



**DEPARTMENTALLY RELATED STANDING COMMITTEE
ON DEVELOPMENT (B) DEPARTMENTS
2024-2025**

FIFTEENTH

ASSAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Report on the Demands for the Grant Nos.48 & 67
for the year 2024-2025**

DEPARTMENT : AGRICULTURE

TWENTY SIXTH REPORT

Presented to the House on 21st February, 2024.

**ASSAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAT
DISPUR :: GUWAHATI - 781006**

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**COMPOSITION OF THE DEPARTMENTALLY RELATED STANDING
COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPMENT (B) DEPARTMENTS, 2024-25**

CHAIRMAN : Shri Bhabendra Nath Bharali

MLA & Chairman

MEMBERS :

1.	Shri Terash Gowalla,	MLA & Member
2.	Shri Utpal Borah,	MLA & Member
3.	Shri Sibu Misra,	MLA & Member
4.	Shri Rupak Sharmah,	MLA & Member
5.	Shri Kaushik Rai,	MLA & Member
6.	Shri Taranga Gogoi,	MLA & Member
7.	Shri Diganta Kalita,	MLA & Member
8.	Shri Darsing Ronghang,	MLA & Member
9.	Shri Rupsing Teron,	MLA & Member
10.	Shri Dharmeswar Konwar,	MLA & Member
11.	Shri Phanidhar Talukdar,	MLA & Member
12.	Shri Jolen Daimary,	MLA & Member
13.	Dr. Amiya Kumar Bhuyan,	MLA & Member
14.	Shri Basanta Das,	MLA & Member
15.	Shri Abul Kalam Rasheed Alam,	MLA & Member
16.	Shri Diganta Barman,	MLA & Member
17.	Shri Abdul Batin Khandakar,	MLA & Member
18.	Shri Bhaskar Jyoti Baruah,	MLA & Member
19.	Shri Abdur Rahim Ahmed,	MLA & Member
20.	Hafiz Bashir Ahmed,	MLA & Member
21.	Shri Aminul Islam (Senior),	MLA & Member
22.	Shri Abdul Aziz,	MLA & Member
23.	Shri Charan Boro,	MLA & Member
24.	Shri Manoranjan Talukdar,	MLA & Member

OFFICERS, ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Hemen Das, Principal Secretary,
2. Shri Dulal Pegu, Secretary,
3. Smti. Deergha Baruah, Deputy Secretary,
4. Shri Samir Das, Under Secretary,
5. Shri Dhanajit Talukdar, Special Officer,
6. Shri Madhab Chetri, Estate Officer,
7. Shri Mahen Ch. Doley, Superintendent Member's Hostel,
8. Shri Fakhar Uddin Chowdhury, Committee Officer,
9. Dr. Rosy Saikia, Language Officer,
10. Shri Baidurjya Bharali, Superintendent,
11. Shri Bhaskar Saikia, Librarian,
12. Shri Lakhi Nath Mardhi, Assistant Research Officer.

INTRODUCTION

1. I, as Chairman of the Departmentally Related Standing Committee on Development (B) Departments, Assam Legislative Assembly having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this **TWENTY SIXTH REPORT** on Demands for **Grant Nos. 48 & 67** of the **Agriculture Department** for the financial year, **2024-25**.
2. Demands for Grant have been examined by the Committee under Rule 260 J (1) (a) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Assam Legislative Assembly.
3. The Committee took evidence of the representatives of the **Agriculture Department** on **15th February, 2024**.
4. The Draft Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on **19th February, 2024**.
5. The Committee expressed its thanks to the Officials of the **Agriculture Department** for placing before them the requisite materials and their considered views in connection with the subjects under consideration and also thanks the Officials of Finance and Transformation & Development Department for their cooperation.
6. The Committee would also like to place on record their deep sense of appreciation for the invaluable assistance rendered to them by the Officials of Assam Legislative Assembly Secretariat attached to the Committee.

