction, monitoring and guidance of the project; managing implementation across all Districts; controlling operational budgets; monitoring PSAP operations; monitoring hardware and application roll-out at Call Centres and field; monitoring service levels at State and regularly communicating with the Steering Committee at the Centre on progress, challenges and requirements; overseeing and managing integration with other services/ministries; guiding to the District Mission Committee; and conducting regular meetings to discuss the project (preferably once a month).

Audit observed (August 2024) that the SSC was initially constituted in November 2015 with members solely from the Police Department, lacking representation from other departments. The SSC was subsequently reconstituted in March 2024, aligning with the ERSS Guidelines, more than eight years after issuance of guidelines by GoI (August 2015). Further, instead of the required 80 monthly meetings, only two meetings were held, one in July 2017 and another in March 2021, as of March 2024. Thus, the SSC played a negligible role in the project’s implementation, including providing overall direction, monitoring, guidance, managing implementation across Districts, PSAP operation, operational budget, etc.

On being pointed out in audit, the Department reported (July 2025) to have conducted two additional meetings of SLSC in March 2025 and June 2025, and assured to hold future meetings as per guidelines *ibid*.

⁸ SAC was reconstituted in April 2018 after incorporating the name of Director General of Police and representative from Department of Local Government.

⁹ From April 2018 to March 2024.

¹⁰ Another meeting was held in May 2025 after pointed out by Audit in August 2024.

¹¹ (i) Director General of Police (Chairperson); (ii) NERS (ERSS) Nodal Officer; (iii) Representative from Home Department; (iv) Representative from Women & Child Development Department; (v) Representative from Health Department; (vi) Representative from Disaster Management; (vii) Representative from Information Technology Department; and (viii) Any other representative based on the services added to ERSS.

(iii) District Mission Committees

As per ERSS Guidelines, the State was required to establish District Mission Committees (DMC) having seven¹² members under the chairmanship of the District Collector or Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) in each District. These Committees were responsible for coordinating with other Departments, ensuring smooth integration of all services with ERSS, monitoring the cases handled through the system, collecting feedback from people to ensure quality of services at the District level.

Audit observed (June-September 2024) that no DMCs were constituted even after nine years of the issuance of the guidelines (August 2015).

On enquiry about the reasons for non-constitution of DMCs, the Department instead of giving a specific reply, intimated (August 2024) that all CsP/SSsP had been instructed for constitution of DMCs.

The Department stated (July 2025) that DMCs had been constituted (September 2024 - April 2025) in all CsP/SSsP. It was added that the instructions had been issued to all Commissioners of Police and Senior Superintendents of Police to convene the DMC meetings regularly for reviewing the project and ensuring smooth integration and effective functioning of NERS.

The fact remains that due to delayed or non-constitution of various committees as well as inadequate monitoring at State and District levels, implementation of ERSS in the State was hampered, as evidenced by various inconsistencies highlighted in the succeeding paragraphs.

3.7.2 Non-preparation of Standard Operating Procedures

The ERSS Guidelines mandate the State to define the State level Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for responding to emergency calls by the State Call Centre as well as field units.

Audit observed (June 2024) that the State had not prepared the SOP defining operations of ERSS in the State (November 2024) even after a lapse of more than nine years of issuance of ERSS Guidelines by GoI. In the absence of a clearly defined SOP, the State's ability to address emergency situations in a timely and organised manner could be hindered, potentially impacting public safety and the overall effectiveness of the ERSS system, as is evident from various deficiencies pointed out in **Paragraph 3.9**.

¹² (i) District Collector/SSP of District (Chairperson); (ii) Representative from Women & Child Development Department; (iii) Representative from Health; (iv) Representative from Disaster Management; (v) Representative from Information Technology Department; (vi) Any other representative based on the services added to ERSS; and (vii) ERSS Nodal Officer of District (Convener).

The Nodal Agency stated (June 2024) that no separate SOP was issued to Districts for responding to emergency call and the State level control rooms and field units were following the guidelines of MHA for responding to emergency calls. The reply of the Nodal Agency was not satisfactory because the State was required to prepare SOP defining *inter alia* the ‘average time taken to receive the emergency services’ and ‘average time taken to reach incident site’.

The Department stated (July 2025) that the draft SOP had been prepared, which was yet to be finalised by the State Apex Committee. Further, action/reply of the Department was awaited (September 2025).

3.8 Financial Management

As per ERSS Guidelines, GoI would optimise and allocate resources such as hardware, network and Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) devices to the States and the States would provide infrastructure for setting up Call Centre/Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), manpower and operations.

The details of funds provided by GoI and GoP for the purpose during the period from 2015-16 to 2023-24 are given in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1: Details of funds allocated, released and expenditure incurred thereagainst during the period 2015-2024

(₹ in crore)

Year	Funds allocated by GoI	Funds allocated by GoP	Funds sanctioned/released			Expenditure incurred	
			State	GoI		GoP funds	GoI funds
				Funds released by GoI to GoP	Central funds released by GoP to the Nodal Agency		
2015-16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2016-17	9.83 ¹³	-	-	9.28 ¹⁴	-	-	-
2017-18	-	-	-	-	3.00	-	-
2018-19	-	10.00 ¹⁵	-	-	5.28	-	3.00
2019-20	-	5.87 ¹⁶	-	0.55	-	-	2.01
2020-21	-	6.00 ¹⁷	-	-	-	-	1.67
2021-22	-	6.00 ¹⁸	-	-	-	-	0.70
2022-23	-	8.00 ¹⁹	7.99 ²⁰	-	1.00	7.99	1.90
2023-24	-	10.00 ²¹	8.00 ²²	-	-	7.97	-
Total	9.83		15.99	9.83	9.28	15.96	9.28

Source: Departmental data

¹³ ₹ 5.82 crore for Capital Expenditure (inclusive of ₹ 1.05 crore for MDTs); ₹ 3.02 crore for Operating Expenditure; and ₹ 1.00 crore for Emergency Response Vehicles.

