

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE REVIEW MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP 'B' OF
STATE PLANNING BOARD HELD ON 29TH SEPTEMBER, 2004 AND 8TH
FEBRUARY, 2005 IN THE OFFICE CHAMBER OF THE CO-CHAIRMAN, STATE
PLANNING BOARD DR. F.A. KHONGLAM.**

Members and Officials present at Annexure – I.

The Co-Chairman, State Planning Board Dr. F.A. Khonglam welcomed the Members and Officers of the different Departments to the meeting. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to review the implementation/achievements of Plan Schemes during 2003-2004.

The following Departments were taken up:-

29.9.04

1. **Industries**:- The Department stated that information asked by the Board on (i) Schemes cleared by Planning Department but have not been approved by Finance Department for 2003-2004 (ii) Schemes cleared by Planning and Finance Department but could not be drawn by the Department for 2003-2004 and (iii) list of redundant schemes (which needed to be discontinued) may be treated as 'Nil'.

During discussions on PMRY a Central Sector Scheme for providing self employment to the educated unemployed youth between 18 to 40 years (SC/ST – 45 years) it is informed that the youth should study upto Class VIII or ITI passed. The family income should not exceed Rs.40,000 per annum. The quantum of the loan amount has been extended to include Industrial Projects costing upto Rs.2 lakhs. The number of youths to be benefited from the scheme during 2003-2004 is raised to 1000 Nos from the 300 youths actually targetted.

On Training Cum Production Centre, the Department stated that these centres are set up for imparting training in different trades for the local youths and after completion of the training course, the trainees are assisted with machine or working capital to establish their enterprise. The trainings imparted are in carpentry, shoe making, tailoring etc. and a stipend of Rs.350/- P.M. to each trainee. The Centres are under Industries Department and where trades are not available in these centres, the Department sponsored for training in private-owned centres. The Industrial Estates at Umiam and Byrnihat are quite successful and the Industrial Estate at Nongstoin are mainly sawmills. In Byrnihat the main drawback is only in terms of power supply and the Department informed that some units are willing to invest in power supply. The Department informed that a new scheme is proposed viz., Honey Processing unit at Sohra to improve the locally processed honey.

On Awareness Programme, the Department stated that it conducts awareness programme in all districts for motivation and identification of local entrepreneurs by way of dissemination of information for the promotion and development of industries and industrial activities.

The Working Group noted that out of Rs.100 crores which is the 10th Plan projected outlay, the Department had expended about Rs.28 crores only during the first 2 years of the 10th Plan and enquired whether the Department can achieve the target of the 10th Plan for the remaining 3 years. The Department stated that the projected outlay of the 10th Plan is only tentative and finally, the actual outlay depends on what Planning Commission and State Planning Department allotted to the Department each year.

To a query by the Working Group on any scope to revive the defunct Meghalaya Watches the Department explained that the Meghalaya Watches is actually started on the line that the HMT company send the parts to Meghalaya Watches, assembling is done by the latter and send back to HMT for disposal. Hence there appear to be no scope to revive the Corporation. The Department informed that some employees have agreed to the Voluntary Retirement Scheme.

During discussion on the performance of Mawmluh Cherra Cements Limited Factory, the Working Group advised the Department to take immediate step for modernization of the machineries etc.

2. Mining & Geology :- The Department informed that its main functions are geological exploration of mineral deposits of the state, administration of mines and collection of revenue in the form of Royalty and Mineral Cess. It also carries out exploration of ground water resources and geotechnical studies on request from state government Departments. In addition to the above, it is helping the Meghalaya Mineral Development Corporation on mineral development activities.

On uranium mining as queried by the Working Group, the Department stated that the decision will be taken only at the level of the Cabinet. It also stated that no work is being taken up at present. However, it is informed that preliminary exploration may be carried out by Atomic Energy Department of Government of India and also informed that for uranium mining, no private parties can take up the work.

During discussion, on Quartz and Granite exploration the Working Group desired a report from the Department on Granite found in the state in terms of area and quality and if there is scope for taking it up commercially. As far as drilling of ground water is concerned, the Department stated that it takes up for establishment of Government Offices.

To a query on Mawsmai Coal Depot the Department informed that it has not function for the last 5/6 years. At present it is being leased to private parties for amusement purposes fetching an annual rent of Rs.20 lakhs to the Department and the salaries of the establishment of MMDC can partly be met from this amount.

The Working Group encouraged the Department on geological exploration of mineral deposits in the state.

3. Sericulture & Weaving:- The Department informed that the Original Plan Outlay of Rs.300 lakhs during 2003-2004 was later reduced to Rs.260 lakhs. The amount of Rs.191.68 lakhs expended during the year was actually out of Rs.210 lakhs and the remaining amount cannot be spent due to non-filling up of vacant posts.

During discussion on the schemes of the Department, it was learnt that the rate of conversion from Cocoon to Yarn (Raw Silk) is very poor and the quality of Cocoon also need to be improved as the ratio in the state is very low compared to other states in the country. The Department also stated that it needs a centre for research works citing an example that Karnataka has a centre for their own research purpose while Meghalaya depends on the Central Silk Board Regional Office at Guwahati.

