

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP 'A' OF
MEGHALAYA STATE PLANNING BOARD HELD ON THE 30TH AUGUST,
2004 IN THE OFFICE CHAMBER OF THE CHAIRMAN, MEGHALAYA STATE
PLANNING BOARD**

At the outset while welcoming the Members, State Planning Board and the Officers present Shri S.C. Marak, Chairman of the Working Group "A" informed that the meeting was convened to review the progress and implementation of Centrally Sponsored/Central Sector Scheme in the state during 2003-2004. He called upon the Members/ Officers to express their views freely in order to have a fruitful discussion.

The following Departments were taken up :-

1. Agriculture/Horticulture : A point was raised by the Working Group as to the rationale regarding the variation of Centrally Sponsored Scheme where there is 75% to 50% to 100% Share of Govt. of India as per statement furnished by the Department. The Department informed that the situation of the nature of the schemes are taken into consideration and further stated that Projects/Schemes drawn under Centrally Sponsored Schemes are areas of operation where the respective Departments have their way in matters of optimum benefit i.e., nature or pattern of schemes etc. while projects/schemes under Central Sector Schemes are in the pattern as drawn up entirely by the Govt. of India. The Department informed the Working Group that its performance is good in respect of implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes and Central Sector Schemes.

The Department impressed upon the Working Group that there is the need of Agriculture mechanism to improve productivity. The Department mentioned that in its dedicated efforts for Agriculture Mechanism, it had managed for sanction of 180 Power Tillers from the Ministry of Agriculture, 200 Power Tillers from Technology Mission and 20 Power Tillers from the State Government during 2003-2004. To a query by the Working Group on a particular Central Sector Schemes viz. Women in Agriculture, the Department informed that the scheme is taken up in Jaintia Hills. This Scheme is being implemented in one district in each state.

The Department stated that under Macro Management of Agriculture-a Centrally Sponsored Scheme – it had drawn up 18 Schemes. The funds utilized for implementation of the schemes was 100% in respect of 14 schemes and a small shortfall in respect of 3 schemes. Funds for 1 scheme viz., Development of Bee Keeping, had not been utilized by the Department. NEC

have increased its financial assistance under Turmeric cultivation. The locations are in Ri-Bhoi and Jaintia Hills.

Under Horticulture, the Department stated that Tea Cultivation is a success story in Meghalaya. The area increase is quite high in Tea Cultivation as well as the production. It was informed that the area of Tea Cultivation which was 227 hectares in 1998 had increased to 657 hectares in 2002-2003. The Department informed the Working Group that the Tea Board is giving financial assistance to the state for raising tea seedlings in the existing nurseries and the seedlings were distributed free of cost to the farmers. On the Strawberry Pilot Project experimented at Umsning it was informed that the seeds are imported from abroad and the yield is of high quality. So far no assistance has been given to private farmers. The Department may examine the possibility of giving assistance to the private farmers. The areas of operation on Citrus Rejuvenation and Development of Mandarin Orange under NEC scheme are in the 4(four) Districts of Ri-Bhoi, East Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills and West Garo Hills. Under area expansion, fresh seedlings will be given to farmers including the new farmers. The total area for expansion is 200 hectares and for regeneration 1000 hectares which is expected to give boost to production.

The Working Group pointed out on migration of farmers from Cherrapunjee (Border Areas) to Ri-Bhoi area because of soil fertility where otherwise at one point of time, the oranges grown on this belt are famous for its quality worldwide and as such, wanted to know on the steps taken by the Department regarding rejuvenation works. The Department stated that the steps to be taken are replacement of unproductive diseased trees by new plantation of tissue culture seedlings etc. raised in the state government nurseries, training on latest technology, improvement of maintenance by application of chemicals against diseases etc. The Working Group was of the opinion that steps on soil improvement should also be taken up, as part of the rejuvenation programme.

The Working Group felt that it should have another meeting with the Department since discussions on other schemes could not be taken up due to shortage of time. The Department to submit a detailed write up on the success story of Tea cultivation.

2. **Animal Husbandry & Veterinary** : The Department briefed on the scheme, “Assistance to State for Control of Animal Diseases (ASCAD)” which is 75% Central Share and 25% State Share. This is an amalgamation of schemes like Animal disease, Foot and Mouth Disease etc. The expenditure of staff component is fully borne by the State. The Department stated that due to late

receipt of sanction from State Government, this scheme could not be implemented during 2003-2004 and Govt. of India was requested to revalidate the Central Share for 2004-2005. On Rinderpest Eradication Programme, the Department stated that it is being implemented with 100% assistance from the Central Government. The main objective of the scheme is for complete eradication of Rinderpest. However, for staff component it is 100% State Share. The Department informed that Rinderpest was already eradicated and Meghalaya is the first to eradicate the disease. The works taken up at present are for research purposes to control the disease.

On survey for estimation of major livestock products, the Working Group was of the opinion that this scheme is very important as in assessing the same it could draw effective projects to meet the meat requirement in the State. The Department expressed its drawback as the activities are limited to government farms primarily meant for promotion activities. The challenge to the Department is however to transfer knowledge to the farmers and motivate them to improve production.

