

# PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

1999—2001

EIGHTY FIRST REPORT

(TENTH ASSEMBLY)



INTERIM REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS  
COMMITTEE ON CONSTRUCTION OF GREEN  
HOUSE BY DRDAs UNDER PANCHAYAT &  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

Presented to the House on 7th April, 2000

ASSAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAT  
DISPUR :: GUWAHATI-6



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COMPOSITION OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS  
COMMITTEE - 1999-2001.

Chairman :

1. Shri Derhagra Mochahary

Members :

2. Shri Pulakesh Barua
3. Shri Kesharam Bora
4. Shri Hemanta Kalita
5. Shri Mohan Das
6. Shri Alauddin Sarkar
7. Shri Nizamuddin Khan
8. Shri Abdul Muqtadir Choudhury
9. Shri Mustafa Shahidul Islam
10. Shri Gautam Roy
11. Shri Kali Ranjan Deb
12. Shri Atul Kumar Sarmah
13. Shri Jogeswar Doley

Secretariat :

1. Shri D.Talukdar, Secretary
2. Shri A.R.Chetia, Deputy Secretary
3. Shri B.Basumatary, Committee officer.



PREFATORY REMARKS

1. I shri Derhagra Mochahary, Chairman of the Committee on Public Accounts having been authorised to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Interim Report on construction of Green House by DRDAs under Panchayat & Rural Development Department Government of Assam.
2. The Committee examined the Commissioner & Secretary and the Director of Panchayat and Rural Development Department in its meetings held on 3.11.99.
3. The Committee has considered the draft Interim Report and finalised the same in its meeting held on 4th April, 2000.
4. The Committee places on records its appreciation for the valuable services rendered by the Commissioner & Secretary and the Director, Panchayat and Rural Development Department. The Committee also offers thanks to the other officials of the department for furnishing records etc. and other help to the Committee. The Committee also appreciates the services rendered by the Secretary Assam Legislative Assembly and his Officers and staff in the Public Accounts Committee branch.

Date, Dispur.  
the 4th April, 2000

DERHAGRA MOCHAHARY,  
CHAIRMAN  
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

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1

AN INTERIM REPORT ON CONSTRUCTION OF  
GREEN HOUSE BY VARIOUS DRDAS

THE REPORT

1. On receipt of certain information from very reliable source about the irregular purchase of materials for construction of Green House viz. Polithine materials to different DRDAs through some suppliers involving crores of rupees without requisition/ quotation of materials. The Public Accounts Committee held an unscheduled meeting with the Commissioner & Secretary and Director, Panchayat & Rural Development Department on 3.11.99. The relevant extract of the proceeding of the meeting is enclosed at Annexure 'A'. The matter has also been laid before the Hon'ble Speaker, Assam Legislative Assembly who has pleased to accord his kind approval.

2. The Commissioner, Panchayat & Rural Development Department informed the Committee that they have no information about purchase/despatch of the polithine materials centrally and categorically said that purchase of materials are allowed to all DRDAs. <sup>locally.</sup> The Panchayat & Rural Development Department was asked as decided by the Committee to furnish the following with supporting records in respect of DRDAs Dhubri, Goalpara, Darrang, Nagaon, Sonitpur, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji and Cachar vide letter Nos. LAPAC.21/99/4219, dated 21-7-99 and No. LAPAC.21/99/4122, dated 18-12-99.

- (i) the amount sanctioned and expenditure made for construction of Green Houses and schemes sanctioned under additional JRY and expenditure made during 1999 and
- (ii) the schemes sanctioned under EAS for 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999 till date.
- (iii) what are the materials purchased by the DRDAs in connection with construction of Green House.
- (iv) when the materials were purchased.
- v) whether such purchases have duly been approved by the purchased Board/Committee.
- vi) the value/price of the materials purchased and
- vii) Name of the beneficiaries.