The Department stated that 70% of the cocoons produced goes outside the State. On setting up of a conversion unit, proposed by the Department the Working Group was of the opinion that the Department may take up with Self Help Groups and reeling machines may be provided at subsidised rates. The Department has proposed a scheme of reeling unit for the unemployed youth but have not been sanctioned. The Working Group recommended the same and asked the Department to resubmit the scheme.

The Working Group suggested that the plantation area needs to be expanded. The Department briefed on the important scheme during 2003-2004 viz., Integrated Muga Silk Development Programme, Integrated Eri Silk Development Programme, Integrated Mulberry Silk Development Programme, Sericulture Pre-service Training and Study Tour and Cocoon Marketing Support system.

8.2.05

1. Tourism:- The Working Group noted that the Department's expenditure on development and upgradation of existing and new Tourist Spots is quite less during the last 2 years and raised the question as to whether the Department will be able to spend the entire amount allocated during the 10th Plan of Rs. 200 lacs. The Department informed that there are two reasons for not being able to spend the money accordingly.

- (i) The absence of a technical wing and the Department's dependence on PWD which lead to delay in submitting the schemes to Government in time.
- (ii) The faulty way of preparing schemes by the PWD which lead to most of the schemes being rejected at the Government's level.

The Department however informed that this year setting up of a technical wing of the Department have been approved by both Finance and Planning Departments and ensured of a better performance by the Department. On identification of new tourist spots the Department informed that several new tourist spots have been identified. On the Lake Resort at Umiam, the Department informed that fund for beautifying the lake comes from the Central Government and for this year about Rs.5 cores have been sanctioned. Regarding the promotion of adventure tourism/trekking/ tented accommodation and purchase of equipments, Rs.285.00 lacs have been allocated in the 10th Plan but so far the Department have not spend anything. On this observation the Department agrees that not much attention has been given to this area and ensured that the Department will take note of this.

The Working Group also enquired on the outlay for the development of Cherrapunjee as a No.1 tourist spot but which do not appear to figure in the Tenth Plan outlay or during 2003-2004 and on less expenditure under Direction and Administration. The Department assured that clarification on these will be submitted to the Board after verification.

On Publicity, Tourist Fairs and Festival it is informed that this year the Department has so far participated in two fairs in Mumbai and in Berlin from 11th to 15th March, 2005. Preparation for this have started and it is also proposed that selected hoteliers will form part of the team with a view to improve the all round development of tourism in the state. Rs.15 lakhs is being invested in this. A documentary film on tourism in the state has been released recently and another one is due for release in a week's time. The publicity works of the Department is tied up mostly outside the state and also internationally through Print and Electronic Media, Documentary films and participation in major fairs and exhibitions. A road show organized in Delhi was attended by 300 hoteliers, tour operators etc. The Department also participated in the Pata fair in Bangkok.

The Foodcraft and Hotel Management Institutes belong to the Central Government. A permanent site for these institutes have been identified at Mawdiangdiang. There are about 75 students studying in these institutes in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd year and most of the students have received placements outside the state.

Enquiring on the latest position of the Crowborough Hotel it is informed that now it is free from all litigations. An Empowered Committee with the Chief Minister as the Chairman, is working out to utilize the building.

In conclusion the Working Group advised the Department to expedite implementation of its scheme for development Tourism in the State.

2. Urban Affairs :- Briefing on the New Shillong/Satellite Township. The Department informed that so far 250 acres of land have been acquired and another 250 acres is yet to be acquired. Out of the Plan Budget of Rs.23.03 crores, Rs.17 crores have been earmarked for

Satellite Township as loan but this could not be availed for acquiring land. Out of 500 acres, 100 acres is needed for developing the infrastructure. For the current year if the Department gets grant money then it will acquire the land as the Planning Commission is giving additional funds for the current year. Consultant has been appointed by the Meghalaya Urban Development Authority for preparation of detailed project for Road and Power sector and works are likely to be initiated during 2004-2005.

On construction of Shopping Complexes in different areas of the city under the scheme Infrastructure Development the Department explained that this is meant for improving the market conditions in smaller towns/villages to defuse to some extent the concentration in the main city in view of traffic problems and other related problems. Regarding proposal for expansion of the market place in Cherrapunjee the Department informed that the problem is that at present the Syiem have not paid the amount due to the Department for the last 2 years although collection is going on. It was however informed that construction of Link Road at Police Bazar and Parking Lot at Iewmiet Laban cannot be taken up due non-availability of land free from encumbrances.

On the low expenditure under construction of Departmental buildings the Department clarified that although land for the purpose has been acquired at Nongpoh but since the land has not yet been handed over to the Department the proposal of development/construction works cannot be processed during the year.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks from the Chair.

Sd/-
(F.A. Khonglam)
Co-Chairman,
State Planning Board