

CHAPTER III: CIVIL DEPARTMENTS

SECTION - A

AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

3.1 Working of the Agriculture Department (Agriculture Wing)

Lack of monitoring of implementation of the action plan by the Task Force formed for the purpose, non-availability of required quantities of certified paddy seeds for replacement, declining trend in consumption of plant nutrients, partial utilisation of assured irrigation potential created, failure to build up a team of specialists on modern techniques of agriculture and lack of adequate credit facilities to the farmers were some of the deficiencies in the Agriculture Department.

Highlights

Replacement of seeds was far below the targeted percentage, farmers lost paddy crops valued at Rs. 1.24 crore due to supply of substandard seeds and percentage of achievement with reference to target for consumption of fertilizers in terms of nutrient gradually came down.

(Paragraphs 3.1.7 and 3.1.8)

Value of handling loss for fertilizers incurred beyond the permissible limit during five years ending 2002-03 worked out to Rs. 1.94 crore.

(Paragraph 3.1.9)

Wasteful expenditure incurred on salary of the idle staff of 38 hiring centres for power tillers, which were not functioning for the last one to five years worked out to Rs. 17.20 crore.

(Paragraph 3.1.15)

A large number of slots in training courses offered by the Government of India for the staff members were not utilised, crop loan provided to farmers every year was of an insignificant amount compared to the amount required and targeted, and percentage of shortfall in utilisation of assured irrigation potential had a sharp rise over the years.

(Paragraphs 3.1.13, 3.1.16 and 3.1.17)

Although Rs. 280.26 crore was spent during the five years ending 2002-03, the required pace of growth as envisaged in the perspective plan could not be maintained and the fulfilment of the objective was thwarted.

(Paragraphs 3.1.29 and 3.1.30)

Introduction

3.1.1 The objective of the Agriculture Wing of the Agriculture Department is to minimise the gap between requirement and production of foodgrains and other crops in the State. To attain self-sufficiency in respect of foodgrains by way of increasing production and productivity, the department adopted a 10-

year perspective plan commencing from 2000-01. The plan proposed intensive activities by the department in several fronts which were broadly grouped under the following heads:

- 1) Seed replacement for better crops;
- 2) Enhancing consumption of plant nutrients;
- 3) Integrated pest management;
- 4) Training and extension services;
- 5) Farm mechanisation;
- 6) Providing adequate credit facilities to farmers; and
- 7) Creation and utilisation of irrigation potential to the maximum extent.

Organisational set up

3.1.2 The Agriculture Department functions under the overall administrative control of a Secretary. The department has three separate wings, viz., (i) Agriculture, (ii) Horticulture and Soil Conservation, and (iii) State Land Use Board, each headed by a separate Director. The department has also one Agricultural Engineering Cell headed by a Chief Engineer.

Audit coverage

3.1.3 A review on working of the department covering all the four districts in the State, with special reference to activities undertaken to achieve the goals set for it in the perspective plan, was conducted between January and May 2003. Records for the period from 1998-99 to 2002-03 were test-checked in the offices of the Director of Agriculture, five Deputy Directors of Agriculture (DDAs)⁼ out of 10, eight Superintendents of Agriculture (SAs)[<] out of 22, and two Executive Engineers (EEs)^H out of six of the Agricultural Engineering Cell. Expenditure covered in audit (Rs. 71.96 crore) constitutes 26 per cent of total expenditure (Rs. 280.26 crore).

Goals set in the perspective plan

3.1.4 The perspective plan envisaged increase in production of foodgrains to 8.83 lakh tonnes by 2004-05 and to 11.36 lakh tonnes by 2009-10. It also proposed to increase production of pulses to 0.17 lakh tonnes by 2004-05 and to 0.30 lakh tonnes by 2009-10. The level of production registered in 1999-2000 was 5.13 lakh tonnes for foodgrains comprising cereals and pulses and 0.04 lakh tonnes of oil seeds. The requirement of food grains (both cereals and pulses) for estimated population of 31.43 lakh in 1999-2000 as per projection based on 2001 general census worked out to 7.71 lakh tonnes[∕]. This indicated a level of shortage in availability of food grains working out to 2.58 lakh tonnes (7.71 lakh tonnes *minus* 5.13 lakh tonnes) during 1999-2000.

⁼ DDAs of West, North, South and Dhalai districts; and DDA (Research).

[<] SAs of Panisagar, Kadamtala, Kumarghat, Mohanpur, Jirania, Bishalgarh, Melaghar and Matabari.

^H EEs of Mechanical Division, Agartala, and Civil Division, Dharmanagar.

[∕] Calculated on the basis of the scale of requirement of 0.182 tonne of cereal and 0.018 tonne of pulses (both per capita per annum) according to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). To this was added allowance for seed, feed and shortage @ 12.5% and pipeline @ 10% as followed in the perspective plan in calculating the total requirement.

Budget provision and expenditure

3.1.5 The budgetary allocation and expenditure both in revenue and capital accounts during the period from 1998-99 to 2002-03 are as under:

A – Revenue*(Rupees in crore)*

| Year | State Plan | | CSS | | NEC | | Total Plan | | Non-Plan | | Grand total | |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|
| | BP | Expen- diture | BP | Expen- diture | BP | Expen- diture | BP | Expen- diture | BP | Expen- diture | BP | Expen- diture |
| 1998-99 | 14.20 | 8.85 | 1.52 | 1.68 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 15.73 | 10.54 | 19.31 | 19.02 | 35.04 | 29.56 |
| 1999-2000 | 24.93 | 14.98 | 4.08 | 3.20 | 0.01 | - | 29.02 | 18.19 | 22.12 | 22.02 | 51.14 | 40.21 |
| 2000-01 | 24.25 | 17.22 | 6.71 | 5.59 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 30.97 | 22.82 | 27.96 | 27.76 | 58.93 | 50.58 |
| 2001-02 | 12.21 | 12.22 | 4.71 | 4.74 | 0.01 | - | 16.93 | 16.96 | 35.08 | 34.16 | 52.01 | 51.12 |
| 2002-03 | 13.18 | 12.77 | 4.76 | 4.54 | 0.01 | - | 17.95 | 17.31 | 33.96 | 34.01 | 51.91 | 51.32 |
| Grand total | 88.77 | 66.04 | 21.78 | 19.75 | 0.05 | 0.02 | 110.60 | 85.82 | 138.43 | 136.97 | 249.03 | 222.79 |
| Savings | | 22.73 | | 2.03 | | 0.03 | | 24.78 | | 1.46 | | 26.24 |

B – Capital*(Rupees in crore)*

| Year | State Plan | | CSS | | Total Plan | | Non-Plan | | Grand total | |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | BP | Expenditure | BP | Expenditure | BP | Expenditure | BP | Expenditure | BP | Expenditure |
| 1998-1999 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 15.00 | 8.95 | 15.00 | 8.95 |
| 1999-2000 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 15.00 | 8.22 | 15.00 | 8.22 |
| 2000-01 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 15.00 | 10.97 | 15.00 | 10.97 |
| 2001-02 | 10.27 | 7.59 | 0.14 | 0.04 | 10.41 | 7.63 | 15.00 | 7.06 | 25.41 | 14.69 |
| 2002-03 | 6.65 | 4.29 | 0.45 | 0.45 | 7.10 | 4.74 | 15.00 | 9.90 | 22.10 | 14.64 |
| Total | 16.92 | 11.88 | 0.59 | 0.49 | 17.51 | 12.37 | 75.00 | 45.10 | 92.51 | 57.47 |
| Savings | | 5.04 | | 0.10 | | 5.14 | | 29.90 | | 35.04 |

Source: Statement furnished by the Directorate of Agriculture in September 2003.

Note: BP = Budget provision.

There were substantial savings under State Plan in the revenue account as well as State Plan and non-Plan in the capital account. Savings in the above sectors indicate that the department was not adequately geared to utilise the available resources in fulfilment of its declared objective.

Seed replacement**Seed replacement programme by production and procurement of seeds**

3.1.6 Replacement of old and outdated variety with more recent high yielding varieties (HYV) of paddy seeds is a pre-requisite condition for getting better production. The perspective plan/action plan fixed the following targets for replacement by way of both production and procurement of certified HYV paddy seeds, as compared to achievement.

(In tonnes)

| Year | Total requirement of seeds | Target for replacement | | | Achievement | | |
|---------|----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------|---------------|----------------|-----------|
| | | By production | By procurement | Total | By production | By procurement | Total |
| 2000-01 | 10400 | 260 | 572 | 832 (8) | 330 | 351 | 681 (6) |
| 2001-02 | 10500 | 460 | 1010 | 1470(14) | 406 | 222 | 628 (6) |
| 2002-03 | 10650 | Break-up not specified | Break-up not specified | 2130(20) | 1057 | 250 | 1307 (12) |

Note: Figures in brackets represent percentage to total requirement.

The table shows that the department failed to provide requisite quantities of certified paddy seeds to the farmers for achieving targeted seed replacement during the first three years of the perspective plan, for which no reasons could be assigned. This caused a major set back in implementation of the perspective plan right from its beginning.

Supply of sub-standard seeds to farmers

3.1.7 Records of the DDA, North Tripura, disclosed that under the certified seeds distribution programme, 25.02 tonnes of paddy seed of variety NDR – 97 were utilised by 1813 cultivators to cover 500.40 hectares of land during *kharif* 2002-03. According to the technical guideline provided to the cultivators, the variety of seeds was supposed to attain its maturity within 97 to 100 days after being sown in nursery bed. But the paddy seed failed to attain its maturity even after 125 to 150 days. This resulted in loss of paddy crop (*second kharif*) valued at Rs. 1.24 crore to the farmers, for which the farmers sought compensation from the department. The department did not provide any compensation to them but stopped payment to the supplier, Tripura Horticulture Corporation Ltd (THCL), a Government of Tripura undertaking, which supplied 51 tonnes of the variety valued at Rs. 7.14 lakh. During 1998-99 also, the THCL supplied 33.03 tonnes of different seeds valued at Rs. 7.59 lakh which were subsequently found to be sub-standard by the DDA (West) due to poor germination rate. The payment against this supply also remained unsettled (May 2003). The loss incurred by the farmers could have been avoided had the department established a quality control set-up for the seeds supplied to farmers.

The Government stated (September 2003) that the department had arranged compensation to the farmers for supply of spurious seeds.

