

HIGHLIGHTS

Revenue and Forest Department

(RELIEF AND REHABILITATION WING)

FLOODS IN MAHARASHTRA – PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Highlights

Maharashtra witnessed the worst ever torrential rainfall in July and August 2005 affecting all the four regions of the State, claiming around 1100 human lives and around 27,000 lives of cattle. The state witnessed a similar disaster again in July and August 2006 when 400 lives of persons were lost. Performance audit of the expenditure on preparedness for flood and relief and rehabilitation to the flood victims indicted that the level of preparedness of flood was not adequate; relief assistance was extended without proper identification of affected persons, financial management was deficient and monitoring of relief and rehabilitation activities was unsatisfactory. Important audit findings are as under:

Disaster management plan formulated in 1997 was not followed systematically in eight out of 10 test checked districts. Long term plans such as desiltation of river, improvement of drainage system were not done except in Mumbai District. Desiltation works in Mithi river recommended by a Committee in 1993 commenced only after the 2005 floods. The desilting works claimed to have executed before the Monsoon of 2006 could not be verified, as there was no documentary evidence of transportation of silt.

(Paragraphs 2.2.1 and 2.2.2)

The warning dissemination system was deficient as 53 out of 69 VHF sets installed (1998-99) in four (out of 10) test checked districts were not functioning since 2003-04 and number of officials trained in disaster management was very negligible.

(Paragraphs 2.2.3 and 2.2.4)

In 10 test checked districts, Rs 4.39 crore was paid as ex-gratia assistance in death cases without observing the norms, while 644 families were deprived of benefits of Rs 6.44 crore from Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

(Paragraph 3.1.2)

Gratuitous relief assistance of Rs 35.65 crore was given without identification and verification of beneficiaries. Besides, as against the assessed loss of Rs 1.32 crore Gratuitous Relief Assistance of Rs 2.55 crore was paid, resulting in excess payment of Rs 1.23 crore.

(Paragraph 3.1.3 and 3.1.3.2)

In three districts, food grain and kerosene were distributed to 10.51 lakh and 9.47 lakh beneficiaries respectively as against 7.47 lakh beneficiaries. Avoidable expenditure was Rs 7.25 crore.

(Paragraph 3.1.4)

There were instances of relief assistance in cash and kind to the extent of Rs 16.14 crore being paid without verifying eligibility, while Rs 23.42 lakh was paid in excess to farmers.

(Paragraph 3.1.4, 3.1.5, 3.1.6 and 3.1.9)

Financial Management during the process of relief and rehabilitation was saddled with cases of overdrawal of Rs 1.78 crore, diversion of funds of Rs 1.43 crore and non-execution of urgent repairs to restore civic amenities of Rs 10.49 crore.

(Paragraph 4.1.1, 4.1.2 and 4.1.4)

Failure to co-ordinate with the Government of Karnataka for timely release of water from Almatti dam led to inundation of adjoining Sangli District. As a result, Rs 58.78 crore was spent towards relief assistance in the District.

(Paragraph 5.1.2)