Dispur :
Dated 19th February, 2024

Shri Bhabendra Nath Bharali,
Chairman,
Departmentally Related Standing
Committee on Development (B) Departments,
Assam Legislative Assembly.

REPORT

CHAPTER- I

Agriculture Department (Grant No. 48)

Introduction:

Agriculture and its allied activities are of overriding importance for the people of Assam as sources of livelihood, employment and as a way of life since more than 70% of the population still are dependent on this sector for their livelihood. Food security and poverty alleviation are two major challenges of the sector to be overcome in the interest of welfare of the farming community who are mostly small and marginal farmers(86.2% Agriculture census 2015-16).

As far as the uses of Agricultural Land, net area shown is 27.49 lakhs Ha, i.e. 35.05% of geographical area. The gross cropped area is 38.72 lakh Ha. Average land holding in the State is 1.09 Ha (Agriculture census of 2015-16) against a National Average of 1.08 Ha. Cropping intensity of the State is 140.83% (2021-22) against a National Average of 152.7%(2020-21). This signifies that a large percentage of cultivable land is not put to use annually and is one of the major challenges stands from the fact a large area of land, i.e., 16.27 lakh Ha is under mono cropping. However, this also offers an opportunity to enhance the production and productivity.

Assam plains have a huge potential of food grain production but productivity is normally low in most of such grains. This is so because the major portion of the plain lies in the Brahmaputra Valley which incidentally is prone to chronic flood and bank erosion. Because of this risk of flood, input management in the Khariff season is at very low level. The summer crop in Assam also has a risk of irrigation water deficit, especially because of lack of viable surface irrigation channels.

The present Government, recognizing Agriculture the vital sector for economic development of the State as given priority to Agriculture Sector.

The Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS)

- 1) Rashtriya Krishi Vikash Yojana (RKVY)
- 2) Food and Nutrition Security (FNS)
- 3) Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization(SMAM)
- 4) National Project on Management of Soil Health & Fertility under RKVY
- 5) Rainfed Area Development under RKVY
- 6) National Mission on Edible Oils/Oil Palm and Oil Seeds (NMEO-OP & OS)

Proposed New initiatives/Reforms-

- Initially the Department proposes to establish 382 knowledge centre (one in each ADO circle) in the State of Assam to enable the entrusted Officers and Staff at circle level to impart training all occasion. During the 1st, 2nd & 3rd phase NABARD sanctioned 95 Knowledge Centre under RIDF-XXV, XXVI,XXVII. The remaining 286 Nos of Knowledge is proposed to be developed in future.
- Under RIDF-XXIX a project namely "Micro Irrigation Project by using Solar Pump for utilization of ground water resources in Assam" with a total project cost of Rs.50.00 cr. has been sanctioned by NABARD. In this project 3302 nos Solar Pump- sets will be distributed among selected beneficiaries. Empanelled of vendors for execution of the project has been completed and MIS portal has been developed. District allotment has been already prepared and ready for publication.

**Government has taken New Initiatives proposed for Agriculture Sector for the
FY 2024-25**

1. Increasing of Cropping Intensity in Assam:

Execution of pilot project (approx 10 Ha) in selected districts of Assam for increasing cropping intensity by showcasing latest agricultural technologies. The project will include integrated irrigation facilities, mechanized ploughing, transplanting, weeding, fertilization, Drone Nano urea topdressing, crop harvesting etc. These new technology demonstrations will motivate the farmers to adopt multiple cropping which in turn will increase the cropping intensity.

2. Assam Millet Mission:

As approved in cab memo on 23rd May 2022, Assam Millets Mission is being implemented for seven years (2022-2029) with an objective of raising nutrient quotient, increasing farmer income, increasing the productivity and crop diversification towards climate resilience. The total cost of the mission is Rs. 199.95 Cr. Out of which APART contributes Rs.45.40 Cr (upto September 2024), Govt. of India schematic intervention Rs.55.02 Cr. and State government fund (SOPD) Rs.99.53 Cr. Since APART will be closed by September 2024 to implement the mission activities Rs.20.75 Cr. is proposed from the State government under SOPD for the financial year 2024-25.