Consumption of fertilizers

Trend of use of fertilizers

3.1.8 The year-wise consumption of fertilizers in the State during 1998-1999 to 2002-03 is as under:

(In tonnes)

| Name of fertilizer [?] | 1998-99 | 1999-2000 | 2000-01 | | | 2001-02 | | | 2002-03 | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| | | | 1 st channel | 2 nd channel | Total | 1 st channel | 2 nd channel | Total | 1 st channel | 2 nd channel | Total |
| Urea | 15218 | 12235 | 7557 | 6308 | 13865 | 8944 | 5245 | 14189 | 7219 | 4368 | 11587 |
| SSP | 4127 | 6206 | 4381 | 1156 | 5537 | 6331 | 3431 | 9762 | 3613 | 2071 | 5684 |
| RP | 2950 | 4115 | 1748 | 1065 | 2813 | 4961 | 473 | 5434 | 911 | 370 | 1281 |
| MOP | 321 | 1533 | 562 | 372 | 934 | 2841 | 328 | 3169 | 418 | 351 | 769 |
| DAP | - | - | 199 | - | 199 | 103 | 357 | 460 | - | 618 | 618 |
| Total | 22616 | 24089 | 14447 | 8901 | 23348 | 23180 | 9834 | 33014 | 12161 | 7778 | 19939 |

Source: Stock Registers of 4 DDAs and monthly progress reports submitted by the SAs.

1st Channel: Procurement made by the department

2nd Channel: Procurement made by the Co-operative Societies.

[?] SSP = Single Super Phosphate; RP = Rock Phosphate; MOP = Muriate of Postash; DAP = Diammonium Phosphate.

Target and achievement in respect of consumption of NPK* in the State during 2000-01 to 2002-03 are as under:

(In tonnes)

| Year | Target | | | | Achievement | | | |
|---------|--------|------|------|-------|-------------|------|------|-------------------|
| | N | P | K | Total | N | P | K | Total |
| 2000-01 | 5741 | 2551 | 2551 | 10843 | 6418 | 1545 | 560 | 8523 (79) |
| 2001-02 | 8908 | 4048 | 4048 | 17004 | 6619 | 2870 | 1901 | 11390 (67) |
| 2002-03 | 12604 | 5682 | 5682 | 23968 | 5454 | 1462 | 461 | 7377 (31) |

Figures in the brackets represent percentage of achievement with reference to target.

The table shows that consumption of fertilizers in terms of nutrient in the State during 2000-01 to 2002-03 were far below the target fixed in the perspective plan/action plan and the percentage of achievement in consumption declined drastically from 79 to 31 during the period. The reasons for decline in the consumption of fertilizers were not investigated by the department.

Out of Rs. 33.32 lakh released by the Government of India in March 2000 for implementation of the scheme of Balanced and Integrated Use of Fertilisers, the department purchased three soil testing vans between August and October 2001 at a cost of Rs. 26.35 lakh to extend soil testing facilities in the State.

The soil testing vans of the DDA, Dhalai and the DDA, North remained idle (May 2003) since their procurement because of non-availability of requisite technical staff and also of chemicals, none of which were provided by the department.

The scheme emphasised the need for procurement of 15 categories of essential equipment for NPK testing in order to strengthen the existing soil testing laboratories, but only seven categories of equipment were made available in the State soil testing laboratory at Arundhatinagar and only three in the laboratory at Udaipur.

The department thus failed to extend even the required minimum soil testing facilities to the farmers so as to enable them to know the actual requirement of chemical fertilizers for their plots before use.

The Government stated (September 2003) that the vans could not start functioning in time due to delay in release of funds by the department.

Loss in storage of fertilizer

3.1.9 Mention was made in paragraph 3.3 of the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ended 31 March 1997 regarding loss of Rs. 4.86 lakh beyond permissible limit during storage of fertilizers.

Further scrutiny of records of four DDAs in all the four districts revealed that during 1998-99 to 2002-03, shortage of 488.62 tonnes of urea and 4308.91 tonnes of other types of fertilizers^δ beyond permissible limit of five *per cent*

* N = Nitrogenous fertilizers; P = Phosphate fertilizers; K = Potashic fertilizers.

^δ (i) Single Super Phosphate (SSP), (ii) Rock Phosphate (RP) and (iii) Muriate of Potash (MOP).

and two *per cent** respectively were recorded in handling 51308 tonnes of urea and 45955 tonnes of other fertilizers. This resulted in loss of Rs. 1.94 crore⁺ to the Government.

The Government stated (September 2003) that attempt had been taken to improve the storing condition of fertilizers.

Pest management

3.1.10 To develop quality control facilities for pesticides in the State, the Government of India (GOI) released (March 2002) an amount of Rs. 30 lakh (March 2002) for setting up of a State pesticide testing laboratory.

The department drew the amount in March 2003 and kept it in the shape of Banker's cheque without the approval of the Government of India. As of May 2003, the department did not even prepare any action plan for setting up of the proposed laboratory.

Had the testing laboratory been set up in the State in time, the quality of pesticides could have been ensured before their use by the farmers in the State. That lack of such facilities was having an adverse impact on crop husbandry would be evident from the following.

Procurement of misbranded plant protection chemicals

3.1.11 In order to procure plant protection chemicals (PPC) for the years 1998-99 and 1999-2000, the department invited tenders (March 1999) from the recognised manufacturers/authorised distributors. It was stipulated that in case of supply of any misbranded/sub-standard PPC, the tenderer would be liable to attract legal action and also to refund the entire amount paid by the department to the tenderer. But while executing deed of agreement with the successful tenderers in August 1999 and March 2000, the department did not incorporate the said terms and conditions in the agreement itself.

Scrutiny of records of the DDA, South, revealed that pending receipt of the laboratory test reports from the Regional Pesticide Testing Laboratories, Kanpur and Faridabad, an amount of Rs. 20.39 lakh, being 85 to 100 *per cent* of the cost of four categories of PPCs supplied, was paid to three suppliers between March 1999 and December 2000. Subsequently, when the laboratory

* These norms were fixed by the department itself.

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| Fertilizer | Total stock received during 1998-2003 | Shortage permissible | | Actual shortage <i>In tonnes</i> | Shortage beyond permissible limit <i>In tonnes</i> | Value of shortage beyond permissible limit | |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|----------------------------------|
| | | <i>In per cent</i> | <i>In tonnes</i> | | | Rate per kg <i>(in Rupees)</i> | Total <i>(Rupees in lakh)</i> |
| UREA | 51307.62 | 5 | 2565.38 | 3054.00 | 488.62 | 5.20 | 25.41 |
| SSP | 24911.62 | 2 | 498.23 | 3159.00 | 2660.77 | 4.02 | 106.96 |
| RP | 15364.18 | 2 | 307.28 | 1491.00 | 1183.72 | 2.81 | 33.26 |
| MOP | 5678.92 | 2 | 113.58 | 578.00 | 464.42 | 6.19 | 28.75 |
| Total: | | | | | | | 194.38 |

- But deeds of agreement were executed in August 1999 and March 2000.

authorities furnished the reports identifying those PPCs as ‘misbranded’[•]/sub-standard, the department could neither recover the paid amount of Rs. 20.39 lakh from the suppliers nor could it take any legal action against them.

Bio-control laboratory

3.1.12 To popularise the concept of eco-friendly cultivation amongst the farmers and for reducing the hazardous use of plant protection chemicals in the field, under the scheme of Integrated Pest Management, Rs. 50 lakh (Rs. 10 lakh in 1994-95; and Rs. 40 lakh in 1996-97) for setting up of a bio-control laboratory in the State (Rs. 30 lakh for construction of laboratory building and Rs. 20 lakh for purchase of laboratory equipment and one vehicle) was sanctioned by the Government of India.

Taking up the work for construction of the laboratory building was delayed due to certain administrative reasons, as stated (August 1999) by the departmental Secretary. The delay resulted in cost over-run of Rs. 19.39 lakh in construction of the building (cost incurred: Rs. 56 lakh *minus* original tender value: Rs. 36.61 lakh). Further, while the construction of the building was completed in March 2000, this was not put to use till September 2001 for reasons not on record, thus keeping the building idle for 18 months.

It was also noticed in audit that, even after a lapse of more than three years since completion of the construction of the building, no effective step was taken (May 2003) by the department to procure and install all the requisite equipment for the laboratory to start mass production and distribution of different types of bio-control agents to the farmers, thereby frustrating the very purpose of setting up of the laboratory.

The Government stated (September 2003) that without proper funding the infrastructure till date could not be utilised in full.

Training and extension services

Training

3.1.13 To improve the level of technical expertise of supervisory personnel, grass root level workers and farmers of the State on specific topics like extension work, rice and pulse production technology, integrated pest management, integrated nutrient management etc, training was required. During the five years ending 2002-03, the department spent Rs. 1.01 crore on training against budget allocation of Rs. three crore, the shortfall in expenditure working out to 66 percent. During the three years ending 2002-03, the department imparted training to 55,374 farmers against the target of 65,850^{*}. The department had never fixed target for training of its staff. During 2001-02 and 2002-03⁺, against 101 slots in 56 training courses for the staff at

[•] If the active ingredients of the PPC and the exterior of the container do not conform to the required specification, it is termed as ‘misbranded’.

^{*} The department had no targets for the two years ending 1999-2000, when 9510 farmers were reported to have been trained.

⁺ No information for the period of three years ending 2000-01 could be furnished by the department.

the national level by the Government of India, only 68 slots in 38 courses were utilised.

Vacancies in crucial posts

3.1.14 Agriculture extension programme in the State had suffered as crucial posts like DDA(30 out of 32), SA(42 out of 85), Junior Engineer(Civil) (28 out of 49), Junior Engineer (Mechanical) (21 out of 55), Assistant Statistical Officer (all the six) and Investigator (13 out of 19) were lying vacant for the last five years.

Farm mechanisation

3.1.15 In August 2002, the department reported that it had been maintaining 269 power tillers at 80 hiring centres all over the State so that the farmers could use them for tilling their land at a reasonable cost. Of these 269 power tillers, 217 were lying inoperative.

Test-check in audit revealed that 38 hiring centres (Dhalai: 5; North: 12; West: 11; and South: 10) with 115 power tillers had not been providing any service to the farmers mainly for want of repair and maintenance and supply of consumables and virtually remained closed to the farmers as of March 2003 (8 for the last 5 years; 9 for 3 years; 16 for 2 years; and 5 for one year).

The department incurred an expenditure of Rs. 17.20 crore on salary of idle staff of these 38 hiring centres during 1998-99 to 2002-03 and the scheme for farm mechanisation failed to fulfil its objective.

Credit facilities

Crop loan

3.1.16 To ensure the desired level of productivity in food grains, adequate quantum of crop loan to the small and marginal farmers is required to be provided by the Government as emphasised in the Action Plan (August 1999) based on the 10 year perspective plan.

The following table shows year-wise requirement of crop loan as assessed in the Action Plan and loan actually provided:

(Rupees in crore)

| Year | Loan required | Loan provided | Percentage of achievement |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2000-01 | 15 | 6.31 | 42 |
| 2001-02 | 20 | 3.29 | 16 |
| 2002-03 | 39.70 ⁹ | 4.03 | 10 |

Source: Action Plan for the years 2000-01 and 2001-02 and other departmental records.

