

Chapter 9

Conclusion and recommendations

9.1 Conclusion

- Despite the SAP 2008 containing a clear agenda for agricultural development in the State for the next 10 years and instructions of the Chief Minister, the CCO did not prepare a long-term perspective plan for operationalising the same and bottom up planning was completely missing in the annual action plans prepared by the Director without consulting the comprehensive district agriculture plans.
- The total cultivated area of 61.36 lakh hectares during 2006-07 declined by two *per cent* to 60.44 lakh hectares by 2010-11 in the State. Such decrease was mainly due to fast and widespread urbanization and indiscriminate use of private land for industrial purposes. Even the District Collectors under Revenue Department acquired private land for industries without consulting the Agriculture and Water Resources Departments which also contributed to decline in cultivated area.
- Despite increase in the irrigation potential of the State from all sources uniformly to 30.36 lakh hectares in 2010-11, only 20.85 lakh hectares (69 *per cent*) of such land was under crop cultivation was an area of concern.
- Though Seed Replacement Rate of the major crop rice showed gradual increase in the State, the productivity of rice as well as pulses and oilseeds remained much below the national average affecting the targeted production.
- There was less supply of quality seeds to the growers than what was required by them. Instances of sale and distribution of sub-standard seeds, resultant crop loss and payment of compensation arising out of sale of substandard seeds, sale of seeds to persons without permits and mis-utilisation of subsidy under *Jalanidhi* programme came to our notice during test check of the records of DDOs.
- Opening of seed sales centres in all the 6234 Gram Panchayats was one of important strategies in SAP 2008; these centres were not opened in 4609 GPs affecting the objective of doorstep supply of seeds to the farmers.
- Fertiliser consumption in the State remained much below the national average. Despite the instructions of SLSC for undertaking evaluation study on implementation of organic farming projects like vermi hatcheries/composts under RKVY, the same remained unmonitored and unevaluated for over two years due to want of full list of the beneficiaries with the office of the Director of Agriculture.
- Infrastructure development under agriculture was slow due to non-operationalisation of soil testing laboratories despite completion, slow pace of construction of seed storage godowns, neglect in establishment of agro service centres particularly in the backward districts, delay in completion / commissioning of seed processing facilities and seed testing and certification facilities although funds were not a constraint.

- Construction of agricultural market yards entrusted to the agencies of the Co-operation Department remained unmonitored by the Agriculture Department leading to slow pace of completion of the same.
- Dedicated officials were not posted as Project Directors in all the 30 ATMA of the State; there were vacancies in the posts of a Deputy Project Director and two ministerial staff in each ATMA despite the same were permitted by GoI under the 'Support to State Extension Reforms Scheme' affecting the functioning of the ATMA.
- As against the requirement of buildings for FIACs in each of the 314 Blocks, construction of only 200 such buildings was targeted. However, only 61 could be completed due to slow pace of construction by contractors and non finalisation of sites.
- While the required annual concurrent evaluation of implementation of NFSM scheme in the State was not undertaken since the implementation of the scheme in 2007-08; the third party evaluation reports on the execution of RKVY projects under different sectors as required under the instruction (May 2010) of State Level Sanctioning Committee (SLSC) were yet to be received.
- Extension service to farmers by the Department affected due to long pending large-scale vacancies in the posts of VAWs and AAOs as this issue had not been factored while framing the SAP 2008.
- Budgetary as well as financial controls were found to be unsatisfactory as many instances of non-compliance with the provisions of Odisha Budget Manual, financial, treasury and service codes by test checked Drawing and Disbursing Officers (DDOs) were noticed.
- Instances of OSSC failing to procure seeds produced in seed village scheme, APICOL not monitoring the proper usage of the subsidised farm machineries supplied to beneficiaries and OUAT not utilising funds provided for infrastructure development and research were noticed.
- Internal audit system was found to be weak and ineffective and the system of inspection and monitoring was not adequate. Internal vigilance mechanism was lethargic with 35 cases pending for one to ten years. The Department seemed to move rudderlessly without adequate oversight by the CCO over its activities - both operational and administrative.

9.2 Recommendations

- The CCO may formulate a long-term perspective plan on priority basis to implement the strategies outlined in the SAP 2008 indicating annual achievement of specific milestones for each activity;
- The objectives set out in the SAP 2008 may be re-visited with focus on moving towards more participative, community ownership and innovation-oriented strategies in various key areas of input supply, storage, distribution, quality training and demonstration activities.

- Coordination among Agriculture, Water Resources and Revenue Departments may be ensured while acquiring agricultural / irrigated land for industrial use and Cooperation Departments on aspect of agricultural marketing;
- The CCO may streamline the seed procurement system for preventing procurement and supply of substandard seeds, evolve an effective monitoring system on procurement of seeds by OSSC under seed village scheme and from outside the State and managing subsidy on farm mechanisation and *Jalanidhi* scheme by APICOL;
- The CCO needs to address the all pervading issue of staff shortages, particularly at the level of Assistant Agriculture officers and VAWs etc. as it has had a serious adverse impact on extension services, demonstrations and trainings in this sector;
- Internal control mechanism need to be strengthened to ensure adherence to budgetary and expenditure controls as per the codal provisions. System of inspection of field DDOs and monitoring of their performance by the CO and CCO need to be put in place and follow up action insisted upon on the results of such inspections. Internal audit may be made effective by ensuring timely audits and their follow up.

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