CHAPTER - IV

Social Infrastructure

4.1 Introduction

Social infrastructure under the PMDP included, *inter alia,* creation of two All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMSs) like institutions for health care in the State; establishment of Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Jammu and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Jammu to be executed by the GoI; one lakh youth to be trained for self-employment and wage employment placement linked skilled training under Himayat scheme; construction of indoor and outdoor stadia in the erstwhile State to encourage sports persons and to increase economic activity in the region. Other schemes like enhanced rate of remuneration to Special Police Officers (SPOs) from ₹ 3,000 per month to ₹ 6,000 per month for two years; undertaking Pashmina promotion programme etc. are also part of this segment.

In the Social Infrastructure segment of the PMDP, ten projects with a total outlay of ₹ 8,057 crore were taken up for development, out of which two projects were selected for detailed test check. These were:

- The ‘Himayat’ scheme with a total outlay of ₹ 1,601.51 crore including an infusion of ₹ 250 crore exclusively from funds allocated under the PMDP.
- Enhanced rate of remuneration to SPOs with an estimated cost of ₹ 450 crore for a two year period from funds allocated under the PMDP.

Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj

4.2 Stepping up efforts under Himayat scheme

4.2.1 Introduction

The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), GoI, launched ‘Himayat’ (October 2011) which subsequently functioned as a separate vertical under the scheme of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) for the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir which covered the urban as well as rural youth under both categories of:

- Below Poverty Line (BPL); and
- Above Poverty Line (APL)

In order to impart skills to facilitate employment in the formal sector as well as for self-employment, training of one lakh youth at an estimated cost of ₹ 1,601.51 crore over a period of five years, with ₹ 250 crore as the funding under the PMDP was fixed (November 2015) by the MoRD, GoI. Subsequently, MoRD, GoI revised (July 2016) this target to 1.24 lakh youth, along with placement assurance of at least 70 *per cent* of the target group to be achieved by November 2020. The training, both residential and non-residential was to be imparted for courses on computer oriented skills, soft skills, communication skills in English as well as technical skills etc. The duration of courses was to range from three to twelve months.

4.2.2 Structural mechanism

Although the State Government had established a Jammu & Kashmir State Rural Livelihood Mission (JKSRLM), the Himayat Management Mission, a dedicated Mission of GoJ&K, was specifically constituted to implement the programme[1] in the erstwhile state of J&K. This Mission, was to work under the supervision of Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, GoJ&K with a Himayat Mission Management Unit (HMMU) at the State level, headed by a Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Units in Gram Panchayat (GP) at the village level. The field units of HMMU were responsible for identification and counselling of the youth for generating awareness about the programme and facilitating placement in support with the Programme Implementing Agencies (PIAs), who were external agencies to be selected by HMMU on the recommendation of National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad and approval by State Level Project Review Committee (SLPRC).

As of June 2019, 28 PIAs were engaged for training youth in various trades/ skills through 54 training centres.

4.2.3 Audit Sample

The HMMU and 14[2] out of 54 training centres imparting training were selected by Simple Random Sampling Without Replacement (SRSWOR) method and the beneficiaries in the 14 training centres sampled were selected randomly for detailed scrutiny.

4.2.4 Implementation

Examination (June 2019) of the records relating to implementation of the programme, revealed that although the HMMU was established (July 2016) at the State level, no support staff at district and block levels were engaged to assist HMMU in effective implementation of the programme. The GPs were therefore not involved in reaching out to the poorest households within their jurisdiction to generate awareness and in facilitating mobilisation of the youth (up to January 2019), for implementation of the programme at grass root level. The participation in the activities by GPs was initiated by the Department only from January 2019 onwards. Consequently the progress required to be achieved by March 2019 was not achieved.

The Director Finance, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj stated (August 2020) that scheme was initially promoted through Self Help Groups (SHGs) formed under the UMEED[3] programme of JKSRLM, as Panchayats were constituted only at the fag end of 2018 and the number of PIAs were very less during the early part of the scheme implementation.

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[1] Mission Document.

[2] 1. Baba Saheb Ambedkar, Delhi; 2. Brite Neon, Jammu; 3. Data Pro, Jammu; 4. Earthcon Construction, Srinagar; 5. Fidelis Corporate Solutions Private Limited; 6. ICA, Samba; 7. IL&FS- 1, Budgam; 8. IL&FS-1, Kupwara; 9. IL&FS 1 Udhampur; 10. Intelligence Manpower, Kathua; 11. JKDAG, Budgam; 12. Mass Info Tech, Kathua; 13. Rooman Technology; and 14. Syadwad, Delhi.