It would be seen that the percentage of crop loan provided, when compared to the required/targeted amount, had gradually declined from 42 in 2000-01 to 10

⁹ Rs. 39.70 crore was the target for disbursement of loan fixed by the participant banks (action plan was not prepared for the year).

in 2002-03. This was certainly not conducive to fulfilment of the objective of self-sufficiency in foodgrains as envisaged in the perspective plan.

Irrigation

Shortfall in utilisation of assured irrigation potential (AIP)

3.1.17 As of March 2003, assured irrigation potential (AIP) of 67,278 hectares was created against the total irrigable land of 1.17 lakh hectares.

The following table shows the year-wise availability of AIP *vis-à-vis* its utilisation during 1998-99 to 2002-03.

| Year | AIP available | AIP utilised | Shortfall | Percentage of shortfall |
|-----------|----------------------|--------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| | <i>(In hectares)</i> | | | |
| 1998-99 | 44,784 | 39,160 | 5,624 | 13 |
| 1999-2000 | 46,039 | 40,663 | 5,376 | 12 |
| 2000-01 | 52,197 | 41,085 | 11,112 | 21 |
| 2001-02 | 59,951 | 47,196 | 12,755 | 21 |
| 2002-03 | 67,278 | 53,570 | 13,708 | 20 |

Source: Departmental records.

The percentage of shortfall in utilisation of AIP increased gradually from 13 to 20 over the years, with consequential denial of the benefit to the farmers.

The department stated (February 2003) that shortfall was mainly due to power problem, leakage in pipeline, theft of pump sets etc. The department was thus fully aware of the reasons for less utilisation of AIP but did not take any effective steps to overcome them. The Government stated (September 2003) that action had been taken to utilise the irrigation potential 'to the optimum level'.

Implementation of Centrally sponsored schemes

3.1.18 The department had been implementing 13 Centrally sponsored schemes during 1998-99 to 2002-03. Of these, the following three schemes[■] were test-checked in audit.

- (i) Oilseeds Production Programme (OPP)
- (ii) National Pulses Development Project (NPDP)
- (iii) Integrated Cereal Development Programme (ICDP)

The table below indicates the scheme-wise budget provision, release of funds and expenditure on the three schemes during the period under review:

[■] Other 10 schemes were: (i) Crop insurance; (ii) Establishment of an agency for reporting of agricultural statistics; (iii) Balanced and integrated use on fertilizers; (iv) National project of Development of fertilizers in low consumption areas; (v) Special jute development programme; (vi) Maize minikit programme; (vii) Rice minikit programme; (viii) Wheat minikit programme; (ix) Sustainable development of sugarcane based cropping system areas; and (x) Integrated seed development.

Year : 1998-99 to 2002-03

(Rupees in crore)

| Name of the scheme | Budget provision | Release | | | Expenditure | | | Savings from Central share |
|---|------------------|----------------------|-------------|-------|---------------|-------------|-------|----------------------------|
| | | Central share by GOI | State share | Total | Central share | State share | Total | |
| Oilseeds Production Programme | 3.22 | 5.32 | — | 5.32 | 4.76 | 1.58* | 6.34 | 0.56 |
| National Pulses Development Project | 2.16 | 3.28 | — | 3.28 | 2.93 | 0.97* | 3.90 | 0.35 |
| Integrated Cereal Development Programme | 1.10 | 2.40 | 0.39 | 2.79 | 2.40 | 0.39 | 2.79 | — |

* No evidence for expenditure actually incurred was found in audit.

Source: Monthly progress reports submitted by the Department to the GOI.

Important points noticed in course of test-check of implementation of the schemes are as follows:

Non-release of State share of Rs. 2.86 crore on implementation of OPP and NPDP

3.1.19 Expenditure under OPP, NPDP and ICDP were to be shared by the Central and State Governments on 75:25 basis (100 per cent Central assistance was available for ICDP since 2001-02).

During 1998-99 to 2002-03, the Government of India released funds of Rs.8.60 crore (Rs. 5.32 crore for OPP and Rs. 3.28 crore for NPDP), but the State Government did not release the required State share of Rs. 2.86 crore (Rs. 1.77 crore for OPP and Rs. 1.09 crore for NPDP). Nevertheless, in the expenditure statement for Rs. 10.24 crore (Rs. 6.34 crore for OPP and Rs. 3.90 crore for NPDP) relating to the years from 1998-99 to 2002-03 (up to December 2002) furnished to the Government of India, Rs. 2.55 crore (Rs. 1.58 crore for OPP and Rs. 0.97 crore for NPDP) was shown to have been released as State share. The expenditure reported to the Government of India was thus incorrect.

Delay in release of funds for programme implementation

3.1.20 Scrutiny of records showed that on receipt of funds for OPP and NPDP from the Government of India, the Finance Department and the Agriculture Department took six to eight months in releasing the funds to the implementing agencies during 1998-99 to 2001-02[<].

Test-check of records revealed that 56 to 83 per cent of funds under OPP and 46 to 66 per cent under NPDP were placed with implementing officers in the months of February and March of each financial year from 2000-01 to 2002-03. There was, therefore, hardly any scope to utilise the whole amount during the currency of the financial year and the funds, on being parked in cash chest, were utilised in subsequent years which was in violation of Financial Rules. As there was no possibility of spending the money within the remaining period

[<] Delay in release of Rs. 2.42 crore ranging from six to eight months noticed to have occurred in seven cases (Rs. 10 lakh in one case during 1998-99; Rs. 45.97 lakh in two cases during 1999-2000; Rs. 1.57 crore in three cases during 2000-01; and Rs. 28.98 lakh in one case during 2001-02).

of the financial year, these had also resulted in drawal of money in advance of requirement, which was in violation of financial rules.

Issue of utilisation certificate without utilising the funds

3.1.21 The department drew Rs. 24.78 lakh (Rs. 12.69 lakh for OPP and Rs. 12.09 lakh for ICDP) in March 2002, but the entire amount remained unutilised as of May 2003, though the Director of Agriculture furnished utilisation certificate for the whole amount to the Government of India in April 2002.

The Government stated (September 2003) that ‘as per advice of the Government of India’, utilisation certificate was submitted.

Exhibition of inflated expenditure

3.1.22 The Director of Agriculture furnished annual progress reports (June-July 2000) to the Government of India on implementation of OPP and NPDP for the year 1999-2000, indicating that Rs. 42 lakh (Rs. 37 lakh for OPP and Rs. 5 lakh for NPDP) was spent for the components ‘infrastructural development and construction works’ under the above two schemes.

Scrutiny of progress reports and other records of the DDAs in the four districts disclosed that no expenditure on these two components was incurred by the four DDAs during the period.

Unauthorised expenditure of Rs. 1.56 crore in excess of allotment for demonstration

3.1.23 Scrutiny of records revealed that out of allotment of Rs. 5.32 crore for oilseeds, Rs. 1.86 crore were earmarked for organising ‘Block Demonstration’ in 10,301 hectares of land during 1998-99 to 2002-03. Against this, Rs. 3.42 crore was spent up to December 2002 covering 18,642 hectares of land in ‘Block Demonstration’ resulting in unauthorised excess expenditure of Rs.1.56 crore and physical achievement of 81 *per cent* over the target in terms of area, thereby affecting adversely the implementation of other components of the scheme, as would be evident from the trend of gradual decrease in both coverage of area and production of oilseeds since 1999-2000 as shown in **Appendix - XIII**. The State level sanctioning committee, which was required to approve the expenditure under the scheme guidelines, did not approve the expenditure. The impact assessment reports on such demonstrations were also not available, though called for in audit.

Financial irregularities

‘Vouchers’ kept in lieu of cash

3.1.24 Test-check of records of three DDOs (SAs of Mohanpur, Jirania and Bishalgarh) and information received from another two DDOs (SAs of Teliamura and Amarpur) revealed that a cash balance of Rs. 0.21 crore was held in the form of ‘vouchers’ by them during the period 1998-99 to 2002-03. The ‘vouchers’ represented payment made from undisbursed cash in the cash chest on items for which there was no allotment and sanction.

The above irregularities in cash management were fraught with the risk of unauthorised use and misappropriation of the Government money.

Outstanding abstract contingent bill

3.1.25 Test-check of records of four DDAs of North, Dhalai, West and South districts, eight SAs and information collected from the department in respect of other six SAs of Kanchanpur, Rajnagar, Bagafa, Satchand, Amarpur and Salema revealed that detailed countersigned contingency (DCC) bills against Rs. 4.44 crore drawn on 1,616 abstract contingency (AC) bills during the period from 1978-79 to 2001-02 were lying outstanding as of March 2003 as shown in **Appendix - XIV**. While every such amount was to be adjusted by submission of a DCC bill within two months of drawal in a lump as provided in the Financial Rules, the amount remaining unadjusted for one to 25 years could lead to misappropriation of Government money. The department could not explain the circumstances under which such abnormal delay had occurred.

The very fact that Rs. 4.44 crore remained unadjusted beyond the admissible period of two months, with the earliest drawals of a portion of the amount having been as old as 25 years, is indicative of serious deficiency in financial management.

The Government stated (September 2003) that necessary steps had been taken for adjustment of the amount.

Monitoring and evaluation

Doubtful conducting of crop-cutting experiment

3.1.26 In order to estimate the productivity of different crops per hectare by way of impact assessment, series of crop cutting experiments (CCE) were to be conducted under the scheme of agricultural economics and statistics. Results of all such CCEs were to be recorded in the format prescribed by the department, so that these can be used for future planning and co-ordination.

Test-check of records of the DDA, South revealed that none of the SAs working in the district had furnished the results of CCEs conducted by them during 1999-2000 and 2002-03 in the prescribed format. The absence of this primary document (which is required to be signed by the owner of the land experimented upon as well as the Government officer who conducted the experiment) casts doubt on actual conducting of the CCEs in the district besides having an adverse impact on entire planning process based upon faulty estimate of productivity.

The Government stated (September 2003) that action would be taken to maintain the authenticity of records in future.

Inaction of the Task Force

3.1.27 Based on the perspective plan, an action plan for two years (2000-01 and 2001-02) was prepared in August 1999 by the Task Force constituted under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary. The action plan was duly approved by the Cabinet in October 1999. The progress of the implementation

of the action plan was required to be reviewed by the Task Force on quarterly basis.

Scrutiny of records disclosed that the Task Force met only twice during 2000-01 to 2002-03 for this purpose but no minutes of the meetings were prepared. No initiative was taken to prepare any action plan beyond 2001-02 for implementation of the programme as contemplated in the perspective plan, for reasons not on record.

