

## **National E- Governance plan can be achieved in J K over 10 years CAG**

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Jammu, Sep 29 (PTI) The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India has criticised the Jammu and Kashmir government for its failure in implementing the National e-Governance Plan, saying the objective of making all local public services accessible to the common man could not be achieved in the Union territory over a period of around 10 years.

In its report on Social, General, Economic (Non-Public Sector Undertakings) sectors for the financial year ended March 31, 2017, the CAG also highlighted the shortcomings in the National Afforestation Programme (NAP) and said no annual report was prepared by the erstwhile state's forest development agency since its inception in July 2010.

The report, tabled in Parliament recently, said against the approved outlay of Rs 212.10 crore for implementation of six schemes by the Information Technology Department under the NeGP, Rs 60.38 crore (28 per cent) was released by the Centre to Jammu and Kashmir.

“Balance outlay of Rs 151.72 crore (72 per cent) could not be received as the confirmation regarding contribution of 20 per cent State share had not been provided to Government of India. Overall fund utilisation during 2012-17 was only 41 per cent as on 31 March 2017,” the CAG said.

It said the objective of providing connectivity under State Wide Area Network (SWAN) project could not be achieved as against the amount of Rs 15.25 crore received for its implementation, Rs 6.90 crore was surrendered and Rs 7.92 crore remained blocked.

“Complete potential of State Data Centre (SDC) was not being utilised in absence of SWAN and backend computerisation of user departments. Failure to firm up the requirements jeopardised the work on the State Service Delivery Gateway (SSDG) project,” it said, adding, implementation of the Common Service Centres project was impacted due to lack of coordinated efforts in ensuring availability of services, absence of a reliable connectivity, lack of awareness or sensitisation and delays in the roll out process.

On the NAP, the CAG said the overall forest cover to geographical area in Jammu and Kashmir decreased from 16.09 percent in 2009 to 15.78 per cent in 2015.

“Against target of 66 percent of geographical area in hills to be covered under forest and tree cover as per National Forest Policy 1988, only 24.02 per cent was under forest and tree cover, leaving a shortfall of 41.98 percent of the envisaged goal,” the report said.

It said seven forest development agencies could not be brought under the ambit of NAP by the state forest development agency during 2010-17, despite the fact that five forest development agencies had formulated and submitted their plans (2010-15) costing Rs 37.59 crore to the state agency which was not forwarded to the National Afforestation and Eco-Development Board.

“The Receipt of funds from the National Afforestation and Eco-Development Board by the State Forest Development Agency were allocated disproportionately to Forest Development Agencies. Against release of Rs 4.44 crore by the National Afforestation and Eco-Development Board to the State Forest Development Agency for 15 Forest Development Agencies, only Rs 1.80 crore were released (2013-14), whereas against release of Rs 5.46 crore for nine Forest Development Agencies, Rs 9.23 crore were released (2011-14),” it said.

The CAG said the funds of Rs 24.46 crore were retained by the state forest development agency up to 265 days and further there was delay in release of Rs 6.30 crore up to 681 days by the forest development agencies to the village forest committees.

“Delay in submission of annual works programme by the State Forest Development Agency to National Afforestation and Eco-Development Board resulted in non-receipt of grant of Rs 11.72 crore during 2010-15,” the report said.

It said neither five year Perspective Plan nor Annual Plan of Operations was prepared by the Forest Development Agencies. “Only Annual Works Programme of the forest territorial area were prepared and that too without the consultation with the Village Forest Committees/ potential village members.”

The report said no entry point activities were undertaken in any of the 11 forest development agencies test-checked in audit despite Rs 1.03 crore being

approved in the annual works programme of 10 agencies for undertaking such activities.

“No training and capacity building measures were undertaken for skill development as no provision was made in the works programme by 11 Forest Development Agencies test-checked in Audit. No plantation journal showing year/compartments/ species-wise and geo-reference details of the plantation was maintained, as such impact assessment to monitor survival vis-a-vis mortality against plantation could not be analysed,” it said.

It said No Annual Report was prepared by the state forest development agency since its inception in July 2010.

“The Governing Body met only once (April 2014) as against seven times, whereas the Executive Body conducted only five meetings as against at least 27 meetings during 2010-16.”

Source: <https://www.theweek.in/wire-updates/national/2020/09/29/des16-jk-cag-egovernance.html>