[3] A scheme being operated by the JKSRLM.

The reply is not relevant as the absence of support staff at district and block levels to coordinate on behalf of the HMMU limited the impact of the scheme.

4.2.5 Planning

The scheme guidelines[4] envisage the preparation of a State Perspective Implementation Plan (SPIP) to articulate strategies to achieve the projected outputs. This was to be followed by the preparation of an Annual Action Plan, to be submitted to the GoI by 01 December of each year. The SPIP was required to project the number of youth, their skill requirements, for a medium term covering seven years, the trades and sectors covered for which training needed to be imparted and identification of areas for innovation and for special projects as well as placement for the beneficiaries trained under the scheme. The baseline information from Skill Gap Assessment (SGA), market scans and surveys and literature reviews etc. was to be collated to undertake a situation analysis of the scenarios in the State to capture details of youth from various categories of poor and vulnerable communities, so as to impart skills to them through training.

Audit noticed (May 2019) that the SPIP covering a period of seven years was not prepared and instead the Mission submitted (July 2016) a three year plan for the first phase for the period from 2016 to 2019, followed by another three year plan in February 2019, for the period from 2019 to 2022. The plans were also submitted without identification of trades to be covered under the programme.

In the absence of the baseline survey, the Department could not prepare the situation analysis of the scenario in the State for skilling the poor which was expected to capture the details of various categories of youth from the poor and vulnerable sectors to be brought into skilling programmes with the result that the objective to bridge the skill gap of the State could be achieved partially only, as of August 2020.

The Director Finance, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, GoJ&K stated (August 2020) that Ministry of Rural Development, GoI desired that State should submit a three-year Action Plan for skill/ training of youth in various skills and their subsequent placements in private sector and that the HMMU was in the process of identification of institutions/ agencies to conduct skill gap analysis for which the proposal was under submission with the Administrative Department.

The reply is however silent as to how the inputs to the Action Plan were to flow as the baseline information from the skill gap assessment, a necessary prerequisite, was yet to be conducted (August 2020).

Thus, inefficient planning and without any critical inputs hampered the scheme in achieving its desired goals as detailed in paragraph 4.1.1.

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4 Para 4.6 of the Guidelines issued on July 2016.

4.2.6 Financial Management

Himayat scheme is a separate vertical of DDU-GKY which is funded fully by the GoI for skill training modules. These training modules were to be implemented through the State Government by a dedicated Himayat Mission Management Unit (HMMU). The annual allocation[5] for the scheme was to be released by the GoI, on the basis of poverty ratios and absorption capacity of States.

Initially, the funds received from GoI were required to be transferred to Mission Director, State Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLM) within a period of three days by the State Government, subsequently increased (September 2018) to 15 days. In case of delay in release of funds to the Mission Director within the prescribed period, the State Government was to pay 12 *per cent* interest for the period of delay beyond the specified period.

The position of funds released and expenditure incurred during the period from 2016 to 2019 is detailed in **Table 4.2.1**.

Table 4.2.1: Financial position
(as on 31 March 2019)

(₹ in crore)

Year	Opening Balance	Funds sanctioned by GoI	Delay in release by GoJ&K	Total availability	Expenditure (Percentage)	Unutilised funds
2016-17	-	45.22	--	46.72	30.40 (65)	16.32
		1.50	222 days			
2017-18	16.32	2.36	--	76.42	28.02 (37)	48.40
		57.74	107 days			
2018-19	48.40	64.67	Between 13 and 16 days	179.32	76.42 (43)	102.90
		66.25	--			
Total		**237.74**		**302.46**	**134.84 (57)**	

(Source: Receipt Expenditure Statement of Himayat Mission)

The funds were released after delays ranging between 13 days to 222 days during the period from 2016-17 to 2018-19. Accordingly, the State Government was liable to pay interest of ₹ 2.81 crore to the Mission on account of delayed releases (May 2019).

The Joint Director (Planning) Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, GoJ&K, while accepting the observation stated (June 2020) that delay in release of funds was due to time taken to follow up the processing procedures between the Administrative Department and the Finance Department, GoJ&K.

Further, during the year 2019-20, an amount of ₹ 234.94 crore was sanctioned by the GoI, against which GoJ&K released ₹ 52.68 crore in favour of the Mission and retained ₹ 182.26 crore. An expenditure of ₹ 23.83 crore was incurred during the year leaving unutilized balance of ₹ 314.01 crore at the close of 31 March 2020.