The Government stated (September 2003) that “it is not known as to why the action plan for the third year and subsequent years for execution of the programmes under perspective plan was not prepared”.

Evaluation

3.1.28 It was envisaged in the Action plan for the period from 2000-01 to 2001-02 that after completion of each season i.e. *kharif* and *rabi*, the achievement of the programme components would be evaluated by engaging an independent body e.g. Evaluation Cell of the Planning and Co-ordination Department of the State, which would submit the report to the Task Force. No such evaluation was taken up for submission of such report to the Task Force so far (August 2003).

Impact assessment

3.1.29 According to the target set by the department under the perspective plan, production was to reach a level of 8.83 lakh tonnes for foodgrains and 0.17 lakh tonnes for pulses by 1994-95.

To ensure this, an even rate of annual increase over the year immediately preceding should have been 11.5 *per cent* for foodgrains and 34 *per cent* for pulses, commencing from the level achieved in the base year of 1999-2000.

The following table shows the rate of increase actually achieved against this during the first three years of the perspective plan, separately for foodgrains and pulses:

| Item | Annual rate of increase in production over the immediately preceding year (in per cent) | | Shortfall (-)/ excess (+) in achievement with reference to target (in per cent) | Production of foodgrains | | Shortfall in production | Value of shortfall in production (Rupees in crore) |
|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------|--|--|-------------------|-------------------------|---|
| | Targeted | Actually achieved | | Required to be achieved under perspective plan | Actually achieved | | |
| Foodgrains (including pulses) | | | | <i>(in lakh tonnes)</i> | | | |
| 2000-01 | 11.5 | 8.7 | (-) 2.8 | 5.72 | 5.58 | 0.14 | 14.00 |
| 2001-02 | 11.5 | 7.0 | (-) 4.5 | 6.38 | 5.97 | 0.41 | 41.00 |
| 2002-03 | 11.5 | 4.4 | (-) 7.1 | 7.11 | 6.24 | 0.87 | 87.00 |
| Pulses | | | | | | 1.42 | 142.00 |
| 2000-01 | 34.0 | 59.3 | (+) 15.3 | | | | |
| 2001-02 | 34.0 | (-) 24.4 | (-) 68.4 | | | | |
| 2002-03 | 34.0 | (-) 1.7 | (-) 35.7 | | | | |

Source: Departmental records.

The trend indicates that the rate of growth in production of foodgrains suffered a decline over the years from 8.7 to a meagre 4.4, and was far from the required rate of growth (11.5) as envisaged by the perspective plan. The rate of growth in production of pulses was also not encouraging as the good results obtained in the form of annual growth in 2000-01 by 59.3 *per cent* which was in excess of the required rate of growth by 15.3 *per cent* had been completely wiped out by a massive decline during the two successive years making the rate even a negative one with a wide deviation from the stipulated rate from the year 2001-02 onwards.

The deviation from the perspective plan resulted in less production of foodgrains of 1.42 lakh tonnes valued at Rs. 142 crore over the three years ending 2002-03.

Gradual decrease was noticed in coverage of area (from 7590 ha in 1998-99 to 4780 ha in 2002-03) under oilseeds, which resulted in less production of oilseeds by 6110 tonnes, valued at Rs. 17.92 crore.

Conclusion

3.1.30 Thus, the overall performance of the department at the end of five years ending 2002-03 was far from satisfactory with reference to its declared objective of attaining self-sufficiency in respect of foodgrains, pulses and oilseeds although Rs. 280.26 crore was spent during the period to fulfil the objective. This was due to:

- (i) non-allocation of adequate resources as envisaged in the perspective plan[♦],
- (ii) inability of the department to utilise even the resources made available in the budget[♦] and
- (iii) deficiency in implementation of the plan in almost every identified areas as brought out above in the review.

[♦] As per perspective plan, the department was required to spend Rs. 23.81 crore and Rs. 35.36 crore for the identified plan components in 2000-01 and 2001-02, against which the budget provision was Rs. 27.51 crore and Rs. 24.25 crore respectively. But the expenditure was Rs. 22.09 crore and Rs. 16.12 crore only during the respective years.

HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENT

3.2 National AIDS Control Programme

The National AIDS Control Programme was introduced in 1987 for countrywide implementation. The main objective of the Programme was not fulfilled in the State due to lack of effective planning, inadequate infrastructure as well as inadequate laboratory testing facilities, shortage of laboratory technicians, and non-availability of medicines for treatment. The performance of the intervention projects suffered due to non-formulation of viable projects according to the core principles of the programme.

Highlights

Against the funds of Rs. 4.29 crore available during 1998-2003 for implementation, Rs. 1.11 crore (26 per cent) remained unspent as of March 2003.

(Paragraph 3.2.5)

The drug de-addiction centre at Kumarghat established at a cost of Rs. 8 lakh in September 2000 for providing treatment to injecting drug users could not be made operational for want of equipment, medicines and technical staff, as of May 2003.

(Paragraph 3.2.9)

The intervention projects were not formulated according to the core principles of the programme as many important components were excluded and the prescribed cost schedule for the components of the project were not followed. The expenditure of Rs. 21.22 lakh incurred on them during 2000-03 proved largely wasteful.

(Paragraph 3.2.10)

Infected persons were not informed of their HIV infection. As a result, 278 such persons in the State, as of March 2003, had been unknowingly spreading the deadly disease among the State population. Moreover, as appropriate method of testing was not being followed, blood units supplied from blood banks were also not considered fully safe against HIV infection.

(Paragraph 3.2.15)

Training of medical and paramedical staff in AIDS management was to be completed by March 2002. But 85 per cent of the staff targeted for training were not trained as of March 2003.

(Paragraph 3.2.18)

Introduction

3.2.1 Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a life threatening condition representing the most serious public health problem in India. The infection is caused by a virus called human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV). According to the report titled 'Combating HIV/AIDS in India, 1999-2000' brought by the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO), the predominant modes of transmission of infection in AIDS patients is through heterosexual contact (80.86 *per cent*) followed by blood transfusion and blood product infusion (5.52 *per cent*), injecting drug users (IDU) (5.30 *per cent*), perinatal transmission (0.72 *per cent*) and others (7.60 *per cent*). To combat HIV/AIDS, the Government of India (GOI) launched National AIDS Control Programme in 1987. The programme has moved through three phases since its launching. The GOI negotiated with the World Bank and the International Development Association (IDA) to support a full-fledged National AIDS Control Project (NACP-I covering the period 1992-99 and NACP-II covering the period 1999-2004).

Objectives

3.2.2 The key objectives of the programme were to reduce the spread of HIV and to strengthen India's capacity to respond to the HIV/AIDS on a long term basis. The goal of National Health Policy 2002 was to achieve zero level growth of HIV/AIDS by 2007. The following components were implemented in the State to achieve the objectives and goal of the programme:

- (a) Priority targeted interventions for groups at high risk;
- (b) Preventive intervention for general community; and
- (c) Institutional strengthening

The other two components – Low Cost AIDS Care and Intersectoral Collaboration were not implemented in the State.

Organisational set up

3.2.3 The programme was implemented by the Programme Officer of the State AIDS Cell up to 1998-99 and thereafter by the Project Director of State AIDS Control Society (hereinafter called the Society) through four Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) of all the four districts, four Medical Superintendents of State and District Hospitals*, 10 Sub-Divisional Medical Officers, nine Rural Hospitals, 61 Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and 19 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The Society had the Commissioner-cum-Secretary of the Health and Family Welfare Department as its President up to 27 February 2001 and thereafter Minister of Health and Family Welfare as Chairman with 10 members including the Project Director as the Member-Secretary. The Project Director and the Assistant Project Director of the Society were on deputation from the department. The Society

* Two State hospitals: GB hospital and IGM hospital (both at Agartala); two district hospitals: Tripura Sundari (TS) hospital at Udaipur, and Rajib Gandhi Memorial (RGM) hospital at Kailashahar.

had 20 other staff members all of whom were on contract service (since April 2001) renewable from time to time.

Audit coverage

3.2.4 Implementation of the programme for the period from 1998-99 to 2002-03 was reviewed in audit between January and April 2003 based on test-check of records of the Society^{*}, all the four CMOs, all the two State hospitals[♥], two District hospitals[‡] out of four, three Sub-Divisional hospitals[‡] out of 10, two Rural hospitals[¶] out of nine, seven PHCs[♦] out of 61 and six NGOs out of 19, covering an expenditure of Rs. 1.19 crore (37 per cent) out of Rs.3.18 crore. The results of audit are discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

Financial arrangement

3.2.5 National AIDS Control Programme is a 100 per cent Centrally sponsored scheme financed by Government of India up to 1998-99 and thereafter by National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO). Grants are directly to be released to the Society only after its annual action plan is approved by NACO. Subsequent release of grants was to be on the basis of actual expenditure reported by the Society and expenditure likely to be incurred during the year. Grants released by the Government of India/National AIDS Control Organisation during 1998-2003 and expenditure thereagainst are shown below:

(Rupees in crore)

| Year | Opening balance | Funds released | Actual expenditure | Closing balance |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1998-99 | 0.20 | NIL | 0.20 | 0.00 |
| 1999-2000 | 0.00 | 0.70 | 0.37 | 0.33 |
| 2000-01 | 0.33 | 0.82 | 0.75 | 0.40 |
| 2001-02 | 0.40 | 1.92 | 1.29 | 1.03 |
| 2002-03 | 1.03 | 0.65 | 0.57 | 1.11 |
| Total | | 4.09 | 3.18 | |

Source : Information furnished by Tripura AIDS Control Society.

Against the funds of Rs. 4.29 crore (including opening balance of Rs. 0.20 crore) available, the agency utilised Rs. 3.18 crore during 1998-2003, leaving an unspent balance of Rs. 1.11 crore (26 per cent). An amount of Rs. 0.68 crore, though sanctioned by the Government of India during 1998-99, was not released due to delay in formation of the State AIDS Control Society.

* The State Aids Control Society (SACS) is audited under Section 14 of the Comptroller & Auditor General's (Duties, Power and Conditions of Service) Act, 1971.

♥ GB Hospital and IGM Hospital, both located at Agartala.

‡ TS Hospital, Udaipur and RGM Hospital, Kailashahar.

‡ Bishalgarh, Kamalpur and Dharmanagar.

¶ Kumarghat and Jirania.

♦ Narsingarh, Mohanpur, Madhupur, Kakraban, Fatikroy, Panisagar and Kadamtala.

