

Executive Summary

Recognising the importance accorded by the Planning Commission, Government of India for a district-centric approach to devolution of finances for an integrated local area development, a district centric audit of Sirmaur district was carried out to assess the status and impact of implementation of various socio-economic developmental activities in the district during 2004-09 and to evaluate whether quality of life of people has improved.

The review covered key social sector programmes relating to Health, Education and Water supply, economic sector programmes relating to creation of Roads and other infrastructure, Employment generation, provision of basic civic amenities and use of Information Technology (IT) to provide better public services, etc.

While audit brought out many positives in the social sector programmes relating to health and education; however, there were quite a few areas where the State/District administration needs to focus its attention.

Planning

Audit scrutiny revealed that the District Planning, Development and Twenty Point Programme Review Committee (DPDC) had not prepared any Perspective Plan or Annual Action Plans, or even a shelf of schemes for the overall development of the district. The local levels of administration like the Blocks and GPs were not involved in providing any inputs to the planning process. Schemes were sanctioned on an adhoc basis by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) based on the proposals submitted by the MPs/MLAs/Other individuals as per the perceived benefit to the local populace. In fact, there was no integrated District Plan.

In the absence of perspective plans and annual action plans for the development of the district with inputs from Blocks and GPs, gaps in various developmental schemes/programmes remained unidentified with the result that the felt needs of the weaker sections of the society and the disparities between various regions and communities within the district could not be addressed.

Recommendations:

Holistic perspective and integrated annual plans should be prepared for the district, based on a structured process of obtaining inputs from Blocks and GPs and other stakeholders for a more realistic assessment of the district.

Accounting Framework and Financial Management

The total flow of funds in the District during 2004-09 and expenditure incurred was not available either with the Additional DC who is the Chief Planning Officer or with the District Planning Officer and other district authorities like DRDA.

There is an absence of a uniform system for maintenance of separate bank accounts for various schemes. The receipt, utilisation and accountal of developmental funds is done on mere release of funds to implementing agencies rather than after their actual utilisation, as

such, the reported progress and achievement of these schemes depicting the outcomes do not reflect the true picture and result in skewing the planning process for overall development.

Large amounts of funds obtained from GOI and State Government are parked in banks without utilising them within the prescribed timeframe, as works could not progress due to non-availability of clearances for utilising forest land and other land disputes.

Recommendations:

Financial management, in general, needs improvement, and funds provided for various socio-economic developmental programmes need to be efficiently and effectively utilised.

A uniform accounting system should be put in place for showing actual utilisation of funds relating to various developmental schemes as distinct from mere release of funds to implementing agencies. Also, a mechanism to ensure release of funds only for works and schemes for which all preliminary and preparatory works have been completed, needs to be evolved.

Social Services

Health

The process of assessing the health care requirements and gaps in infrastructure, equipment, manpower, etc., as per NRHM stipulation is yet to be completed in the district. The district had three CHCs, 36 PHCs and 145 SCs. Except PHCs, the number of other institutions was less than the norms prescribed. The basic health care services required to be provided in the health centres were not available at many of the centres visited by the audit team. Moreover, due to non-availability of adequate number of skilled manpower the purpose of setting up the health centres was not achieved in the district.

The prevalence of vaccine preventable diseases was negligible in the district as no case of infant and child diseases like neonatal tetanus, diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough was detected in the district during 2005-09. However, 220 cases of measles were detected during 2005-09. No new case of Polio was detected during 2005-09 in the district. Out of 2,845 persons screened up to March 2009 under National AIDS Control Programme in the district, 39 persons were found HIV positive.

Separate targets/health indicators for the districts were not prescribed despite the Mission (NRHM) requirement to do so. Therefore, the progress of achievement of the crucial health indicators for the district could not be ascertained and the authenticity of the data reported at the State level could also not be verified.

Community participation in planning, implementation and monitoring of the NRHM programme was not ensured. No Village Health and Sanitation Committees (VHSC) had been formed in the district. Though Rogi Kalyan Samities (RKSS) have been formed in all the CHCs and PHCs in the district, these are yet to become fully operational.

In the absence of proper planning involving identification of gaps in the healthcare infrastructure and non-availability of stipulated facilities and skilled manpower in the health institutions, the aim of providing accessible and affordable healthcare to people remained to be achieved in the District.

Recommendations:

The District Health Society should play a more proactive role in commissioning a survey to identify the gaps in health care infrastructure and facilities and draw up a specific timeframe as per the NRHM guidelines, to provide accessible and affordable health care to the rural poor and vulnerable sections of the district. All the health centres should be equipped with adequate and skilled manpower to achieve the objectives of the programme.