3. In response to the letters mentioned in the foregoing paras, the department has furnished the information as follow:-

Sl. No.	Name of DRDA	No of Schemes	No. of beneficiaries	Quality of material purchased and value	Name of the supplier
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Bongaigaon	( No. scheme was taken-up under Green House )			
2.	Dhubri	(No. low cost Green House scheme implemented )			
3.	Golaghat	(No. such scheme has been implemented )			
4.	Goalpara	(No scheme implemented )			
5.	Dibrugarh	13	14	U.V.films (5600 KG ) Nylon mesh 8676 m <sup>2</sup>  (Rs.1562 L) U.V.films 50 Rolls (Rs.9.835L)	M/S. P.P.Spare Accessories M/S Feb. Tech  M/S. Nilachal Enterprise
6.	Sibsagar	176	257	U.V. films 7.59 MF (Rs.14.20 )	M/S MD Enterprise M/S MKS Enterprise
7.	Karimganj	47	47	U.V.Films 100 Rolls (Rs.20.46 L)	M/S Nilachal Enterprise
8.	Barpeta	163	163	U.V. films 43684 m <sup>2</sup>	M/S Nilachal Enterprise  M/S Lachit Trade  M/S MKS Enterprise  M/S UVU Marketing Agency



1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	Kamrup	145	145	U.V.Films 2070.5 KG © Rs.22.57 L per 100 Rolls	M/S Universal Marketing M/S Hari Saikia M/S Nilachal Enterprise.
10.	Tinsukia	12	12	U.V.Films 5320m <sup>2</sup> Rs.3.89 L Nylon Mesh 5292.00 m <sup>2</sup> . Rs.0.42 L	M/S Lachit Phukan M/S Rubi Borkataky M/S Dixit Hazarika M/S Dipjyoti Construction.
11.	Nalbari	120	(Not implemented as yet)		
12.	Darrang	160	160	U.V.Films 150 Rolls Rs.30.69 L	M/S Nilachal Enterprise
13.	Sonitpur	-	691	U.V.Films 76,000 m <sup>2</sup> Rs.55.34 L Nylon Mesh 58800 m <sup>2</sup> Rs. 8.23 L	M/S Nilachal Enterprise M/S Universal Marketing Mr.K.R.Kalita
14.	Karbi Anglong	81	81	U.V.Poly thene 200 Rolls and others (price of specific)	M/S Nilachal Enterprise M/S Krishna Enterprise.
15.	N.Lakhimpur	200	197	U.V.Films 200 Rolls Rs.40.91 L	M/S Nilachal Enterprise.
16.	Morigaon	150	150	U.V.Films 150 Rolls Rs.29.50 L	M/S Nilachal Enterprise.
17.	Nagaon	36	36	U.V.Films 10,600 m <sup>2</sup> Rs.7.45 L	M/S Nilachal Enterprise.
18.	Cachar	255	255	U.V.Films 200 sheets and Other Rs. 41.79 L	M/S Nilachal Enterprise.
19.	Kokrajhar	150	150	U.V.Films 150 Rolls Rs. 1.92 L	M/S Nilachal Enterprise. M/S Trade P
20.	Jorhat	200	200	U.V.Films 280 M <sup>2</sup> Rs.32.73 L	M/S G.R. Enterprise.
21.	Hailakandi	36	36	U.V.Films 10600 m <sup>2</sup> Rs.7.45 L	M/S Nilachal Enterprise.
22.	Dhemaji	(No scheme implemented)			
23.	N.C.Hills	(No scheme implemented)			



4. The Committee has also discussed the matter in course of their Spot Study Tour under taken after 3-11-99 in the districts of Morigaon, Nagaon, Sonitpur, Darrang and Kamrup and visited few sites of erection of Green Houses. The Spot Study in the remaining districts is yet to be completed and the report of physical varification on this matter will come-up in due course.

5. It is seen from the letter NO.RRD.170/98/31, dated 24.3.99 (annexed at Annexure 'B') that the department took up the scheme of Green Houses as low cost rain shelter for raising off season vegetables and flowers for the following advantages :-

- i) Crops can be grown under adverse climate conditions round the year
- ii) cultivation of high value, high quality crops generating higher incomes
- iii) opportunity for commercial production
- iv) offers scope for successful nurseries

The Committee has also been furnished a report on the scheme of plastic culture which is also annexed at Annexure 'C' to speak itself on the Government stand on the merit of it. The Committee has also obtained the technical bulletin of the low cost Green House cum rain shelter for raising off-season vegetables and flowers in high rain fall region " The bulletin is under thorough scrutiny and will be comented upon in due course.