3. Assam Fodder Mission:

As approved in cab memo on 23rd September 2022, Assam Fodder Mission is being implemented for seven years (2022-2029) with an objective of sustainable development of livestock sector, making the State self sufficient in fodder production and availability of good quality fodder. The total cost of the mission is Rs.120.20 Cr. out of which APART contributes Rs.30.10 Cr. (upto September 2024), Govt. of India schematic intervention Rs.60.10 Cr. and State government fund (SOPD) Rs. 30 Cr. Since APART will be closed by September 2024, to implement the mission activities Rs.7 Cr. is proposed from State government under SOPD for the financial year 2024-25.

**Government has proposed New Schemes incorporated in the Budget Estimates of
FY 2024-25 under SOPD**

1) Revolving fund for seed buy back from registered FPCs/Farmers:

In order to make self reliant in production by providing quality seed to the farmer at right price, the ASCL has initiated production of certified seeds through FPCs/Farmers with the provision of assured buy back as immediate payment to be made to the FPCs/Farmers against the produce at the time of procurement. As such it is proposed to create a revolving fund for the purpose of procurement of seed from the farmers by ASCL.

REPORT

CHAPTER- II

Agriculture Department (Grant No. 48)

2.1 After the presentation of the Budget in the House for financial year 2024-25 on **12th February, 2024** the Departmentally Related Standing Committee held the meeting on 15th February, 2024 to discuss on Grant No.- 48 relating to Agriculture Department. At the same time, the Committee also considered the action taken report on the recommendation made on 2023-24 in its 25th report presented to the House on 29th March, 2023.

2.2 The Budget provision made under Grant No.-48 relating to the Agriculture Department 2024-25 are as follows :-

	REVENUE	CAPITAL	TOTAL (Rs in lakhs)
VOTED	168734.44	64109.03	232843.47
CHARGED	0.00	0.00	0.00

2401 Crop Husbandary-Horticulture	123005.77
2415 Agricultural Research and Education	40878.66
2435 Other Agricultural Programmes	4850.01
4401 Capital Outlay on Crop Husbandary	64109.03
Grand Total	232843.47

The Budget estimate under Grant No.48 is Rs. **232843.47** Presented before the House for approval. The total allocated money is proposed to be spent in the Revenue and Capital expenditure respectively.

ACTION TAKEN REPORT FURNISHED ON THE OBSERVATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS MADE IN TWENTY FIFTH REPORT OF THE DRSC ON DEVELOPMENT (B) DEPARTMENTS FOR 2023-24 ON GRANT NO.48

1. During the course of discussion the Committee observes that the budget allotted for the year 2021-2022 could not be utilized due to lack of Action Plan.

Therefore, the Committee directed the Department to prepare the action Plan of various schemes for the financial Year 2022-2023 so that the Budget allotted should be utilized properly in due time.

The Committee observes that the cold rooms are not converted into Solar system. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the fund received for cold storages should be utilized in conversion of cold rooms to Hybrid Colds Rooms with the system of Solar as well as electricity.

Action Taken Report :

The Assam State Agricultural Marketing Board (ASAMB) had earlier constructed cold storages under approved scheme of NEC, APEDA, and RIDF.

The ASAMB did not construct any cold storage/cold room during the FY 2023-24.

The ASAMB will go for construction of hybrid type cold rooms instead of cold storages, subject to receipt of fund in due course.

Under Private Sector, there is provision under Horticulture Mission for North Eastern & Himalayan States (HMNEH) implemented by Directorate of Horticulture & Food Processing, Assam for setting up of Cold Rooms by Farmer/Agri Entrepreneurs with financial assistance @50% of Total Project Cost limited to 15.00 lakh upto maximum 30 MT capacity.

