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DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN NORTH-EASTERN STATES THROUGH FIVE YEAR PLANS AND ANNUAL PLANS.

(Source - Planning Commission)

The Government has been resorting to various measures since independence for Socio-economic development of the people of the country and formulating schemes for development of infrastructure, education, culture, health, creating job opportunities etc. In the process, the special needs of particular sector in any State and State specific characteristics are also kept in view and exceptions wherever required have been made for ensuring balanced growth of the country including any region.

Considering the geographical features and special characteristics of the NE States, Central Government Ministries have been resorting to formulating strategies/schemes even by making special concessions/dispensations in respect of the areas Administered by them. The programs/projects are aimed at improving the socio-economic infrastructure, creation of job opportunities, up gradation of culture, education, and creating economic base for bringing people to the mainstream.

In this context, state specific position in respect of some NE States is briefly as under:-

1. Arunachal Pradesh

Arunachal Pradesh with an area of 83, 743 square kms, surrounded on three sides by Bhutan, China, and Myanmar along 1,613 kms. long International Border possesses a heterogeneous demographic character with distinct ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious diversity. The majority of State population lives in its 3857 villages.

After independence the administration of the present day Arunachal Pradesh was through Ministry of External Affairs when the area was as known as North Eastern Frontier of Assam (NEFA). It became a Union Territory in 1972 and subsequently attained Statehood in 1987. The Government resorted to development measures through various programs including Five Year Plans. Though the planned development was started from the First Five Year, the pace of development had been slow. The priority sectors in the initial plan periods were development of surface communication, agriculture, education, public health and cottage industries. The development efforts gained momentum only from the Sixth Five Year Plan (1974-79). Agriculture is the mainstay of the majority of the people. The State's economy is affected by rugged mountain terrain, heavy rainfall, communication bottleneck, primitive method of cultivation, prevalence of shifting cultivation, inadequacy of physical infrastructure, absence of marketing network and credit flow and low level of entrepreneurship etc.

Agriculture and allied activities have overriding importance as a source of livelihood to the people of Arunachal Pradesh. The States economy is characterized by persistent stringent financial situation marked by a very low level of State resources co-existing with high level of borrowing. Employment in Arunachal Pradesh is solely dependent on Government organizations and the Government relative activities. While technological progress is the index of development, the technique of production is

backward as primitive methods are used for cultivation and wide prevalence of Jhum cultivation.

During the 10th Five Year Plan period emphasis was on four major sectors viz. Social Services, Transport and Communication, Agriculture, Power and Energy. The approved outlay was Rs. 4150.35 crore with revised outlay of Rs. 4033.29 crore. Over 75% of the fund was allotted for the development of infrastructure (roads, bridges, power, irrigation and flood control etc.) which got higher priority than social sector.

The major thrust areas during the 10th Plan aimed at enhancing productivity and production, increase in seed efficiency, balanced use of bio-mass/ organic and in-organic fertilizers for (INM) technology, optimum use of irrigation potential and adopting moisture management technique for greater water use efficiency and improving productivity, water management, management of human resource etc. Despite efforts, the desired growth rate during the 10th Plan period could not be achieved due to major constraints like lack of infrastructure, poor extension - research linkage, lack of cultivation, poor capital investment in agriculture and recurring losses in crop production due to natural calamities.

Against the approved outlay of Rs. 4150.35 crore (Rs. 4033.29 crore revised outlay) for 10th Plan, the proposed outlay for the Eleventh Plan is Rs. 8790.55 crore, which is 112 % increase over 10th Plan. Against the approved outlay of Rs. 1056 crore for 2006-07 the proposed outlay for 2007-08 is Rs. 1320.00 crore, which is 25% increase over 2006-07 for various sectors such as Agriculture Allied Activities, Rural Development, Special Area Program, Irrigation and Flood Control, Energy, Industry and Minerals, Transport and Communication, Science Technology and Environment, General Economic and Social Services etc.

The proposed outlay for Eleventh Plan for the VSE is Rs. 127.00 crore with an allocation of Rs. 8.20 crore for Annual Plan 2007-08 for promotion of Handlooms, Handicrafts, Power-looms, Seri-culture, SSI, ARI, Khadi Coir, PMRY, REGP, IIDC and Food Processing Sub-sectors/ schemes.