6. The Committee has also enquired of the following from all other ~~States~~ <sup>States</sup> under letter NO.LAPAC.21/99/923, dated 4.2.2000.

- i) Whether the concept of Green House has been accepted in their State under DRDA
- ii) if so, what amount has so far spent.
- iii) how much sylpoline and of what qunatity has been purchased and its rate and
- iv) whether desired result could be derived.

The information are yet to be received.



## OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

7. The Committee observes that the construction of low cost Green House cum rain shelter for raising off-season vegetables and flowers was taken-up by the DRDAs under IRDP or JRY as per instruction given by the Government in their letter NO.RAD1.70/98/31, dated 24.3.99 (reference Annexure 'B'). But the departmental Commissioner could not furnish detail information before the Committee in its meeting held on 3-11-99. The Committee, therefore, advise that in future the departmental witness will give evidence which is true and conceal nothing.
8. The State of Assam is a flood prone area. Flood is a regular feature and a vast area is inundated in all the past years. In such a natural situation it is very much doubtful if the concept of Green House would be applicable in the state.
9. The cost of construction of a Green House in about 110 sq.m area comes to Rs. 21,000.00 only. The area is too small and comparing its cost it would not be viable for a cultivator below poverty line unless the entire materials are supplied by Government free of cost. The same hardship may arise in respect of small and marginal farmers. In view of this, the Committee discards with the concept of Green House in the State.
10. It transpires to the committee in course of discussion and spot visit that the project of Green House has not been submitted to Governing Body anywhere in the State for approval and also the process in which the construction is made is found irregular. It is also not clarified whether the rate is an approved one and if so, who has approved the rate. Except in India other countries have rejected polythine culture. Whereas, it is encouraged by politicians and bureaucrats in India. The Committee, is, therefore, of the view that the application of Green House is completely uneconomical and also not viable.
11. The Committee, therefore, recommends that further works on Green House and payment of bills pending before the DRDAs should be stopped forthwith. In addition, the whole matter concerning Green House and various irregularities committed thereof should be enquired by an officer not below the rank of Divisional Commissioner and the report thereof should be submitted within a period of one month from the date of presentation of this Report before the House.



Chairman :- We have come to know from a reliable source that serious financial irregularity in the DRDA with regard to construction of Green House and purchase of materials centrally. We want to call upon the Commissioner, Rural Development and Director, Panchayat & Rural Development, Assam with all relevant documents to appear before the Committee.

এতিয়া আমি পৰৱৰ্তী কাৰ্য্যসূচীলৈ আহো। আমি অসমৰ ভিতৰত কেইখনমান ঠাই পৰিদৰ্শন কৰাৰ কথা চিন্তা কৰিছিলো। এতিয়া আমাৰ ধাননীয়া সদস্য সকলে আলোচনা কৰি এইটো ঠিক কৰিলে ভাল হয়।

সমিতিয়ে আলোচনা কৰি কোক্ৰাঝাৰ, ধুবুৰী, কামৰূপ, মংগলদৈ, নগাওঁ, মৰিগাওঁ জিলাকেইখন পৰিদৰ্শন কৰাৰ সিদ্ধান্ত লয়। সমিতিয়ে ২২ নবেম্বৰ'৯৯ ৰ পৰা ২৫ নবেম্বৰ'৯৯ ৰ ভিতৰত ধুবুৰী আৰু কোক্ৰাঝাৰ জিলাৰ ছাগলীয়া আৰু গ্ৰীণ হাউচৰ গেট পৰিদৰ্শন কৰিবলৈ যত পোষণ কৰে। সমিতিয়ে, উক্ত জিলা দুখনৰ ডি,আৰ,ডি,এ আৰু পি,ডি,বি,ডি,দি(ব'ডচ)ৰ বিভাগীয় বিষয়া সকলৰ লগত আলোচনাত মিলিত হ'ব। সমিতিয়ে মূলতঃ ইলেক্শ্যন এক্সপেন্ডিচাৰকে ধৰি ৯৯০৬-৯৯০৭ ডি,আৰ,ডি,এ বিভাগৰ চি,আই,চিট,চিমেণ্ট, ব'ড আদি তেওঁলোকে কিমান, কাৰপৰা কিনিছে, কিমান দায়ত কিনিছে, এইবোৰ কোনে যোগান ধৰিছিল আৰু এই বস্তুবিলাক বলক্ৰাইজ ক'ত, কেনেকৈ, কিমান ডিষ্ট্ৰিবিউট কৰা হ'ল তাৰ ওপৰত সমিতিয়ে গুৰুত্ব দিব। আলোচনাৰ বিষয় বস্তু হ'ল গ্ৰীণ হাউচ কনষ্ট্ৰাকচন সম্পৰ্কে। কৃষি বিভাগৰ ফালৰ পৰা গ্ৰীণ হাউচ সম্পৰ্কে কিবা সামগ্ৰী কিনিছে নেকি ?