There was a general observation that the Department of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary is in the backyard and yet to enter the commercial arena. The Working Group asked the Department to furnish a note on import of meat etc. vis-a-vis the state's requirement. Regarding self-sufficiency in meat production the Working Group advised the Department to identify a particular meat requirement where farmers could be encouraged to concentrate in this particular production with the intention of increasing production to cater to the requirements in the state.

3. Co-operation : The Statement furnished by the Department in respect of Centrally Sponsored Schemes was found to be incomplete as neither the pattern of funding was shown nor any actual expenditure was indicated against the Central Share amount indicated during 2003-2004. Though the Department explained that the figures shown in the statement are those as reflected in the budget provision but no schemes were drawn up for which there was no expenditure. The Working Group felt that such explanation should have been fully indicated in the statement. However, under Central Sector Scheme, the Department have utilized Rs.261.62 lacs against the outlay of Rs.681.52 lacs during 2003-2004 under Assistance to Multipurpose Rural Co-operative (Integrated Co-operative Development Project) No expenditure was shown for schemes under Assistance to other Co-operative Societies and Other Expenditure in Central Sector Schemes and no explanatory note was given by the Department.

The Chairman felt that the Department should highlight the problems faced in the implementation of Centrally Sponsored /Central Sector Schemes and suggestions as to how to go about to improve the performance of the schemes.

The Department was asked to resubmit relevant information in respect of Centrally Sponsored Schemes and Central Sector Schemes as per the prescribed proforma.

4. Community and Rural Development : The Working Group was of the opinion that there should be evaluation of rural development programmes from the concept of the schemes to implementation. This may be taken up internally i.e. initially, by the Department itself and later may be taken up by any external agency on the findings of the Department vis-à-vis the conditions on the ground. The Working Group felt that the statistics on the impact of the rural development schemes on the beneficiaries need to be drawn up over the years. During discussions the Working Group was informed that fund is not a constraint for rural development programmes.

The Working Group asked the Department to furnish informations district-wise on implementation of SGSY and other rural development schemes.

5. Tourism : The Department briefed on the schemes viz., Construction of Suspension Bridge over Weina Falls and Riat Sohkhai in Nongknum Island at Nongstoin, Construction of Cottages in Nongknum Island at Nongstoin, Wangala Dance Festival and setting of signages in Meghalaya that have been sanctioned by the Centre. Since the Working Group was made to understand that land need to be identified for taking over by the Department, it felt that the local people should be involved in the implementation of the schemes. As for construction of cottages, the Working Group was of the opinion that it could be implemented by the local people and they could run the cottages as well. The Working Group desired that these projects should be implemented within the current financial year i.e., 2004-2005 and government may think in terms of privatization of the projects.

In view of the focus to promote tourism in the state, the Working Group enquired upon other schemes of the Department which the Department informed as follows :-

- (i) With regard to schemes taken up with ITDC, land was identified and Centre has assured for funds and these projects will be taken up in four months time

- (ii) On Crowborough Hotel, the Department is thinking in terms of leasing the building as it is to a reputed Hotel Agency e.g. say Taj Hotels etc. Such Agency would take up completion of the building and would be allowed to run free of cost for a certain period to cover the expenditure and this will be worked out only by a reputed consultancy firm
- (iii) Yatri Niwas, Tura which was handed over to MTDC by Tourism Department will be leased to NEHU and the same to be handed over to NEHU. Deputy Commissioner is assessing the rent.

The Chairman asked the Department to improve the Tourist Lodge at Tura.

6. Employment and Craftsmen Training : The Centrally Sponsored Schemes of the Department are setting up of Industrial Training Institute, Baghmara, strengthening/modernization of existing ITIs etc.

To a query by the Working Group on any monitoring by the Department after training i.e., job placements of the trainees etc., the Department stated that though there is no such monitoring, it is thinking in terms of a Self Help Group (at the initiative of the Department itself) where such a group to be located in the ITI Campus will be provided with a Telephone connection and called Dial-a-service. The setting up of this Self Help Group will be widely publicized. It was also informed that the Department had published a booklet of success-story of those ITI passed trainees. Copies may be sent to the Office of the State Planning Board for circulation to the Members.

On general information by the Department, the Working Group learnt that the trainees of ITI, Shillong are from other districts also. Though ITIs produced about 200 passed out trainees every year, there are about 30% drop outs. There is no hostel facility in the Institute at Shillong. On job market, the Department stated that passed out trainees in Electronics are employed in Shillong Doordarshan , AIR etc.

The Working Group asked the Department to submit a separate note on the poor quality of equipments and certain trades that require mechanized items.

7. **Social Welfare** : The Department briefed on the Centrally Sponsored Schemes being implemented during 2003-2004. To an observation of the Working Group on the shortfall of financial achievement vis-s-vis the outlay, the Department clarified that one of the main reasons was that projections for some schemes were made on the higher side.

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

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