

3.2 National Programme for the Control of Blindness

The National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB) was launched by the Government of India in 1976. NPCB is introduced in the State of Goa in 1981 as a 100 percent centrally sponsored scheme. The targets prescribed were not realistic and based on assessment/survey during 1996-2001. The unspent grant of Rs.6.16 lakh was not refunded or adjusted from the release of grants. Further evaluation of the programme was not carried out to ensure effective implementation.

Highlights

- Unspent grant of Rs.6.16 lakh was not refunded or adjusted from the release of grants.
(Paragraph 3.2.7)
- Targets prescribed were not realistic and based on assessment/survey.
(Paragraph 3.2.8, 3.2.9)
- NPCB programme did not cover population of 1.63 lakh out of 11.69 population of Goa State due to shortage of staff.
(Paragraph 3.2.10)
- Mobile unit was not functioning during 1996-97 to 2000-2001 depriving door treatment to the needy and poor.
(Paragraph 3.2.11)
- NPCB training was not given to the ophthalmic staff during 1996-97 to 2000-01.
(Paragraph 3.2.12)
- Evaluation of the programme was not carried out to ensure effective implementation.
(Paragraph 3.2.14)

Introduction

3.2.1 The National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB) was launched by the Government of India in the year 1976 as a 100 per cent Centrally Sponsored Programme with the aim to reduce blindness from 1.4 per

cent to 0.3 per cent population by 2000 AD by providing eye-care facilities at Primary Health Centres (Primary Level), District Hospitals (Secondary Level), mobile unit and teaching institutions like Goa Medical College. The programme was introduced in the State in 1981.

Organizational set up

3.2.2 The programme is implemented under the overall supervision of the Director of Health Services, Panaji. The Chief Medical Officer is the Programme Officer and is assisted by three ophthalmic surgeons at two District Hospitals and one Community Health Centre and one District Blindness Control Society (DBCS) and 16 ophthalmic Assistants attached to 14 Primary Health Centres. Further Goa Medical College (GMC) with operation theatre facilities carrying out all cataract and other eye surgeries.

Audit Coverage

3.2.3 A review of the implementation of the programme in the State was conducted during April to June 2001 with the test check of records maintained at the Directorate of Health Services, Panaji, Chief Medical Officer, Ophthalmic Cell (NPCB), Panaji, 2 District Hospitals at Margao and Mapusa, 1 Community Health Centre at Ponda and Six Primary Health Centres at Chinchinim, Cortalim, Betki, Corlim, Candolim and Bicholim, covering 33 per cent expenditure under the programme in the state.

Financial performance

3.2.4 The budget provision and expenditure incurred under Plan and Non-Plan schemes of NPCB during 1996-97 to 2000-01 was as under:

TABLE 3.5

Year	Plan			Non-Plan			Total		
	Budget Provision	Expenditure	Excess(+) Savings(-)	Budget Provision	Expenditure	Excess(+) Savings(-)	Budget Provision	Expenditure	Excess(+) Savings(-)
(Rupees in lakh)									
1996-97	6.11	5.76	(-) 0.35	16.24	16.00	(-) 0.24	22.35	21.76	(-) 0.59
1997-98	8.11	7.34	(-) 0.77	20.42	20.01	(-) 0.41	28.53	27.35	(-) 1.18
1998-99	7.45	7.02	(-) 0.43	21.10	18.82	(-) 2.28	28.55	25.84	(-) 2.71
1999-00	9.15	8.58	(-) 0.57	21.30	21.75	(+) 0.45	30.45	30.33	(-) 0.12
2000-01	8.07	4.61	(-) 3.46	26.13	19.54	(-) 6.59	34.20	24.15	(-) 10.05
Total	38.89	33.31	(-) 5.58	105.19	96.12	(-) 9.07	144.08	129.43	(-) 14.65

(Source: *Appropriation Accounts of Government of Goa*)

3.2.5 The expenditure against plan to be financed by Government of India was mainly for the implementation of the programme and non-plan was for pay and allowances, contingencies etc. to be met out of State's own resources.

3.2.6 It was noticed that during the year 1996-97 to 2000-01 the department received total grants of Rs.1.44 crore from the State Government, out of which it spent Rs.1.29 crore and balance of Rs.14.65 lakh were not utilized till 31 March 2001. It was stated in May 2001 that grants were not utilized due to retirement of 3 ophthalmic assistants and one statistical assistant.

3.2.7 There was budget grant of Rs.1.44 crore during 1996-97 to 2000-01. This amount included a central assistance of Rs.0.39 crore in cash against which an amount of Rs.0.33 crore was spent leaving adjusted balance of Rs.0.06 crore. The department stated that unspent balance would be adjusted in future grants.