4.2.6.1 Withdrawal of funds

The HMMU directed (March 2017) the Programme Implementing Agencies (PIAs) to use a single dedicated bank account for all receipts and linked disbursements to be

[5] As per the para 5.1 of the guidelines.

mapped to the Central Plan Scheme Monitoring System (CPSMS) of GoI in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). The PIAs were required to transfer the amounts from this dedicated Bank account only when the funds were required to be disbursed.

As per the related records, three[6] PIAs engaged by the HMMU for imparting training had withdrawn ₹ 23.01 crore from the dedicated DDU-GKY Bank account during the period from 2017 to 2019 as given in **Table 4.2.2**.

Audit noticed (May 2019) that instead of making payment from the dedicated account, these three PIAs transferred the amounts as given in **Table 4.2.2** to other Bank accounts in violation of the SOP. Only one[7] refunded ₹ 9.13 crore. The balance ₹ 13.88 crore (60 *per cent*) was with the PIAs, even after two years had lapsed.

Table 4.2.2: Withdrawal of funds
(as on June 2019)

(₹ in crore)

Sl. No.	Name of Programme Implementing Agency	Amount advanced	Amount withdrawn	Amount recouped	Amount outstanding	Penalty	Total pending Recovery
1.	M/s Surya Wires Private Limited	12.36	9.37	9.13	0.24	0.29	0.53
2.	M/s Apollo Medskills Limited	8.18	7.39	0.00	7.39	0.16	7.55
3.	M/s Orion Edutech Private Limited	7.39	6.25	0.00	6.25	0.16	6.41
	Total	**27.93**	**23.01**	**9.13**	**13.88**	**0.61**	**14.49**

(Source: Mission records)

On this being pointed out (May 2019), the Director Finance, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj stated (August 2020) that M/s Surya Wires Private Limited had returned/ deposited ₹ 9.13 crore only out of ₹ 9.37 crore up to the end of March 2019. No further details of the recoupment of the balance ₹ 13.88 crore were furnished.

When the matter was further pursued (January 2021) with the Department, details of the updated status of recoupment, the COO, Himayat furnished the following updated information:

- In case of M/s Surya Wires Pvt. Ltd., ₹ 10.09 crore has been recouped and a penalty of ₹ 0.29 crore has been imposed by the HMMU.
- In the case of M/s Apollo Medskills Limited, the entire amount of ₹ 7.39 crore has been recouped and the HMMU has imposed a penalty of ₹ 0.16 crore.
- In case of M/s Orion Edutech Pvt. Ltd., ₹ 3.14 crore has been recouped and a penalty of ₹ 0.16 lakh has been imposed by the HMMU.

[6] 1. M/s Appolo Medskills Limited; 2. M/s Orion Edutech Private Limited; and 3. M/s Surya wires Limited.

[7] M/s Surya Wires Private Limited.

As can be seen from the chronology of events, funds were made available to the PIAs without monitoring their requirement in gross violation of the SOP. Further, although this had been pointed out in the first audit reports of the PIAs, there was no concerted action by HMMU to ensure recovery of the diverted amounts at the earliest.

Thus, temporary embezzlement of a total amount of ₹ 23.01 crore by three PIAs in gross violation of the SOP was not acted upon.

The reasons for such lapse involving a substantial amount of ₹ 23.01 crore and giving undue benefit to private entities needs to be investigated and responsibility needs to be fixed. Further, adequate steps should be taken to ensure that such lapses do not occur in future.

4.2.6.2 Separate Bank Account for Administrative cost

As per instructions issued (September 2018) by the MoRD, GoI, a separate dedicated Bank account for transactions relating to administrative cost was required to be opened under this scheme. However, a separate Bank account was opened by the HMMU only on 29 January 2020 in the J&K Bank, nearly three years after implementation of the scheme, that too, after specifically being instructed (September 2018) by the GoI. In the absence of a separate Bank account from 18 September 2018 to 28 January 2020, the expenditure related to administrative expenses were not maintained in a transparent manner and therefore the same could not be examined by Audit, defeating the very purpose for which the instructions were issued.

Adequate steps should be taken to ensure that such lapses do not occur in future.

