

Executive Summary

Recognising the importance accorded by the Planning Commission, Government of India, for a district-centric approach to devolution of finances for integrated local area development, a district centric audit of Mandi district was carried out to assess the status and impact of implementation of various socio-economic developmental activities in the district during 2006-11 and to evaluate whether the quality of life of the people in the district 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.

Audit noticed certain positive points in the social and economic services sector programmes relating to health, education, water supply and rural electrification but 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 Plan, or even a shelf of schemes for the overall development of the district. The local levels of administration like the Blocks and *Gram Panchayats* (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 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.

(Paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3)

Recommendation

- *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. Preparation of annual plans by the district should be made mandatory and should have the approval of the State Government.*

Financial Management and Accounting Framework

The total flow of funds to the District during 2006-11 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 no uniform system for maintenance of accounts for various schemes. The receipt, utilisation and account of developmental funds is done on mere release of funds to implementing agencies rather than after their actual utilisation. Hence, the reported progress and achievement of these schemes depicting the outcomes do not reflect the true state of affairs.

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.

(Paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2)

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.*

Social Services

Health

The District Health Society (DHS) was required to prepare a perspective plan for the entire mission period and Annual Plan with inputs from the lower tiers of the Government. Since DHS was constituted only in October 2010, Perspective Plan and Annual Plan for the period 2006-11 were not prepared. The process of assessing the health care requirements and gaps in infrastructure, equipment, manpower, etc., as per NRHM stipulation is yet to be done in the district. The district had six Hospitals, 11 CHCs, 61 PHCs and 311 SCs. Except PHCs, the number of other institutions was less than the prescribed norms. The basic health care services required to be provided in the health centres were not available at many 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 and whooping cough was detected in the district during 2006-11. However, 611 cases of measles were detected during 2006-11. No new case of Polio was detected during 2006-11 in the district. Out of 31,197 persons screened up to March 2011 under National AIDS Control Programme in the district, 263 persons were found HIV positive (including 102 fully blown cases).

Separate targets/health indicators for the district

were not prescribed despite the 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 Committee (VHSC) had been formed in the district. Rogi Kalyan Samities (RKSs) have been formed in all the test checked CHCs and PHCs in the district. Except in one PHC, all RKSs were 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.

(Paragraphs 5.1 to 5.1.9)

Recommendations

- *The District Health Society (DHS) was constituted only in October 2010 in the district. It should play a proactive role in implementation of NRHM by 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 Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (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 2006-11.

Higher education is being imparted in the district through a network of 121 Government High Schools (GHS), 206 Government Senior Secondary Schools (GSSS), one Post Graduate Degree College, seven Degree Colleges and one Sanskrit College.

Enrolment in class X has declined from 15,752 in 2006-07 to 15,570 in 2010-11 in the district. The pass percentage in respect of Class X had decreased during 2007-08 as compared to 2006-07. The pass percentage of XI class increased during the period 2007-10 while it decreased substantially during 2010-11. The class XII pass percentage came down by 26 per cent during 2010-11 (70 per cent) as compared to 2009-10.

The infrastructural facilities available in 327 High Schools and Senior Secondary Schools in the district are deficient as 19 schools do not have pucca building, 174 schools have no separate labs for science subjects, 237 schools do not have facility of library for students, 14 schools do not have separate toilets for boys and girls and 201 schools do not have furniture, such as wooden-desks, etc.

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 officers authorised by him had not conducted inspection of the schools in the district during 2006-11.

Thus, many schools in the district lacked basic infrastructure/facilities and the scholarship schemes were not effectively managed due to non-maintenance of updated database of the actual students to be covered for assessing the requirement of funds and delayed the benefits of the scholarships to the eligible students. Shortage of teachers in schools impacted the board results.

(Paragraphs 5.2 to 5.2.4)

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 both 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 periodically and all the eligible students should be provided scholarship as per norms, in a timely manner.*
- *To ensure effective monitoring, the annual inspection of the schools by the DE should be made mandatory.*

Integrated Child Development Services

Five to eight per cent mothers (expectant and nursing) and 16 to 28 per cent children in the age group of six months to six years were not given the benefit of supplementary nutrition during 2006-11. Out of 2950 Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) in the district, only 473 AWCs have Government buildings and the remaining 2477 AWCs were running in private accommodation. There was delay in completion of AWCs ranging from one to 48 months and construction of AWCs in 14 cases could not be taken up due to non-availability of land.

(Paragraph 5.3)

Recommendations

- *The district administration should ensure that land for construction of AWCs is made available before release of funds to executing agencies.*
- *A co-ordinated approach needs to be adopted by the District Programme Officer and the BDOs to ensure timely completion of building works.*

Social Security Pension

Benefit of social security pension to 638 ineligible persons involving an amount of ₹62.59 lakh was given until March 2011 despite their identification in October 2008.