Education

A review of the status of education in the district, especially in the context of implementation of SSA, revealed that the number of primary and upper primary schools (upto standard VIII) increased but enrolment of children in the targeted age group of 6-14 years in these schools decreased during 2004-09.

Higher education is being imparted in the district through a network of 61 Government High Schools (GHS), 79 Government Senior Secondary Schools (GSSS), one Post Graduate Degree College, four Degree Colleges and one Sanskrit College.

Enrolment in classes IX to XII has declined from 23,237 in 2005-06 to 20,436 in 2008-09 in the district. The class XII pass percentage showed a declining trend in 2008-09 as compared to 2005-08.

The infrastructural facilities available in 140 High Schools and Senior Secondary Schools in the district are deficient as, 5 Schools do not have pucca building, 9 Schools are running without electricity connection, 43 schools have no separate labs for science subjects, 104 schools do not have separate toilets for boys and girls, 7 schools do not have safe drinking water facilities and 18 do not have spacious playground.

The scholarship schemes were not effectively managed as a database of the beneficiaries and its periodical updation for identification of actual students to be covered and requirement of funds for the purpose was not being maintained. This either deprived or delayed the benefits of the scholarships to the eligible students.

The inspection of schools is to be done at least once a year by the Director of Education (DE); however, the DE or any other officer authorised by him had not conducted inspection of the schools in the district during 2004-09.

To sum up, many schools in the district were lacking basic infrastructure/facilities and the scholarship schemes were not effectively managed as a database of the actual students to be covered and its periodical updation for assessing the requirement of funds was not being maintained which deprived and delayed the benefits of the scholarships to the eligible students. Shortage of teachers in schools impacted the board results which was far from satisfactory.

Recommendations:

Basic infrastructure/facilities should be provided on a priority basis in all the schools, especially at the elementary level, to ensure an appropriate environment for teaching and learning. Appropriate steps should be taken by the Education Department to arrest the declining trend in enrolment in the schools.

The State Government should carry out a survey and create a database of the beneficiaries to be covered under various scholarship schemes. This database should be updated on a yearly basis and all the eligible students should be provided scholarship as per norms, in a timely manner.

Drinking Water

Out of 4312 habitations in the district, 45 *per cent* of the habitations were fully covered with drinking water facility, 30 *per cent* were partially covered and the remaining were yet to be covered.

Lack of adequate supervision at departmental level and at required frequency, not only delayed the completion of schemes on time, but also raised doubts about the quality of works. Further, the targeted beneficiaries were denied adequate and safe drinking water.

Unsafe water was being supplied to the public in the district as the quality of water to the habitations was not being ensured by conducting the required water sample tests; as a result substantial number of cases of water borne diseases were noticed in the district.

Recommendations:

The State Government/district administration needs to prepare a strategic action plan to provide potable drinking water to the uncovered habitations in a time bound manner.

Water quality testing system should be improved/upgraded to ensure supply of safe drinking water to the public.

Economic Services

Infrastructure-Transportation and Road connectivity

There is no airport and railway connectivity in the district. The nearest airport at Chandigarh is 90 kms away from Nahan town. The nearest railway station is Ambala Cantt (Haryana) which is 65 kms from Nahan town. Out of the total 971 villages in the district, only 680 villages have been provided road connectivity as of March 2009. Thus, 30 *per cent* of the villages in Sirmour district still remain to be provided with road connectivity; acquisition of forest/private land being the main bottleneck.

Out of 103 works taken up during 2004-09 under PMGSY and State Sector schemes, only 37 works (36 *per cent*) were completed, within the stipulated completion period, 21 works were still in progress and remaining 45 works were lying incomplete as of March 2009.

Thus, in the absence of a viable mechanism to resolve the land disputes to facilitate timely completion of road works, the Public Works Department has delayed in providing road connectivity to all the villages in the district.

Other Developmental Schemes

Other developmental schemes like Vikas Mein Jan Sahyog (VMJS), Sectoral Decentralised Planning (SDP), Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS), Vidhayak Kshetriya Vikas Nidhi Yojana (MLALADS), etc. were taken up in the district in an uncoordinated way as the works were neither properly planned nor completed within the specified timelines. The assets created out of these schemes also remained unknown to the district administration as no asset register was maintained at any level.

Recommendation:

The State/district administration should ensure greater coordination with the executing agencies to ensure that the works are planned, taken up and completed within the specified timelines and accountability should be fixed for delay and slippages in this regard.