Department of Agriculture, Assam has taken initiative to create awareness among farmers/entrepreneurs of the State about the latest Hybrid cold rooms which can also be run by solar power. Few companies were invited to demonstrate the technology in the 8th Assam International Agri-Horti Show 2023 held during 16-18 December 2023 at Veterinary College Playground, Khanapara.

Directorate of Horticulture & Food Processing, Assam has set up a 10 MT capacity hybrid Cold Room at its "Indo-Israel Centre of Excellence for Vegetables", Khetri, Kamrup Metro district for demonstration purpose.

It is expected to have applications from intending entrepreneurs for such Hybrid Cold Rooms and provision will be kept in the Annual Action Plan in coming years.

2. During the course of discussion, the Committee observes that due to non-receipt of FOC from Finance Department, the Agriculture Department could not utilize for its development works during 2022-23. Therefore, the Committee directed the Department while making FOC, to indicate the Head of Account and always in touch with Finance Department.

Action Taken Report:

As per recommendations of the Departmentally Related Standing Committee, already Head of Account of all schemes have been indicated while submitting the FoC which is mandatory for obtaining Financial Sanction and Fixation of Ceiling.

The Department is in constant touch with the Finance Department for drawl of FOCs so that the schemes proposed during the year get implemented.

As on date status of Head of Account creation is as follows:

- Mapping of Central Head of Account under SNA for CSS has been completed.
- New Head of Account for the scheme "Establishment of Assam KrishiVigyan Institute under Assam Agricultural University at Pathorighat" has been received.

3. During the course of discussion the Committee observes that Rice which were procured by the Government are kept in the FCIs which have damaged due to presence of moisture. Therefore, the Committee recommends that a dryer may be provided in the PPC centre. Moreover, the Committee also suggested that Food and Civil Supplies Department should purchase Rice directly from Mills.

Action Taken Report :

The Procurement Agencies need to procure paddy at MSP from farmers maintaining Fair Average Quality (FAQ) norms that include 17% moisture content (maximum) etc. On the other hand, the resultant Custom Milled Rice (CMR) is delivered to FCI by observing the moisture content (maximum of 14%) as per guideline of Government of India . As per GOI guildlines CMR is mandatorily be submitted by the millers against lifting of paddy from the procurement agencies.

It is proposed to put Dryer at Paddy Procurement Centres (PPCs)/ Mustard Procurement Centres (MPCs) selected by the Department . Department is exploring for installation of Dryer at PPCs for Musturd under APART project.

The status of paddy procurement by ASAMB during the KMS 2022-23 & KMS 2023-24 up to 27-01-2024 is given below:

KMS 2022-23 (FY 2022-23 & 2023-24):

MSP	= Rs. 2040.00/Qntl
No. of PPCs	= 15
Target (1 st & 2 nd crop)	= 60000 Qntl
Achievement (1 st & 2 nd crop)	= 44612.80 Qntl
No. of farmers beneficiaries	= 598
Total MSP paid	= Rs.91010112.00

KMS 2023-24 (FY 2023-24 & 2024-25):

MSP	= Rs.2183.00/Qntl
No. of PPCs (1 st crop)	= 5
Target (1 st crop)	= 50,000 Qntl
Achievement (1 st crop) upto 27-01-24	= 9342.20 Qntl
No. of farmer beneficiaries	= 146
Total involvement against MSP	= Rs.20394022.60

An amount of Rs.90.00 lakh has already been sanctioned against “ Paddy procurement from Farmers at notified MSP” under SOPD for the FY 2023-24 and it is under process of release to ASAMB.

4. During discussion, the Committee observes that importance has not been given to Agricultural Research works under Assam Agriculture University for better improvement in Agricultural Sector. No Fund had been received during FY 2022-23.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that importance should be given in Agricultural Research works under Assam Agriculture University. The Committee also strongly recommends that additional Rs.20 Crore may be given for Agricultural Research Works through SD during FY 2023-24.

