

EIGHTEENTH REPORT
STANDING COMMITTEE ON URBAN
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(2001)

(THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(DEPARTMENT OF DRINKING WATER SUPPLY)

DEMAND FOR GRANTS
(2000-2001)

*[Action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the
Eleventh Report of the Standing Committee on Urban and
Rural Development (Thirteenth Lok Sabha)]*

Presented to Lok Sabha on 19.4.2001

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 19.4.2001



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

April, 2001/Chaitra, 1923 (Saka)

COMMITTEE ON URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Corrigenda to the 18th Report (13th Lok Sabha)

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COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(2001)

Shri Anant Gengaram Geete — *Chairman*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar
3. Shri Padmanava Behera
4. Shri Jaswant Singh Bishnoi
5. Shri Ambati Brahmaniah
6. Shri Swadesh Chakraborty
7. Shri Haribhai Chaudhry
8. Shri Bal Krishna Chauhan
9. Prof. Kailasho Devi
10. Shrimati Hema Gamang
11. Shri Holkhomang Haokip
12. Shri R.L. Jalappa
13. Shri Babubhai K. Katara
14. Shri Madan Lal Khurana
15. Shri Shrichand Kripalani
16. Shri P.R. Kyndiah
17. Shri Bir Singh Mahato
18. Shri Punnulal Mohale
19. Dr. Ranjit Kumar Panja
20. Shri Ramchandra Paswan
21. Shri Chandresh Patel
22. Shri Dharam Raj Singh Patel
23. Prof. (Shrimati) A.K. Premajam
24. Shri Rajesh Ranjan
25. Shri Nikhilananda Sar
26. Shri Maheshwar Singh
27. Shri Chinmayanand Swami
28. Shri Sunder Lal Tiwari
29. Shri D. Venugopal
30. Shri Chintaman Wanaga

(iv)

Rajya Sabha

31. Shri S. Agniraj
32. Shrimati Shabana Azmi
33. Shri Kamendu Bhattacharjee
34. Shri N.R. Dasari
35. Shri R.S. Gavai
36. Prof. A. Lakshmisagar
37. Shri C. Apok Jamir
38. Shri Faqir Chand Mullana
39. Shri Onward L. Nongtdu
40. Shri A. Vijaya Raghavan
41. Shri N. Rajendran
42. Shri Solipeta Ramachandra Reddy
43. Shri Man Mohan Samal
44. Shri Suryabhan Patil Vahadane
45. Vacant

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri S.C. Rastogi — *Joint Secretary*
2. Shri K. Chakraborty — *Deputy Secretary*
3. Shrimati Sudesh Luthra — *Under Secretary*

INTRODUCTION

1. the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Urban and Rural Development (2001) having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present the Eighteenth Report on Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Eleventh Report of the Standing Committee on Urban and Rural Development (1999-2000) on Demand for Grants (2000-2001) of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Drinking Water Supply).

2. The Eleventh Report was presented to Lok Sabha on 24th April, 2000. The replies of the Government to all the recommendations contained in the Report were received on 25th August, 2000.

3. The replies of the Government were examined and the Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 12th March, 2001.

4. An analysis of the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Eleventh Report of the Committee (1999-2000) is given in Appendix-II.

NEW DELHI;
18 April, 2001

28 Chaitra, 1923 (Saka)

ANANT GANGARAM GEETE
Chairman,
Standing Committee on
Urban and Rural Development.

CHAPTER I

REPORT

This Report of the Committee on Urban and Rural Development (2001) deals with the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in their Eleventh Report on Demand for Grants (2000-2001) of the Ministry of Rural Development which was presented to Lok Sabha on 24th April, 2000.

2. Action taken notes have been received from the Government in respect of all the 30 recommendations which have been categorised as follows:

- (i) Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government:

2.2, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14, 2.18, 2.26, 2.31, 2.40, 2.41, 2.42, 2.46, 2.49, 2.54, 2.68, 2.72, 2.75, 2.77, 2.78, 3.11 and 3.12

- (ii) Recommendation which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's reply:

3.10

- (iii) Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee:

2.15, 2.28, 2.45, 2.57, 2.62, 3.8 and 3.9

- (iv) Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited:

2.11 and 2.29

3. The Committee desire that final replies in respect of the recommendations for which only interim replies have been given by the Government should be furnished to the Committee within three months of the presentation of the Report.

4. The Committee will now deal with action taken by the Government on some of these recommendations in the succeeding paragraphs.

A. Structuring of data regarding NC and PC habitations**Recommendation (Para No. 2.11)**

5. The Committee had recommended as under:

"The Committee, when informed that out of 14,30,543 habitations, only 2,67,347 habitations *i.e.* around 18.6% of the total habitations remained PC or NC, are sceptical about the structuring of the data in this regard, especially when a large number of FC habitations re-emerge as NC habitations for want of continued sustenance. In case if all these FC habitations that re-emerge as NC habitations for want of sustenance are also included in the data relating to PC and NC habitations, then the data relating to number of NC and PC habitations would have been higher showing a dismal performance of the Government. The Committee therefore feel that there should be a realistic assessment of PC and NC habitations, keeping in mind the number of FC habitations re-emerging as NC habitations, so that physical and financial targets are properly planned for achieving the objective of the Government."

6. The Ministry in their reply have stated as under:

"All the State Governments have now been requested to furnish the information annually in respect of fully covered habitations slipping back into Not Covered and Partially Covered category and the Partially Covered habitations slipping into Not Covered category. It would take State Governments' considerable time, effort and money for collecting this information accurately. The information as and when received from the State Governments would be compiled by the Department of Drinking Water Supply. However, due to sources going dry because of depletion in ground water level, natural growth of population in existing habitations and emergence of new habitations, systems having a definite life-period and the systems becoming defunct due to poor Operation & Maintenance, the slippage of the covered category of habitations into not covered category is a constantly changing situation and the estimates will vary at any given point of time."

7. While appreciating that the Government have requested the State Governments to furnish the information annually in respect of fully covered habitations slipping back into Not Covered and Partially Covered categories and the Partially Covered habitations slipping into Not Covered category, the Committee would like to be apprised of the response of the State Governments in this regard and the details of the information received by the Central Government. As the State Governments have been requested to furnish the said information annually, the Committee would like that the information may be included in the annual Performance Budget of the Department. The Committee however, note with concern the factors which lead to slippage of the covered category of habitations into not covered category, particularly the fact, "systems becoming defunct due to poor operation and maintenance." The Committee cannot reconcile to this reason and would like the Government to address it seriously and come forward with a concrete proposal. As regards the sources drying up due to depletion of ground water level and other factors leading to slippage of the covered category of habitations into not-covered category', the Committee feel that while planning the scheme, such probabilities should have been taken into account, particularly when technology has made long strides and experts are available to speak about population growth, and possible emergence of new habitations. The Committee hope that in future, the Government would go into the planning of such schemes after taking into account all the probabilities that may possibly stymy a healthy functioning of a scheme. The Experts in the area may also be consulted to avoid unseen factors obstructing such programme.

B. Preparation of Action Plans by the State Government to cover all PC and NC habitations

Recommendation (Para No. 2.13)

8. The Committee had recommended as under:

"While noting the objective of the Government to cover all PC and NC habitations in the rural areas in the country during the next five years, the Committee have their own doubts about the achievement of the objective in view of the fact that just 50% of what the Government had asked for has been sanctioned by the Planning Commission in the 9th Plan. Further

even after passing of nearly one year since the National Agenda for Governance was put into operation, the Government are yet to receive the comprehensive action plans from some of the State Governments. Further none of the State Governments furnished their annual action plans by October, 1999 as stipulated in the guidelines, thus wasting at least a sixth of the financial year, 2000-2001. The Committee would, therefore, like to be apprised of the details of the those States/UTs which did not furnish the annual plans as stipulated in the guidelines. It is astonishing to note that the Government till date do not have the extensive details regarding the exact number of the habitation-wise terrain in respect of NC and PC habitations. The Committee fail to understand how the estimates about the required allocation are being proposed without knowing the exact scenario. The Committee therefore urge that the Government should urgently furnish the State-wise details relating to NC and PC habitations."

9. The Ministry in their Action Taken reply have stated:—

"All States/UTs have since furnished the Action Plan to cover all rural habitations with the supply of drinking water, in a period of five years, indicating the coverage status (Number of NC/PC/FC and total habitations) as on 1.4.1999 and the requirement of funds for covering the remaining NC/PC habitations in five years. The information received from the States/UTs has been consolidated into a Comprehensive Action Plan which has been submitted to the Finance Ministry/Planning Commission for consideration.

10. The Committee would like to be apprised of the details of the said Action Plans furnished by the State Governments and the Comprehensive Action Plan, as submitted by the Government, to the Finance Ministry/Planning Commission for consideration. They would also like to be apprised of the status of said Comprehensive Action Plan.

C. Increase in financial allocation and high level consultation

Recommendation (Para No. 2.15)

11. The Committee had recommended as under:—

"The Government and the Planning Commission should urgently consider at the highest possible level, in consultation with high-level State authorities, the exponential increases in financial allocations and disbursements required to attain the drinking water goals of the National Agenda for Governance, and the political and administrative steps that need to be taken, including the key

question of the empowerment of the Panchayats in this regard, as provided in the Constitution. In this context the role of the Gram Sabhas needs specific attention, with the role of the Gram Sabhas in Fifth Schedule Areas being defined in terms of the provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 passed by Parliament. The Department should also coordinate with the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Department of Women and Child Development) the responsibilities which could be entrusted to the Gram Mahila Sabhas set up under the Indira Mahila Yojana. Moreover, the disturbingly low priority being given to rain water conservation, including traditional methods of water conservation, as well as the minuscule expenditure being incurred on this vital matter, needs urgent high-level review."