A meeting for finalization of Eleventh Plan (2007-12) and Annual Plan (2007-08) for Arunachal Pradesh was held on 1.3.2007. After discussion with the Chief Minister, Arunachal Pradesh and the official delegation it was observed by the Planning Commission that one time ACA provided for special infrastructure projects is disbursed thinly and that the State should make a realistic Plan linked to specific problems particularly in the area of infrastructure viz. Roads, Power etc.

2. SIKKIM

Sikkim with an area of 7096 Sq. km. is nestled in the Himalays with Tibet (China) to the north and north east, Bhutan to east, Nepal to the west, and Darjeeling District of West Bengal to the south. Sikkim became the 22nd State of India on 16th May, 1975.

The position of Sikkim is quite good as compared to majority of the states. The literacy rate is higher than all India average and health indicators show that Sikkim has made impressive progress. Nearly 81% (2001) of the households in Sikkim have access to safe drinking water compared to the National average 62.3 %. There are 24 Primary

Health Centers, 147 Primary Health Sub-Centers and 4 Community Centers. The State however, suffers from a huge disadvantage in terms of access of infrastructure. The State has neither air link nor rail link with the rest of the country. The life line of the State connecting it to the rest of the country is highway 31 A linking Gangtok to Siliguri in West Bengal.

The projected 10th Plan outlay for Sikkim is Rs. 1655.74 crore. However, the total approved lay out is Rs. 2296.09 crore and distributed expenditure is Rs. 2155.19 crore showing 94% utilization. The overall growth target for the 10th Plan for the State was fixed at 7.87%. Against this achievement during the first three years of the 10th Plan had been 7.79%. The gross target fixed for the state for the 11th Plan is 6.7%.

Total approved layout for Annual Plan 2006-07 is Rs. 550 crore. The State Govt. has proposed in outlay of Rs. 4733.74 crore for 11th Five Year Plan and Rs. 864.32 crore for the Annual Plan 2007-08 for Agriculture Allied Activities, Rural Development, Special Area Program, Irrigation and Flood Control, Energy, Industrial and Minerals, Transport and Communication, Science, Tech. and Env., General Economic Services and Social Services etc.

The proposed outlay for 11th Plan for the BSE Sector is Rs. 73.00 crore which is 1% of the total proposed outlay of Rs. 4733.44 crore for the state. For Annual Plan 2007-08, the proposed allocation is Rs. 13.03 crore. The discussion on the Annual Plan and the 11th Plan for Sikkim were held on 6.3.2007 when the Plan outlays were finalized.

APPROVAL OF ANNUAL PLAN 2007-08 FOR MANIPUR.
(Source - Planning Commission)

Planning Commission on 26.3.2007 finalised the Annual Plan for Manipur for the year 2007-08 at Rs. 1374.31 crores. According to the Planning Commission Manipur's utilization of outlay had improved and efforts are required to continue the trend. The Commission assured the State Government to enhance the plan size, if utilization on major projects was found satisfactory, during the course of the year.

The State Government was advised for close monitoring and efficient utilization of funds provided under the Manipur Reconstruction Plan announced by the Prime Minister during his visit in November 2004. While complimenting the State for substantial improvement in Health Sector, attention of the State Government was drawn towards need for generating more awareness about HIV/AIDS and promoting of Economic Empowerment of Women including reducing the high gender gap in literacy. Emphasis was laid on monitoring irrigation and rain water harvesting program, Block/Council development program in the Eleventh Plan.

According to the Chief Minister Health, Education and Irrigation would get priority in the Eleventh Plan period. Power sector reforms too were being initiated and rain water harvesting has been made compulsory for all Government buildings.

FENCING AND FLOODLIGHTING ALONG INDIA-BANGLADESH BORDER.

(Source: Ministry of Home Affairs -BM Division)

The border passes through West Bengal (2216.7 Km), Assam (263 Km), Meghalaya (443 Km.), Tripura (856 Km) and Mizoram (318 Km). The entire stretch consists of plain, reverine, hilly/jungle and with hardly any natural obstacles. The area is heavily populated, and the cultivation is carried out till in the entire area.