¹⁴ Amount of ₹ 8.54 crore was released on 30.03.2017 and amount of ₹ 0.74 crore was released on 31.03.2017.

¹⁵ ₹ 7.00 crore for Machinery & Equipment and ₹ 3.00 crore for Vehicles.

¹⁶ Machinery and Equipment.

¹⁷ ₹ 4.00 crore for Machinery & Equipment and ₹ 2.00 crore for Vehicles.

¹⁸ ₹ 4.00 crore for Machinery & Equipment and ₹ 2.00 crore for Vehicles.

¹⁹ For vehicles.

²⁰ For vehicles.

²¹ ₹ 3.00 crore for Machinery & Equipment and ₹ 7.00 crore for Vehicles.

²² For vehicles.

Table 3.1 shows that:

- GoP did not allocate funds for implementation of ERSS in the State till 2017-18. Though funds ranging from ₹ 5.87 crore to ₹ 10.00 crore were allocated by GoP during 2018-2022, no funds were released by GoP to the Nodal Agency (Punjab Police) during this period.
- The Government of India released ₹ 9.83 crore²³ between March 2017 and July 2019 for the implementation of ERSS. However, the State Government's disbursement of these funds to the Nodal Agency was significantly delayed, as amount of ₹ 3.00 crore was released (March 2018) with a delay of more than 10 months; ₹ 5.28 crore was released (March 2019) with delay of more than one year; ₹ 1.00 crore was released (December 2022) with a delay exceeding five years; and the final instalment of ₹ 0.55 crore was disbursed (April 2024) with delay of more than three years.

The Department attributed (February 2025) the reasons for this to non-release of requisite funds by the Finance Department (FD). The FD did not furnish any reply (February 2025). Thus, delayed/non-release of funds hampered the implementation of ERSS in a timely and effective manner in the State, as is evident from various deficiencies highlighted in **Paragraph 3.9**.

3.8.1 Non-release of Interest on Delayed Transfer of Funds

While releasing (March 2017) the grant-in-aid for the implementation of ERSS (erstwhile NERS), GoI directed the State Government to transfer the funds to the Nodal Agency within 15 days failing which the State Government was required to release the funds with interest, at the prevailing Reserve Bank of India (RBI) bank rate for the period of default.

Audit observed (August 2024) that though the State Government released the Central funds to the Nodal Agency with a delay ranging from one to five years (as discussed in the preceding paragraph), the accrued interest amounting to ₹ 1.24 crore on delayed release of funds was not released to the Nodal Agency.

In the exit conference, the Department attributed (February 2025) the reasons for delayed release of funds to time taken for stabilisation of procedures regarding Single Nodal Agency (SNA) Account by the State Government. However, the reply was silent regarding transfer of Central funds prior to implementation of SNA (1 July 2021).

The Department further stated (July 2025) that the funds amounting to ₹ 9.28 crore allocated by GoI were directly utilised for project-related expenses and were not transferred to any external implementing agency. It was added

²³ ₹ 8.54 crore (30 March 2017); ₹ 0.74 crore (31 March 2017); and ₹ 0.55 crore (19 July 2019).

that since the funds had been utilised by the State Government as required, no interest was payable.

The reply of the Department was not in line with the GoI guidelines *ibid*. The interest liability arose due to the delayed transfer of funds to the Nodal Agency, regardless of the internal utilisation for project purposes. The Department did not provide any documentary evidence or calculations to substantiate the claim that the accrued interest of ₹1.24 crore was not payable.

3.9 Implementation and Operationalisation of ERSS

3.9.1 Non-integration of Dial 112 with Emergency Services other than Police

ERSS Guidelines required integration of existing emergency services such as firefighting, ambulance and other emergency services with Dial 112. As per the Detailed Project Report (DPR) submitted (February 2018) by C-DAC to the Nodal Agency, the first phase would include police emergency services. The second phase would cater to services like health, fire force and disaster management. However, the DPR did not specify the commencement and completion dates of phases for integration of Dial-112 with the emergency services.

Accordingly, C-DAC was required to conduct system studies and technical discussions with Police, Medical, Fire and Disaster Management Departments to customise the core solution for Public Safety Answering Point and District Coordination Centre. However, no evidence was found of such studies, consultations or meetings. Instead, the Total Service Provider (C-DAC) implemented the core solution exclusively for police services, which was launched in February 2019, setting up the Control Room of ERSS Dial-112 temporarily within the Police Department. Further, delays in the constitution of various Committees and non-release of essential funds by the State, as discussed in **Paragraphs 3.7.1** and **3.8** respectively, hampered the timely implementation and operationalisation of ERSS in the State. This hindered effective integration with other emergency services, potentially compromising coordination, efficiency and resource utilisation, thereby undermining the objectives of the 112-based Emergency Response System.

In the exit conference, the Nodal Agency attributed (February 2025) the reasons for non-integration of other emergency services to non-availability of adequate space for additional workstations. It was added that the funds of ₹ 140 crore had been allocated for construction of ERSS building, which would facilitate integration with other services envisaged under the ERSS framework.