আযুক্ত :- আশি এই সম্পৰ্কত গাইড লাইন ভাৰত চৰকাৰৰ পৰা  
পাওঁ । কৃষি বিভাগত হৰ্চিকালচাৰ, নাৰ্চাৰী আদি  
কৰাৰ বাবে আশি, আৰ, দি, পিৰ জৰিয়তে টকা দিয়া  
হয় । পলিথিন কিনা হয় । অসম কৃষি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ৰ  
ফালৰ পৰাওঁ এই সম্পৰ্কত টেকনিকেল গাইড লাইন আছে ।  
জিলাবোৰত গ্ৰীণ হাউচ আঁচনি যিবোৰ লৈছে, সেইবোৰ  
দি, আৰ, দি, এই ফালৰ পৰা লৈছে ।

সভাপতি :- কোন বছৰত সাক্ষী কিনা হৈছিল ?

আযুক্ত :- ১৯৯৬-৯৯ চনত দি, আৰ, দি, এই ফালৰ পৰা জিলা  
পৰ্য্যায়ত সাক্ষী কিনা হৈছিল ।

সভাপতি :- কোন কেইখন জিলাত গ্ৰীণ হাউচ কনষ্ট্ৰাকচনৰ কাম  
হাতত লৈছে ?

আযুক্ত হাইলাকাণ্ড, কৰিমগঞ্জ, কাচাৰ, কাৰ্বিআংলং, ধুবুৰী,  
লক্ষীমপুৰ, দৰং আদি জিলাত গ্ৰীণ হাউচ আঁচনি লোৱা  
হৈছে ।

সভাপতি :- কাচাৰ জিলাত কিমান হিতাধিকাৰী আছে ?

আযুক্ত :- কাচাৰ জিলাত ৩০০ হিতাধিকাৰীতাবে ১৪৫ জন  
প্ৰশিক্ষণপ্ৰাপ্ত ।

শ্ৰী নিজামুদ্দিন খান :- কিমানখন জিলাত গ্ৰীণ হাউচ সম্পূৰ্ণ হৈছে ?

আযুক্ত :- এতিয়া ঘই কৰ নোৱাৰিম । কাৰণ ঘই খবৰ এইমাত্ৰে  
পাইছো । তথ্যখিনি আনিব পৰা নাই । সেয়েহে তথ্যখিনি  
সমিতিৰ পিচত দিব পাৰিম ।

শ্ৰী নিজামুদ্দিন খান :- আপুনি কৃষি, হৰ্চিকালচাৰ আদিত কি কি  
আঁচনি লৈছে আৰু পলিথিনৰ আৰু অন্য সাক্ষী কিনা সম্পৰ্কত  
এটা ৰিপোৰ্ট সমিতিৰ ওচৰত দাখিল কৰিব ।

শ্ৰী মোহন দাস :- গ্ৰীণ হাউচ বস্তুটোনো কি ?