The India-Bangladesh border is marked by a high degree of porosity and checking illegal cross border activities has been a challenging proposition. In order to prevent illegal immigration and other anti-national activities from across the border, the Government of India have sanctioned the construction of border roads and fencing in two phases. The details of fence/roads sanctioned and work completed upto February, 2007 are as under:

Fencing

Name of State	Border Length	Fencing in Phase-I (completed)	Fencing in Phase-II (sanctioned)	Fencing in Phase-II (completed)	Total completed in Phase-I & II
West Bengal	2216.7	507	1021	670.00	1177.00
Assam	263	149.294	71.5	40.68	189.97
Meghalaya	443	198.06	201	173.06	371.12
Tripura	856	---	736	654.49	654.49
Mizoram	318	---	400	85.01	85.01
TOTAL	4096.7	854.354	2429.5	1623.24	2477.59

Border Roads

Name of State	Roads in Phase-I (completed) (in Kms.)	Roads in Phase-II (sanctioned) (in Kms.)	Roads in Phase-II (completed) (in Kms.)	Total (in Kms.)
West Bengal	1616.57	---	---	1616.57
Assam	176.50	77.50	60.12	236.62
Meghalaya	211.29	204	192.75	404.04
Tripura	480.51	269	181.51	662.02
Mizoram	153.06	246.50	132.27	285.33
TOTAL	2637.93	797.00	566.65	3204.58

A pilot project for flood lighting along 277 Kms of Indo-Bangladesh border was taken up in West Bengal which has since been completed. The Government of India has decided to replace the entire 854 Kms of fence constructed under Phase-I in West Bengal,

Assam and Meghalaya, as most of the fencing has been damaged due to adverse climatic conditions, repeated submergence etc.

BORDER AREA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Border Area Development Program (BADP) is focused on socio-economic development of the border areas to promote a sense of security amongst the people living in the border areas. Under this program, priorities are given to the areas closer to the border. BADP was started during the 7th Plan with the objective of balanced development of sensitive border areas in the Western Region and subsequently extended to States bordering Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, Bhutan and Nepal. It now covers 345 border blocks of 94 districts in 17 States, which share international land borders.

The funds under BADP are provided to the States as a 100% Central Grant for execution of projects relating to social infrastructure, link roads, employment generation, education, health, agriculture and allied sectors to meet the special development needs of the people living in remote and inaccessible areas near the International Borders.

BADP Guidelines

Funds are allocated by the Planning Commission and kept under the budgetary control of Ministry of Finance. Ministry of Home Affairs further reallocates the funds to the 17 beneficiary States on the basis of:

- Length of the International Border (Km);
- Population of the border blocks;
- Area of the border blocks (Sq. Km) giving equal weightage to each of these criteria.
- 15% extra weightage is given to the hilly, desert and Rann of Kutch areas.

Schemes/projects under BADP are finalized and approved by the State Level Screening Committee (SLSC) headed by the Chief Secretary of the concerned State and executed by the agencies of the State Government. Security related developmental schemes, as suggested by the Central Police Force guarding the borders and State Police Forces, could also be taken up under this program.

Monitoring mechanisms and review of BADP works

Implementation of BADP, in terms of physical and financial achievements, is being monitored regularly in the Department of Border Management. The State Governments are also closely monitoring the implementation of works/schemes being undertaken under BADP. The inspection of the works is also being carried out by the officers of the Department of Border Management to ensure quality and for timely completion of the works.

Empowered Committee

An Empowered Committee under the chairmanship of Secretary (BM) has been constituted to examine various aspects relating to scope of the Program, its execution, prescription of geographical limits, allocation of funds etc.

Allocation and releases

Allocation and releases made to the Border States during the financial years 2005-06 and 2006-07 are as under:

(Rs. in lakh)

S. No.	Name of States	2005-06		2006-07				
		Allocation	Release	Allocation	Release			
					Normal	Specific Area Scheme	Indus Rivers	Total
1	Arunachal Pradesh	1935.49	1935.49	3298.00	3298.00	1200.00	0.00	4498.00
2	Assam	1081.00	1081.00	1352.00	1102.00	986.34	0.00	2338.34
3	Manipur	592.00	592.00	750.00	750.00	500.00	0.00	1250.00
4	Meghalaya	494.00	494.00	730.00	730.00	583.36	0.00	1313.36
5	Mizoram	903.48	903.48	1302.00	1302.00	960.00	0.00	2262.00
6	Nagaland	456.00	456.00	478.00	478.00	1099.00	0.00	1577.00
7	Sikkim	622.00	622.00	658.00	597.68	908.04	0.00	1566.04
8	Tripura	1296.00	1296.00	1662.00	1647.64	1030.84	0.00	2678.48

Allocation of funds for 2007-08

Allocation of funds for BADP for the year 2007-08 has been kept at the previous years allocation of Rs.520.00 crores.

