

Executive Summary

The Performance Audit of Saryu Nahar Pariyojana (SNP) was carried out focusing on the execution of works during April 2017 to March 2022. It aims at assessing the efficiency and economy in the implementation of the project, identifying the lapses, if any, in obtaining the benefits envisaged from the project, and suggest to the State Government for corrections and improvements.

SNP was formulated in 1982 at an estimated cost of ₹ 299.20 crore by enlarging the scope of Left Bank Ghaghara canal project which was formulated by the State Government in the year 1978 to irrigate 3.54 lakh hectare area of trans-Ghaghara region in the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh. A Culturable Command Area (CCA) of 11.29 lakh hectare was to be created under the project covering nine eastern districts of Uttar Pradesh. An irrigation potential of 14.04 lakh hectare was to be generated in the CCA of 11.29 lakh hectare area. SNP was commissioned in December 2021 at an expenditure of ₹ 10,003.11 crore (March 2022). SNP received funds from the State Government resources, central assistance from Government of India under Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programmes, National Project and Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana and loan from National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

The project suffered majorly due to delay in acquisition/purchase of land required for the project and delayed funding. The Department took long time in purchasing land from the farmers which not only delayed the completion of the project but also put extra financial burden on the public exchequer because of cost escalations including hike in amount of land compensations to the farmers. The project was not provided funds as per the annual requirements which also hindered the progress of works.

Audit noticed that detailed estimates were prepared without approval to Longitudinal section of canals and drawings of the masonry structures which led to significant changes in the scope of contracts. Cost estimates were not prepared as per the norms prescribed in the Schedule of Rates and in the Detailed Project Reports due to which there were cases of overestimation in the work's estimates.

Contract management was weak. The tenders were invited without technical sanctions. Insufficient time was given to the bidders to submit the bids. Instances of excess expenditure and undue advantage to the contractors were noticed. Quality assurance in the execution of works was weak as prescribed tests for earth works and masonry works were not carried out as per norms.

The project was commissioned in December 2021 after almost 40 years from the date of start of works. However, many of the canals were incomplete/not taken up for construction. Rapti Main Canal and its distribution system was not utilised for want of outlets and sumps to carry water from canal to fields. Command area development works were completed only in 20 per cent CCA hindering the flow of water from canals to field.

Recommendations:

- *The State Government should investigate the reasons for incorrect assessment of the requirements of the project leading to significant variations in the scope of works during execution and consequential delays in the completion of project.*
- *The State Government should carry out comprehensive field surveys to determine the actual area covered with the Saryu Nahar Pariyojana for correct assessment of required development work and for effective irrigation planning.*
- *In view of the persistent situation of time and cost overrun in many of the schemes/programmes, the State Government should fix responsibility for lapses and delays in project execution.*
- *The State Government should find out the circumstances under which the contracts were awarded without finalising designs and drawings and quantities of works.*
- *The quality of construction of the major structures of the project should be verified.*
- *Internal control mechanism should be strengthened through regular internal audits, technical inspections and maintaining the records and documents.*
- *The canals constructed under Rapti Main Canal and its distribution system should immediately be put to use by constructing outlets, sumps in the canals and field channels and drains below the outlets.*
- *There is an urgent need to identify the solution for providing adequate water in the command area of the Saryu Nahar Pariyojana, especially in Rabi season so that farmers can get the expected benefits.*
- *Water user associations should be formed immediately to ensure equal distribution of available water in the canal network.*
- *Maintenance of created assets should be ensured to keep the assets usable in order to get the envisaged benefits.*