12. The Government have stated as below:—

"The Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP) prepared by the Department of Drinking Water Supply to provide drinking water facilities to all rural habitations of the country in five years, has been submitted to the Finance Ministry/Planning Commission for consideration. The CAP clearly indicates the year-wise requirement of funds for providing drinking water facilities to all rural habitations in five years. The matter would be pursued with the Finance Ministry/Planning Commission.

As per Article 243G of the Constitution, the Legislature of a State may, by law, endow the Panchayats with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self-government and such law may contain provision for the devolution of powers and responsibilities upon Panchayats at the appropriate level, subject to such conditions as may be specified therein, with respect to—(a) the preparation of plans for economic development and social justice, and (b) the implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to the matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule which, *inter-alia*, includes Drinking Water and maintenance of community assets. As such, the responsibility of endowing the above mentioned powers with the Panchayats is with the State Governments. The Ministry of Rural Development had requested the State Governments to complete the devolution of funds/powers to the PRIs in respect of Rural Water Supply schemes by the year 2000. The Ministry has once again reiterated the requests to the State Governments.

The Ministry of Water Resources is the nodal Ministry for ground water resources. Recently, a high-level workshop under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Prime Minister was organized by the Ministry of Water Resources to review and prioritise rain water harvesting technologies, including traditional methods of rain water harvesting.

13. While noting the reply furnished by the Government, the Committee find the reply does not address to the recommendation made by the Committee to co-ordinate with the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Department of Women and Child Development) the responsibilities which could be entrusted to the Gram Mahila Sabhas set up under the Indira Mahila Yojana. In view of it they reiterate their earlier recommendation and would like to be apprised of the response of the Government in this regard.

D. Reduction in physical and financial achievement under ARWSP and MNP

Recommendation (Para No. 2.28)

14. The Committee had recommended as under:—

“The Committee observe:

- there has been a drastic fall of nearly Rs. 800 crore between 1998-99 and 1999-2000 in the expenditure reported by States/UTs and implementing agencies;
- the number of habitations covered has shrunk by more than half, from 1.13 lakh in 1998-99 to 0.43 lakh (provisional) in 1999-2000.
- this has resulted in a dramatic decrease in the annual percentage growth of physical achievement from over 9 per cent and 8 per cent respectively in the previous two years to just over 3 per cent in the last financial year;
- that it took 13 years for the ratio of financial to physical achievement to double from 1986 to 1999, whereas in a singly year, 1999-2000, the ratio has more than doubled.”

15. The Ministry in their Action Taken reply stated:—

- "As per the available information compiled on the basis of latest report submitted by the State Government, the expenditure under ARWSP and MNP during 1999-2000 is Rs. 1526.91 crore and Rs. 2342.29 crore respectively.
- As per the latest information furnished by the State Governments, 11035 Not Covered habitations and 58294 Partially Covered habitations have been fully covered during 1999-2000.
- The annual percentage of growth of physical achievement during 1999-2000 is 4.06%. The observation of the Standing Committee is correct and it may be due to the fact that the habitations taken up for coverage during 1999-2000 were of difficult nature and capital intensive as the left over habitations are mostly in difficult terrain, desert regions, hilly areas, hard rock areas or quality affected.
- The observation of the Standing Committee is correct and it may be due to the fact that the habitations taken up for coverage during 1999-2000 were of difficult nature and capital intensive as the left over habitations are mostly in difficult terrain, desert regions, hilly areas, hard rock areas or quality affected."

16. The Committee are dissatisfied with the reply furnished by the Government pursuant to their earlier observation regarding drastic fall in physical and financial achievement under ARWSP and MNP. On the observation of the Committee regarding decline in the number of coverage of habitations, during the year 1999-2000, instead of furnishing the reasons for the drastic decline, the Government have furnished the latest position with regard to the habitations covered according to which during 1999-2000, 69329 habitations were actually covered. Even in the Government's latest data is believed, the number of habitations covered during 1999-2000 is little less than 50% as compared to previous year. Further on the observation of the Committee with regard to the substantial decline in the annual percentage growth of physical achievements and the ratio of physical to financial achievement during the year 1999-2000, as compared to the previous years, the Committee are dismayed to note that instead of furnishing the categorical reply to their observations, the

Government have furnished the hypothetical reply according to which the decline in the number of habitations may be due to the fact that habitations taken up for coverage during 1999-2000 were of difficult nature and capital intensive. The Committee take serious view of the way the Government have replied to their recommendations. They desire that the Government should analyse the reasons for drastic decline in the physical achievement under ARWSP and MNP and furnish the specific reasons. They would also like that the Government should furnish the specific data regarding habitations covered in difficult areas during 1999 vis-a-vis the previous year. Besides, the Committee would like to be informed of the being taken to reverse the alarming decrease in the ratio of physical achievement to financial outlay.

E. Scientific district-wise survey of private water sources with accessibility to the public

Recommendation (Para No. 2.29)

17. The Committee had recommended as below:—

“The Committee desire that the implications of these serious shortfalls be carefully assessed by the Government and corrective action taken urgently. Equally, it is essential that a scientific State-wise/district-wise survey be made of private water sources with accessibility to the public’ to ensure that this newly included sources is properly estimated and fully tapped.”

18. The Ministry in their Action Taken reply have stated as under:—

“As the Rural Water Supply schemes are implemented in the field by the State Governments, they have been requested accordingly to examine the reasons for low coverage and high cost of coverage during 1999-2000 and intimate their detailed explanation on the matter to the Department of Drinking Water Supply to enable its detailed critical analysis.

The State Governments have also been requested that a scientific district-wise survey of private water sources with “accessibility to the public” may be made at the earliest.”

19. While noting that the State Governments have been requested to conduct a district-wise scientific survey of private water sources with accessibility to the public, the Committee would like that the matter may further be pursued with the respective State Governments and the Committee be apprised of the status/details of the said survey conducted/being conducted by the respective State Governments. The Committee would also like to be informed of the timeframe for the completion of the said survey. Besides, they would like to be apprised of the steps taken to reverse the deeply disturbing trends towards low coverage and high costs.

F. Reasons for under-spending of ARWSP and MNP outlay

Recommendation (Para No. 2.40)

20. The Committee had recommended as below:

“The Committee are not inclined to accept the vague reply furnished by the Government when asked about the under-utilisation of ARWSP and MNP outlay in various States/UTs during 1998-99 and 1999-2000. They feel that without analysing the position State/UT-wise, the Department had tried to furnish a general reply. The Committee take serious view of the attitude of the Government in taking action on the observations made by them. The Committee desire that the Government should critically analyse the position in each State/UT in regard to unspent funds and take corrective steps to ensure 100% utilisation of funds.”

21. The Government have replied as below:

“The States/UTs have been requested to utilise the funds allocated under ARWSP and MNP fruitfully. In cases where they are unable to utilise the funds, the States have been requested to furnish detailed explanation for the same so as to ensure critical analysis of the position and suitable remedial action.”

22. While noting that the State Governments have been requested to furnish the detailed explanation for unspent outlay under ARWSP and MNP, the Committee would like the Government to further pursue the matter with States/UTs, analyse the position and apprise them accordingly. They fail to understand why after the lapse of a year since the Government's attention was drawn to the need to analyse and explain the reasons for the under-utilisation of funds in key programmes like ARWSP and MNP, the Government are still unable to furnish any reasons, without which of course, no rectificatory action is possible. They would like to be informed of the time frame within which action in this regard would be taken by the Government.

G. Incentive provided to better performing districts

Recommendation (Para No. 2.45)

23. The Committee recommended as below:

"The Committee find that as per the revised guidelines 20% allocation is being made to 58 districts *i.e.* around 10% of the total districts. They are concerned to note that 90% of the districts are being deprived of their share of allocation by the new initiatives taken by the Government. The Committee are not inclined to accept the revised norms and would like that the criteria of allocation of the outlay should be same for all the districts and no district should be favoured at the cost of the other districts."

24. The Government have replied as below:-

"20% of the ARWSP funds are for implementation of reform initiatives, which *inter-alia*, includes implementation of Sector Reform Projects in 58 pilot districts. They are to be utilised on the basis of successful progress of implementation of projects. The unutilised amount would be pooled back into the balance 80% amount re-allocated among the States as per the allocation criteria. The funds kept aside for reforms could also be utilised by other districts for activities like water quality monitoring through Catchment Area Approach, Restructuring of PHED/Board/Authority/Nigam etc. Further, districts other than the 58 pilot projects would be sharing the entire balance 80% of the ARWSP funds and full MNP provision made by the State Governments. In order to try out new innovative initiatives, such an incentive is required."

25. The reply given by the Government is vague and has not focused on the recommendation of the Committee. The Committee are not inclined to accept the plea of the Government that the incentive is required to try out new innovative initiatives. They feel that the reform initiatives tried by the Government should be uniform for all the districts in the country and few districts should not be awarded at the cost of other districts. The Committee also feel that a serious indepth analysis of the revised norms is called for so that more and more districts receive the allocation. While performance appraisal is a must, but there should be a careful perusal of the reasons, why the implementation of the projects suffered. A negative attitude, as above, may not help in reforms. The Committee would like to be apprised of a full report in this regard at the earliest.