Action Taken Report:

Under Agricultural Research works of Assam Agriculture Universities Budget Provision has been as follows:

- i. Grants in Aids (Head of Accounts: 2415-01-004-1823-000-32-99-TG-EI-V-GA)
Budget Provision: Rs.1863.21 lakh.

Financial Breakup:

a.	State Share against AICRP/AINP Projects : Rs.1539.00
b.	Universities own Research Project : Rs.324.21
	Total Rs.1863.21 Lakh

Present status as on 24/01/2024 – Financial Sanction has been issued for the amount of Rs. 1863.21 Lakh.

- ii. Grants in Aid (Head of Accounts: 2415-01-277-1831-000-32-99-TG-EI-V-GA)
Budget Provisions : Rs. 1000.00 lakh.

Financial Breakup:

a.	Repairing and Renovation of 9 Nos of Colleges: Rs.572.58
b.	Overseas Fellowship : Rs. 98.00
c.	Experimental Learning program : Rs. 95.00
d.	Others, TA/DA,POL,contingent expenditure etc.: Rs.234.42
Total	: Rs.1000.00 Lakh

Present Status as on 24/01/2024 – FOC received for amount of Rs.500.00 Lakh and Financial Sanction has been issued for the remaining amount of Rs. 500.00 Lakh.

Status of fund received during 2022-23 proposed action on recommendation.

B/E-R/E and fund received during 2022-23 under the Minor Head 004 Research is as Follows:-

(Rs in Lakh)

Head	B/E	R/E	Received
2415-01-004-1823-000-31-01	4715.02	4715.02	4715.02
2415-01-004-1823-000-32-99	1500.00	2000.00	NIL
2415-01-004-6025-000-32-99	100.00	100.00	100.00
2415-01-004-6024-000-32-99	100.00	100.00	100.00

Supplementary Demand for argumentation of additional demand of Rs.20.00 Cr. as recommendation in the report of the 25th DRSC will be submitted in the next session of ALA.

5. The Committee observes that the Conventional Urea has been using since then in Agricultural Products.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that instead of using Conventional Urea, Nano Urea should be used in Agricultural Products and a demonstration should be organized by the Directorate level.

Action Taken Report :

Under the initiatives of Agriculture Department , Assam , the use of Nano Urea has gained momentum in Assam. During 2021-22, 41692 bottles , during 2022-23, 533584 bottles and during 2023-24, 6,23,915 bottles of Nano Urea has already gone to the farming community . Each 500 ml Nano urea bottle is equivalent to one 45 kg bag of conventional Urea. Directorate of Agricultural, Assam in collaboration with IFFCO Limited has conducted as many as 10 demonstrations on spraying of Nano Urea using drones in crops like Paddy, Maize, Vegetables & Tea. A demonstration on use of Nano Fertilizers using drone has been done in Bamgaon Tea

EState, Balipara, Sonitpur, Assam which is first in Tea industry in Assam. In near future few more demonstration in Tea & Coffee will be conducted.

One Nano conclave is being organised by the Agriculture Department , Govt. of Assam for promotion of Nano urea in the State.

The Assam Sate Agricultural Marketing Board (ASAMB) has started the distribution of prilled urea from the month of December,2022 to the retailers under ASAMB.

Moreover, in pursuance of the directives of Govt. of Assam, Nano urea has also been distributed with the prilled urea to the retailers under ASAMB. To popularies use of Nano urea by the farmers, Nano awareness and demonstration programme amongst retailers and farmers are being organised by IFFCO . In this regards, Knapsack sprayer machines have been distributed to retailers at substantially discounted price by IFFCO.

Of late, ASAMB has declared prizes to encourage retailers to go for Nano urea so that it reaches the field more and more.

