

Highlights

A performance audit of ARWSP, covering the period from April 2002 to March 2007, was conducted between June and October 2007. This involved field audit of the relevant records of the Department of Drinking Water Supply (Ministry of Rural Development), State Governments, and District and State Implementing Agencies (Public Health Engineering Departments, Jal Nigams etc.) in 26 States. The audit revealed the following:

- Surveys of habitations at periodic intervals are important in assessing ground-level coverage of access to safe drinking water. There were significant deficiencies in the conduct of the 2003 National Habitation Survey at the States, adversely affecting assurance regarding the quality and reliability of the survey data, and thus its utility for planning purposes.

(Paragraph 2.1)

- In the absence of Annual Action Plans based on a detailed and comprehensive habitation-wise analysis in many States, targets were being fixed on a numerical basis, and works taken up in an ad hoc manner. This adversely impacts the coverage of habitations, especially the prioritization for incomplete works and Not Covered (NC)/ Partially Covered (PC) habitations.

(Paragraph 2.2)

- There were several instances of deficient financial control, besides instances of inadmissible expenditure and diversion of ARWSP funds.

(Paragraph 2.4 and Chapter 3)

- Contrary to the scheme's objectives, slip back of fully-covered habitations and re-emergence of problem habitations continued to be a major problem, thus raising the issue of indefinite continuity of the programme.

(Paragraph 2.5)

- States did not pay adequate attention to water quality. The infrastructure for testing and monitoring water quality, especially at the District level, was inadequate and periodic testing requirements were not complied with. Distribution and utilisation of field testing kits at the GP/ VWSC level was also poor.

(Paragraph 2.6)

- Some States had initiated innovative practices for water sustainability, including implementation of a State-wide water transmission grid, use of IEC campaigns for promoting water conservation, and use of remote sensing technology for assessment of impact of recharge structures. However, many States did not take adequate measures for ensuring sustainability of water resources especially ground water. The proportion of schemes relying on

ground water sources was very high in many States. In the absence of adequate attention being paid to sustainability, the slip back of habitations may continue to remain a major area of concern.

(Paragraph 2.7)

- There were significant deficiencies in the implementation of the demand-driven, participatory approach of Swajaldhara. In many cases, the beneficiary contribution, which is at the core of Swajaldhara, had not been fully received. There were numerous cases of non-execution and delayed execution of Swajaldhara schemes and the financial control, in terms of maintenance of records, audit of accounts and adherence to stipulated procedures was weak.

(Paragraph 2.9 and Chapter 3)

- There were numerous deficiencies in execution and implementation of works. These included cases of time and cost-overrun, non-completion/delayed completion of works, non-functional/defunct works, delayed completion and non-completion of water quality mission projects, incorrect prioritization of works, wasteful and unfruitful expenditure, and expenditure on unapproved items.

(Chapter 3)