4.2.6.3 Deduction of Income Tax at Source

As per section 194 of Income Tax Act, Income Tax is to be deducted when funds were provided to PIAs for imparting training as Tax Deduction at Source (TDS). It was, however, noticed (May 2019) that in case of seven PIAs[8], TDS of ₹ 55 lakh was not deducted from these PIAs who were imparting training to unemployed youth, at source from payments made to these PIAs thereby extending undue benefit to these PIAs as well as violating the provisions of the Act.

On this being pointed out (May 2019), the Director Finance, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, GoJ&K while accepting (August 2020) the observation on non-deduction of TDS (Income Tax) stated that the same was due to non-allotment of TAN numbers. It was further stated that the same would be recovered from the concerned PIAs while releasing second instalment.

The provisions regarding deduction of Income Tax from the payments to PIAs may be stringently enforced by the Department, in order to avoid penalties being imposed.

[8] 1. Apollo Medskills; 2 Cap Foundation; 3. IL&FS; 4. Manpower Group; 5. Orion Education; 6. Surya Wires; and 7. Team Lease Services.

4.2.7 Commencement of Projects

The HMMU issues orders regarding deemed date of commencement of the projects after these projects are sanctioned. It was imperative for the PIAs to adhere to the time schedule for commencement of the projects for effective implementation of programme. However, as seen from the records of the COO, HMMU, there were significant delays in commencement of projects in the case of 20 PIAs, where the difference between deemed date of commencement and the actual date of commencement of the projects was in a range of 9 days and 169 days, despite availability of funds and engagement of a Technical Support Agency (TSA).

4.2.7.1 Progress in training and placement of youth

Training[9] in domain areas/ skills with an assured employment after completion of training to the youth is provided by PIAs under Himayat programme. The PIAs are responsible for conducting training of youth with expected outcome of 70 *per cent* of trainees to be placed at entry level service/ manufacturing sector jobs within or outside the State. The GoJ&K was requested[10] to mobilise candidates for training and activate existing Self Help Groups (SHGs) for this purpose. The year wise position of targets fixed for training of unemployed youth, achievements and trained youth placed in jobs during the years from 2016 to 2019 is given in **Table 4.2.3**.

Table 4.2.3: Position of trainings and placements

Sl. No.	Year	Targets (Number of Trainees)	Achievements (Percentage)	Placements made (percentage *vis-a-vis* total numbers trained)
1.	2016-17	9,200	0 (0)	0 (0)
2.	2017-18	18,352	123 (1)	0 (0)
3.	2018-19	25,995	4,371 (17)	732 (17)
	Total	**53,547**	**4,494 (8 *per cent*)**	**732 (16 *per cent*)**

(Source: Records of Himayat Mission)

As seen from the **Table 4.2.3**, although a target number of 53,547 youth were to be trained during the period from 2016 to 2019, the achievement was only 4,494 (8 *per cent)*[11]. There were 27 active PIAs which had provided training to 4,494 candidates and 6,871 candidates were undergoing training as of 31 March 2019. Though during the years 2016-17 and 2017-18, only 123 youth were trained and no placements thereof were made during these years. Further, out of a total of 4,494 youth trained, only 732 youth (16 *per cent*) were placed in jobs during the period from 2016 to 2019. For the year 2019-20, no targets were fixed though 10,045 unemployed youth were trained against which 2,582 youth (26 *per cent*) were placed in jobs.

9 Duration of Training programs were ranging from 3 to 12 months.

10 In the review meeting held by the Principal Secretary to Prime Minister on 13 August 2016.

11 Training provided in trades viz. Test Engineer software, Banking associate, Retail sales associate, Health care Multipurpose worker, Medical Laboratory Technician, Sales Director, Insurance Sales associate, Medical sales representative, Light Motor Vehicle (LMV) Driver level-III, Hospitality Assistant, Security Guard, Assistant Electrician, Fashion Designer, Sewing Machine operator etc.

The Director Finance, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, GoJ&K stated (August 2020) that there were challenges in providing placement to the candidates as there was low potential of employment within the State due to limited organised private sector opportunities and unwillingness of candidates to move out of the State for taking up jobs outside the State. To increase the number of placements, the HMMU had organised a Job fair in June 2019 wherein 10 Companies offered jobs to 194 candidates. Further, eight more job fairs had been conducted for providing job opportunities to the trained candidates.

The reply is partially correct as several new institutions like IIT, IIM, specialised Institutions have been set up in the state during this period.

Thus, despite the increased achievement in 2019-20, there needs to be more concerted efforts to make the scheme a success.