The status of distribution of prilled and nano urea by ASAMB during the FY-2023-24 upto 28-01-2014 is given below:

Prilled urea distributed = 1,13,558.625 MT

Nano urea distributed = 4,53,336 bottles

No. of retailers under ASAMB = 4,760

An amount of Rs. 450.00 lakh has been allocated under SOPD for the FY 2023-24 for "Expenditure against distribution of Urea by ASAMB" and FOC proposal for releasing the aforesaid amount in under process at Government level.

6. The Committee observes that Black Dal and Mustard Seeds are not included under MSP.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that Black Dal and Mustard Seeds should be included under MSP.

Action Taken Report :

The MSP of Black Dal (Black gram) @ Rs.6,950 per Qntl. and Mustard seeds @ Rs.5,650.00 per Qntl. for the year 2024-25 (Rabi 2023-24) have already been declared by Govt. of India.

It is noteworthy to mention here that procurement of mustard/rapeseed at declared MSP has been taken up for the first time in the State , since the year 2023-24 (Rabi 2022-23) and Mustard procurement in total 3,306 MT have been procured during 2023-24 combinedly by AFCSCL & ASAMB.

As amount of Rs.450.00 lakh has been allocated under SOPD for the FY 2023-24 against " Procurement of Mustard , Urad, Millet etc at MSP" and FOC proposal for releasing the aforesaid amount is under process at Govt. level.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(AGRICULTURE)

Grant No. 48

The Committee scrutinized the records and took evidence of Departmental Officials and after threadbare discussion made the following observations and recommendations:-

1. During the course of discussion, the Committee observes that the cadre of Agriculture Development Officer (ADO) and Agriculture Extension workers at district level are lying vacant as these are the most vital extension functionaries at field level.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that these vacant posts should be fulfilled immediately.

2. The Committee observes that APART Project is scheduled to be closed in September, 2024.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that the Assam Millet Mission and Assam Fodder Mission Schemes should be included in the State Budget for the FY 2024-25. The Committee also recommends that an amount of Rs. 20.75 Crore under SOPD and 6.92 Crore from Govt of India under Assam Millet Mission and Rs. 7.00 Crore under SOPD and Rs. 10.25 Crore from Govt of India under Assam Fodder Mission should be incorporated in the State Budget for the FY 2024-25.

3. During the course of discussion, the Committee observes that as per the guidelines of Govt of India, maximum moisture content for procurement of Mustard at MSP is being fixed at 8%. But due to the climatic condition of the State moisture content, saleable Mustard seed cannot be brought below 12%.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that Govt of India may be intimated by the Govt of Assam for allowing a relaxation in moisture content limit from 8% to 12% in case of Mustard seed considering the climatic condition of Assam.

4. During the course of discussion, the Committee observes that while promoting FPO/FPCs in Agriculture Sector by various agencies of Govt. of India and Govt. of Assam, there is every chance of duplicity over the clusters.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that a Central Agency is to be notified by the Govt. of Assam to monitor promotion of FPO/FPCs by different agencies of Central and State Govt.

5. The Committee observes that latest hybrid cold rooms are essential in Agriculture sector.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that a massive awareness programme should be launched among the farmers/entrepreneurs.

6. During the course of discussion, the Committee observes that Agriculture Knowledge Centre in Lumding and Tamulpur are not functional even after completion of construction works.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that the concerned Department should take initiative to make functional Agriculture Knowledge Centre in Lumding and Tamulpur.

7. The Committee observes that the farmers did not get Crops Insurance within specific time.
Therefore, the Committee recommends that Crops Insurance should be settled within specific time.

8. During the course of discussion, the Committee observes that large scale of paddy crops has been damaged by infestation of pests/insects destroying the plant.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that a research work should be taken up by the Assam Agricultural University to prevent the infestation of pests/insects in paddy crops.

With these observations, the Committee recommends that the total amount of Rs. 232843.47 lakhs as sought for, under Grant No. 48 (Agriculture) for the Financial Year 2024-25 be approved by the August House.