The Department further stated (July 2025) that the integration of Police and Disaster Management Organisations with Dial-112 had been completed in 2019 and 2022, respectively. It was added that in the case of Fire Services, dispatchers

from the Department had been deployed, and for Health/Ambulance Services, two computer systems of medical service dispatchers had been installed at the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP).

The reply of the Department was not convincing as the ERSS guidelines envisaged phased integration of all emergency services supported by system studies and consultations, evidence of which was not furnished to Audit. Further, these measures indicated only partial arrangements and did not constitute full integration as projected. Thus, the fact remains that even after lapse of more than nine years of issue of the guidelines (August 2015) by GoI and more than six years of launching ERSS in the Police Department, the State Government could not provide requisite infrastructure to make the ERSS fully operational.

3.9.2 Inadequate Deployment of Vehicles for ERSS

The State was responsible for providing sufficient number of two-wheelers and four-wheelers for dispatch in case of emergency. As per ERSS Guidelines, each State was to be provided with an average of six Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) per police station for the actual number of vehicles available. Any increase in the number of dispatch vehicles had to be communicated to the Government of India, which would grant approval based on its assessment.

Accordingly, 1,866 vehicles (933 four-wheelers and 933 two-wheelers) were proposed in August 2023, with the plan later revised in October 2024. The allocation included two four-wheelers and two two-wheelers for each rural police station; three four-wheelers and three two-wheelers for each urban police station; and one four-wheeler and one two-wheeler for each jail. These vehicles were to be deployed across 382 police stations²⁴ and 25 jails²⁵.

The State Government procured 192 vehicles (175 four-wheelers and 17 two-wheelers) under ERSS during the years 2022-23 and 2023-24. The status of the vehicles required and deployed for ERSS in Punjab is given in **Table 3.2**.

Table 3.2: Status of vehicles deployed vis-à-vis vehicles required for ERSS in the State as on 31 March 2024

Description	Vehicles required	Vehicles deployed	Shortage of Vehicles	Percentage shortage
Four-Wheeler	933	241	692	74
Two-Wheeler	933	17	916	98
Total	1,866	258*	1,608	86

Source: Departmental data

* Includes 66 existing vehicles (four-wheelers) of Punjab Police fleet.

Table 3.2 shows that as against the requirement of 1,866 vehicles, only 258 vehicles were deployed under ERSS, thereby depicting a substantial

²⁴ Rural Police Stations (238 x 2) = 476 four-wheelers and 476 two-wheelers; and Urban Police Stations (144 x 3) = 432 four-wheelers and 432 two wheelers.

²⁵ 25 four-wheelers and 25 two-wheelers.

shortfall of 1,608 (86 per cent) vehicles. Further, no vehicle was deployed for ERSS in any of 25 Jails in the State.

The status of vehicles required and deployed for ERSS in test-checked Districts is given in **Table 3.3**.

Table 3.3: Status of vehicles deployed *vis-à-vis* vehicles required for ERSS in test-checked Districts as on 31 March 2024

District	Vehicles required	Vehicles deployed	Shortfall of vehicles	Percentage shortfall
Amritsar	176	54	122	69
Barnala	42	9	33	78
Hoshiarpur	66	6	60	91
Jalandhar	160	33	127	79
Patiala	120	11	109	91
SAS Nagar	94	16	78	83
Total	658	129	529	80

Source: Departmental data

Table 3.3 shows that as of March 2024, the shortfall in six test-checked Districts ranged from 69 per cent to 91 per cent. This shortage would significantly impact the ability of facilities to respond effectively, as is evident from the fact that in 22,629 cases (52 per cent), the vehicles took more than 30 minutes to reach the incident sites, as discussed in **Paragraph 3.9.4**.

The Nodal Agency stated (July 2024) that during the financial years 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22, no funds were released by the State Government for purchase of Emergency Response Vehicles. In the exit conference, the Administrative Secretary informed (February 2025) that additional 700 vehicles had been purchased for ERSS during the year 2024-25.

The Department further stated (July 2025) that the State Government had allocated ₹ 100 crore in the financial year 2025-26 for procurement of new Emergency Response Vehicles (ERV), which would be deployed to ensure handling of emergency cases within the shortest possible timeframe. Subsequent action of the Department was awaited (September 2025).

3.9.3 Shortage of Mobile Data Terminal Devices

As per ERSS Guidelines, Mobile Data Terminal²⁶ (MDT) devices would be provided to the police vehicles which would be tracked using GSM/GPRS/GPS at data centre. Information about the incidents would be sent to the field officers through MDT devices in terms of messages, mails and calls. The



Emergency Response Vehicle at Barnala having MDT (November 2024)

²⁶ Tracking and communication device.

guidelines stipulate that MHA, GoI would optimise and allocate required resources such as hardware, network and MDTs to the States.

The GoI released (March 2017 - July 2019) ₹ 9.83 crore which included ₹ 1.05 crore for procurement of MDTs and for allied activities. However, as of March 2024, though 258²⁷ vehicles were available for ERSS, MDT devices were installed in 165²⁸ vehicles (64 *per cent*) only.

The status of MDT-fitted vehicles deployed in six test-checked Districts as of March 2024 is depicted in **Table 3.4**.