NEWS NOTES

Bangladesh Trade Fair in Tripura

A single country trade fair-dedicated to Bangladesh was held in Tripura's capital city Agartala between the 17th to 23rd of March. India has been showing great hospitality to Bangladeshi traders, artists, writers and intellectuals who often come to Tripura from various states of the North East apart from New Delhi, to sell their wares, show their talent and interact with the people. India hopes that people to people friendship will be

reciprocated by the Bangladeshi govt. and they would stop sheltering militants of the North East.

In the trade fair, which drew large crowds in Agartala, many Bangladeshi traders were selling their wares including famous Pran brand of mineral water and juices, Dhakai Jamdaani sarees and melmoware crockery.

SAARC CAR RALLY

Assam Chief Minister flagged off a SAARC Car rally from Guwahati on the 22nd of March, 2007. Sponsored by the Indian External Affairs Ministry and CII, participants from all SAARC countries including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan etc participated in the rally. A convoy of 28 vehicles from Tata Motors was used for the rally. The rally started from Cox's bazaar in Bangladesh on the 15th March and ended in Maldives on the 14th of April covering countries including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Maldives.

The aim of the rally was to increase interaction among people of the SAARC countries and strengthen people to people ties. The participants got a warm welcome in Guwahati where school children lined up on the streets to cheer rallyists.

NATIONAL INTEGRATION TOUR BY ARMY

The Red Horns Division of the Army organized a 'National Integration Tour' recently. They brought nine school girls from Goalpara district of Assam on a trip to Delhi. Chandigarh and Solan. The aim of the tour was to increase knowledge about India among students of the North East.

CHOKHRENG FESTIVAL IN TRIPURA

A three day colourful 'Chokhreng fair' was held from 13th to 15th March, 2007 in Khumlung, West Tripura. Fair showcased books focusing on tribal literature of Tripura, and saw many tribes of the state performing their traditional songs and dances. With insurgency reducing drastically in the small State, such cultural activities have seen an increase.

READERS COLUMN

Ministry of Home Affairs, through the NE Newsletter, has been requesting for inputs for the NE Newsletter from the Government agencies, institutions and individuals. Though, response has been received from some quarters, yet regular inputs a highlighting the area specific problems, special features including potential for tourism, environmental protection or special efforts as could contribute to the socio-economic development would be welcome from all in the North East. The views of intellectual/ professionals like minded people in North-Eastern State highlighting area specific problems and possible measures for resolution thereto are invited for up-gradation of infrastructure, creation of awareness about Govt. efforts etc.

It is requested that special articles/ columns should be sent in a hard copy format accompanied by floppy/ CD version. Special articles should be accompanied by an abstract of a maximum of 150-200 words. Papers should not have been simultaneously submitted for publication to another journal or news paper. Readers are encouraged to send comments and suggestions (300-400 words) on published articles to the letters column. All letters should have the writer's full name and postal address.

LETTERS TO EDITOR

I have seen your magazine and gone through it. I found it so great and want to read it for life long. But I feel it won't be so great if I get no regular supply.

And please Sir, send me your magazines on my address.

Mahindra Rai
Class 10th 'B'
Damphu HS School
Tsirang, Bhutan.

Though I am very interested in reading your magazine but I have no regular supply of your magazine. I want to read your magazine regularly. So, I want to ask you to supply me your interesting magazines for reading. So, if Sir could do it for me, I would be most grateful to you.

Manu Tamang
Class IX, 07
Mendreigang MS School
Tsirang Bhutan.

I request you to kindly to put us on your mailing list for your free copy of your esteemed "NE Newsletter" for our library purpose. We would be extremely grateful for your kind consideration and immediate action.

Yours faithfully,

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