An amount of Rs. 17.58 lakh was advanced (February 2002) to four CMOs- to make arrangement for conducting awareness campaigns through the local bodies like Nagar Panchayats, Gram Panchayats, and Agartala Municipal Council. The local bodies were duly paid the amount by the CMOs. The vouchers for adjustment of Rs. 17.58 lakh had not yet been received by the Society. The vouchers were also not made available to Audit by the CMOs during test-check. As such, expenditure of Rs. 17.58 lakh on awareness campaign could not be verified in audit.

Infrastructure

3.2.6 The State Government was required to provide infrastructure with adequate equipment and trained personnel in various health institutions for quality health services. The target fixed for creation of infrastructure and achievement thereagainst during 1998-2003 are shown below:

| Name of the units | Target | Achievement | Percentage of shortfall |
|---------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Blood banks | 6 | 6 | NIL |
| STD clinics | 11 | 3 | 73 |
| Sentinel surveillance centres | 5 | 3 | 40 |
| Voluntary blood testing centres | 3 | 1 | 67 |
| Zonal blood testing centres | 3 | 1 | 67 |
| Blood component separation unit | 1 | NIL | 100 |

The Government attributed (August 2003) the reasons for shortfall to lack of planning of the concerned officials of the Society and shortage of manpower.

Blood Banks

3.2.7 It is the responsibility of the State Government as well as the State AIDS Control Society to provide the latest technology available for blood transfusion services and ensure its functioning in an updated manner. The Department claimed to have modernised all the six blood banks in the State. But it was noticed that against 40 items of equipment required to be provided in a modern blood bank, items ranging from four to 12⁶ only were provided in these six blood banks. One Elisa reader machine without printer was provided to BSM hospital, Kamalpur, in September 2001. As a result, the Elisa system remained inoperative (May 2003). The blood bank of TS hospital needed repairs and renovations for which an estimate of Rs. 0.94 lakh was sent to the Society in February 2000. But it was noticed that the said work had not yet been taken up as the Society did not provide the required funds (May 2003).

Again, against the requirement of 24 Laboratory Technicians, 12 Laboratory Assistants and 12 Nurses for six blood banks (according to in-charges of the blood banks), only 12 Laboratory Technicians and five Nurses were provided. It was also noticed that against six technicians required to be appointed by the

- CMO (West): Rs. 7.02 lakh; CMO (South): Rs. 5.23 lakh; CMO (North): Rs. 3.28 lakh; and CMO (Dhalai): Rs. 2.05 lakh.

⁶ Four items in RGM hospital and 12 items in GB hospital, IGM Hospital, TS hospital, BSM hospital (Kamalpur), and Dharmanagar hospital.

Society, for which grants of Rs. 0.75 lakh per blood bank per year were available under the programme, no technician was yet appointed. The reasons for not appointing technicians could not be stated by the Society (May 2003).

The Government replied (August 2003) that required number of Laboratory Technicians and Assistants were provided by Health and Family Welfare Department. The reply is not tenable as there was nothing on record to show that the requirement was even assessed by the Society.

Blood Component Separation Unit

3.2.8 According to the National Blood Policy, only the components of blood which are required by a patient should be transfused. For rational use of blood, its components and plasma fraction, it was envisaged in the programme that blood component separation facilities would be established in all the modern blood banks.

Against the requirement of six blood component separation units for the blood banks already set up, it was seen that even the infrastructure for one such unit though targeted to be set up in 1996-97 for the blood bank of the GB hospital, was not provided as of March 2003. For blood component separation facilities, equipment supplied by the NACO (through supplying agency) between March 2001 and July 2002, value for which could not be stated by the department though asked for, had been lying idle (July 2003). The items of equipment were not installed and their functioning tested though the warranty period of one year for most of its components was over. The Government attributed (August 2003) the reasons for delay to failure of the supplier to provide a critical component from NACO 'in due time'.

Drug De-addiction Centre

3.2.9 For providing treatment to the injecting drug users (IDUs), one drug de-addiction centre was established at Kumarghat at a cost of Rs. 8 lakh, and the centre was inaugurated by the Health Minister in September 2000. But the centre was still not functioning, as of May 2003, for want of equipment, medicines and technical staff. The Government stated that the centre should not have been inaugurated before availability of staff.

Programme Implementation

Priority targeted intervention for groups at high risk

3.2.10 Intervention with people with increased vulnerability to HIV is one of the core strategies for prevention of HIV in India. The project aimed to reduce the spread of HIV among groups at high risk by identifying target population and providing peer counselling and condom promotion. These were to be largely delivered by NGOs. The amount allocated for each high-risk group and the expenditure incurred in intervention projects during 2000-03 are shown in **Appendix - XV**.

It was noticed that against the cost of Rs. 1.49 crore as per scales of estimates prescribed in the NACO guidelines, 20 intervention projects at a total cost of Rs. 34.79 lakh only were sanctioned and taken up during 2000-03. The basis of fixing the cost of the projects by the Society was not made available to Audit. Whether the projects, each of which was to be implemented at such a low budget, were at all viable was not examined while fixing the cost of the different projects.

For successful implementation, the intervention projects should include all the following components (i) programme management, (ii) behaviour change communication, (iii) cost of service, (iv) enabling environment, and (v) monitoring and evaluation. It is not enough to provide only one component or its sub-component for a sustainable result.

According to the core principles of the programme, the NGOs whose proposals were recommended by the Technical Advisory Committee, were to be invited to undergo a short orientation course of training in understanding the principles of interventions and formulating a viable project. Seven projects (2000-01 to 2001-02) test-checked, indicated that all of the above components were not covered by the projects and the NGOs were not invited to participate in short orientation course of training. The projects included only cost of programme management and honoraria for counsellors and the medical officer. The Government admitted (August 2003) that the Society made mistakes in formulating the projects.

The honorarium admissible as per scale prescribed by the NACO and the honorarium allowed by the Society in fixing the cost of programme management of the project are shown in the table below:

| Category of staff | Monthly rate of honorarium prescribed by NACO | Monthly rate of honorarium allowed by the Society |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Programme coordinator | Rs. 6000 | Rs. 1500 |
| Office support staff | Rs. 3000 | Rs. 300-500 |
| Counsellor | Rs. 4000 | Rs. 300-1000 |
| Part time doctor | Rs. 4000 | Rs. 500 |

It was also noticed that cost of drugs for treatment, cost of community events for behaviour change, cost of creating enabling environment and evaluation of the programme were not taken into account. As no viable projects were formulated to achieve the objectives of intervention, the expenditure of Rs. 21.22 lakh incurred during 2000-03, proved wasteful. The performance of a few NGO projects is discussed below.

(i) Door of Hope

3.2.11 An intervention project of 105 Injecting Drug Users (IDUs) was sanctioned (April 2001) for Rs. 3.53 lakh (for three years) against the cost of Rs. 5.84 lakh as per scales prescribed by the NACO and Rs. 1.21 lakh was released to the NGO between July 2001 and March 2002 without making operational the Drug De-addiction Centre, at Kumarghat where the IDUs were

to be treated. The project did not include cost of remuneration to staff, creation of enabling environment and evaluation.

It was seen from the performance report furnished by the NGO that though 70 *per cent* of the IDUs were motivated to undergo treatment, the facilities for treatment could not be provided by the Society to the IDUs, despite repeated persuasion from the NGO. The NGO requested (November 2002) to discontinue the project as it was meaningless to continue the project without medical services for de-addiction. The Department decided (January 2003) to discontinue the project. Thus, the project without any provision for treatment did not serve any purpose and the expenditure of Rs.1.16 lakh incurred up to August 2002 towards wages of field workers, stationery, contingent expenditure, transportation and workshop had gone waste.

The Government stated (August 2003) that the funds could have been released to the NGO only after availability of staff in the Drug De-addiction Centre.

(ii) Sanghadip

3.2.12 A project for 1800 truck drivers was taken up in April 2001 at a total cost of Rs. 2.30 lakh (for three years) against the cost of Rs. 10.40 lakh as per scales prescribed by the NACO. Scrutiny of the activity reports submitted by the NGO revealed that routine nature reports indicating health check up of drivers ranging from 105 to 250, and counselling of drivers ranging from 1080 to 1754 were furnished without any further details as to how and by whom health check up and counselling were done.

Behaviour change communication, and creation of enabling environment are the core principles of targeted intervention. For this purpose, baseline assessment at the end of the year is required to be conducted to evaluate the programme. But it was noticed that these components were ignored and no funds were provided for them. All these factors together made the project ineffective.

(iii) Lions Club

3.2.13 An intervention project for two years for 3210 migrant labourers working in the brick fields for Rs. 5.70 lakh was sanctioned in January 2001 against the cost of Rs. 15.58 lakh, as per scales prescribed by the NACO, and Rs. 2.56 lakh was released between April 2001 and January 2002.

The six monthly activity reports submitted by the NGO indicated that 14 health camps and 349 group discussions were held during the year 2001 covering 1125 labourers, and 5000 condoms were distributed. It was also noticed that the project was discontinued since January 2002.

The Government stated (August 2003) that, as the performance of the NGO was not satisfactory, the project was discontinued. Thus, the objectives of the project intervention remained largely unachieved.

Control of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD)

3.2.14 With the arrival / spread of HIV infection and because of its strong relation with STD, National STD Control Programme was brought under the

purview of the NACO since 1992 and STD clinics were sought to be strengthened by providing drugs, consumables and laboratory support for diagnosis and treatment. All the three STD clinics in the State were claimed to have been strengthened by the department, which meant that the clinics should have had the above facilities.

Test-check revealed that neither any trained Laboratory Technicians nor any Laboratory Assistants were provided in two STD clinics at the TS Hospital, Udaipur, and the RGM Hospital, Kailashahar. Laboratory facilities like reagent, kits, equipment for diagnosis and medicines for treatment were not provided in these STD clinics. In the RGM hospital, Specialist (Dermatology) was also not available since inception to run the clinic effectively as of May 2003.

Records of STD clinic at the GB Hospital indicated that against the requirement[^] of 640 vials of Penicillin, 58200 capsules/tablets of Tetracycline, 43120 of Erythromycine, 7540 of Cotrimoxazole and 4524 of Ciprofloxacin for 1056 patients (actually treated) suffering from Syphilis, Gonorrhoea, Chancroid and Lympho Granuloma Venerea (LGV) during 1998-2002, only 550 vials of Penicillin, 500 tablets/ capsules of Tetracycline and 3400 of Ciprofloxacin were supplied to the clinic. It was also noticed that, for treatment of the diseases like Herpes Trichomoniasis, Candidiasis and Veneral Warts, no medicines were supplied by the Society though a large number of such patients were detected and the Society was required to supply all the medicines according to the programme.