H. The responsibility of Central and State Governments to provide safe drinking water to rural masses

Recommendation (Para No. 2.57)

26. The Committee had recommended as under:

"While appreciating the policy of providing incentive to States performing better, the Committee are not able to accept the logic that providing drinking water supply is a State subject and the responsibility of motivating poorly performing States does not lie with the Central Government. The Committee are of the view that providing drinking water is equally the responsibility of the Central Government, that is why it has been given priority in the National Agenda for Governance. In view of it, the Committee feel that Central Government should take necessary steps to persuade and motivate the poorly performing States/UTs who considered the provision of safe drinking water to rural masses as their responsibility and to cooperate in the Central Sector schemes being operated for the purpose."

27. The Government have stated as below...

"Drinking water supply is Constitutionally a State subject and the State Governments implement rural water supply schemes under the State Sector Minimum Needs Programme (MNP). The Centrally sponsored Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) is a 100% grants-in-aid programme with matching MNP provision by the States and is aimed only to supplement the efforts of the States in attaining the avowed objective of the Government of India in providing safe drinking water to all rural habitations within a specific period. The State Governments are being requested from time to time to take all possible steps for successful implementation of the Rural Water Supply Programme. Any advice given by the Committee for persuading the motivating the poor performing States/UTs will be considered.

28. The Committee had pointed out that precisely because drinking water had been given priority in the Central Government's National Agenda for Governance, notwithstanding this being a State subject, it was the obligation of the Central Government to ensure time bound implementation. Instead of setting up a structured mechanism for real time monitoring, consultation and rectificatory action, the Department have contented themselves with seeking the advice of the Committee. The Committee feel that advice can be tendered only after the Department has pin-pointed these issues and set up a structured time-table for persuading the motivating the poor performing States/UTs. They, therefore, would like to be informed about the response of the Government in this regard.

I. Devolving of implementation of O&M of Drinking Water Supply Programme to PRIs

Recommendation (Para No. 2.62)

29. The Committee had recommended as under:

"The Committee find that although it has been accepted by the Government that their ultimate aim is to hand over the activities related to planning, implementation, O&M etc. to the Panchayat/legally authorised local authorities, yet the Government appear to be hesitant over suing their full persuasive powers to urge State Governments at the highest possible level to devolve to the Panchayats/legally authorised local authorities the required finances and executive powers, authority and responsibility to fulfill the high duty which ought to be vested in the Panchayats of ensuring drinking water facilities for all at the required level of quality, operation and maintenance, as a social right of all sections of society and every citizen's essential entitlement. It is noted that Water Supply Programme is 100% Centrally Sponsored Programme and is being implemented by the States as per the guidelines prepared by the Central Government. In this context the Committee fail to understand why the responsibility of implementing and O&M etc. has not been given to Panchayats in the guidelines as per the Constitutional provisions. In view of it, it is recommended that the guidelines should be suitably amended whereby the responsibility of implementing Drinking Water Supply Programme and O&M etc. is directly provided to Panchayats/legally authorized local authorities and the money is also directly released to Panchayats.

30. The Government have stated as below:

"Drinking water supply is a State subject and the State Government implement rural water supply schemes under the State Sector Minimum Needs Programme (MNP). The Centrally sponsored Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) is a 100% grants-in-aid programme with matching MNP provision by the States and is aimed only to supplement the efforts of the States in attaining the avowed objective of the Government of India in providing safe drinking water to all rural habitations within a specific period.

Though the ultimate aim of the Government is to hand over ownership and operation and maintenance of the rural drinking water schemes to the PRIs/local communities, at present this concept is being demonstrated only in 58 districts of the country where the sector reform pilot projects are being implemented. Efforts are being made to allow the PRIs to implement the rural water supply schemes in those sector reform districts wherever the PRIs are firmly in place and are ready and willing to take up the responsibility of effective implementation of these projects. Once the strategy of the reforms is demonstrated successfully in the pilot districts, the responsibility for implementation of this innovative concept would be directly discharged by PRIs in conformity with the principles envisaged in the 73rd Constitution Amendment.

31. The Committee are unable to accept the argument of the Government that PRIs need not be involved in the experimental phase in pilot districts but, perhaps, brought in later in some unspecified manner. In view of it, they reiterate their earlier recommendation to suitably amend the guidelines whereby the responsibility of implementing Drinking Water Supply Programmes and O&M etc. is directly provided to Panchayats/legally authorised local authorities and the money is also directly released to Panchayats”.

J. Adequate outlay for CRSP

Recommendation (Para No. 3.8)

32. The Committee had recommended as under:

“As per data only 16% to 20% of the rural households are stated to have sanitation facilities. Equally disturbing is the position of school sanitation where only few schools have even urinal and lavatory facilities not to talk of the overall sanitation. The Committee are concerned to note that inspite of their recommending strongly in their earlier reports for enhancement of outlay and take necessary steps to improve the poor situation in the area of rural sanitation, nothing substantial has been done. Only Rs. 500 crore have been earmarked for 9th Plan whereas for achieving the stipulated target of covering 35% of rural population by the end of 9th Plan around Rs. 4375 crore are required as per the information provided by the Government. It is again strongly recommended that the Government should persuade the Planning Commission to enhance the outlay substantially so as to achieve the set objectives of covering at least 35% of the population by the end of the 9th Plan. The Committee would also like to recommend that while planning for providing sanitation facilities to schools in the rural areas it should be ensured that separate toilets are provided for girls. The Committee also recommended that with a view to augment the resources, Government should enlist the cooperation of local Member of Parliament and impress upon him to contribute towards this object from this MPLADS fund.”

33. The Ministry in their Action Taken reply have stated:

"During 2000-2001, Rs. 140 crore have been provided for Central Rural Sanitation Programme as compared to Rs. 110 crore provided during last financial year which is about 28% increase. It may be mentioned that due to limited availability of funds, the Planning Commission has suggested reduction of target from 35% to 25% of the rural household sanitation coverage during the Mid-Term Appraisal.

Under the Restructured Centrally Sponsored Rural Sanitation Programme, which has come into effect from 1-4-1999, special emphasis has been given to school sanitation. Under the RCRSP, upto 10% of the funds under the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) Approach and 5% of the funds under the "allocation based" programme could be earmarked for school sanitation. The State Governments are being requested to construct separate toilets for girls and letters have already been written to all the State Governments to enlist the cooperation of local Members of Parliament and impress upon them to also contribute towards this objective from the MPLADS funds."

34. The Committee are unhappy to note the action taken reply of the Government in response to their recommendation to enhance the outlay under Rural Sanitation Programme to enable the Government to achieve the stipulated target of covering 35% of the rural population by the end of the Ninth Plan. They are surprised to note that instead of taking steps to enhance the outlay substantially, the Government have rather reduced the targets from 35% to 25%. The Committee deplore the way the Government have handled such a serious issue of providing sanitation to the rural areas. Such an uncalled for move on the part of the Government, which may have an adverse effect on the hygienic environment in the rural areas, particularly in the schools, leads to serious concern. The Committee strongly disapprove of the indifference, shown by the Government, towards rural sanitation. The Committee, therefore, observe that it is high time the Government should give due importance to the sanitation programme in rural areas and they strongly recommend that the outlay for this programme should be enhanced to commensurate with the set objectives. The Committee also regret that the Government have not addressed to their recommendation to take steps to involve MPs through MPLADS in this vital national endeavour. They, therefore, would like to be apprised of the steps taken by the Government in this regard.

K. Monitoring of CRSP**Recommendation (Para No. 3.9)**

35. The Committee had recommended as under:

"The Committee are unhappy to note the poor monitoring of the programmes by the Government. During 1998-99 as per their own data, the expenditure has been shown as Rs. 121.06 crore against release of Rs. 67 crore for which the Government have no clarification. Even after the lapse of two years, the position is yet to be checked from the State Governments. The Committee take serious view of the attitude of the Government towards one of their most important programme and would like that the monitoring of the programme should further be strengthened."

36. The Ministry in their Action Taken reply have stated:

"The monitoring of the programme is being done through monthly, quarterly and annual progress reports, periodic review meetings with the States and visit of area officers to the States. Efforts have already been initiated to reconcile the discrepancies in figures."

37. The Committee take serious note of the fact that on pointing out a serious irregularity in the implementation of CRSP during 1998-99, whereby expenditure reported is Rs. 121.06 crore against releases of Rs. 67 crore during that particular year, the Government are unable to furnish clarifications even after the lapse of around 3 years. This speaks volume of the inadequate and ineffective monitoring of one of the most priority programme. They desire that the clarification in respect of all the above mentioned observations of the Committee may be furnished without any further delay. Further they also desire that monitoring of the programme should further be strengthened to ensure 100% utilisation of the scarce resources and achievement of set objectives of the programmes.

CHAPTER II

RECOMMENDATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY GOVERNMENT

Recommendation (Para No. 2.2)

The Committee hope that with the creation of a separate Department of Drinking Water Supply, more focussed attention would be given to achieving the target of making available potable drinking water to all habitations and schools within the time-frame of five years (2000-2005) stipulated in the National Agenda for Governance. To this end, the Committee urge:-

- High-level political coordination between the Centre and the States to achieve the time-bound target in area which falls primarily within the competence of the States;
- Entrusting the fundamental responsibility of planning and implementation of the programmes of the Department to the Panchayat Raj Institutions;
- The provisions of adequate funds on a priority basis to achieve the social right of all citizens to potable drinking water in accordance with the Directive Principles of State Policy.