Table: 3.4: Status of MDT-fitted vehicles deployed in six test-checked Districts as of March 2024

District	No. of vehicles deployed for ERSS	MDT-fitted vehicles	Vehicles without MDTs	Shortfall (In <i>per cent</i>)
Amritsar	54	47	7	12.96
Barnala	9	7	2	22.22
Hoshiarpur	6	3	3	50.00
Jalandhar	33	22	11	33.33
Patiala	11	5	6	54.55
SAS Nagar	16	9	7	43.75
Total	129	93	36	27.91

Source: Departmental data

Table 3.4 shows that ERSS vehicles ranging from 13 *per cent* to 56 *per cent* were not equipped with MDT devices. The Department, however, did not take up the matter with C-DAC/GoI to meet the shortfall of MDTs. Without MDTs, vehicles would rely on manual communication methods like radio or telephone calls, which often lead to delays and higher chances of mistakes. With MDTs, vehicles receive timely, direct and accurate data, enabling faster responses, better situational awareness and more efficient operations overall. MDTs streamline the flow of information and allow personnel to act quicker, reducing response time significantly.

Thus, the shortfall of MDTs could impact the efficiency of emergency response operations, potentially delaying critical interventions.

The Department reported (July 2025) to have purchased 175 smart phones for two-wheelers and 150 tabs with semi-rugged case during the year 2024-25, and assured to install these MDTs in additional ERVs shortly. It was added that MDTs would be installed in new ERVs to be procured during 2025-26. However, subsequent action/reply of the Department regarding installation of MDTs in ERVs was awaited (September 2025).

²⁷ As detailed in Table 3.2.

²⁸ 99 MDTs were fitted on the Vehicles procured during 2022-23 and 2023-24 and 66 MDTs were installed on vehicles of Punjab Police Fleet.

3.9.4 Adherence to Quality in Emergency Response Services

As per ERSS Guidelines, maintenance of quality is the key to successful operation of the ERSS. The State would ensure adherence to the quality parameters and submit an adherence report to the Steering Committee every month. The status of adherence to the important quality parameters for operation of ERSS during the period 2021-2024 is given in **Table 3.5**.

Table 3.5: Status of adherence to the quality parameters for operation of ERSS during 2021-2024

Sr. No.	Quality parameters (Target)	Achievement	Achievement in number of cases		
			2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
1.	Average time taken by call taker before forwarding to dispatcher (<i>Less than two minutes</i>)	< 2 minutes	3.80 % (12,719)	2.19 % (6,516)	2.99 % (11,071)
		2-5 minutes	66.90 % (2,23,778)	66.60 % (1,98,685)	68.47 % (2,53,176)
		> 5 minutes	29.30 % (97,999)	31.21 % (93,103)	28.54% (1,05,517)
2.	Average time taken by dispatcher to identify and dispatch emergency vehicles (<i>Less than two minutes</i>)	< 2 minutes	-	-	56.45 % (26,713)
		2-5 minutes	-	-	21.76% (10,296)
		> 5 minutes	-	-	21.79 % (10,313)
3.	Average time taken by emergency vehicle to respond through MDT (<i>Less than 15 seconds</i>)	< 15 seconds	-	-	10.13% (4,713)
		15-30 seconds	-	-	21.50 % (10,007)
		> 30 seconds	-	-	68.37 % (31,827)
4.	Average time taken to reach incident site (<i>Less than 30 minutes</i>) *	< 30 minutes	-	-	47.71% (20,647)
		30-45 minutes	-	-	16.56% (7,167)
		>45 minutes	-	-	35.73% (15,462)
5.	Number of cases closed within three hours of reporting (<i>80 per cent of cases reported</i>)	< 3 hours	74.47 % (2,49,260)	60.20 % (1,79,558)	61.80 % (2,28,388)
		> 3 hours	25.53 % (85,444)	39.80 % (1,18,725)	38.20 % (1,41,184)

Source: ERSS Guidelines and data/information provided by Nodal agency

Note: Quality parameters at Sr. Nos. 2,3&4 are based on MDT device, which was installed in vehicles in May 2023.

* As per proposal of the Department, the State did not prepare requisite SOP for the purpose (February 2025).

Table 3.5 shows that:

- During 2021-2024, the average time taken for attending a call before forwarding it to the dispatcher was less than two minutes only in 2-4 *per cent* cases. In majority of the cases (67-68 *per cent*) the process took 2-5 minutes, while in a significant proportion of the cases (28-31 *per cent*), call attendants took more than five minutes before forwarding the call to the dispatcher, indicating a major delay in emergency response initiation during the period. The Department attributed (July 2025) the reasons for the delay to language barriers and difficulties in accurately identifying the incident location at night.
- As many as 56 *per cent* of cases met the target of dispatching vehicles within two minutes; 22 *per cent* took 2-5 minutes; and 22 *per cent* cases took more than five minutes during 2023-24, signifying delays in dispatching emergency vehicles in a substantial number of cases. The Department stated (July 2025) that in some cases, the callers failed to provide complete details about the incident location, requiring the dispatcher to call back to obtain the necessary information before dispatching ERV.
- During 2023-24, only 10 *per cent* of cases met the prescribed response time of less than 15 seconds for emergency vehicles responding through MDTs, while 22 *per cent* of the cases took 15-30 seconds. A significant proportion (68 *per cent*) took more than 30 seconds, indicating a slow system response time, which could lead to delays in attending to emergencies. The Department attributed (July 2025) the reasons for the delay to persistent network connectivity issues, which critically impacted operational efficiency.
- In 48 *per cent* cases, vehicles arrived at the incident site within the 30-minute target; 17 *per cent* took 30-45 minutes; and in 35 *per cent* cases, it took more than 45 minutes, implying that in over one-third of cases, emergency vehicles took an extended period to reach the incident site. The Department attributed (July 2025) the reasons for the delay to availability of limited number of vehicles, State's vast geography and traffic congestion in densely populated areas.
- The performance in resolving cases within three-hour target fluctuated between 60 *per cent* and 74 *per cent*, while 26 *per cent* to 40 *per cent* of cases remaining open beyond three hours during the period 2021-2024. The Department stated (July 2025) that in cases involving heinous crimes, the police required more time at the scene to investigate the incident, assist victims, or transport them to hospitals. The reasons for the delay were also attributed to relay the case details via phone to local police stations in areas lacking ERVs or PCR vehicles.