(Paragraph 5.4)

Recommendation

- *To avoid disbursement of social security pension to ineligible persons, district administration should issue suitable instructions to field functionaries viz., Tehsil Welfare Officer to conduct proper verification of applicant's livelihood status in the presence of representatives of Gram Panchayats/Municipalities.*

Water Supply

Out of 10,237 habitations in the district, 67.03 per cent of the habitations were fully covered with drinking water facility, 32.56 per cent were partially covered and the remaining were yet to be covered.

Lack of adequate supervision at departmental level had not only delayed the completion of water supply schemes, but also raised doubts about the quality of works. Further, the targeted beneficiaries were denied adequate and safe drinking water due to non-completion of schemes.

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.

(Paragraphs 5.5 (i) to 5.5 (iii))

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.*

Sanitation and Sewerage

While schemes for sewerage facilities in three out of five towns were yet to be provided, two schemes approved for providing sanitation facilities by March 1997 and December 2000

respectively remained incomplete as of May 2011.

(Paragraph 5.6 (ii))

Recommendation

- *The State/district administration should take effective steps for providing sanitation facilities in the towns in a timely manner.*

Economic Services

Infrastructure-Transportation and Road connectivity

Jogindernagar town of the district has a rail link which is 56 kms away from district headquarters Mandi. The nearest airport at Bhunter (Kullu district) is 62 kms away from Mandi town. Out of the total inhabited 2833 villages in the district, only 1596 villages (as per E-in-C's records) have road connectivity as of March 2011. Thus, 43 per cent of the villages in Mandi district still remain to be provided with road connectivity; acquisition of forest/private land being the main bottleneck.

Out of 981 works taken up during 2006-11 under PMGSY and State Sector schemes, only 144 works (15 per cent) were completed, 757 works were still in progress and the remaining 80 works were lying in a suspended state as of March 2011 due to land disputes, forest clearance and court cases.

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.

(Paragraphs 6.1 to 6.1.1)

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 (VKVNY), 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.

(Paragraphs 6.1.2 (a) to (d))

Recommendations

- *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.*
- *Asset register should be maintained for keeping records of the assets created under various schemes.*

Employment Generation

Under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), audit did not notice any case where 100 days employment demanded was not provided to the beneficiaries. Works such as water conservation, water harvesting and drought proofing etc., which were important to strengthen the natural resource base and to address the cause of poverty were not given priority as envisaged in the MNREGA guidelines. Payment of wages was not made to the workers within the prescribed period of fortnight to ensure security of livelihood.

(Paragraphs 6.2.2 to 6.2.3)

Recommendation

- *State Government should issue instructions to the implementing agencies to ensure prioritisation of works as per MNREGA guidelines and also ensure payment of wages to the workers in time as per provisions of the Act.*

Energy

Out of the 2,833 villages in the district, 2,830 villages have been electrified as of March 2011.

The delay in sanctioning the DPR/finalisation of tenders for electrification of unelectrified

households under RGGVY resulted in cost escalation of ₹10.93 crore.

(Paragraph 6.3)

Recommendation

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

Calamity Relief Fund Scheme

There is recurring problem of diversion of funds under the scheme. Besides, 673 out of 2,819 repair and restoration works after incurring an expenditure of ₹6.51 crore remained incomplete as of May 2011.

(Paragraphs 6.4 (i) to (iii))

Recommendation

- *To avoid diversion of funds under the scheme, the State Government should issue suitable instructions to the district administration to ensure utilisation of funds strictly as per Gol's norms.*

General Services

E-Governance-Sugam Centres

Of the total 50 services to be provided at each Sugam centre, the services to be provided through IT applications at District, Sub Division and Tehsil/Sub Tehsil level were 37, 35 and 33 respectively whereas the remaining informatory services were available over internet. In Mandi District, only 3 to 7 main services with IT applications were being provided as of April 2011 through the Sugam centres against 33 to 37 main 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.

(Paragraphs 7.1 to 7.1.2)

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.

(Paragraphs 7.2.3)

Recommendation

- *Waste management plans need to be finalised by the MCs on priority basis for ensuring 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 sectors which were plagued by cost and time overruns thereby depriving the public of the benefits of these developmental schemes.

(Paragraphs 9.1 to 9.2)

Recommendation

- *Monitoring, inspection and supervision needs to be strengthened at all the levels of local administration to ensure that the programmes are executed timely within the cost and timely corrective action 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 failed to 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 coordinate, 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.

(Chapter 10)