While appreciating the importance being attached by the Government, to the supply of drinking water, the Committee feel that the Central Rural Sanitation Programme is no less important than the drinking water supply. They therefore, recommend that the said programme should also be given due importance and efforts made to make it a success.

Reply of the Government

- High level political meetings are held from time to time wherein major issues relating to drinking water supply in the rural areas are discussed at length. Even though drinking water supply is a State subject and the schemes for supply of drinking water are implemented by the State

Governments, whenever any problem related to its implementation is brought to the notice of Central Government, an attempt is made to resolve the problem. Members of Parliament on their part also bring to the notice of the Department of Drinking Water Supply various problems in respect of drinking water supply in their respective constituencies. The matter raised is then taken up with the implementing agency in the concerned State Government for finding usable solution to the problem. In this manner high-level political coordination between the Centre and the States is achieved.

- As per Article 243G of the Constitution, the Legislature of a State may, by law, endow the Panchayats with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self-government and such law may contain provision for the devolution of powers and responsibilities upon Panchayats at the appropriate level, subject to such conditions as may be specified therein, with respect to—(a) the preparation of plans for economic development and social justice, and (b) the implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to the matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule which, *inter-alia*, includes Drinking Water and Maintenance of community assets. As such, the responsibility of endowing the above mentioned powers with the Panchayats is with the State Governments. The Ministry of Rural Development had requested the State Governments to complete the devolution of funds/powers to the PRIs in respect of Rural Water Supply schemes by the year 2000. The Ministry has once again reiterated the requests to the State Governments.
- A Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP) has been prepared by the Department of Drinking Water Supply on the basis of the information furnished by the State Governments with a view to cover all the rural habitations with drinking water facilities in five years along with the estimated requirement of funds for achieving this objective. The Plan has also been submitted to the Finance Ministry/Planning Commission for consideration.

The Government continues to give priority in supplementing the efforts of the State Governments to provide sanitation facilities to the rural masses. Keeping in view the low coverage of sanitation in rural areas, major policy changes have been brought about in the Rural Sanitation to increase the coverage. The restructured programme, which has come into being w.e.f. 1-4-1999, moves away from the principle of State-wise allocation of funds primarily based on poverty criteria to a demand-driven approach in a phased manner. It is community led and people centered. There is shift from high subsidy to a low subsidy regime. The Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) approach emphasizes on the awareness building component and meets the demand through alternative delivery mechanism. School Sanitation has been introduced as major component and as an entry point encouraging wider acceptance of sanitation among rural masses. During the current financial year, the budget allocation has been substantially increased for Rural Sanitation to Rs. 140 crore as compared to the budget allocation of Rs. 110 crores during the last year.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P) dated 25.8.2000, Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Recommendation (Para No. 2.12)

The Committee are constrained to note the position of drinking water in rural schools. It is really pathetic to find that even after more than 52 years of independence more than 50% of rural schools do not have access to drinking water. While noting that 30,000 schools have been planned to be covered during 2000-2001, they recommend that all efforts should be made to achieve the targets within the stipulated time.

Reply of the Government

The targets for each State in respect of coverage of rural primary and upper primary schools during 2000-2001 has been fixed in consultation with the State Governments. This is for the first time the targets for coverage of rural schools with drinking water facilities have been fixed. The States have been requested to make all efforts to achieve the target. By targeting 30,000 primary/upper primary schools per annum, it is proposed to cover 1.50 lakh schools within a period of five years. The Eleventh Finance Commission has been requested to allocate funds to the States for covering 1.50 lakh schools so that all remaining primary/upper primary schools in the rural areas get covered with the facility of drinking water in five years.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P) dated 25.8.2000, Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Recommendation (Para No. 2.13)

While noting the objective of the Government to cover all PC and NC habitations in the rural areas in the country during the next five years, the Committee have their own doubts about the achievement of the objective in view of the fact that just 50% of what the Government had asked for has been sanctioned by the Planning Commission in the 9th Plan. Further even after passing of nearly one year since the National Agenda for Governance was put into operation, the Government are yet to receive the comprehensive action plans from some of the State Governments. Further none of the State Governments furnished their annual action plans by October, 1999 as stipulated in the guidelines, thus wasting at least a sixth of the financial year, 2000-2001. The Committee would, therefore, like to be apprised of the details of those States/UTs which did not furnish the annual plans as stipulated in the guidelines. It is astonishing to note that the Government till date do not have the extensive details regarding the exact number of the habitation-wise terrain in respect of NC and PC habitations. The Committee fail to understand how the estimates about the required allocation are being proposed without knowing the exact scenario. The Committee therefore urge that the Government should urgently furnish the State-wise details relating to NC and PC habitations.

Reply of the Government

All States/UTs have since furnished the Action Plan to cover all rural habitations with the supply of drinking water, in a period of five years, indicating the coverage status (Number of NC/PC/FC and total habitations) as on 1.4.99 and the requirement of funds for covering the remaining NC/PC habitations in five years. The information received from the States/UTs has been consolidated into a Comprehensive Action Plan which has been submitted to the Finance Ministry/Planning Commission for consideration.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 10 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Para No. 2.14)

The Committee feel that the full coverage of all habitations and schools in rural areas in country within the next 5 years through the ARWSP and MNP programmes is a highly target-oriented programme which should neither further wait nor lag behind for want of sufficient outlay. The Committee therefore, strongly recommend that through high level, concerted coordination between the Government and the Planning Commission, the outlay under ARWSP and MNP should be enhanced adequately so as to achieve the laudable objectives.

Reply of the Government

The Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP) prepared by the Department of Drinking Water Supply to provide drinking water facilities to all rural habitations of the country in five years, has been submitted to the Finance Ministry/Planning Commission for consideration. The CAP clearly indicates the year-wise requirement of funds for providing drinking water facilities to all rural habitations in five years. The matter would be pursued with the Finance Ministry/Planning Commission.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Recommendation (Para No. 2.18)

The Committee appreciate the steps taken by the Government to provide 10% of the total allocation of the Department to the North-Eastern States and Sikkim. They hope that the modalities of allocating the outlay would be finalised in consultation with the Planning Commission expeditiously and the Committee apprised accordingly. It is further desired that the Government should review the absorption capacity of the North-Eastern States so as to ensure 100% utilisation of the scarce resources.

Reply of the Government

The modalities of allocating funds to the North-Eastern States have been finalised under ARWSP. The States have been requested to ensure proper utilisation of the funds allocated to them by taking up water supply programme in the rural areas.

During the current financial year, Rs. 14 crores (10% of the total allocation under Central Rural Sanitation Programme) have been separately provided for North Eastern States including Sikkim. Under the allocation based programme, allocations to different North Eastern States have been made on the basis of percentage of rural population.

Recognising the fact that the absorption capacity of the North-Eastern States is rather low, all efforts are being made to ensure adequate utilization of the allocated funds. Under Total Sanitation Campaign special focused attention is given to the selected districts in this regard.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Recommendation (Para No. 2.26)

For achieving the single objective of providing drinking water to rural areas, the Committee feel that the operation of plethora of schemes is chaotic as well as create a situation where monitoring becomes difficult. They therefore disfavour the operation of multiple schemes like ARWSP, MNP of the Department and PMGY of Planning Commission. The Committee strongly recommend that the allocation under the different schemes/programmes should be brought under one scheme/programme keeping in view the fact that a separate Department to deal with the problem of drinking water supply has already been created. The Committee are concerned at the apparent confusion over the precise relationship between the RGNDWM and the newly-created Department. They recommend that the relationship be clarified in terms of the "mode" established for societal mission in 1986 and the administrative/financial responsibilities which now devolve on the new Department. The Committee regret that, despite having been requested to do so, the Department has not been able to furnish any information about the technological and managerial insights attributable to RGNDWM, and suggest that these be taken into consideration in defining the role of the Mission and its relationship to the Department.

Reply of the Government

It is submitted that Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) and Minimum Needs Programme (MNP), although are two different programmes, the ARWSP is a Centrally Sponsored Programme and is administered by the Central Government. MNP, on the other hand, is a State Government programme, and a part of the funds under MNP is earmarked for rural water supply sector. As rural water supply is a State subject, the State Governments endeavour to provide drinking water supply to the rural habitations under the State Sector MNP by implementing various rural water supply schemes. The Central Government supplements the efforts of the States by providing additional funds under the ARWSP. The guidelines for receiving the ARWSP funds, which *inter-alia*, necessitates at least a matching investment from the MNP, motivates the State Governments to implement the programme vigorously both under ARWSP and MNP.

The Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana-Rural Water Supply (PMGY-RWS) in a new initiative launched only in the current year and its impact/effect could only be assessed in future. As such, it is premature to consider integrating/merging it with other existing programmes/schemes at this stage.

There has been no change in the status of the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission or in its functions, with the creation of Department of Drinking Water Supply. Earlier the Mission was administratively under the Department of Rural Development and now it is under the newly created Department of Drinking Water Supply in the Ministry of Rural Development.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Recommendation (Para No. 2.31)

The Committee take serious note of the reduction in targets during 1999-2000 and further drastic decline in the achievement as compared to previous two years. The Committee feel that the under-utilisation of outlay and slippage in targets are the major reasons for getting the lesser allocation from the Planning Commission. They therefore, recommend that the Government should take necessary corrective steps to ensure 100% utilisation of funds and achievement of the set targets. Further the Committee are concerned over the mechanism of implementing the scheme whereby substantial funds are earmarked at the fag end of the year simply to inflate the data resulting in huge unspent balances. It is desired that the Government should endeavour to ensure that the funds are released by the Centre to States and by States to the implementing agencies in a phased manner throughout the year.