The Department's explanations did not adequately address the systemic issues underlying persistent delays. The shortfall in ERVs, inadequate monitoring and

progress review through structured meetings, and incomplete integration of allied services compounded operational inefficiencies. These challenges, coupled with slow MDT response times, indicated that unless sufficient ERVs along with MDTs are procured in proportion to the State’s geographical requirements, such delays would continue to persist.

Furthermore, the quality standards outlined in the ERSS guidelines were not adequately met even in the Police Services, while other critical emergency services *viz.* Fire, Health, Women’s Helpline, etc. were yet to be integrated with Dial-112 ERSS.

3.10 Conclusion

The delayed or non-constitution of key Committees including State Apex Committee (SAC), State Steering Committee (SSC) and District Mission Committees (DMC) along with inadequate monitoring, hampered the implementation of Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) in the State.

Despite more than nine years since the issuance of ERSS Guidelines by the Government of India (GoI), the State was yet to formulate Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for its operations.

Timely and adequate funds were not released to the Nodal Agency for procuring Emergency Response Vehicles and for Mobile Data Terminals (MDT).

The emergency services (other than Police services) *viz.* Fire (101), Health (102 & 108), Women’s Helpline (181), etc. were yet to be integrated with ERSS-‘Dial 112’, thereby undermining the objectives of the Scheme. As of March 2024, only 258 vehicles had been deployed under ERSS against the requirement of 1,866, reflecting a significant shortfall of 1,608 vehicles (86 *per cent*). Additionally, Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) were installed in only 165 out of 258 vehicles (67 *per cent*).

An analysis of ERSS quality parameters during the period 2021-2024 revealed significant delays in key stages of emergency response, including call forwarding, dispatcher response, vehicle response time and incident resolution. These inefficiencies undermine the scheme’s core objective of providing immediate emergency assistance to those in distress.

3.11 Recommendations

In the light of the audit findings, the State Government may ensure:

- (i) *Timely formation and operationalisation of mandated Committees to strengthen governance and oversight of ERSS;*
- (ii) *Development and implementation of comprehensive SOPs for ERSS operations, and emergency response protocols across the State;*

- (iii) Prompt release of sufficient funds to the Nodal Agency for procurement of Emergency Response Vehicles, Mobile Data Terminals (MDT), etc.;*
- (iv) Integration of other emergency services like Fire, Health, Women's Helpline, etc. with ERSS- 'Dial 112'; and*
- (v) Implementation of measures to reduce delays at all stages of emergency response, including call forwarding, dispatcher response, vehicle deployment and incident resolution, to enhance service delivery.*

The matter was referred (December 2024) to the State Government; their replies were awaited (March 2025).

Chapter-IV
Compliance Audit Observations
(Departments)

Chapter-IV

Compliance Audit Observations (Departments)

This Chapter contains two observations covering compliance issues observed in Departments of the Government, involving financial implications of ₹ 20.89 crore. The replies of the Departments have been suitably incorporated in the observations.

HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA)

4.1 Undue Financial Burden on Punjabi University, Patiala due to Payment of Goods and Services Tax and Interest from its Own Sources

Not complying with the provisions of the Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017 led to a payment of ₹ 2.19 crore (which includes interest of ₹ 1.08 crore) by Punjabi University, Patiala on collection of College Affiliation Processing Fee, from its own sources. Of this, ₹ 0.35 crore was recovered from certain colleges, leaving the University with a financial burden of ₹ 1.84 crore. Additionally, a liability of ₹ 0.12 crore remains outstanding due to pending GST payments along with accrued interest.

The Government of India (GoI) had implemented the Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017 (CGST Act) with effect from 1 July 2017. As per provisions of the notification (28 June 2017¹), issued by Ministry of Finance (Department of Revenue), GoI, followed by notification (30 June 2017²), issued by Government of Punjab, Goods and Services Tax (GST) at the rate of 18 per cent (i.e., nine per cent each Central Goods and Services Tax and State Goods and Services Tax) shall be levied on educational services, which *inter alia* included 'College Affiliation Processing Fee³'.

Test-check of records (June 2024) of the Punjabi University, Patiala (University) and subsequent information collected (up to April 2025) therefrom showed that the University had collected an amount of ₹ 6.84 crore on account of continuation fee (i.e., College Affiliation Processing Fee) from various colleges during the period from July 2017 to December 2020, but it had neither levied/collected any GST from the affiliated colleges nor had

¹ Under Sr. No.30, Heading 9992 of notification No.11/2017-Central Tax (Rate) dated 28 June 2017.

² Under Sr. No.30, Heading 9992 of notification No. SO 17/P.A.5/2017/Ss 9,11,15 and 16/2017 dated 30 June 2017.