আয়ুক্ত :- ইয়াৰ দ্বাৰা হৰ্চিকালচাৰ আৰু নাৰ্চাৰীৰ সন্মুখী প্ৰডিউচ কৰে ।  
ব্যক্তিগত বেনিফিচাৰিয়ে কৰিব পাৰে আৰু নাৰ্চাৰীৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত গুপ হিচাবে  
কৰিব পাৰে । ডি,আৰ,ডি,এৰ আই,আৰ,ডি,পি,জে,আৰ,বাই,যি,  
এচ,,চি,/এচ,টি আচনি আছে, স্নেইবোৰ জড়িত আছে ।

শ্ৰী মোহন দাস :- যিহেতু ভাৰত চৰকাৰৰ গাইড লাইন আছে, আই,আৰ,ডি,পিৰ  
আৰ্চনি যিহেতু জড়িত আছে গতিকে বেংক ল'নৰ কথা জড়িত আছে ।  
এইটো চাব লাগিব । গভৰ্নিং ব'ডিৰ পৰাওঁ পাচ হব লাগিব । এতিয়া  
আমাৰ কথা হ'ল গ্ৰীণ হাউচ কেনেধৰনে কৃতকাৰ্য্য হব । গ্ৰীণ হাউচৰ  
নামত পলিথিনৰ ওপৰতহে বেছি গুৰুত্ব দিয়া হৈছে । মোৰ মতে আৰ্চনিটো  
কৃতকাৰ্য্য হব লাগে । ইয়াৰ নামত ভেকো-ভাওনা হব নালগে । ফাণ্ড  
মিচইউজ হব নালগে । আপোনালোকে সময় লৈ আটাইখিনি তথ্য  
সম্বিতিক দিব । গভৰ্নিং ব'ডিৰ সন্মত যি সিদ্ধান্ত লোৱা হৈছে স্নেই-  
টোও আমাক দিব ।

শ্ৰী কালিৰঞ্জন দেৱ :- গ্ৰীণ হাউচৰ কাৰণে গভৰ্নিং বডিৰ এপ্ৰোভেল লাগে নেকি ?  
আয়ুক্ত :- হয় লাগে ।

শ্ৰী চহিদুল ইচলাম :- চেণ্ট্ৰেলি পাৰচেজ কৰিছনে লেকেলি পাৰচেজ কৰিছে ?  
আয়ুক্ত :- ডি,আৰ,ডি,এ চেণ্ট্ৰেলি পাৰচেজ নকৰে ।

সভাপতি :- কিছুমান জিলাত চেণ্ট্ৰেলি পাৰচেজ কৰিছে । কৰিমগঞ্জত এইটো  
এক্চেণ্ট কৰা নাই । কোনে চান্সলাই কৰিছে তাৰ নাম নাই ।

আয়ুক্ত :- অৰ্ডাৰত পাৰ্ছিব নাম থাকিব লাগিব ।

শ্ৰী আবদুল মুকতাৰিৰ চৌধুৰী :- লোকেল পাৰচেজ কমিটি থাকিব, তেওঁলোকে কিনিব ।

শ্ৰী নিজামুদ্দিন খান :- পলিথিন পাৰচেজ সম্পৰ্কত আপুনি তদন্ত কৰি আমাক জনাব ।

সভাপতি :- কিছুমান জিলাত গ্ৰীণ হাউচ এপ্ৰোভ কৰিছে ।

আয়ুক্ত :- এইটো আমাৰ হাতত নাই ।

সভাপতি :- ৰিপোর্টটো আপোনালোকে কিমান দিনৰ ভিতৰত দিব পাৰিব ?

আয়ুক্ত :- ১৫ দিনৰ ভিতৰত দি দিম ।

শ্ৰী আলাউদ্দিন সৰকাৰ :- অসমত গ্ৰীণ হাউচৰ প্ৰয়োজন নাইয়েই ।

শ্ৰী মোহন দাস :- মই ভাৰত চৰকাৰৰ বিশেষজ্ঞৰ লগত আলোচনা কৰিছো ।  
আমাৰ গ্ৰীণ হাউচৰ প্ৰয়োজন আছে ।  
সিদ্ধান্ত :