Family Health Awareness Campaigns (FHACs) were organised in April and December 1999, June 2000, April 2001 and March 2002, by organising camps at sub-centre level and arranging treatment of STD patients. Records of the CMOs of four districts test-checked, indicated poor performance in the campaigns organised between June 2000 and March 2002 as shown below:

| Period | Target population estimated by the Department | Actual attendance in camps | STD patients identified and referred to clinics | Patients who actually attended clinics | STD prevalence rate among the population that attended the camps (per thousand) (Col 5 ÷ Col 3 X 1000) |
|--------------|---|----------------------------|---|--|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| June 2000 | 13.94 lakh | 96,973(7) | 15,159 | 8,582(57) | 156 |
| April 2001 | 15.58 lakh | 1,09,731(7) | 16,818 | 8,415(50) | 153 |
| March 2002 | 15.66 lakh | 1,13,575(7) | 20,242 | 9,303(46) | 178 |
| Total | | | 52,219 | 26,300(50) | |

Figures within brackets represent percentage of attendance to the target.

Source: Reports submitted by the Society to NACO.

The above table indicated that had the attendance in camps been larger, the number of STD patients would have been higher than that of the cases identified. It was noticed that the STD patients covered by treatment ranged between 46 and 57 *per cent* during the period. The prevalence rate of STD

[^] The requirement is assessed with reference to treatment schedule and number of patient treated.

ranged from 153 to 178 among the population that attended the camps, which was quite high. Also, about 50 *per cent* of the patients identified remained unprotected against the spread of HIV, despite an expenditure of Rs. 54.15 lakh in the campaigns. The department thus failed in its role in counselling and motivating the STD patients for taking up the prescribed course of treatment.

Stock register of medicines maintained by the CMO, West, and the CMO, Dhalai, showed that STD medicines were not received between March 1999 and June 2000 by the CMO, West, and between February 2000 and April 2001 by the CMO, Dhalai. In the absence of specific medicines, manner in which the programme was implemented could not be clarified by the CMOs. However, records of the AIDS Control Society indicated that various STD medicines worth Rs. 8.51 lakh[<] as shown in **Appendix - XVI** were supplied between February 2000 and March 2001 but these were not received by the CMOs.

In reply, the Government stated (August 2003) that this was a very serious matter and the Project Director of the Society was asked to investigate.

Preventive intervention for general community

Blood Safety

3.2.15 One of the main objectives of the National Blood Policy is to make the latest technology available to ensure its functioning in an updated manner. The practice of replacement donors was to be phased out to achieve 100 *per cent* voluntary blood donation. And for this purpose, as envisaged, an action plan is required to be developed by the State Blood Transfusion Council. Donor Organiser and Donor Recruitment Officer for all blood banks are required to be appointed and provided with orientation training cum advocacy programme on donor motivation.

Records indicated that neither was any action plan for phasing out replacement donors drawn nor any Donor Organiser[▲] or Donor Recruitment Officer[▲] appointed by State Blood Council.

The Project Director stated (March 2003) that National Action Plan to achieve availability of 95 *per cent* of the requirement by voluntary blood donation within 2007 was being followed in the State. The reply is not convincing as the State Blood Transfusion Council had achieved 17 *per cent* voluntary donation in 1999, which increased only to 35 *per cent* in 2002. The pace was too slow to successfully attain the goal within another five years when there was no required manpower and a specific action plan.

Records of all the six blood banks, and the zonal blood testing centre indicated that 88,255 blood units were tested between 1998-99 and 2002-03, against

[<] The value of the medicines was calculated on the basis of the rates collected from the local market as these could not be supplied by the Society.

[▲] The responsibilities of the holder of the post are to motivate the public for voluntary blood donation and to organise blood donation camps.

which 247 HIV seropositive cases^k were detected. The information had been withheld from the infected persons and no counselling was done. Even the HIV positive donors were not informed about their HIV status. Public health experts of the country expressed concern that the HIV positive donors have been living without knowledge of their infection and possibly transmitting it to their sexual partners. This was not conducive to programme objectives. Against this background, in December 2002, the Government of India decided that the blood donors found to be HIV positive would be informed about the status of HIV testing and asked to seek confirmatory test and counselling. But the infected persons had not been informed of their HIV infection as yet (May 2003) and, as a result, 278 HIV infected persons had been unknowingly acting as infecting agents in spreading the deadly disease among the State population.

The Government stated (August 2003) that the matter was taken up with the Government of India and the Society would act according to the Government of India directions.

In blood banks, blood units are screened only by Elisa, rapid and simple (ERS) test. But it was established that on being infected with HIV, it takes about six weeks to six months to develop detectable level of antibody in blood. The time gap is called 'window period'. The infection of blood with HIV is not detectable during the 'window period' by the present system of ERS testing. Therefore, blood units supplied by blood banks of the State for safe transfusion after the units had undergone ERS testing were not to be considered safe, and the chance of infection with HIV remained unchecked.

HIV can be detected even in the 'window period' if blood units are tested by Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) method as stated (February 2003) by the Medical Officer in charge of Zonal Blood Testing Centre of GB Hospital. The approximate cost of setting up the PCR testing facilities would be Rs. 10 lakh as per his estimate. But it was noticed that neither the AIDS Control Society nor the State Government was considering the setting up of the PCR testing facilities. The guideline issued by the NACO is also silent about handling the problem of 'window period'.

The Government agreed (August 2003) with the fact pointed out above, and stated that the State Government had been following NACO guidelines only in this regard.

Voluntary testing and counselling

3.2.16 Voluntary testing and counselling is the process by which an individual undergoes counselling enabling him to make an informed choice about being tested for HIV. This would involve increasing demand for the facilities for joint testing of couples. It was envisaged in the programme that one voluntary testing centre would be established in each district. But audit scrutiny revealed that against the target for setting up three centres by 1996-97, only one such centre started functioning in 1999-2000 at the GB Hospital, Agartala.

^k In addition, 10 such cases under Voluntary Testing and Counselling and 21 cases by the Sentinel Surveillance Centres were detected.

The performance of the voluntary testing centre is shown below:

| Year | No. of sites offering services | No. of volunteers targeted for screening | Attendance per site for individual testing | No. of couples jointly tested | HIV positive cases detected |
|-----------|--------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1999-2000 | 1 | 250 | 105 | Nil | 01 |
| 2000-01 | 1 | 250 | 99 | Nil | Nil |
| 2001-02 | 1 | 250 | 78 | Nil | 02 |
| 2002-03 | 1 | 250 | 153 | Nil | 07 |

That not a single couple turned up during the years for joint testing was also an indication of poor performance of the awareness campaign taken up by the department.

It was noticed that no Counsellor was appointed and no counselling was done, in spite of availability of grants under the programme towards salaries of two Counsellors. The Government stated (August 2003) that appointment of Counsellors was under consideration of the Society.

Sentinel surveillance

3.2.17 Surveillance of STD patients constitutes an important component of prevention and control of HIV/AIDS. The objective of this activity is to develop an effective surveillance system generating a set of reliable data.

Against the target of five Sentinel Surveillance Centres to be set up by 1998-99, three such centres in three districts were set up at the end of 2002-03. The shortfall was attributed (August 2003) by the Government to non-accordance of sanction of the new sites by the NACO. Records of the surveillance centres showed that 2236 samples were tested during 1998-2003 against which 21 HIV sero-positive cases were detected.

Training

3.2.18 According to the NACO guidelines, training of all specialists, medical officers, nurses, health workers and all laboratory personnel in AIDS management were to be completed between June 2000 and March 2002. The training was to be conducted locally and the society was to sponsor it.

The targets fixed and achievement thereagainst during April 1999 to March 2003 were as follows:

| Category of personnel to be trained | Target | Achievement |
|--|--------------|-----------------|
| Medical Officers including Specialists | 1115 | 410(37) |
| Nurses | 1000 | 156(16) |
| Laboratory Technicians | 160 | 6(4) |
| Paramedical staff | 1250 | 309(25) |
| Anganwadi Workers | 3000 | 127(4) |
| Community Health Guides | 2400 | 468(20) |
| Trained Birth Attendants | 1211 | Nil(0) |
| Total: | 10136 | 1476(15) |

Figures within brackets represent percentage of coverage.

Source: Tripura AIDS Control Society.

The table indicates that although the training of all categories of staff was to be completed by March 2002, only 15 per cent of the target for 10,136 staff members fixed for the period was achieved up to March 2003. The Society could not explain why 85 per cent of staff had not been trained as of March 2003.

Institutional strengthening

Functioning of AIDS Control Society

3.2.19 Tripura AIDS Control Society was formed in August 1998 and started functioning from April 1999. The Society was formed in order to remove the bottlenecks faced by programme implementing officers. But it was noticed that the independent functioning of the Society was not ensured. Funds of Rs. 98.62 lakh were released to the Society during 1999-2003 under "Institutional Strengthening" against which the Society spent Rs. 54.49 lakh only. It was also noticed that against 27 posts sanctioned by the NACO for the Society, eight posts* were not filled up, as of March 2003. For field units, 10 posts of Laboratory Technicians for which grants had been available under the programme, were also not filled up. The reasons for delay were not stated although called for (February 2003) in audit.

Monitoring and evaluation

3.2.20 The responsibilities for impact evaluation of the programme rest with National Monitoring and Evaluation Agency. But no such evaluation was so far undertaken by the agency in the State.

Field units are required to submit their monthly reports to the Society in the first week of the following month for monitoring and reporting to the NACO. But it was noticed that 32 reports from the STD clinic of the TS Hospital and 28 reports from the STD clinic of the RGM Hospital were not submitted by the clinics during 2000-01 to 2002-03. The reasons for failure on the part of the Society to collect the reports in time could not be indicated. It was, thus, established that the reports submitted to the NACO did not reflect a correct position of STD treatment during the years.

* Dy. Director (STD), Dy. Director (IEC), Dy. Director (Blood Safety), Drug Inspector, Administrative Officer, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer etc.

SECTION - B AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

3.3 Expenditure on idle staff

Non-functioning of the hiring centres resulted in idling of machinery and idle expenditure of Rs. 30.91 lakh on pay and allowances.

In order to provide technical assistance to farmers, the Agriculture Department maintained six hiring centres with nine power tillers[?] (PTs) at Bishalgarh Agricultural Sub-Division under the control of the Superintendent of Agriculture, Bishalgarh. The hiring centres were established to facilitate availability of PTs to the needy farmers on hire basis at the rate fixed by the Government from time to time.

Test-check (August 2002) of records of Superintendent of Agriculture revealed that functioning of all these hiring centres had been kept suspended since July 1997 due to non-allocation of funds for meeting expenditure on maintenance and operational costs of PTs. As a result, the services of 10 field – specific technical and operational workers remained unutilised. Meanwhile, the Government decided in March 2000 to transfer the activities of hiring centres to Panchayat Samitis, which had also not materialised (January 2003) pending drawing up of modalities for such transfer.