³ In accordance with Sr. No.66, Heading 9992 of notification No.12/2017-Central Tax (Rate) dated 28 June 2017; and circular issued (September 2020) by Punjabi University, Patiala.

deposited any amount on this account with the Government, in line with the provisions of CGST Act *ibid*. After information sought (September 2023) by the Director General of GST Intelligence, Chandigarh Zonal Unit (GST Department) and based on the discussion with Senior Intelligence Officer, the University deposited (March 2024) GST of ₹ 2.19 crore (which included interest of ₹ 1.08 crore) on collection of ₹ 6.15 crore on account of continuation fee (i.e., College Affiliation Processing Fee) from various colleges for the period from July 2017 to March 2020. Subsequently, as per orders (March 2024) of the Vice-Chancellor, the University had recovered GST amount of ₹ 0.35 crore from some of the colleges (March 2025). However, GST of ₹ 0.12 crore on continuation fee of ₹ 0.69 crore collected from various colleges during the period from April 2020 to December 2020 was neither levied/collected nor was deposited with the Government. The University started levying and collecting GST from January 2021 onwards.

The University stated (March 2025) that as per the notification No. 12/2017 (June 2017), services provided by an educational institution to the students, faculty and staff were exempted from GST and due to lack of clarity in the matter, the University had neither levied nor had paid GST on various services rendered by them. It was added that on receipt (June 2021) of clarification from GST Department, they started levying GST. The reply of the University was not satisfactory as the University was already aware of levying GST on continuation fee, as is evident from collection and deposit of GST by them since January 2021, on the basis of a decision taken (June 2020) to levy/collect GST from August 2020, by a committee formed by the Vice-Chancellor, followed by a circular in this regard issued by the University in September 2020. Further, the notification No. 12/2017 did not provide for exemption of GST on College Affiliation Processing Fee, and they were required to deposit GST immediately with effect from July 2017.

Thus, not complying with the provisions of CGST Act led to a payment of ₹ 2.19 crore (which includes interest of ₹ 1.08 crore) by the University on collection of College Affiliation Processing Fee, from its own sources. Of this, ₹ 0.35 crore was recovered from certain colleges, leaving the University with a financial burden of ₹ 1.84 crore. Additionally, a liability of ₹ 0.12 crore remains outstanding due to pending GST payments along with accrued interest.

The matter was referred (January 2025) to the State Government; their reply was awaited (March 2025).

**PUBLIC WORKS (BUILDINGS & ROADS)
AND
TECHNICAL EDUCATION & INDUSTRIAL TRAINING
DEPARTMENTS**

4.2 Non-realisation of Intended Benefits due to Incomplete Buildings of Multi-Disciplinary Academy

Non-provision of adequate funds by the Department and IKGPTU coupled with allotment of work by EE before obtaining technical sanction and ensuring availability of sufficient funds from the client Department resulted in non-completion of work even after lapse of 14 years from the scheduled date of completion, thereby rendering the expenditure of ₹ 19.05 crore incurred on six incomplete blocks of Multi-Disciplinary Academy as idle, besides non-realisation of the intended benefits of improving the living standards of people in remote village areas through technical education.

Paragraph 2.89 of Public Works Department (PWD) Code stipulates that no work shall be commenced unless the estimates have been sanctioned and allotment of funds is made by the competent authority. Further, Paragraph 2.5 of PWD Code provides that administrative approval is the formal acceptance of the Administrative Department concerned of a proposal to incur expenditure in PWD on a work, initiated by, or connected with the requirement of such Administrative Department and is, in effect, an order to PWD to execute certain specified work at a stated sum to meet the administrative needs of the department requiring the work.

With the objective to uplift the living standard of the people of the remote areas of villages by providing technical education, Government of Punjab (GoP), Department of Technical Education and Industrial Training (Department) administratively approved (February 2009) the project of construction of Sardar Atma Singh Multi-Disciplinary Academy⁴ (MDA) at Village Jabbowal, Sultanpur Lodhi, Kapurthala for ₹ 34.23 crore⁵.

Test-check of records (January 2021) of the Superintending Engineer (SE), Electrical Circle, PWD (B&R), Chandigarh and further information collected (February 2022–March 2025) from the Executive Engineer (EE), Construction Division No. 2, PWD (B&R), Kapurthala and Department of Technical Education & Industrial Training (Department) revealed that EE allotted (September 2009) the work for ₹ 32.88 crore with completion date of March 2011 on the basis of the Administrative Approval (February 2009), but

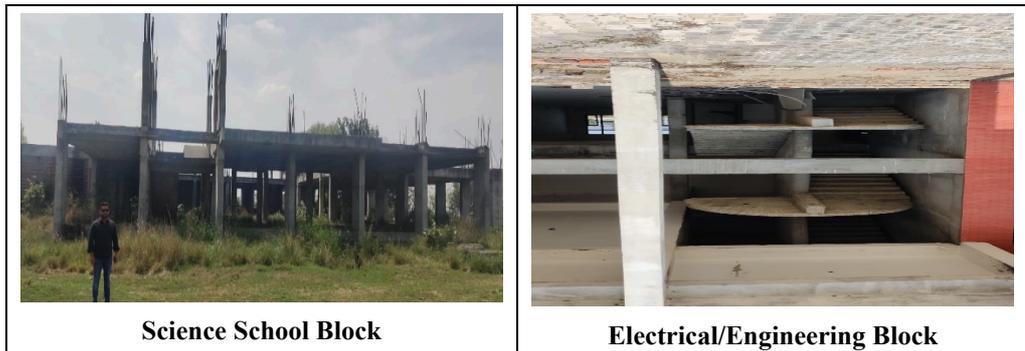
⁴ With provision of seven blocks viz (i) Computer Engineering & ECE Block; (ii) School Block; (iii) Polytechnic Block; (iv) IT Block; (v) Electrical Engineering Block; (vi) Administrative Block; and (vii) Lab Block.