Employment Generation

Under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), the shortfall in providing legally guaranteed 100 days wage employment to card holders who had demanded employment ranged between 94 and 98 *per cent*. No unemployment allowance was granted to eligible job card holders who were not provided employment. Moreover, the women beneficiaries were not given adequate employment opportunities as required under the Act.

Thus, the district authorities failed to provide the guaranteed wage employment in rural areas of the district thereby defeating the objective of security of livelihood to the needy and the vulnerable sections viz. SC/ST and women; the extent of poverty alleviation through these schemes remains doubtful.

Energy

Out of the 971 villages in the district, 965 villages (99 *per cent*) have been electrified as of March 2009. The State Government chalked out plans for electrifying the remaining villages also through the Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY).

The delay of over four years since March 2005 in sanctioning the DPR for electrification of unelectrified households resulted in cost escalation of Rs 19.93 crore, besides, depriving 3805 eligible householders of Sirmour district of the benefits under RGGVY.

Recommendation:

The State Government should streamline its internal processes to ensure that project proposals are formulated on time and pursued with the GOI to ensure that adequate funds are provided for electrifying all the unelectrified habitations/villages within a specific timeframe.

General Services**E-Governance-Sugam Centres**

As regards the e-governance activities, only 2 to 5 services were being provided as of July 2009 through the Sugam centres against 33 to 37 services envisaged to be provided at tehsil to district level. Besides, offering envisaged services through Sugam efforts should also be made to bring all services under one roof as is presently not the case.

Civic Amenities by Municipal Administration

Management of solid waste by Municipal Councils(MCs)/Nagar Panchayats(NPs) was characterised by inherent defects of usage of open vehicles for transportation of waste and non-development of suitable sites for setting up of Solid Waste Management Projects. The MCs and NPs in the district did not have an integrated waste management plan for collection,

storage, segregation, transportation, processing and disposal of municipal solid waste thereby exposing the public to the dangers of untreated waste and pollution.

Recommendation:

Waste management plans need to be finalised by the MCs on priority basis for pollution free environment.

Monitoring Mechanism and Impact Evaluation

In sum, monitoring and supervision of the progress of implementation of various schemes at all tiers of local administration in the district was perfunctory which impacted the progress of developmental works/projects undertaken by various departments/implementing agencies. There were number of works in the social and economic sector which were plagued by cost and time overruns thereby depriving the public of the benefits of these developmental schemes.

Recommendation:

Monitoring, inspection and supervision needs to be strengthened at all the tiers of local administration to ensure that the programmes are executed on time and within cost and timely corrective action is taken in cases of slippage.

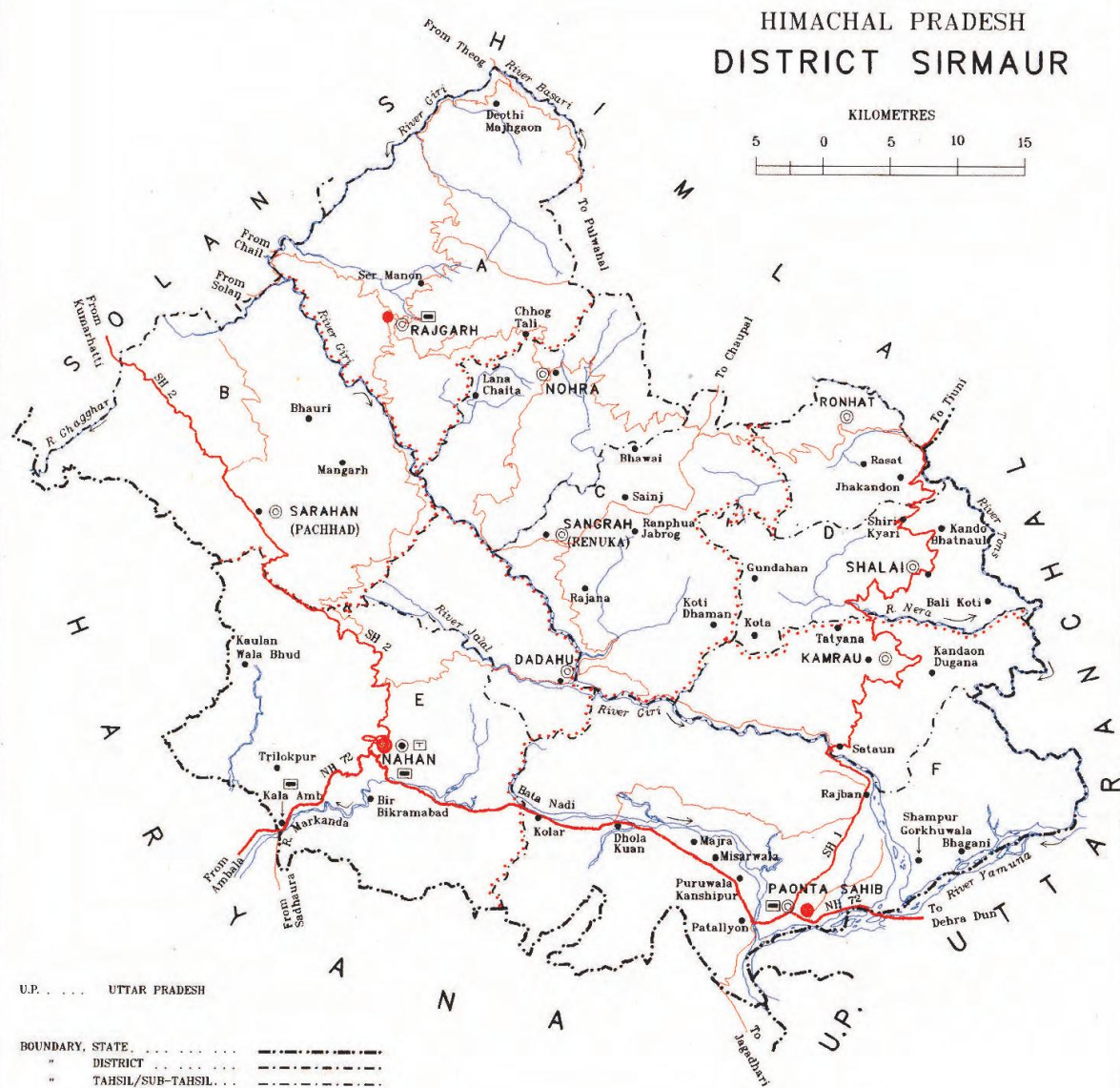
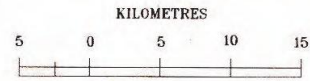
Conclusion