Thus, failure of the department to provide funds for running and maintenance of power tillers and delay in transfer of the centres to Panchayat Samitis led to unproductive expenditure on pay and allowances amounting to Rs. 30.91 lakh for the period from August 1997 to July 2002. This also resulted in idling of nine power tillers worth Rs. 6.23 lakh[♦] and also depriving the farmers of the intending benefits projected under the scheme.

The matter was reported to the Government April 2003; reply had not been received (August 2003).

[?] (i) Bishalgarh: 2 PTs; (ii) Devipur; 2 PTs; (iii) Durganagar: 1 PT; (iv) Lalsinghmura: 1 PT; (v) Ramnagar: 2 PTs and (vi) Charilam: 1 PT.

[♦] 2 Power tillers @ Rs. 94,140.00 = Rs. 1,88,280 (purchased in 1998)
7 Power tillers @ Rs. 62,170.00 = Rs. 4,35,190 (purchased in 1987)

Total: Rs. 6,23,470

EDUCATION (HIGHER) DEPARTMENT

3.4 Non-realisation of pro-rata contribution from the beneficiary States

Director of Higher Education could not realise the pro-rata contribution of Rs. 43.68 lakh from three North Eastern States for their nominees studying in Tripura Engineering College.

To modernise the laboratories, workshops etc. of the Tripura Engineering College as prescribed by the All India Council for Technical Education, the Government of Tripura decided (February 1994) to collect fees from the respective State Governments (pro-rata contribution) @ Rs. 42,000 per annum per student nominated by other North Eastern (NE) States from the academic year 1994-95 onwards, against the seats allocated by the North Eastern Council (NEC).

The matter was discussed among the representatives of all the member States in the NEC meeting held on 24 August 1994 and it was agreed in principle to share the additional financial requirement in order to improve the facilities.

Test-check (July 2002) of records of the Director of Higher Education, Tripura, revealed that since introduction of the realisation of pro-rata contribution the Government of Nagaland had sponsored their students for 1994-95 only and Arunachal Pradesh had sponsored their students for 1997-98 and regularly from 1999-2000 onwards while the Government of Manipur had been sponsoring their students regularly from 1997-98 onwards. However, against the demand of Rs. 55.02* lakh realisable from the three States for the academic years 1994-95 to 2002-03, only Rs. 11.34 lakh was realised.

Thus, pro-rata contribution of Rs. 43.68* lakh (Rs. 55.02 lakh – Rs. 11.34 lakh) for the period from 1994-95 to 2002-03 remained unrealised from three States as of July 2003.

The Government to whom the matter was reported in April, 2003 stated (July 2003) that for the last three years the nominating States namely Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh had been nominating fresh candidates with pro-rata contribution in advance at the time of their initial admission. The Government decided not to allow admission of any student without advance payment of pro-rata contribution in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th year. The reply, however, remained silent on collection of outstanding dues from 1994-95 to 2002-03.

* 1994-95 : Rs. 5.04 lakh ; 1995-96: NIL; 1996-97: NIL; 1997-98: Rs. 11.76 lakh; 1998-99: Rs.8.40 lakh; 1999-2000: Rs. 13.44 lakh; 2000-2001: Rs. 7.56 lakh; 2001-2002: Rs. 5.88 lakh; 2002-2003: Rs. 2.94 lakh.

* Nagaland : Rs. 5.04 lakh; Arunachal Pradesh : Rs. 8.40 lakh; and Manipur : Rs. 30.24 lakh.

3.5 Idle expenditure on procurement of books

Books worth Rs. 16.60 lakh procured by the Director of Higher Education for nine public libraries were not put to use of the readers due to non-availability of required infrastructure.

To strengthen and upgrade the public libraries in the State, the 11th Finance Commission awarded Rs. 1.80 crore (State level public library: Rs. 1 crore; and other public libraries: Rs. 0.80 crore) for the years 2000-2005. The Commission suggested to create a corpus, invest the entire funds and utilise the returns from the investment accrued every year for purchase of books, and periodicals.

Test-check (July 2002) of records and subsequent correspondence of the Director of Higher Education, Agartala, revealed that the department received and kept (March 2001) Rs. 1.80 crore in term deposit and earned an interest of Rs. 29.26 lakh thereon, as of September 2002.

The Book Selection Committee constituted (March 2002) by the department had purchased (March 2002) 15,345 books valued at Rs. 16.60 lakh for nine selected public libraries[♦] from Agartala book fair. But these books were not classified and catalogued to bring into use of readers. The books were lying unutilised in the godown of the State Central Library, Agartala.

The Head Librarian of the State Central Library, stated (November 2002) that due to inadequate infrastructure (proper storage and reading facilities) in the public libraries, the books could not be brought into use. It was clear from the reply that the decision to procure books was taken by the department without assessing the available storage facilities prior to procurement of a large stock of books at a cost of Rs. 16.60 lakh.

Thus, injudicious procurement of books without creating adequate storing space in the public libraries for which these were procured resulted in idle expenditure of Rs. 16.60 lakh.

On this being pointed out in audit, the Government stated (June 2003) that the department distributed (November 2002) all the books to nine public libraries, and also stated that decision to launch overall development programmes including expansion of infrastructural facilities of libraries has also been taken. But, subsequent test-check (July 2003) of five libraries[♠] out of nine, revealed that in the absence of required space and furniture, the books though distributed, remained idle. The books also remained unutilised in the remaining four libraries as construction of buildings for two libraries[△] was

[♦] State Central Library at Agartala, and Sub-Divisional Libraries at Khowai, Sonamura, Udaipur, Belonia, Kailashahar, Dharmanagar, Ambassa and Kamalpur.

[♠] Agartala, Khowai, Sonamura, Udaipur and Belonia.

[△] Dharmanagar and Kamalpur.

going on, decision to start construction of the building for one library[†] was taken and there was no decision for construction of building for one library[‡].

As the books purchased could not be put to use of readers for want of buildings with required space to accommodate them, resulting in unnecessary blocking of funds, the department should have put off such purchase till the accommodation facilities were created.

EDUCATION (SCHOOL) DEPARTMENT

3.6 Excess payment to contractor

Non-deduction of Tripura Sales Tax at source resulted in excess payment of Rs. 13.88 lakh to the contractor.

Sections 3A and 3AA of the Tripura Sales Tax (TST) Act, 1976, as amended from time to time, provide for deduction of a certain percentage of the gross amount of the contractor's bill towards TST. The rates are fixed as 1.5 *per cent* in case of RCC bridge work and 4 *per cent* in respect of other works as specified in the Tripura Sales Tax Rules.

The Education Department decided (November 1996) to construct 70 school buildings through Rashtriya Pariyojana Nirman Nigam Limited (RPNN) a Government of India enterprise. The works were estimated to cost Rs. 4 crore. Department entered into an agreement (January 1997) with RPNN for construction of the buildings on turnkey basis at different locations within the State. The entire amount of Rs. 4 crore being the estimated cost of construction of the 70 school buildings was paid to RPNN as advance between December 1996 and March 1997.

According to the provision of the agreement, the agency (RPNN) was to submit monthly expenditure statement against the advance payment made to them and, on completion of the work, final statement of expenditure duly audited, was to be submitted to the department for final settlement. The agreement also provided that the sales tax would be borne and paid by the department. As such, the agency had no responsibility to pay the tax.

Scrutiny (July 2002) of the records of the Directorate of School Education, Tripura, revealed that the sales tax leviable on the works contract had not been deposited by the department as per the provision of the agreement. The statement of expenditure and fund utilisation certificate furnished (November 2002) by the agency on completion of the work showed that Rs. 13.88 lakh

[†] Kailashahar.

[‡] Ambassa.

- School buildings: 50 Nos @ Rs. 4 lakh = Rs. 2 crore
20 Nos @ Rs. 10 lakh = Rs. 2 crore
Rs. 4 crore

had been adjusted between January 1997 and November 2002 towards sales tax against the advance payment (Rs. 4 crore).

In response to audit query, the Commissioner of Taxes stated (April 2003) that the Sales Tax received from the Director of School Education through adjustment of advances had not been deposited by the Agency (RPNN). Thus, the failure of the department to comply with the provision of agreement had not only resulted in excess payment of Rs. 13.88 lakh made to the agency but also in loss of revenue to the State exchequer to that extent.

The matter was reported to the Government in June 2003; reply had not been received (August 2003).

EDUCATION (SOCIAL WELFARE AND SOCIAL EDUCATION) DEPARTMENT

3.7 Welfare of the handicapped

Introduction

3.7.1 According to the survey conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) in 1991, about five *per cent* of the population of the country suffers from one disability or the other.

In order to promote welfare of the handicapped, the State Government has been implementing (a) the provisions of “Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act” (the PWD Act), 1995 (a Central act) and (b) various programmes and schemes, including three State sector schemes for extending benefit under (i) scholarship for the physically handicapped students; (ii) Tripura Special Award (marriage with physically handicapped persons) Rules, 1986; and (iii) Tripura Blind and Handicapped Persons Pension Rules, 1980, and five Centrally sponsored schemes[?]. The Government has also been running three special schools*.

The Education (Social Welfare and Social Education) Department had been declared the Nodal Department for implementation of the PWD Act and other programmes and schemes for the welfare of the handicapped. The other departments which are involved in implementation of the programme were Health and Family Welfare, Labour and Employment, Transport, Revenue and Public Works. The nodal department had not yet ascertained (August 2003)

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- [?] (i) Scheme of Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids/Appliances.
(ii) Scheme of National Award for People with Disabilities.
(iii) Assistance to Disabled through National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation.
(iv) Integrated Education for Disabled Children.
(v) National Programme for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities.

- * (i) Institute for Visually Handicapped (for Boys), Narsingarh (opened in 1972),
(ii) Institute for Visually Handicapped (for Girls), Badharghat (opened in 1982), and
(iii) Institute for Speech Rehabilitation, Abhoynagar (opened in 1971).

the category-wise number of disabled persons in the State on the basis of proper survey.