⁵ The project was approved (December 2008) under National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) tranche-RIDF XIV.

without obtaining the technical sanction⁶ and without ensuring availability of adequate funds prior to start of the work, in contravention of the codal provisions *ibid*.

Audit observed that the progress of work was slow due to shortage of funds as against the requirement of ₹ 32.88 crore, the Department provided ₹ 16.02 crore⁷ only between December 2009 and July 2011.

Thereafter, Government of Punjab (GoP) transferred (January 2012) the buildings of MDA to Inder Kumar Gujral Punjab Technical University (IKGPTU) (formerly known as Punjab Technical University) on “as is where is” basis with the directions to bear all capital and recurring cost on development and management of MDA by the University. Despite directives of GoP, IKGPTU released (December 2014 to October 2023) ₹ 10.52 crore⁸ only against the requirement of ₹ 16.86 crore; that too after delays ranging between 3 and 12 years. It was observed that out of seven proposed blocks, only one block *viz.* Computer Engineering & ECE Block was completed at a cost of ₹ 6.03⁹ crore and was being utilised since August 2019. However, other six blocks¹⁰ remained incomplete despite spending ₹ 19.05 crore thereon (March 2025) and could not be put to use as is evident from the following photographs:



In the meantime, the Chief Engineer ordered (December 2019) closure of the agreement on request of the contractor. No further efforts were made by the Department to complete the incomplete blocks of MDA since December 2019.

The Department stated (August 2023) that funds were released as per the demand of the executing agency after getting the funds from Finance Department. The EE stated (November 2024) that it was responsibility of the client department to provide funds after the administrative approval. The

⁶ The estimates of public health, civil and electrical components of the work were sanctioned in December 2010, April 2013 and September 2015 respectively i.e., after allotment of work.

⁷ ₹ 2.00 crore in December 2009, ₹ 3.00 crore in June 2010, ₹ 3.00 crore in September 2010 and ₹ 8.02 crore in July 2011.

⁸ ₹ 0.60 crore in December 2014, ₹ 1.32 crore in March 2015, ₹ 2.00 crore in October 2015, ₹ 4.50 crore in June 2016, ₹ 0.80 crore in May 2021, ₹ 0.04 lakh in March 2023 and ₹ 1.26 crore in October 2023.

⁹ It also includes expenditure of ₹ 2.90 crore on Boundary wall and Sub Station.

¹⁰ (i) School Block; (ii) Polytechnic Block; (iii) IT Block; (iv) Electrical Engineering Block; (v) Administrative Block; and (vi) Lab Block.

IKGPTU did not furnish reasons for non-release of adequate funds to complete the buildings of MDA.

The replies were not acceptable as non-release of adequate funds by the Department and IKGPTU coupled with allotment of work by EE before obtaining technical sanction and without ensuring availability of sufficient funds from the client department resulted in non-completion of work even after lapse of 14 years from the scheduled date of completion. Thus, the expenditure of ₹ 19.05 crore incurred on six incomplete blocks of MDA was rendered as idle. Besides, the intended benefits of improving the living standards of people in remote village areas through technical education were not realised.

The matter was referred (October 2022) to the State Government; their reply was awaited (March 2025).

Recommendation: The State Government may ensure strict adherence to financial and technical procedures by obtaining technical sanctions and confirming fund availability before awarding contracts, ensuring timely project completion and realisation of intended public benefits.



(NAZLI J. SHAYIN)

Chandigarh
The 20 November 2025

Principal Accountant General (Audit), Punjab

Countersigned



(K. SANJAY MURTHY)

New Delhi
The 28 November 2025

Comptroller and Auditor General of India

Appendices

Appendices

Appendix 2.1

(Referred to in Paragraph 2.6.1.3)

Detail of expenditure incurred on Inadmissible Items

(₹ in crore)

Year	Single Village Schemes			Multi Village Schemes		
	No. of schemes	House connection provided	Inadmissible expenditure	No. of schemes	House connection provided	Inadmissible expenditure
2019-20	535	24,687	0.66	308	11,014	0.31
2020-21	316	11,230	0.34	181	4,277	0.26
2021-22	203	10,160	0.23	77	2,813	0.10
2022-23	20	180	0.01	15	369	0.01
2023-24	5	358	0	0	0	0
Total	1,079	46,615	1.24(A)	581	18,473	0.68 (B)
Grand Total (A+B)						1.92¹

Source: Departmental data

¹ Ludhiana: ₹ 92.41 lakh; Pathankot: ₹ 12.18 lakh; and Tarn Taran: ₹ 24.72 lakh.

