

OVERVIEW

This Report contains one performance audit on Prevention and Control of Dengue in the National Capital Territory of Delhi with financial implication of ₹ 53.69 crore and two paragraphs involving ₹ 83.28 crore.

Some of the major findings detailed in the Report are summarized below:

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Prevention and Control of Dengue in National Capital Territory of Delhi

Delhi has been experiencing outbreaks of dengue since 1967 and various steps had been initiated over the years by the government, municipal corporations and other concerned agencies to prevent and control its occurrence as well as provide medical assistance and relief to afflicted persons. However, dengue continues to occur every year necessitating commitment of significant financial resources to tackle the problem. A performance audit covering the period from January 2013 to December 2015 was conducted to assess whether the steps taken by government agencies and municipal corporations to control dengue were adequate and effective.

Audit observed that despite the recurrence of dengue over the years in the NCT of Delhi and the spike in dengue cases as well as mortalities during 2015, the steps taken by the departments as well as the municipal corporations were not commensurate with the magnitude of the problem though funds were not a constraint. The three municipal corporations (MCsD) of East, North and South as well as New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) lacked an effective surveillance mechanism and only 289 out of 967 reporting units (30 *per cent*) reported data of dengue patients to the State Surveillance Unit thereby undermining its objective of meaningful surveillance enabling timely intervention. There was also no institutional mechanism for collaboration or coordination with concerned departments/agencies for solid waste management, proper sanitation and regulation of construction sites, tyre markets, etc. to control mosquito breeding. The Malaria circle, which is the primary unit for anti-mosquito field operations, also lacked basic infrastructural facilities necessary for them to effectively function. Over 67 *per cent* of the malaria circles lacked water connections, 22 *per cent* lacked electricity connection and 88 *per cent* lacked a landline telephone which impaired their ability to effectively carry out their functions.

Further, the institutional arrangement to respond to outbreaks of dengue was weak. The Dengue Task Force constituted to formulate action plans for containment of dengue remained inactive and Rapid Response Teams were not constituted in MCsD, NDMC, Northern Railway and Delhi Cantonment Board

for taking emergency action to interrupt or reduce transmission and eliminate mosquito breeding sites. Out of 67,578 positive dengue cases reported by hospitals, South Delhi Municipal Corporation, as the nodal agency, intimated only 22,436 cases to the Directorate. For the year 2015, while the hospitals reported 409 dengue deaths, the Death Review Committee confirmed only 60 deaths.

Absence of adequate monitoring of spraying and fogging exercises coupled with lack of standard procedures for selection of suitable insecticides and techniques to be adopted undermined the effectiveness of the anti-mosquito operations. MCsD incurred an expenditure of ₹ 109.43 crore on domestic breeding checkers for targeting larvae in houses without any supervision of the work done or an assessment of their effectiveness. Further, expenditure totalling ₹ 42.85 crore was incurred on anti-mosquito operations adopting techniques and chemical formulations that are not prescribed or recommended by either the Directorate of National Vector Borne Disease Control Program or the Program Guidelines for Containment of Chikungunya and Dengue Epidemic Outbreak. In addition, there was no record of usage of insecticides valued at ₹ 79.76 lakh.

The Government of Delhi spent ₹ 10.04 crore on awareness campaigns for prevention of dengue during 2013-14 to 2015-16. However, the advertisements were released between September and November i.e. after the outbreak of dengue which defeated the objective of creating awareness of measures to prevent the outbreak. Similarly, the MCsD also started their public awareness campaigns in October every year after the monsoons.

Compliance Audit

Re-development of Rajiv Gandhi Chowk

Connaught Place (CP) was originally designed in 1929 as a shopping-cum-residential complex. Connaught Place was re-named as Rajiv Gandhi Chowk in the year 1995. Over the years, the ageing process as well as *ad hoc* changes and additions to the structure had resulted in deterioration of the overall condition of the heritage complex and defacement of its original façade. Further, development of the underground Palika Bazar and Rajiv Chowk Metro Interchange Terminal inside the inner circle increased footfalls and number of vehicles in CP resulting in traffic congestion and conflict between vehicular and pedestrian on roads. Increase in commercial activities and growing population put additional pressure on the civic infrastructure of CP.

The over-arching objective of the project was to restore the architectural and heritage character of CP while at the same time facilitating and easing traffic

and pedestrian movement to improve the overall ambience and experience of the visitors to this premier commercial centre in the national capital. This objective could not be achieved. The scope of the project as envisaged in the Detailed Project Report was drastically reduced from ₹ 615.20 crore to ₹ 477.02 crore. Restoration of the facade was completed only in the outer and inner circles while study to ascertain the structural stability of the buildings was not carried out. Facilities like subways, escalators, underground parking space and improvement of landscaping and lighting intended to ease both traffic and pedestrian movement and improve visitors' experience were not completed.

Audit also observed that expenditure amounting to ₹ 18.05 crore on utility corridors, surface development, water supply and flooring of corridors was either unfruitful or was avoidable. In addition, the efficacy of augmentation of fire-fighting capabilities done at a cost of ₹ 4.97 crore could not be assured in audit. The turnkey consultant, Engineers India Limited, did not submit the financial implication of change in technology adopted for construction of service tunnel to NDMC for review and decision despite increase in cost from the original ₹ 71.21 crore to ₹ 192.95 crore.

Advertisement and Publicity Campaigns of the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi

The Directorate of Information and Publicity (DIP) of the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi is responsible for informing and publicising the programs, policies and activities of the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) and looks after the publicity requirements of all its departments.

In May 2015, the Hon'ble Supreme Court approved 'Guidelines on Content Regulation of Government Advertising' with a view to preventing arbitrary use of public funds for advertising without any attendant public interest. Audit test checked the records of DIP as well as that of five other departments and the Delhi Jal Board relating to advertisements released during the period from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2016 in order to ascertain whether expenditure on publicity and advertisements was being incurred economically, efficiently and effectively in accordance with general principles of financial propriety. The guidelines and principles approved by the apex Court were adopted as the benchmark for assessing and evaluating the expenditure incurred.

GNCTD incurred an expenditure of ₹ 47.74 crore during 2013-14 and ₹ 27.43 crore during 2014-15. During 2015-16, the expenditure incurred was ₹ 101.46 crore including ₹ 20.23 crore paid by DIP in 2016-17 but relating to advertisements of 2015-16. In addition, there was expenditure by other departments and committed liabilities in respect of print and outdoor media during 2015-16 details of which were not provided to Audit.

Advertisements and publicity campaigns funded from the public exchequer should be related to the Government's responsibilities and be explicitly directed at informing the public of the State/Union Territory concerned of the government's policies, programs, services and initiatives. On test check of records, Audit observed that expenditure of ₹ 24.29 crore was incurred on advertisements and publicity campaigns that were not in conformity with the generally accepted principles of financial propriety or the guidelines on content regulation approved by the Hon'ble Supreme Court. Further, over 85 *per cent* of expenditure of ₹ 33.40 crore incurred in one specific publicity campaign pertained to advertisements released outside the NCT of Delhi which was beyond the responsibility of the GNCTD. There was also no prior exercise to identify target audiences or necessary visibility or outreach nor was there any post campaign impact assessment. Audit also noted that while 'Shabdarth' was established with the stated objective of economizing expenditure on advertisements, this was not achieved. Non-adherence to extant instructions relating to inclusion of cost estimates in proposals for release of advertisements/publicity campaigns while seeking approval of the competent authority coupled with improper or non-maintenance of necessary registers undermined expenditure control and provided no assurance as to the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the expenditure incurred and liabilities created on advertisements and publicity.