কেইখনমান জিলাত গ্ৰীণ হাউচ সম্পৰ্কত সন্মুখী কিছুমান কিনা  
হৈছে । সেয়ে সম্বিতিয়ে সিদ্ধান্ত লয় যে - এতিয়া যিবোৰ জিলাত  
গ্ৰীণ হাউচৰ কন্সট্ৰাকচনৰ কাম আৰম্ভ কৰিছে, স্নেইবোৰ বন্ধ কৰিব  
লাগে আৰু ইয়াৰ ওপৰত এটা বিভাগীয় তদন্ত কৰি ২ সন্মত হৰ ভিতৰত  
এটা সম্পূৰ্ণ ৰিপোর্ট সম্বিতিক দাখিল কৰিব লাগিব লগতে সম্বিতিয়ে  
সিদ্ধান্ত লয় যে 'গ্ৰীণ হাউচ'ৰ ফিজিবিবলিটি সম্পৰ্কত গভৰ্নিং ব'ডিয়ে  
সিদ্ধান্ত কৰিব ।

সভাপতি :- শেষত সভাপতিয়ে সকলোকে ধন্যবাদ জনায় সভা বিয়লি ৩'৩০  
বজাত শেষ কৰে ।



GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM  
PANCHAYAT AND RURAL DEV.(C) DEPARTMENT  
DISPUR, GUWAHATI -6

NO.RRD.170/98/31

Dated Dispur, the 24th March, 99.

From : Shri A. Baruah, ACS  
Deputy Secy. to the Govt. of Assam,  
Panchayat & Rural Development,  
Dispur, Guwahati -781005

To : Project Director  
DRDA

Sub : Low cost green house cum rain shelter for raising off season  
vegetables and flowers.

Sirs,

The matter of using technology to increase the income of the small and marginal farmers, the bulk of whom belong to BPL families, have been engaging the mind of the Govt. for quite sometime. The recurrent floods and the lack of assured irrigation during the Rabi season make it even more difficult for these poor farmers to cross the poverty line.

The Govt. has in the last few years made power tillers, shallow-tube wells and other agri-machineries and implements available to the farmers on nominal hire charges or subsidy on purchase, as the case may be, with the belief that such inputs will help increase productivity and thereby income. Similarly programmes on pulses, lentils, onions and horticultural crops were also taken up in specific areas to augment income of the flood-hit farmers.

In a similar vein, Govt has now decided to popularise the project of low cost greenhouse cum rain shelter for raising off season vegetables and flowers in high rainfall region popularly known as plasticulture. Briefly the advantages of greenhouse cum rain shelter are as follows :

- (i) crops can be grown under adverse climatic conditions round the year.
- ii) Cultivation of high value, high quality crops generating higher incomes.
- iii) opportunity for commercial production.
- iv) offers scope for successful nurseries.

You may take-up this scheme either under IRDP (individual/group financing), under 20% of EAS fund earmarked for Horticulture for individual beneficiaries or under 22.5% of JRY funds for individual beneficiary schemes for SCs/STs

For further details on the scheme you may refer to a booklet on the subject published by Dept. of Agronomy, Deptt of Research (Agri), AAU, Jorhat. For successful implementation of this scheme the following care should be taken.

Contd...



1. Initially only those trained in greenhouse technology (Viz. Plasticulture ) should be selected as beneficiaries.
2. Models prepared by AAU, Deptt of Agriculture, Assam should be adopted.
3. The APO (Agri) where available should be entrusted to closely monitor the implementation of the scheme from inception till the production of vegetables/flowers. Experts from Agri. Deptt. / AAU. Should also be associated throughout.
4. Marketability of off-season vegetables should be explored and ascertained. Preferably such schemes should be taken up near towns/cities where the demand for such high value vegetables/ flowers in continual.
5. Materials required for erecting greenhouse should be assessed and orders for UV stabilised polyethylene plastic film of 200 micron thickness may be placed beforehand to overcome cost over-rund.

Action taken in this regard may be intimated to the Govt. in due course.

Yours faithfully,

Sd/-

Deputy Secretary to the Govt.  
of Assam, Panchayat & Rural Development  
Department.



ANNEXURE- C .

REPORT

The scheme of plasticulture relates to raising of high value crops in off season under controlled environments in high rainfall areas. This is done by construction of Green Houses covered with U.V. stabilized polyfilms with the use of high breed seeds and adoption of a package of improved agricultural practices.