Reply of the Government

The States/UTs have been requested to fully utilise the funds allocated to them under ARWSP, so as to ensure full achievement of the target.

All efforts are made to release the entire allocated funds to the States in time and as early as possible. But due to the various formalities required to be fulfilled by the States in view of the checks & controls envisaged in the guidelines, often the State Governments fail to draw their instalments in time. The Department of Drinking Water Supply however, endeavour to provide all help and assistance to the State Governments in their efforts to draw the funds.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Recommendation (Para No. 2.40)

The Committee are not inclined to accept the vague reply furnished by the Government when asked about the under-utilisation of ARWSP and MNP outlay in various States/UTs during 1998-99 and 1999-2000. They feel that without analysing the position State/UT-wise, the Department has tried to furnish a general reply. The Committee take serious view of the attitude of the Government in taking action on the observations made by them. The Committee desire that the Government should critically analyse the position in each State/UT in regard to unspent funds and take corrective steps to ensure 100% utilisation of funds.

Reply of the Government

The States/UTs have been requested to utilise the funds allocated under ARWSP and MNP fruitfully. In cases where they are unable to utilise the funds, the States have been requested to furnish detailed explanation for the same so as to ensure critical analysis of the position and suitable remedial action.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 22 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Para No. 2.41)

It is noted with surprise that Union Territories of A&N Islands, D&N Haveli, Daman and Diu, Lakshadweep are not availing of ARWSP funds, inspite of the fact that NC/PC habitations still exist in said UTs. The Committee urge that such UTs should be requested to avail of ARWSP funds so that all NC and PC habitations in the UTs are fully covered at the earliest.

Reply of the Government

The Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, D&N Haveli, Daman & Diu and Lakshadweep have been requested to avail of ARWSP funds so that all NC/PC habitations in the rural areas get covered with the supply of drinking water. However, it is submitted that Union Territories get sufficient Central funds for their schemes as a result of which they often do not feel the necessity of availing the ARWSP funds.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Recommendation (Para No. 2.42)

As regards Delhi, the Committee would like that some outlay under ARWSP should be earmarked for maintenance and quality related problems etc., as these are also components of ARWSP, though coverage of habitations in Delhi has been completed.

Reply of the Government

Allocation to the NCT of Delhi as per the allocation criteria has been resumed from 2000-2001 onwards.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H. 11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Recommendation (Para No. 2.46)

The Committee are not moved by the argument of the Government that loading all O&M costs on the Panchayats is the optimal way of ensuring community participation in the maintenance of drinking water assets. The Government do not appear to have taken into account the glaring variations in the financial allotments to Panchayats as between different States nor to the continuing parlous state of panchayat finances notwithstanding the directives of the Tenth Finance Commission or the recommendations of the State Finance Commission. Until the Constitutional obligation of ensuring the "sound finances" of the Panchayats is met in adequate measure, the Panchayats will not be able to operate and maintain drinking water facilities at the level which will give "satisfaction" to all categories of users—which is the fundamental assumption behind this scheme. The end result of loading the entire financial responsibility for O&M on users/Panchayats could be that the better-off will be better provided for and the worse-off will be neglected, or even abandoned. This is unacceptable. The Committee urge the Government to reconsider this matter to ensure that the proposed pilot projects are successfully implemented with a view to ensuring the rapid extension of the scheme to all districts. Moreover, it is the right and responsibility of the Government to establish criteria for the identification of districts for pilot projects. The Committee regret the voluntary abnegation of responsibility for this by the Government. Finally, it is the responsibility of the Government to sensitize external agencies to the need for providing local inputs in project formulation and the implementation of their "shelf of projects" and the imperative of rooting their proposed institutional set-up in the Constitutional scheme of elected local self-Government.

Reply of the Government

The approach is being tried out on an experimental basis in only 58 districts selected by the State Governments. Only if found successful and acceptable will it be expanded to other districts of the country. However, the fact remains that only if the community comes forward to plan, fund, implement, operate and maintain their own rural water supply schemes, with technological support from the Government, the sustainability of the systems could be ensured.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Recommendation (Para No. 2.49)

While appreciating the said dual policy for supply of water to rural habitations, the Committee would like that suitable guidelines should be issued to the State Governments to adhere to the norms fixed for the purpose and to ensure that quality of water to be supplied for drinking and cooking purposes.

Reply of the Government

All the State Governments have been requested to adhere to the norms prescribed in the guidelines in respect of dual water supply policy.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Recommendation (Para No. 2.54)

The Committee note the innovative approach of the Government as quite idealistic. They express their doubts as to whether State Governments are in a position to take care of the requirement of outlay required for the purpose of providing drinking water supply to rural habitations. Even if it is stipulated that all the habitations are covered, there are problems of maintenance of assets, sustainability of water sources, quality aspect, R&D, etc. for which a lot of funds are required. The Committee also have their own doubts on the success of the experience of maintenance by community on payment basis in each district. In the case of Panchayats looking after maintenance, the capacity building of Panchayats 'specifically their financial capacity' is the main issue which needs to be addressed. Keeping in view the above considerations, the Committee feel that the guidelines needs a review.

Reply of the Government

The guidelines were last revised in 1999, after consulting all State Governments, Sector professionals and after evaluating similar innovative approaches already being successfully implemented elsewhere in the country. The approach is being tried out on an experimental basis in only 58 districts. Only if found successful and acceptable will it be expanded to other districts of the country. However, the fact remains that only if the community comes forward to plan, fund, implement, operate and maintain their own rural water supply schemes, with technological support from the Government, the sustainability of the systems could be ensured.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Recommendation (Para No. 2.68)

The Committee find that adequate emphasis is not being given by the State Governments to address the quality problem of drinking water. Even if the Government data is to be believed, around 10% of the habitations are affected by one or the other type of contamination. It is further disturbing to note that water treatment plants are becoming non-functional due to inadequate operation & maintenance and lack of trained and experienced staff for O&M work. Further, water testing laboratories functioning in districts in rural areas are inadequately equipped. It is strongly recommended that adequate attention should be paid to solve the problem of contamination of water to ensure that the rural masses get safe drinking water. Further, more attention need to be given to the aspect of training to the staff responsible for O&M of water treatment plants. The Committee urge that necessary guidelines in this respect should be issued to the State Governments.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has been reminding the States from time to time to take effective steps to address the drinking water quality problem and to take appropriate measures for proper operation and maintenance of water treatment plants. State Governments have once again been requested to take appropriate measures in this regard. The guidelines issued in 1999 contain liberalised norms for HRD activities in the rural water supply sector.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Recommendation (Para No. 2.72)

Though separate allocation for human resource development has been made during 1999-2000, the Committee note with concern that no expenditure has been reported by States out of the said allocation. In view of the necessity of well trained staff responsible for operation and maintenance of different drinking water systems/sources, as admitted by the Government, the Committee urge that State Governments should be persuaded to give priority to human resource development.

Reply of the Government

All the States/UTs have been requested to take up various Human Resource Development activities for successful implementation of the Rural Water Supply Programme. The norms for HRD programmes have also been liberalised as per the new guidelines issued in 1999.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Recommendation (Para No. 2.75)

The Committee are constrained to note that the poor operation and maintenance of different drinking water systems is rampant everywhere due to which most of the systems are becoming defunct as admitted by the Secretary, during the course of oral evidence. They feel that serious attention should be paid towards this aspect and necessary instructions should be issued to the State Government. In view of the gravity of the situation, it is recommended that flexibility should be provided to State Governments to make expenditure on O&M as per their requirement. The Committee therefore feel that the existing guidelines of making expenditure upto 15% on O&M should be suitably revised.

Reply of the Government

State Governments have been requested to initiate immediate measures to ensure proper operation and maintenance of the drinking water systems in order to make them sustainable over a long period of time. As regards raising the level of O&M expenditure from the existing 15% of ARWSP allocation to the levels required by the State Governments, it may be stated that States are free to meet any amounts required by them for O&M from their MNP funds. It is also stated that the percentage for O&M has been increased from 10% w.e.f. 1-4-1999. Any further increase can be considered only after funds become available to cover all the NC/PC habitations with safe drinking water. Realising that more funds are required for an effective Operation and Maintenance of the assets created under the rural water supply programme, the Eleventh Finance Commission has been requested to provide additional funds for the purpose.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Recommendation (Para No. 2.77)

The Committee urge that the monitoring of the programme should be further strengthened to ensure 100% utilisation of the scarce resources allocated for the programme and to achieve the set objective. In view of the fact that a separate Department has been created to deal with the drinking water supply, it is urged that for effective monitoring, the officers of the Central Government should make surprise visits to check the performance of the programme. The Committee further feel that as the programme involves social and economic uplift of the masses in relation to tackling this basic problem in rural areas, local MPs should more and more be involved in the implementation of this programme.