The GOI has increasingly been entrusting the responsibility at the local level, especially the PRIs to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in delivery of key services like education, health, employment, etc. However, Audit analysis revealed that absence of adequate people's participation from the block and GP levels in the planning process has hindered the planned progress of the district and address the felt needs at the grass root level. While the PRIs are empowered to prepare specific plans for an integrated development of their area, lack of structured annual action plans from these levels and absence of capacity building have resulted in their inability to expend the funds provided to them for implementation of various programmes.

There are multiplicity of programmes and schemes and even larger number of implementing agencies, making it difficult for the district administration to effectively monitor and supervise the developmental activities. While almost all the developmental programmes are targeted at the same set of beneficiaries, the existence of myriad programmes without an integrated focus, has led to each of them being implemented in a stand alone mode. Adequate monitoring mechanism is either not instituted, or is not functioning as envisaged, with regard to execution of schemes.

The State Government needs to put in place a robust district centric planning process by mapping the gaps in infrastructure under various sectors like health, education, employment generation, drinking water etc. through inputs from all tiers of local administration and public at large. A clear roadmap to achieve the targets set through such plans for the development of the district should be drawn so that the benefits of the schemes reach the intended beneficiaries in time. District specific Human development indicators to gauge the extent of development and the effectiveness of various schemes being implemented by the State in the District should be evolved by the State Government. People's participation is essential for ensuring sustainable development of the District.

INDIA
HIMACHAL PRADESH
DISTRICT SIRMAUR



U.P. UTTAR PRADESH

- BOUNDARY, STATE - - - - -
- " DISTRICT - - - - -
- " TAHSIL/SUB-TAHSIL - - - - -
- " C. D. BLOCK - - - - -
- DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS ●
- TAHSIL/SUB-TAHSIL HEADQUARTERS ⊙
- NATIONAL HIGHWAY NH 72
- STATE HIGHWAY SH 1
- IMPORTANT METALLED ROAD ———
- RIVER AND KHAD ~~~~~
- IMPORTANT VILLAGE HAVING 500 AND ABOVE POPULATION WITH NAME ●
- TOWNS WITH POPULATION SIZE AND CLASS III, IV & VI ● ● ●
- DEGREE COLLEGE AND TECHNICAL INSTITUTION □ □

C.D. BLOCK	HEADQUARTERS
A RAJGARH	RAJGARH
B PACHHAD	SARAHAN
C SANGRAH	SANGRAH
D SHALAI	SHALAI
E NAHAN	NAHAN
F PAONTA SAHIB	PAONTA SAHIB

1. Where the name of tahsil/sub-tahsil differs from its headquarter's name the former is given within brackets.
2. Boundary shown is updated upto 31st December, 1999.
3. C.D. Block boundary excludes Statutory Towns.