Implementation of the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Act / Rules

3.7.2 The following table would show that most of the provisions of the PWD Act and the PWD Rules made thereunder (PWD Rules, 1997 framed by the State Government) remained unimplemented (August 2003) and the intended benefits did not reach the disabled persons.

| Reference to Act/Rules | Provision | Status of implementation |
|---|--|---|
| Prevention and early detection of disabilities | | |
| Section 25 of Act | To take steps in respect of survey, investigation and research on cause and prevention of disabilities. | Reported to have taken up survey, but no action taken in other areas. |
| Section 25 of Act | Screening of all children at least once in a year to identify 'at risk' cases. | Not done. |
| Section 25 of Act | Training to be imparted to the staff at the primary health centres on prevention and early detection of disabilities. | Not done. |
| Education | | |
| Section 27 of Act | Implementing schemes and programmes for non-formal education for the children with disabilities. | Not done. |
| Employment | | |
| Section 32 of Act | Identification of posts which can be reserved for persons with disabilities. | Not done. |
| Section 33 of Act | Reservation of three <i>per cent</i> of vacant posts for disabled persons. | Issued order but implementation not monitored. |
| Rules 37 and 38 | Reporting vacancies to Special Employment Exchange by 84 Government controlled establishments. | Effective steps not taken to obtain such reports. |
| Section 40 of Act | Providing three <i>per cent</i> reservation of proportionate quota for disabled persons among the beneficiaries of poverty alleviation programmes. | Instructions issued but implementation not monitored. |
| Preferential allotment of land | | |
| Section 43 of Act | Scheme for preferential allotment of land to disabled persons for prescribed purposes. | Decision taken by Government (May 1999), but not implemented. |

| Reference to Act/Rules | Provision | Status of implementation |
|---|---|---|
| Non-discrimination | | |
| Section 45 of Act | Ensuring non-discrimination with the disabled persons on the road. | Not done. |
| Section 46 of Act | Providing necessary facilities for disabled persons in all new public buildings. | Decision taken by the Public Works Department (March 1999), but no information on implementation with the nodal department. |
| Institution for persons with severe disabilities | | |
| Section 56 of Act | Establishment of institutions for persons with severe disabilities (those with 80 <i>per cent</i> or more of any or more disabilities). | Not done. |
| Social security | | |
| Section 67 of Act | Insurance scheme or any alternative security scheme for Government employees with disabilities. | No such scheme adopted. |
| Section 68 of Act | Scheme for payment of unemployment allowance to persons with disabilities. | Unemployment allowance @ Rs. 500 per month to fully blind persons under certain conditions approved by the Council of Ministers (September 2002), but no action taken thereafter (August 2003). |

Implementation of schemes and programmes

Scheme for Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids/Appliances (ADIP)

3.7.3 Out of Rs. 16 lakh received from the Government of India by two District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs) at Udaipur and Kailashahar in 1997-98 and 1998-99 respectively under the scheme, only Rs. 7.20 lakh were utilised for the persons with disabilities, and funds of Rs. 4.17 lakh were blocked in the form of undistributed aids/appliances, and Rs. 0.11 lakh were diverted (as of 31 March 2003) for purposes not connected with the scheme. The instances indicate that the appliances were purchased without assessment of actual requirement and the scheme was taken up for implementation without due seriousness.

Assistance to Disabled Persons through National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC)

3.7.4 The National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC) set up by the Government of India in January 1997 functions as an apex institution for channelising the funds to persons with disabilities. The State Government had nominated (June 2000) the Tripura Scheduled Castes Co-operative Development Corporation Ltd. as the State Channelising Agency (SCA), for obtaining loans from NHFDC for the handicapped persons in Tripura for self-employment.

While during 2000-01 to 2002-03, 205 loan applications were received by the SCA, till May 2003, loans of Rs. 6.76 lakh to only 13 beneficiaries were disbursed. The position indicates lack of initiatives in obtaining and providing loans for persons with disabilities for self-employment.

Moreover, no post-assistance survey to evaluate the socio-economic impact of the assistance and no follow-up action on the assistance were found to have been taken up.

Integrated Education for Disabled Children

3.7.5 Under the scheme, 100 *per cent* financial assistance is provided for education of disabled children which includes (i) assistance towards books, stationery and uniforms; (ii) escort allowance for severely handicapped children, and (iii) reader allowance for blind children. Assistance is also given for setting up and equipping resource rooms with aids and assistive devices, purchase and production of instructional materials, training and orientation of resource teachers, as well as pay and allowances of the Administrative Cell at the State level to implement and monitor the programme.

During 1997-98 to 2001-02, the total amount of admissible grant on the items of expenditure approved by the Government of India was Rs. 85.59 lakh, out of which actual amount released by the Government of India was Rs. 45.73 lakh, and expenditure incurred by the State was Rs. 44.90 lakh during 1997-98 to 2002-03. The State Government could not avail Rs. 39.86 lakh of the total admissible grant from the Government of India during the above period due to laxity in implementation of the scheme that led to under-utilisation of the available funds.

The department could not furnish item-wise expenditure on implementation of the scheme during 1998-99 to 2002-03, though called for in audit.

National Programme for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities

3.7.6 In Tripura, the scheme was launched in December 2001, and West Tripura District was selected for this purpose. The implementing agencies for the programme at the State level and the district level were State Resource

Centre (SRC)^A and District Disability Rehabilitation Centre (DDRC)-, both of which started functioning in 2001-02.

Out of the funds of Rs. 37.50 lakh released by the Government of India during 2000-01 and 2001-02 for the SRC, an amount of Rs. 4.90 lakh was spent (up to March 2003) towards renovation of a building for the SRC. The unspent balance of Rs. 33.41 lakh (including accumulated interest of Rs. 0.81 lakh) of the SRC was lying in bank (June 2003).

Out of the funds of Rs. 1.10 crore released by the Government of India during 2000-01 and 2001-02 for the DDRC, the expenditure (as per audited statement of accounts prepared up to December 2002) was Rs. 2.28 lakh, which included honorarium to doctors (Rs. 1.02 lakh) and miscellaneous office expenses (Rs. 1.26 lakh). But no person with disability was found to have been rehabilitated so far under the scheme (May 2003).

The Government accepted (August 2003) all the above findings and stated that necessary steps have been taken to remove some of the deficiencies.

HOME DEPARTMENT

3.8 Non-realisation of duty allowance

Commandant, Home Guard Organisation, failed to realise the duty allowance of Rs. 10.78 lakh on deployment of home guards from four authorities/organisations.

Utilisation of services of the home guards by the Government departments/public undertakings or private industries for their own work requires realisation of duty allowances from the indenting authorities against such duty. An undertaking for paying such allowances is to be obtained from the indenting authorities before the home guards are deployed.

Test-check (July 2002) of records of the Commandant, Home Guard Organisation, Tripura, Agartala, revealed that duty allowance for deployment of home guards to various public undertakings deployed at the instance of such indenting authorities, was not realised regularly. Claims were preferred after a lapse of three to 118 months after the deployment of home guards without any follow-up action to realise the outstanding claims. Thus, as a result of delay in preferring the claims and lack of follow-up action, duty allowance amounting to Rs. 13.83 lakh for the period from January 1992 to

^A The SRC at Agartala has been working under the "Society for Rehabilitation of Disabled", a society registered (December 2001) under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

- The DDRC at Agartala was set up by the Artificial Limb Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO), a Government of India undertaking, under Gramin Punarvas Yojana. The DDRC was inaugurated on 11 December 2001 and has been working under the "District Rehabilitation Society for Disabled", a society registered (December 2001) under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

May 2002 (as worked out by the department) remained unrealised against five units of Central public undertakings[^] as of November 2002.

On this being pointed out in audit (July 2002), the Commandant, Home Guard Organisation stated (November 2002) that due to 'communication gap' in preferring the claims, the reimbursement by the public undertakings might have been delayed.

The Government stated (August 2003) that at the instance of audit it has been decided that henceforth no deployment of Home Guards would be made without obtaining undertaking from the agency that the duty allowance would be reimbursed by it. The Government also stated that Rs. 3.05 lakh had been realised in the meantime. Hence, the balance of the unrealised amount stands at Rs. 10.78 lakh (September 2003).

CIVIL DEPARTMENTS

3.9 Outstanding Inspection Reports

First reply for 179 out of 906 Inspection Reports issued up to 2002-03 was not furnished by various Civil Departments while the Government prescribed a time limit of one month from the date of receipt of Inspection Report to furnish the reply.

Audit observations on financial irregularities and defects noticed during local audit but not settled on the spot are reported to the auditee offices and the concerned higher authorities through Inspection Reports. More important irregularities are reported to the Heads of Departments and to the Government. The Government had prescribed that the first reply to the Inspection Reports should be furnished by the concerned departments within one month from the date of their receipt.

The position of outstanding reports in respect of various Civil Departments is indicated below:

A review of position of outstanding inspection reports relating to various Civil Departments revealed that 2612 paragraphs included in 906 inspection reports issued up to 2002-03 were pending settlement as of June 2003. Of these, even first reply had not been received in respect of 179 Inspection Reports inspite of repeated reminders. Year-wise break-up of the outstanding inspection reports and paragraphs is given below:

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- [^] 1. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, Tripura Project, Agartala: Rs. 8.50 lakh (January 1992 to March 2002)
 2. Indian Oil Corporation / AOD, Dharmanagar: Rs. 2.78 lakh (March 2001 to May 2002)
 3. Indian Airlines, Agartala: Rs. 0.82 lakh (January 2002 to May 2002)
 4. Indian Oil Corporation, Kunjaban: 0.85 lakh (January 2002 to May 2002)
 5. Indian Oil Corporation, LPG Bottling Plant, Bishalgarh: Rs. 0.88 lakh (January 2002 to May 2002)

| Sl. No. | Year | Number of outstanding | | Number of inspection reports of which even first reply had not been received |
|---------|---------------|-----------------------|------------|--|
| | | Inspection Reports | Paragraphs | |
| 1. | Up to 1991-92 | 30 | 52 | – |
| 2. | 1992-93 | 11 | 41 | 2 |
| 3. | 1993-94 | 46 | 133 | 5 |
| 4. | 1994-95 | 99 | 310 | 8 |
| 5. | 1995-96 | 101 | 320 | 9 |

| Sl. No. | Year | Number of outstanding | | Number of inspection reports of which even first reply had not been received |
|---------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|--|
| | | Inspection Reports | Paragraphs | |
| 6. | 1996-97 | 86 | 235 | 11 |
| 7. | 1997-98 | 99 | 242 | 10 |
| 8. | 1998-99 | 92 | 272 | 12 |
| 9. | 1999-2000 | 88 | 262 | 17 |
| 10. | 2000-01 | 69 | 213 | 20 |
| 11. | 2001-02 | 90 | 275 | 45 |
| 12. | 2002-03 | 95 | 257 | 40 |
| | TOTAL | 906 | 2612 | 179 |

As a result, the following important irregularities commented upon in these Inspection Reports had not been settled as of June 2003.

| <i>(Rupees in crore)</i> | | | |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| Sl. No. | Nature of Irregularities | Number of cases | Amount involved |
| 1. | Wasteful/Infructuous expenditure | 29 | 3.21 |
| 2. | Extra/avoidable expenditure | 45 | 2.67 |
| 3. | Blockage of funds | 28 | 11.93 |
| 4. | Non-recovery of excess payments / overpayments | 45 | 1.01 |
| 5. | Others | 638 | 136.01 |
| | Total | 785 | 154.82 |