Reply of the Government

The progress of implementation of the programme is monitored at the Central level through the periodical reports furnished by the State Governments. Officers from the Department/Ministry also make periodical visits to the States to review implementation of the programme. Local MPs have been made members of District Water and Sanitation Missions (DWSMs) being constituted at the district level for the implementation of the sector reform pilot projects. The Members of Parliament are being requested to consider taking up programmes relating to rural water supply like rain water harvesting, revival of traditional water harvesting structures, construction of check dams, watershed development etc. out of the MP's Local Area Development Funds.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Recommendation (Para No. 2.78)

The Committee also urge that to have access to the latest data to strengthen the monitoring mechanism the latest technology like networking of Computer records available with implementing agencies/State Governments and the Department in the Centre should be done.

Reply of the Government

A Management Information System (MIS) project to ensure quick to and fro flow of information between the Centre and the States (including formations up to the Division and Sub-Division level) is proposed to be established by using the state of the art Information Technology (IT). The MIS project consists of selection of hardware, selection of operating system, preparation of a Software Requirement Specification (SRS) document, and development of customised software and implementation of software.

Specification of hardware for the project has been finalised. A multi-user operating system has also been supplied along with hardware to the States/UTs. The SRS defining the organisational objectives and priorities, user needs and establishing linkages within various organisations in all States/UTs has been completed and implemented in all the States/UTs. The procurement of application software and selection of Relational Database Management System for development of software are under process.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Recommendation (Para No. 3.11)

The Committee find that not only the allocation under the programme is meagre, but whatever little allocation is being made is not being spent fully. When asked for the reasons for under utilisation of funds, the Government put forward the plea that it took sometime for the projects to be prepared, examined and got approved. The Committee are not inclined to accept the plea of the Government in this regard and disapprove the way the programme has been restructured. They recommend that to ensure 100% utilisation of the scarce resources, in future proper planning in consultation with the State Governments and implementing agencies should be made before launching/restructuring any programme.

Reply of the Government

The Rural Sanitation Programme has been restructured on the recommendations of the National Seminar on Rural Sanitation held during 1998, in which the State Secretaries in charge of the Programme and District level authorities participated. Besides, five Regional Workshops were held during in 1998 and 1999 to elicit the views of the State Governments and also to acquaint them with the new components of the restructured programme. Under Total Sanitation Campaign, the Rural Sanitation Programme is being implemented with focussed attention in selected districts in a project mode. The State Governments & implementing agencies are fully involved at every stage of planning/implementation of the Programme.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Recommendation (Para No. 3.12)

The Committee desire that more attention should be paid towards school sanitation as children are the best to be educated and trained in this regard. It is further urged that sanitation in the schools should not only be confined to construction of toilets but a holistic approach in this regard is required. It is strongly recommended that adequate allocation should be made for school sanitation.

It is further recommended that the implementing agencies should make use of the latest technology in respect of construction of toilets etc. Necessary instructions in this regard should be issued to the State Governments.

Reply of the Government

Under the Restructured Centrally Sponsored Rural Sanitation Programme, special emphasis has been given to school sanitation. Under the RCRSP, upto 10% of the funds under the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) Approach and 5% of the funds under the "allocation-based" programme could be earmarked for school sanitation. Under Total Sanitation Campaign a holistic approach has been taken so as to cover all aspects of rural sanitation. In addition, the State Governments have also been requested to make use of latest technology in respect of construction of toilets in schools.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

CHAPTER III

RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REPLIES

Recommendation (Para No. 3.10)

The Committee also recommend that with a view to augment the resources, Government should enlist the cooperation of local Member of Parliament and impress upon him to contribute towards this object from his MPLADS fund.

Reply of the Government

State Governments have been requested to enlist cooperation of all the MPs to contribute from their MPLADS funds towards enhancement of coverage of rural sanitation.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

Recommendation (Para No. 2.15)

The Government and the Planning Commission should urgently consider at the highest possible level, in consultation with high-level State authorities, the exponential increases in financial allocations and disbursements required to attain the drinking water goals of the National Agenda for Governance, and the political and administrative steps that need to be taken, including the key question of the empowerment of the Panchayats in this regard, as provided for the Constitution. In this context the role of the Gram Sabhas needs specific attention, with the role of the Gram Sabhas in Fifth Schedule Areas being defined in terms of the provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 passed by Parliament. The Department should also coordinate with the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Department of Women and Child Development) the responsibilities which could be entrusted to the Gram Mahila Sabhas set up under the Indira Mahila Yojana. Moreover, the disturbingly low priority being given to rain water conservation, including traditional methods of water conservation, as well as the minuscule expenditure being incurred on this vital matter, needs urgent high-level review.

Reply of the Government

The Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP) prepared by the Department of Drinking Water Supply to provide drinking water facilities to all rural habitations of the country in five years, has been submitted to the Finance Ministry/Planning Commission for consideration. The CAP clearly indicates the year-wise requirement of funds for providing drinking water facilities to all rural habitations in five years. The matter would be pursued with the Finance Ministry/Planning Commission.

As per Article 243G of the Constitution, the Legislature of a State may, by law, endow the Panchayats with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self-government and such law may contain provision for the devolution of powers and responsibilities upon Panchayats at the appropriate level, subject to such conditions as may be specified therein, with respect to—(a) the preparation of plans for economic development and social justice, and (b) the implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to the matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule which, *inter-alia*, includes Drinking Water and Maintenance of community assets. As such, the responsibility of endowing the above mentioned powers with the Panchayats is with the State Governments. The Ministry of Rural Development had requested the State Government to complete the devolution of funds/powers to the PRIs in respect of Rural Water Supply schemes by the year 2000. The Ministry has once again reiterated the requests to the State Governments.

The Ministry of Water Resources is the nodal Ministry for ground water resources. Recently, a high-level workshop under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Prime Minister was organised by the Ministry of Water Resources to review and priorities rain water harvesting technologies, including traditional methods of rain water harvesting.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 13 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Para No. 2.28)

"The Committee observe from the data given above and in Appendix III:

- there has been a drastic fall of nearly Rs. 800 crore between 1998-99 and 1999-2000 in on expenditure reported by States/UTs and implementing agencies;
- the number of habitations covered has shrunk by more than half, from 1.13 lakh in 1998-99 to 0.43 lakh (provisional) in 1999-2000.

- this has resulted in a dramatic decrease in the annual percentage growth of physical achievement from over 9 per cent respectively in the previous two years to just over 3 per cent in the last financial year;
- that it took 13 years for the ratio of financial to physical achievement to double from 1986 to 1999, whereas in a singly year, 1999-2000, the ratio has more than doubled.

Reply of the Government

- As per the viable information compiled on the basis of latest report submitted by the State Government, the expenditure under ARWSP and MNP during 1999-2000 is Rs. 1526.91 crores and Rs. 2342.29 crores respectively.
- As per the latest information furnished by the State Governments, 11035 Not Covered habitations and 58294 Partially Covered habitations have been fully covered during 1999-2000.
- The annual percentage of growth of physical achievement during 1999-2000 is 4.06%. The observation of the Standing Committee is correct and it may be due to the fact that the habitations taken up for coverage during 1999-2000 were of difficult nature and capital intensive as the left over habitations are mostly in difficult terrain, desert regions, hilly areas, hard rock areas or quality affected.
- The observation of the Standing Committee is correct and may be due to the fact that the habitations taken up for coverage during 1999-2000 were of difficult nature and capital intensive as the left over habitations are mostly in difficult terrain, desert regions, hilly areas, hard rock areas or quality affected.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 16 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Para No. 2.45)

The Committee find that as per the revised guidelines 20% allocation is being made to 58 districts i.e. around 10% of the total districts. They are concerned to note that 90% of the districts are being deprived of their share of allocation by the new initiatives taken by the Government. The Committee are not inclined to accept the revised norms and would like that the criteria of allocation of the outlay should be same for all the districts and no district should be favoured at the cost of the other district.

Reply of the Government

20% of the ARWSP funds are for implementation of reform initiatives, which *inter-alia*, includes implementation of Sector Reform Projects in 58 pilot districts. They are to be utilised on the basis of successful progress of implementation of projects. The unutilised amount would be pooled back into the balance 80% amount and re-allocated among the States as per the allocation criteria. The funds kept aside for reforms could also be utilised by other districts for activities like water quality monitoring through Catchment Area Approach, restructuring of PHED/Board/Authority/Nigam etc. Further, districts other than the 58 pilot projects would be shirring the entire balance 80% of the ARWSP funds and full MNP provision made by the State Governments. In order to try out new innovative initiatives, such an incentive is required.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 25 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Para No. 2.57)

While appreciating the policy of providing incentive to States performing better, the Committee are not able to accept the logic that providing drinking water supply is a State subject and the responsibility of motivating poorly performing States does not lie with the Central Government. The Committee are of the view that providing drinking water is equally the responsibility of the Central Government, that is why it has been given priority in the National Agenda for Governance. In view of it, the Committee feel that Central Government should take necessary steps to persuade and motivate the poorly performing States/UTs to consider the provision of safe drinking water to rural masses as their responsibility and to cooperate in the Central Sector schemes being operated for the purpose.