4.2.8 Human Resource Management

To oversee the implementation of the programme, the GoJ&K was required to appoint adequate staff so that a fulltime dedicated team headed by Chief Operating Officer (COO) is in place. The Block Programme Managers (BPM) as well as number of Community Resource Persons (CRP) were also required to be appointed and cost of professionals engaged at the block level and below was provided for in the programme costs.

As of March 2019, only 6 posts[12] against 16 sanctioned posts[13] were filled/ occupied, a shortfall of 63 *per cent* at the Apex level. The position did not improve during 2019-20, as the vacancy was 54 *per cent* of the available posts as of March 2020. At district and block level, the shortfall was 100 *per cent* although 340 posts [14] were sanctioned.

The Director Finance, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, GoJ&K stated (August 2020) that proposal for engagement of staff at State/ district level on outsourced basis, on the suggestion of MoRD, GoI was under process in the Administrative Department.

The proposal of HMMU for engagement of staff on outsourced basis continues to remain under process with the Administrative Department.

The GoJ&K may consider taking a decision on the proposal on a priority basis.

4.2.9 Monitoring mechanism

A comprehensive approach was required to assist the PIAs and States in achievement of agreed goals of this scheme. To monitor the performance of PIAs against agreed performance indicators, the concurrent monitoring through web based internet application was required along with an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system

12 COO (1), SPMs (3), DEO (2).
13 COO (1), SPMs (7), SO (1), PA (1), Accounts Assistant (2), DEO (4).
14 District Functionaries (22), Block Functionaries (318).

and deployment of independent monitors. High level quality teams were required to be established within PIA and the HMMU to ensure quality monitoring.

Audit examination of records (May 2019) revealed that the Mission had engaged (January 2019) NABARD Consultancy Services (NABCONS) as the Technical Support Agency (TSA). However, the program faced challenges due to non-deployment of sufficient staff by the TSA to undertake the envisaged activities. The Ministry of Rural Development, GoI and GoJ&K were directed[15] (November 2017), to accelerate synergies as well as pace of implementation and the GoJ&K was to appoint seven to eight thematic specialists to enhance industry connect of the related components of the scheme which was yet to be done (August 2020). Thus, quality monitoring teams were not in place despite being provided for under the scheme.

The Director Finance, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, GoJ&K stated (August 2020) that HMMU had engaged NABCONS as TSA to undertake concurrent monitoring of the projects in May 2018 and that with respect to deployment of staff by NABCONS all the staff in required number were deployed by them as per MOU between HMMU and NABCONS. Further, a two days Chief Executive Officers meet was organised by HMMU during February 2020 at Jammu and dignitaries from the Industry committed to provide job opportunities to Himayat trained candidates besides offering linkages to PIAs in supporting other activities of the project.

However, as was seen from the communication (January 2019) of the COO, HMMU to the Vice President, NABCONS, New Delhi, those were the difficulties being faced by the HMMU in terms of both number and capacity of the human resource, deployed by the NABCONS.

The monitoring mechanism needs to be strengthened for the scheme to attain the goals set.

4.2.10 Impact assessment

As per guidelines[16] of the scheme, impact assessment was required to be conducted by the HMMU.

Audit, however, observed that no impact assessment and evaluation of the scheme had been conducted through independent studies by the HMMU as of June 2020.

To assess impact of the scheme on the rural/ urban youth of the State, Audit interacted with 211 beneficiaries in selected 13 training centres (out of 54 training centres). Some of the important aspects relating to programme management, provision of basic amenities, facilities provided to the youth, awareness of masses, satisfaction level of beneficiaries etc., derived from the interviews held are mentioned in the **Table 4.2.4**.

[15] As per decision taken in the review meeting held by the Union Home Secretary on 20-30 November 2017.

[16] Para 3.2.1.7 (v) of the Scheme guidelines.