Target and Achievement – Cataract Surgery

3.2.8 The main aim of the programme was to reduce the blindness from 1.4 per cent to 0.3 per cent population by 2000 AD. The number of cataract operations proposed and actually performed during 1996-97 to 2001-01 were as under:

TABLE 3.6

Year	No. of DBCS in the state	No. of cataract surgery proposed/targeted in the year	No. of cataract surgery actually performed in the year	Percentage of achievement
(In numbers)				
1996-97	1	5000	4093	82
1997-98	1	5600	4767	85
1998-99	1	5600	4472	80
1999-00	1	6500	4743	73
2000-01	1	6750	5000	74
Total		29450	23075	

3.2.9 It was noticed that as against 29450 cataract surgeries targeted during 1996-97 to 2000-01, 23075 surgeries were actually performed during the above period. The percentage of achievement ranged from 73 per cent in the year 1999-2000 to 85 per cent in 1997-98. The targets prescribed were not based on the assessment/survey. The same was required to be fixed on actual conditions. Further there was no follow up of cataract operations to ensure success of operations done. It was stated (June 2001) that there was no gross shortfall in achievement of the target during the above period. The departmental contention cannot be accepted in audit as targets were required to be fixed on prevailing health situations and follow up action was felt necessary to ensure satisfactory results of operations already done to assess whether the objectives of reduction in blindness from 1.4 per cent to 0.3 per

cent was achieved. The department stated that survey would be conducted to find out blindness cases in future.

Non-coverage of population for programme

3.2.10 It was noticed that the Primary Health Centre, Corlim was not sending progress reports of NPCB to the Chief Medical Office, NPCB, Panaji since November 1999 on the grounds of non-availability of required staff. This had resulted in not providing benefits of the programme to 0.73 lakh population of Corlim Primary Health Centre during November 1999 to June 2001. Further population of 0.90 lakh was also not covered due to shortage of 3 Ophthalmic Assistants at Pernem, Valpoi and Bicholim.

Non-functioning of Mobile Unit

3.2.11 The Ophthalmic Cell was having one mobile unit since 1981 under its control. This unit was entrusted with the work of conducting cataract surgery and treatment at camps in Goa. The mobile unit consisted of one Ophthalmic Surgeon, one Ophthalmic Assistant, one Nurse and one Driver. It was noticed in audit that this mobile unit was not functioning since 1996. The department stated that cost effectiveness in cataract surgery was better in base hospitals than in field hospital and people of Goa are fully aware of intra-ocular lens implantation for cataract surgery and prefer this to the previous techniques. It was further stated that services of mobile unit were utilized for mini camps held at various Primary Health Centres to cater to the needy public patients. The reply furnished was not tenable as only 25 mini camps were held during 1998-99 as verified from the log book of mobile van. Further two mega camps at Community Health Centre and District Hospitals and one at Goa Medical College were held during 1997-98 and 1998-99. Thus the mobile van and staff concerned were not fully utilized for purpose for which they were intended.

Training under National Programme for Control of Blindness

3.2.12 As per the National Programme for Control of Blindness, the training to eye surgeons in Intra-ocular lens surgery (IOL) was given by Director General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Similarly at District level training was to be given to health workers, ophthalmic assistants, operation theatre assistants etc. It was noticed that three surgeons attached to the District Hospitals, one Jr. Surgeon attached to Community Health Centre at Canacona and 19 Ophthalmic Assistants, Health workers, Nurses, Operation Theatre Assistants attached to Primary Health Centres were not trained.

Non-utilization of grants of District Blindness Control Society

3.2.13 The District Blindness Control Society (DBCS) had received central grants of Rs.12.53 lakh (including unspent balance of Rs.2.88 lakh brought over from earlier year) from Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi during 1996-97 to 2000-01 for utilization in eye camps, purchase of medicines, intra-ocular lens transplantation, spectacles and for routine cataract surgery done at Goa Medical College for needy patients. The DBCS had spent an amount of Rs.8.47 lakh leaving a balance of Rs.4.06 lakh to be spent as on March 2001. It was stated in July 2001 that balance amount could not be utilized in 2001-02.

Evaluation

3.2.14 Monitoring of the programme was done by sending monthly, quarterly returns to the Director General of Health Services, New Delhi. However, it was noticed in audit that the monitoring of the programme was however restricted to the performance of cataract operations only. Further no evaluation was undertaken to ensure effective implementation of the programme and the results thereof for remedial action. The department stated that no evaluation was done at any time between the period 1996-97 to 2001 by the State Government or any agency appointed by State. The department however not furnished any reasons (June 2001) for not having done the evaluation.

3.2.15 The matter was reported to Government in July 2001 and their reply has not been received (January 2002).