Reply of the Government

Drinking water supply is constitutionally a State subject and the State Governments implement rural water supply schemes under the State Sector Minimum Needs Programme (MNP). The Centrally sponsored Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) is a 100% grants-in-aid programme with matching MNP provision by the States and is aimed only to supplement the efforts of the States in attaining the avowed objective of the Government of India in providing safe drinking water to all rural habitations within a specific period. The State Governments are being requested from time to time to take all possible steps for successful implementation of the Rural Water Supply Programme. Any advice given by the Committee for persuading and motivating the poor performing States/UTs will be considered.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 28 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Para No. 2.62)

The Committee find that although it has been accepted by the Government that their ultimate aim is to hand over the activities related to planning, implementation, O&M etc. to the Panchayat/legally authorised local authorities, yet the Government appear to be hesitant over using their full persuasive powers to urge State Governments at the highest possible level to devolve to the Panchayats/legally authorised local authorities the required finances and executive powers, authority and responsibility to fulfill the high duty which ought to be vested in the Panchayats of ensuring drinking water facilities for all at the required level of quality, operation and maintenance, as a social right of all sections of society and every citizen's essential entitlement. It is noted that water supply programme is 100% Centrally Sponsored Programme and is being implemented by the States as per the guidelines prepared by the Central Government. In this context the Committee fail to understand why the responsibility of implementing and O&M etc. has not been given to Panchayats in the guidelines as per the Constitutional provisions. In view of it, it is recommended that the guidelines should be suitably amended whereby the responsibility of implementing Drinking Water Supply Programme and O&M etc. is directly provided to Panchayats/legally authorised local authorities and the money also directly released to Panchayats.

Reply of the Government

Drinking water supply is a State subject and the State Governments implement rural water supply schemes under the State sector Minimum Needs Programme (MNP). The Centrally sponsored Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) is a 100% grants-in-aid programme with matching MNP provision by the States and is aimed only to supplement the efforts of the States in attaining the avowed objective of the Government of India in providing safe drinking water to all rural habitations within a specific period.

Though the ultimate aim of the Government is to hand over ownership and operation and maintenance of the rural drinking water schemes to the PRIs/local communities, at present this concept is being demonstrated only in 58 districts of the country where the sector reform pilot projects are being implemented. Efforts are being made to allow the PRIs to implement the rural water supply schemes in those sector reform districts wherever the PRIs are firmly in place and are ready and willing to take up the responsibility of effective implementation of these projects. Once the strategy of the reforms is demonstrated successfully in the pilot districts, the responsibility for implementation of this innovative concept would be directly discharged by PRIs in conformity with the principles envisaged in the 73rd Constitution Amendment.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 31 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Para No. 3.8)

As per data only 16% to 20% of the rural households are stated to have sanitation facilities. Equally disturbing is the position of school sanitation where only few schools have even urinal and lavatory facilities not to talk of the overall sanitation. The Committee are concerned to note that inspite of their recommending strongly in their earlier reports for enhancement of outlay and take necessary steps to improve the poor situation in the area of rural sanitation, nothing substantial has been done. Only Rs. 500 crore have been earmarked

for 9th Plan whereas for achieving the stipulated target of covering 35% of rural population by the end of 9th Plan around Rs. 4375 crore are required as per the information provided by the Government. It is again strongly recommended that the Government should persuade the Planning Commission to enhance the outlay substantially so as to achieve the set objectives of covering at least 35% of the population by the end of the 9th Plan. The Committee would also like to recommend that while planning for providing sanitation facilities to schools in the rural areas it should be ensured that separate toilets are provided for girls. The Committee also recommended that with a view to augment the resources, Govt. should enlist the cooperation of local Member of Parliament and impress upon him to contribute towards this object from his MPLADS fund.

Reply of the Government

During 2000-2001, Rs. 140 crores have been provided for Central Rural Sanitation Programme as compared to Rs. 110 crores provided during last financial year which is about 28% increase. It may be mentioned that due to limited availability of funds, the Planning Commission has suggested reduction of target from 35% to 25% of the rural household sanitation coverage during the Mid Term Appraisal.

Under the Restructured Centrally Sponsored Rural Sanitation Programme, which has come into effect from 1-4-99, special emphasis has been given to school sanitation. Under the RCRSP, upto 10% of the funds under the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) Approach and 5% of the funds under the "allocation-based" programme could be earmarked for school sanitation. The State Governments are being requested to construct separate toilets for girls and letters have already been written to all the State Governments to enlist the cooperation of local Members of Parliament and impress upon them to also contribute towards this objective from the MPLADS funds.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000, Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 34 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Para No. 3.9)

The Committee are unhappy to note the poor monitoring of the programme by the Government. During 1998-99 as per their own data, the expenditure has been shown as Rs. 121.06 crore against release of Rs. 67 crore for which the Government have no clarification. Even after the lapse of two years, the position is yet to be checked from the State Governments. The Committee take serious view of the attitude of the Government towards one of their most important programme and would like that the monitoring of the programme should further be strengthened.

Reply of the Government

The monitoring of the programme is being done through monthly, quarterly and annual progress reports, periodic review meetings with the States and visit of area officers to the States. Efforts have already been initiated to reconcile the discrepancies in figures.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000, Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 37 of Chapter-I of the Report)

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED

Recommendation (Para No. 2.11)

The Committee, when informed that out of 14,30,543 habitations, only 2,67,347 habitations *i.e.* around 18.6% of the total habitations remained PC or NC, are sceptical about the structuring of the data in this regard, especially when a large number of FC habitations re-emerge as NC habitations for want of continued sustenance. In case if all these FC habitations that re-emerge as NC habitations for want of sustenance are also included in the data relating to PC and NC habitations, then the data relating to the number of NC and PC habitations would have been higher showing a dismal performance of the Government. The Committee therefore feel that there should be a realistic assessment of PC and NC habitations, keeping in mind the number of FC habitations re-emerging as NC habitations, so that physical and financial targets are properly planned for achieving the objective of the Government.

Reply of the Government

All the State Governments have now been requested to furnish the information annually in respect of fully covered habitations slipping back into Not Covered and Partially Covered category and the Partially Covered habitations slipping into Not Covered category. It would take State Governments' considerable time, effort and money for collecting this information accurately. The information as and when received from the State Governments would be compiled by the Department of Drinking Water Supply. However, due to sources going dry because of depletion in ground water level, natural growth of population in existing habitations and emergence of new habitations, systems having a definite life-period and the systems becoming defunct due to poor Operation & Maintenance, the slippage of the covered category of habitations into not covered category is a constantly changing situation and the estimates will vary at any given point of time.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000, Department of Drinking Water Supply]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 7 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Para No. 2.29)

The Committee desire that the implications of these serious shortfalls be carefully assessed by the Government and corrective action taken urgently. Equally, it is essential that a scientific State-wise/district-wise survey be made of 'private water sources with accessibility to the public', to ensure that this newly included source is properly estimated and fully tapped.

Reply of the Government

As the Rural Water Supply schemes are implemented in the field by the State Governments, they have been requested accordingly to examine the reasons for low coverage and high cost of coverage during 1999-2000 and intimate their detailed explanation on the matter to the Department of Drinking Water Supply to enable its detailed critical analysis.

The State Governments have also been requested that a scientific district-wise survey of private water sources with "accessibility of the public" may be made at the earliest.

[Ministry of Rural Development O.M. No. H-11020/5/2000-GC (P)
dated 25.8.2000 (Department of Drinking Water Supply)]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 19 of Chapter-I of the Report)

NEW DELHI;
18 April, 2001
28 Chaitra, 1923 (Saka)

ANANT GANGARAM GEETE,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on
Urban and Rural Development.

APPENDIX I

COMMITTEE ON URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(2001)

MINUTES OF THE SIXTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE
ON URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT HELD ON
MONDAY, THE 12TH MARCH, 2001

The Committee sat from 15.00 hrs. to 16.20 hrs. in Committee Room 'B', Ground Floor, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Anant Gangaram Geete — *Chairman*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar
3. Shri Jaswant Singh Bishnoi
4. Shri Swadesh Chakraborty
5. Shrimati Hema Gamang
6. Shri Holkhomang Haokip
7. Shri Mandan Lal Khurana
8. Shri Shrichand Kriplani
9. Shri Bir Singh Mahato
10. Shri Punnulal Mohale
11. Dr. Ranjit Kumar Parja
12. Shri Chandresh Patel
13. Shri Dharam Raj Singh Patel
14. Shri Chinmayanand Swami
15. Shri Sunder Lal Tiwari
16. Shri Chintaman Wanaga

Rajya Sabha

17. Shri Karnendu Bhattacharjee
18. Shri N.R. Dasari
19. Prof. A. Lakshmisagar
20. Shri A. Vijaya Raghavan

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri S.C. Rastogi — *Joint Secretary*
2. Shri K. Chakraborty — *Deputy Secretary*
3. Smt. Sudesh Luthra — *Under Secretary*

2. *** *** *** *** *** ***

3. The Committee thereafter took up for consideration Memorandum No. 5 regarding draft report on the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Eleventh Report of the Committee (13th Lok Sabha) on Demand for Grants (2000-2001) of Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Drinking Water Supply) and adopted the draft action taken Report with some modifications and additions in annexure.

4. *** *** *** *** *** ***

5. The Committee then authorised the Chairman to finalise the said draft action taken Report on the basis of factual verification from the concerned Ministry/Department and to present the same to Parliament.

The Committee then adjourned.