The scheme of plasticulture is especially useful and beneficial in Assam and the North East where rainfall is exceedingly high. The Assam Agriculture University at Jorhat has done significant research on the utility and adaptability of the scheme to this region. They have successfully demonstrated that educated, progressive farmers without much investment can increase their income manifold even though they have little or no land at their disposal. Considering the prospects of popularising this scheme in the North East and Assam in particular the AAU has been conducting training on plasticulture to interested farmers over the last couple of years. Briefly the usefulness of the scheme of plasticulture can be summarized as below :

- (i) Crops can be grown under adverse climate conditions round the year
- (ii) Cultivation of high value, high quality crops generating higher incomes
- (iii) Opportunity for commercial production
- (iv) Offers scope for successful nurseries

In Upper Assam, the scheme of plasticulture had taken off quite well albeit on a miniscule scale. During his tour of Tinsukia, Dibrugarh and Sibsagar districts in June 1998, the APC, Assam noted with satisfaction that with training, initiative, adoption of modern technology and a little investment now rural educated youths have found gainful employment in groups and individually earning upto Rs. 10,000 per month. (copy of APC's tour note is enclosed).

Visualizing the need to garner the huge rural educated unemployed youth force into constructive channels who would otherwise drift away to undesired activities and who are not inclined to take up agriculture (read paddy cultivation) as a means of livelihood, it was thought that popularising Plasticulture, Floriculture, Horticulture, Mini Tea Gardens etc. would attract their interest and bring about gainful self-employment to these rural youths. These schemes in particular were more appropriate/suitable to youth of BPL families as they did not possess



sufficient land to m

sufficient land to take up intensive crop culture and that their salvation lay in intensive, modern agriculture practises.

The Govt. of India through its various policy guidelines have been advocating that sufficient attention should be paid to agriculture and allied sectors as rural population is predominantly dependant on agriculture and that any effort directed at rural development must, inso facto, address the problems and potentials of the agri sector. As a case in point, the EAS Manual clearly states that 40% of EAS funds must devolve to agri sector including 20% of EAS funds for development of Horticulture. The Govt. of Assam further instructed that one 40% of EAS funds earmarked for Agri sector be apportioned as follows : Agri Sector 20%, Horticulture 20%, Pisciculture sector 10% and Sericulture 10% (relevant extract enclosed).

Against this backdrop when GoI increased the allocation to R.D. Sector for the year 1998-99 in December 98 (end of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter) by almost 100% viz from Rs. 220 crores to Rs. 448 crores and that as per sanction stipulation the funds had to be utilised within the same financial year, viz March 99 or else would invite punitive deduction of funds in the next financial year, the Govt. of Assam decided that the DRDAs take up schemes on Horticulture, Pisciculture, Sericulture, Plasticulture on a priority basis instead of squandering precious funds on commonplace schemes like road repairing etc. whose utility is limited and do not create any income generating assets for the BPL families specifically.

Thus, in consideration of GoI policy guidelines and experience gathered in the field in the last two decades it was decided to popularise, inter-alia, the schemes of Plasticulture and Mini Tea Gardens. Accordingly a circular was issued to all the DRDAs highlighting the usefulness of the scheme of plasticulture and the care that should be taken while implementing the scheme in the field as it was a new and innovative scheme for many of the DRDAs. A copy of the circular issued by this Deptt. is enclosed for ready reference.



Perusal of the Govt. circular/guideline would clearly indicate that the scheme was meant to be implemented after due consideration of certain laid down criteria, including inter-alia- initially those who were earlier trained in Plasticsulture should only be selected, the schemes should be taken up near town/cities where marketability of such high value off season crops would not pose any problems, the bulletin issued by AAU regarding Plasticsulture scheme be consulted prior to preparation of schemes and U.V. stabilised polythene films of 200 micron thickness, as specified by AAU, should be purchased.

A preliminary report calling for required information has already been collected, a compiled format of 17 districts is enclosed herewith. Report on remaining districts will be submitted shortly. Any apparent irregularity if brought to the notice of the Department will be referred to the District Monitoring & Vigilance Committee which is the appropriate body for dealing with such cases, wherein the reports will be placed and discussed.

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