

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP'A' OF STATE PLANNING BOARD HELD ON 1ST SEPTEMBER, 2005 IN THE OFFICE CHAMBER OF CHAIRMAN, STATE PLANNING BOARD TO REVIEW OF PLAN SCHEMES DURING 2004-2005.

Members and Officials present at Annexure-I

Shri S.C.Marak, Chairman, Meghalaya State Planning Board welcomed the Members and Officials to the meeting.

The following Departments were taken up :-

1. Programme Implementation Department :- During discussions, the Working Group was informed that the Evaluation Unit (Cell) which was earlier under the Directorate of Economics and Statistics was upgraded to a Directorate under the Programme Implementation Department (PID). The Directorate of Evaluation is to provide feedbacks to different Departments. Till date, it has completed evaluation of 17 projects of different Departments. Approval of the State Evaluation Committee is needed before making public of such evaluated projects. The Programme Implementation Department also takes up monitoring of Plan schemes and organize review meetings with different Departments. At present evaluation of different schemes of Community & Rural Development is being undertaken and it is proposed to evaluate on the volume of water under PHE. The response from different Departments on reports called for is quite poor.

The Working Group pointed out that evaluation is a very important job. It is very necessary to evaluate important projects or those projects which have huge escalation costs. The Rongai Valley Medium Irrigation Project and Greater Shillong Water Supply Projects need to be evaluated.

The Department was asked to furnish copies of the 17 evaluated projects to the State Planning Board.

2. Planning Department (Voluntary Action Fund) – The Department informed that out of 565 applications received during 2004-2005, 213 Nos. are found to be ineligible as per the modified guidelines issued by Planning Department. 352 applications were entertained for financial assistance from the Voluntary Action Fund during 2004-2005 on a budget provision of Rs. 30 lacs.

It was stated that the objectives of the Voluntary sector is to encourage and promote voluntary institutions for promotion of self reliance and accelerate rural and tribal development through voluntary action. The applications are routed through the Deputy Commissioners and the Chief Minister is the Chairman of the Committee. The Voluntary Agencies/Non-Government Organisations should be registered with the Government. During 2005-2006 advertisements have not yet been issued. There is a Plan allocation of Rs.50.00 lacs. To avoid duplication Agriculture related activities and Sports related Programmes are excluded.

Science & Technology – The Department informed that in 1985, the State Government set up a Science & Technology Cell under the Planning Department. However, Science & Technology activities

in the state received a boost with the creation of the State Council of Science, Technology & Environment, Meghalaya in 1997, an autonomous society of the State Government for promotion of Science & Technology in the state. The Department stated that it is popularizing science especially in rural areas through involvement of NGOs and Self Help Groups. It further informed that about 300 numbers NGOs are helping the Department in its various activities.

Responding to queries by the Working Group the Department informed that organic composting is popular to a certain extent. The Govt. of India is proposing to invest through Science & Technology Cell for organic farming. On Rain Water Harvesting, roof top rain water harvesting is being taken up and the units are doing well. Low cost sanitation is taken up on family-based or community based. The Community based low cost sanitation is taken up at Elephant Falls, Upper Shillong and at Tura and Sohra. Low cost oven with an investment of Rs.7000/- only, is taken up at Nongmynsong which is doing very well.

The Department informed that a Bio Resources Development Centre is being set up at Upper Shillong under the Science & Technology Sector. The scientist-in-charge of the centre has been posted and he is assisted by 7(seven) Scientific Technical and Administrative personnel. A Shillong Science centre is being set up in the campus of North Eastern Hills University, Shillong. The office building is in the final stage of completion. The process of recruiting the necessary manpower for the centre is being taken up.

On Employment Generation Schemes taken up during 2004-2005, the Department stated that a “Technology-oriented Entrepreneurship Development Programme on Mushroom Production Technology” was conducted by the state Science & Technology Council in association with the National Research Centre for Mushroom (NRCM), Solan (HP) in the last part of the financial year. 55 participants from different parts of the state attended. The programme was aimed at providing exposure and basic knowledge to the participants on the latest technologies available with regard to mushroom production.

The Department is asked to inform the Board those areas which are doing well in this technology, as the Working Group would like to visits some projects of the Department.

3. Information Technology :- The Department stated that it came into being sometime in 2001 only. It started implementing Plan Schemes since 2003-2004 only. During the said year, it focused on basic infrastructure and programme to propel future activities of the Department and an amount of Rs.75 lakhs was expended during 2003-2004.

During 2004-2005, the Department had an initial budget provision of Rs.83 lakhs out of which continuing schemes such as development of roadmap, IT infrastructure etc were taken up and for taking up of new schemes such as establishment of Computer Learning Centre, Tura etc. Further, Rs.88 lakhs under ACA for implementation of National E-Governance Plan (NeGP) was received and budgetary provision made through Supplementary Demand. Thus a total of Rs.171 lakhs is spent during 2004-2005.

During discussions, the Department stated that there is a directive from the Ministry of Information Technology that all Community Blocks in NE be computerized. In Meghalaya, 2(two) projects (CICs) were first taken up at Myllem and Umsning Blocks and at present, 32 blocks out of 39 blocks are computerized. To a query by the Working Group as to how computerization of these blocks have helped, the Department stated that Community & Rural Development is the nodal Department. Information Technology Department also does the monitoring every 2-3 months. The Department stated that CICs are being utilized for IGNOU studies as far as utilization level the Department stated it is yet to come up. Among North East States Meghalaya, Sikkim and Mizoram are doing well.

On training of Government Officers, the Department stated that private service providers were engaged at quite a low payment. 2 NEC Scheme entitled “Development of E-Governance infrastructure by way of which Computers are now provided to Section Level Offices in the Secretariat, to Private Secretary to Ministers/Parliamentary Secretaries etc. and “Establishment of remote sensing/Geographical Information System (GIS) facilities” where all the GIS infrastructure required by all state Government Departments are now established. Rs.2.5 crores for establishing GIS lab is supported by NEC.

On employment generation schemes, the Department stated that though there are no Plan schemes during 2004-2005 involving employment generation, yet the Department in association with DOEACC Centre, Guwahati is able to conduct ITES training courses in 2 batches, where a number of youths are trained and already a few have received placements in BPOs, call centres, and private organisations across the country.

4. Information & Public Relations :- During 2004-2005, Rs.141.58 lakhs was expended against the revised Plan Outlay of Rs.156 lakhs. During discussions the Working group felt that the Department has a crucial task in informing the people especially at the grassroots level of the various schemes, projects etc. of the state Government aimed for their benefit and welfare, and as such revamping of fixed loud speakers which alone will cost about Rs. 1 crore is supported by the Working Group.

The activities of the Department also included organizing Special Inter Active Programme and workshops, Seminars with other Departments at Sub-Divisional level. A seminar with Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi is proposed. Plans for the office building for DIPR are yet to be approved.

The Working Group advised the Department to look into the publicity angle to link with Tourism Department to attract tourists to the state. The Department was asked to submit a vision document for the next 20 years and to furnish a detailed note with the proposals of Rs.4.5 crores for 2005-2006.

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

Sd/-
(S.C. Marak)
Chairman,
State Planning Board.