***Relevant portions of the minutes not related to the subject have been kept separately.

ANNEXURE

[See Para 3 of Minutes dated 12.03.2001]

Sl. No.	Page No.	Para No.	Line No.	Modifications
1	2	3	4	5
1.	1	2 (i)	11	Delete 2.15
2.	1	2 (i)	13	Delete 2.57 and 2.62
3.	1	2 (iii)	12 from bottom	Insert 2.15 before 2.28 and insert 2.57 and 2.62 after 2.45
4.	6	10	—	<p>Insert the following paras after para 10:</p> <p>“C. Increase in financial allocation and high level consultation</p> <p>Recommendation (Para No. 2.15)</p> <p>11. The Committee had recommended as under:</p> <p>“The Government and the Planning Commission should urgently consider at the highest possible level, in consultation with high-level State authorities, the exponential increases in financial allocations and disbursements required to attain the drinking water goals of the National Agenda for Governance, and the political and administrative steps that need to be taken, including the key question of the empowerment of the Panchayats in this regard, as</p>

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provided in the Constitution. In this context the role of the Gram Sabhas needs specific attention, with the role of the Gram Sabhas in Fifth Schedule Areas being defined in terms of the provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 passed by Parliament. The Department should also coordinate with the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Department of Women and Child Development) the responsibilities which could be entrusted to the Gram Mahila Sabhas set up under the Indira Mahila Yojana. Moreover, the disturbingly low priority being given to rain water conservation, including traditional methods of water conservation, as well as the miniscule expenditure being incurred on this vital matter, needs urgent high-level review."

12. The Government have stated as below:

"The Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP) prepared by the Department of Drinking Water Supply to provide drinking water facilities to all rural habitations of the country in five years, has been submitted to the Finance Ministry/ Planning Commission for consideration. The CAP clearly indicates the year-wise

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requirement of funds for providing drinking water facilities to all rural habitations in five years. The matter would be pursued with the Finance Ministry/Planning Commission. As per Article 243 G of the Constitution, the Legislature of a State may, by law, endow the Panchayats with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self-government and such law may contain provision for the devolution of powers and responsibilities upon Panchayats at the appropriate level, subject to such conditions as may be specified therein, with respect to—(a) the preparation of plans for economic development and social justice, and (b) the implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to the matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule which, *inter-alia*, includes Drinking Water and maintenance of community assets. As such, the responsibility of endowing the above mentioned powers with the Panchayats is with the State Governments. The Ministry of Rural Development had requested the State Governments to complete the devolution of funds/powers to

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				<p>the PRIs in respect of Rural Water Supply Schemes by the year 2000. The Ministry has once again reiterated the requests to the State Governments. The Ministry of Water Resources is the nodal Ministry for ground water resources. Recently, a high-level workshop under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Prime Minister was organized by the Ministry of Water Resources to review and prioritise rain water harvesting technologies, including traditional methods of rain water harvesting.</p> <p>13. While nothing the reply furnished by the Government, the Committee find the reply does not address to the recommendation made by the Committee to co-ordinate with the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Department of Women and Child Development) the responsibilities which could be entrusted to the Gram Mahila Sabhas set up under the Indira Mahila Yojana. In view of it they reiterate their earlier recommendation and would like to be apprised of the response of the Government in this regard."</p>
5.	9	13	—	<p><i>Add</i> the following at the end of para 13:</p> <p>"Besides, the Committee would like to be informed of the steps</p>

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				being taken to reverse the alarming decrease in the ratio of physical achievement to financial outlay."
6.	10	16	—	<i>Add the following at the end of para 16:</i> "The Committee would also like to be informed of the time frame for the completion of the said survey. Besides, they would like to be apprised of the steps taken to reverse the deeply disturbing trends towards low coverage and high costs."
7.	11	19	4 from bottom	<i>For "appreciating" substitute "noting"</i>
8.	11	19	—	<i>Add the following at the end of para 19:</i> "They fail to understand as to why after the lapse of a year since the Government's attention was drawn to the need to analyse and explain the reasons for the under-utilisation of funds in key programmes like ARWSP and MNP, the Government are still unable to furnish any reason, without which of course, no rectificatory action is possible. They would like to be informed of the time frame within which action in this regard would be taken by the Government."
9.	13	22	—	<i>Add the following at the end of para 22:</i> "The Committee would like to be apprised of a full report in

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				this regard at the earliest."
10.	13	22	—	<p><i>Insert the following paras after para 22:</i></p> <p>"H. The responsibility of Central and State Governments to provide safe drinking water to rural masses</p> <p>Recommendation (Para No. 257)</p> <p>26. The Committee had recommended as under:</p> <p>"While appreciating the policy of providing incentive to State performing better, the Committee are not able to accept the logic that providing drinking water supply is a State subject and the responsibility of motivating poorly performing States does not lie with the Central Government. The Committee are of the view that providing drinking water is equally the responsibility of the Central Government, that is why it has been given priority in the National Agenda for Governance. In view of it, the Committee feel that Central Government should take necessary steps to persuade and motivate water to rural masses as their responsibility and to cooperative in the Central Sector schemes being operated for the purpose."</p>

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27. The Government have stated as below :

"Drinking water supply is Constitutionally a State subject and the State Governments implement rural water supply schemes under the State Sector Minimum Needs Programme (MNP). The Centrally sponsored Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) is a 100% grants-in-aid programme with matching MNP provision by the States and is aimed only to supplement the efforts of the States in attaining the avowed objective of the Government of India in providing safe drinking water to all rural habitations within a specific period. The State Governments are being requested from time to time to take all possible steps for successful implementation of the Rural Water Supply Programme. Any advice given by the Committee for persuading and motivating the poor performing States/UTs will be considered.

28. The Committee had pointed out that precisely because drinking water had been given priority in the Central Government's National Agenda for Governance, notwithstanding this being a State subject, it was the obligation of the Central

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Government to ensure time bound implementation. Instead of setting up a structured mechanism for real time monitoring, consultation and rectificatory action, the Department have contented themselves with seeking the advice of the Committee. The Committee feel that advice can be tendered only after the Department has pin-pointed these issues and set up a structured time-table for persuading and motivating the poor performing States/UTs. They, therefore, would like to be informed about the response of the Government in this regard.

I. Devolving of implementation of O&M and Drinking Water Supply Programme to PRIs

Recommendation (Para No. 2.62)

29. The Committee had recommended as under:

“The Committee find that although it has been accepted by the Government that their ultimate aim is to hand over the activities related to planning, implementation, O&M etc. to the Panchayat/legally authorised local authorities, yet the Government appear to be hesitant over using their full persuasive powers to urge State Governments at the highest

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possible level to devolve to the Panchayats/legally authorised local authorities the required finances and executive powers, authority and responsibility to fulfil the high duty which ought to be vested in the Panchayats of ensuring drinking water facilities for all at the required level of quality, operation and maintenance, as a social right of all sections of society and every citizen's essential entitlement. It is noted that Water Supply Programme is 100% Centrally Sponsored Programme and is being implemented by the States as per the guidelines prepared by the Central Government. In this context the Committee fail to understand why the responsibility of implementing and O&M etc. has not been given to Panchayats in the guidelines as per the Constitutional provisions. In view of it, it is recommended that the guidelines should be suitably amended whereby the responsibility of implementing Drinking Water Supply Programme and O&M etc. is directly provided to Panchayats/legally authorized local authorities and the money is also directly released to Panchayats.

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30. The Government have stated as below:

“Drinking water supply is a State subject and the State Governments implement rural water supply schemes under the State Sector Minimum Needs Programme (MNP). The Centrally sponsored Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) is a 100% grants-in-aid programme with matching MNP provision by the States and is aimed only to supplement the efforts of the States in attaining the avowed objective of the Government of India in providing safe drinking water to all rural habitations within a specific period.

Though the ultimate aim of the Government is to hand over ownership and operation and maintenance of the rural drinking water schemes to the PRIs/local communities, at present this concept is being demonstrated only in 58 districts of the country where the sector reform pilot projects are being implemented. Efforts are being made to allow the PRIs to implement the rural water supply schemes in those sector reform districts wherever the PRIs are firmly in place and are ready and willing to take up the responsibility of effective implementation of these projects. Once the strategy of

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the reforms is demonstrated successfully in the pilot districts, the responsibility for implementation of this innovative concept would be directly discharged by PRIs in conformity with the principles envisaged in the 73rd Constitution Amendment."

31. The Committee are unable to accept the argument of the Government that PRIs need not be involved in the experimental phase in pilot districts but, perhaps, brought in later in some unspecified manner. In view of it, they reiterate their earlier recommendation to suitably amend the guidelines whereby the responsibility of implementing Drinking Water Supply Programmes and O&M etc. is directly provided to Panchayats/legally authorised local authorities and the money is also directly released to Panchayats.

11. 16 25 —

Insert the following at the end:

"The Committee also regret that the Government have not addressed to their recommendations to take steps to involve MPs through MPLADS in this vital national endeavour. They, therefore, would like to be apprised of the steps taken by the Government in this regard."

APPENDIX II

[Vide Para 4 of the Introduction]

ANALYSIS OF THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE ELEVENTH REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (13TH LOK SABHA)

I. Total number of recommendations	30
II. Recommendations that have been accepted by the Government (Para Nos. 2.2, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14, 2.18, 2.26, 2.31, 2.40, 2.41, 2.42, 2.46, 2.49, 2.54, 2.68, 2.72, 2.75, 2.77, 2.78, 3.11, and 3.12)	20
Percentage to the total recommendations	(66.67%)
III. Recommendation which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies (Para No. 3.10)	1
Percentage to the total recommendation	(3.33%)
IV. Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee (Para Nos. 2.15, 2.28, 2.45, 2.57, 2.62, 3.8, and 3.9)	7
Percentage to the total recommendations	(23.33%)
V. Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited (Para Nos. 2.11 and 2.29)	2
Percentage to the total recommendations	(6.67%)