Appendix 2.2

(Referred to in paragraph 2.6.4.1)

Number of habitats affected by hazardous metals in the State during 2019-20 to 2023-24

District	2019-20							2020-21							2021-22							2022-23							2023-24																		
	Arsenic	Nitrate	Iron	Selenium	Mercury	Mixed parameters including heavy metal	Fluoride	Uranium	Arsenic	Nitrate	Iron	Selenium	Mercury	Mixed parameters including heavy metal	Fluoride	Uranium	Arsenic	Nitrate	Iron	Selenium	Mercury	Mixed parameters including heavy metal	Fluoride	Uranium	Arsenic	Nitrate	Iron	Selenium	Mercury	Mixed parameters including heavy metal	Fluoride	Uranium	Arsenic	Nitrate	Iron	Selenium	Mercury	Mixed parameters including heavy metal	Fluoride	Uranium							
Amritsar	350	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	332	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	326	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	328	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	312	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Barnala	0	2	0	0	0	2	6	12	0	5	0	2	0	1	4	10	0	5	0	1	0	1	4	10	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4				
Bathinda	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3					
Faridkot	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	7	6	0	5	0	0	0	0	6	6	0	0	0	0	3	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Fatehgarh Sahib	1	7	1	0	0	3	56	3	2	3	1	2	0	3	40	3	2	2	0	0	0	1	40	3	0	2	0	0	1	36	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	29	27							
Fazilka	3	0	5	0	0	0	8	44	12	0	4	0	9	31	10	29	12	0	3	0	8	25	10	30	5	0	0	0	23	8	30	3	0	0	0	0	0	9	2	38							
Ferozepur	43	17	1	0	0	1	21	62	46	14	2	0	28	2	13	43	45	4	2	0	3	2	13	32	23	2	0	0	1	4	23	16	2	0	0	0	0	2	3	35							
Gurdaspur	217	1	0	0	0	6	0	0	224	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	219	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	192	0	0	0	0	0	0	133	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0							
Hoshiarpur	13	0	15	0	0	4	0	8	13	0	0	4	0	0	0	8	12	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	10	0	0	2	0	0	3	8	0	0	2	0	0	0	3								
Jalandhar	0	3	1	0	0	30	0	0	1	2	1	15	0	6	0	0	1	0	1	8	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1								
Kapurthala	6	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	6	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0								
Ludhiana	2	19	1	0	0	32	1	5	1	9	1	18	1	0	1	4	1	1	1	16	1	0	1	3	1	1	0	12	0	1	5	0	0	0	8	0	0	1	4								
Mansa	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1								
Moga	2	2	2	0	0	3	5	66	3	2	2	2	0	0	4	42	3	2	2	2	0	0	4	41	0	0	0	0	0	5	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4								
Sri Muktsar Sahib	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0								
Patiala	15	0	8	0	0	25	195	17	12	0	7	4	0	19	185	9	10	0	4	3	0	16	185	5	6	1	0	2	0	3	156	4	0	1	0	2	0	8	147								
Roopnagar	32	15	6	0	0	13	0	0	30	10	0	9	0	0	0	0	29	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	12	0	0	0	0	3								

District	2019-20							2020-21							2021-22							2022-23							2023-24														
	Arsenic	Nitrate	Iron	Selenium	Mercury	Mixed parameters including heavy metal	Fluoride	Uranium	Arsenic	Nitrate	Iron	Selenium	Mercury	Mixed parameters including heavy metal	Fluoride	Uranium	Arsenic	Nitrate	Iron	Selenium	Mercury	Mixed parameters including heavy metal	Fluoride	Uranium	Arsenic	Nitrate	Iron	Selenium	Mercury	Mixed parameters including heavy metal	Fluoride	Uranium	Arsenic	Nitrate	Iron	Selenium	Mercury	Mixed parameters including heavy metal	Fluoride	Uranium			
Sangrur	3	1	1	0	0	2	8	30	1	3	1	4	0	4	5	21	1	1	0	4	0	4	5	20	0	0	0	3	0	1	4	12	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	5
Malerkotla	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
SAS Nagar	2	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SBS Nagar	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	1	0	3	0	11	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pathankot	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tarn Taran	126	1	0	0	0	4	3	3	111	1	0	2	0	0	5	1	109	1	0	2	0	0	5	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	93	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6
Total	815	69	45	0	0	134	319	252	803	56	21	74	41	77	282	171	785	30	14	49	12	62	282	147	681	24	0	27	0	34	227	121	593	20	0	19	0	22	195	174			

Source: Departmental data

Appendix 3.1

(Referred to in Paragraph 3.2)

Functioning of components of Emergency Response Support System

Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) will be equipped with necessary signal receiving equipment and backend processing systems in high availability mode, to receive and process various distress signals originating from the State. The distress signals are delivered to a panel of skilled Call-Takers, who gather incident data from callers and route genuine and actionable requests to Dispatchers for further action. Dispatchers initiate necessary action (i.e., assignment to Emergency Response Units) to provide immediate assistance. The entire mission will be monitored and controlled by the PSAP Supervisor.

District Coordination Centre (DCC) is a District-level central location for Police, Fire Force and Health departments to effectively dispatch ERUs in the regional location. Dispatchers in the DCC of services play the role of distributed dispatching. The PSAP dispatchers and District-level dispatchers jointly address most of the incidents. The operations may be further aided by installing web-based dispatchers at Police Stations/ Hospitals.

National Support Services (NSS) hosts all common services, optionally used by the States to enhance the facilities in the PSAP solution. Services like LBS (Location identification), Telephone subscriber's information service, Interstate information exchange, 112-Public Web Portal will be hosted at NSS.

© COMPTROLLER AND
AUDITOR GENERAL OF INDIA
www.cag.gov.in

<https://cag.gov.in/ag/punjab/en>