Table 4.2.4: Beneficiary interview

Sl. No.	Questionnaire	Ratio	Response (In numbers)	Percentage
1.	Whether the youth under training is residential/ Non-residential	Residential/ Non-residential	74/137	35/65
2.	Qualification of youth undergoing training	10th and above but under-Graduate/ Graduate	193/18	91/9
3.	Gender of the youth	Male/ Female	114/97	54/46
4.	Category: whether General/ SC, ST, OBC	General/ SC, ST, OBC	128/83	61/39
5.	Whether the youth is under training or has completed the training period	Under training/ trained	211	100
6.	Awareness of the youth about the programme/ scheme	Through counselling/ relatives, friends	76/135	36/64
7.	How the youth was selected for training	Aptitude test/ otherwise	197/14	93/7
8.	Whether the stream was selected by the youth or was it allotted by the training centre	By the youth/ by the Centre	129/82	61/39
9.	Quality of food and accommodation available at the training centre	Good/ Normal	74/0 (only residential)	100
10.	Whether admissible payment of honorarium (non-residential) has been received or not	Received/ Not received	88/49 (Interacted 137 only)	64/36
11.	Satisfaction level the youth regarding Job opportunities	Yes/ No	211/0	100

(Source: Beneficiary Survey Reports)

The Director Finance Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, GoJ&K stated (August 2020) that extensive impact assessment was not conducted for the programme but individual success stories of various candidates undergoing skill training who were placed in different Companies had been recorded and the Mission would undertake impact assessment and evaluation once the substantial number of trainees with assured placement is achieved.

Home Department

4.3 Enhanced rate of remuneration to Special Police Officers (SPOs) from ₹ 3,000 per month to ₹ 6,000 per month

4.3.1 Introduction

In order to augment operational capability of the erstwhile State police, a scheme for engagement of Special Police Officers (SPOs) was introduced in 1995. Although, this scheme was in existence since 1995, a specific project under the PMDP of GoI for ₹ 450 crore was approved (March 2016) with the objective of improving living conditions of Special Police Officers (SPOs) by enhancing their monthly remuneration in a graded manner[17] from ₹ 3,000 to a maximum of ₹ 6,000, with effect from January 2016. The project was to be implemented for two financial years 2015 to 2017 or up to the currency of Security Related Expenditure (SRE) scheme, whichever was earlier.

[17] Condition 1 of the order dated 5 January 2016.

Out of 79 auditee units, 20 units were selected for detailed check by judgmental sampling method by adopting the criteria of maximum number of SPOs deployed for sample selection.

In this project, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), GoI was to provide resource support to the State Government by reimbursement of expenditure through Security Related Expenditure (SRE). At the State level, the project was implemented by Director General of Police (DGP) under the overall supervision of Principal Secretary, Home Department, GoJ&K with Senior Superintendents of Police (SSPs) as implementing agencies.

Scrutiny of performance of SPOs by the Department (March 2019) at the behest of GoI resulted in disengagement of 2,650 SPOs (18 *per cent*) out of 14,539 SPOs engaged during the period from 2013 to 2019.

The entire cost of the project of ₹ 450 crore had been incurred by the Department while regular honorarium charges of SPOs were booked under SRE being reimbursed by the GoI.

4.3.2 Compliance to Instructions

I. Vacant Posts

Total number of 25,474 posts of SPOs were sanctioned by GoI during the year 1995 and thereafter 10,000 additional posts of SPOs were sanctioned in September 2016, raising the total number of sanctioned posts of SPOs to 35,474. Audit observed that only 30,231 SPOs were in position as on September 2019 against 35,474 sanctioned posts and total SPOs in position increased to only 32,169 as of August 2020, leaving a vacancy of 3,305 (about 9 *per cent*) despite the increased honorarium.

Thus, despite the incentive provided under the Scheme the vacancies of the order of nine *per cent* continued to exist.

II. Retention of SPOs

The MHA, GoI directed (August 2017) that 4,251[18] posts of SPOs which were lying vacant, were required to be kept in abeyance till the process adopted by the GoJ&K for their recruitment was approved by the GoI. Instructions were issued (August 2017) by the Police Headquarters (PHQ), GoJ&K that there would be no engagement of SPOs till further orders from the MHA, GoI. However, 1,066 SPOs in 12 sampled offices of the Department were retained in excess of the sanctioned limit and wages up to December 2017 were drawn contrary to the said instructions.

The Department stated (August 2020) that due to late receipt of the MHA communication, the process of engagement continued and concurrence for 940 SPOs engaged during the period was accorded by the MHA in March 2018.

[18] 1,089 out of 25,474 (upto September 2016) sanctioned posts and 3,162 out of 10,000 (from September 2016) sanctioned posts.

The reply is not acceptable as 1,066 SPOs were retained though concurrence for retention was for 940 SPOs only.

Thus, manpower in excess of the authorised numbers continue and are being paid without regularisation of their services.

It is recommended that the existing vacancies be filled up expeditiously with adherence to due process so as to achieve the benefits proposed in the Scheme.