The Action Taken Report on the recommendation may be submitted to the Committee within 90 (Ninety) days from the date of presentation of the Report in the House.

REPORT

CHAPTER –III

Grant No.-67

Horticulture and Food Processing Department

The Departmentally Related Standing Committee on Development (B) Department discussed the Budget provision made under the Grant No.- 67 relating to the Horticulture and Food Processing Department for the financial year 2024-25. At the same time the Committee also considered the action taken report on the recommendation made on 2023-24 in its 25th report presented to the House on 29th March, 2023.

The Budget provision made under Grant No. - 67 for the financial year 2024-25 is as below :----

	REVENUE	CAPITAL	TOTAL (RUPEES IN LAKH)
Voted	11397.13	330.00	11727.13
Charged	0.00	0.00	0.00

2401 Crop Husbandry-Horticulture	11375.63
2415 Agricultural Research and Education	21.50
4401 Capital Outlay on Crop Husbandry	330.00
Grand Total	11727.13

The budget estimate under the Grant No.-67 is Rs.11727.13 presented before the House for approval. The total allocated money is proposed to be spent in the Revenue and Capital expenditure respectively.

Horticulture sector comprising fruits, vegetables, flowers, spices, medicinal and aromatic plant, mushroom, bee-keeping and their value addition has become a viable option for farmers and entrepreneurs of the State to augment their income. It is a means of nutritional and Health security for both Urban and Rural masses. It is also generates employment opportunity to the unemployed educated youths. Horticulture

Sectors also provide opportunity to augment SGDP through export of Horticultural produce to domestic and international markets.

Brief Note on Grant No. 67

Assam is traditionally rich in Horticulture sector and the socio-economic fabric of its people is associated with horticultural sector. The horticultural beauty lies in its history, culture, tradition and in the mindset of the people-which has imbibed a lot from this science of fruits, flowers, vegetables, spices, plantation crops, root and tuber crops, nut crops, medicinal, aromatics, mushroom, bee-keeping and the climatic condition of Assam is conducive for growing these wide range of horticultural crops. Horticultural crops occupy about 17% of the gross cultivated area of Assam and annually produce more than 90 lakh MT of various Horticultural produces- contributing significantly towards food and nutritional security of the State. But there are two other factors that may make Horticulture in Assam a very important sector which

i). Inherent capacity for employment generation

ii). Income generation at farmers level. No other sector can claim to be better position in this regard for a State like Assam. Foreseeing this potentiality, the Govt. of Assam took a timely decision in the year 2004 to create a separate Directorate of Horticulture and Food Processing in Assam to give focus attention on inherent potentiality of commercialization of various sectors of Horticulture. This new Directorate has started supporting farmers and Horticultural entrepreneurs in their endeavour towards commercialization which is the need of the hour.

Assam being encompassed under one of the fourteen global bio-diversity hot spots, the State is endowed with favourable agro-climatic conditions that offer wide range of options for farming as well as investment in Horticulture sector.

In order to reap the benefits of the above mentioned factors and to sustain the growth rate that has been achieved during last decade, the Department has sorted out the under mentioned strategies which remains as a big challenge for the Department.

Aims and objectives:-

- 1) Strengthening production base through area expansion of various horticultural crops and raising their productivity is the greatest challenge before the Directorate and a good beginning has been made in this direction.
- 2) In order to achieve this, the most important aspect is availability of the elite planting materials of fruits, vegetables etc within easy reach of farmers.
- 3) Encourage nurseries to produce quality planting materials from genuine mother plants using latest technology.
- 4) Import elite planting materials from ICAR farms for propagation at Departmental and private nurseries.
- 5) Rejuvenation of senile orchards for enhancing productivity of fruit crops.
- 6) High density planting for more return per unit area.

- 7) Special emphasis on protected and off-season cultivation.
- 8) Thrust on horticulture mechanization and use of modern tools to enhance efficiency of labour and minimize cost of production.
- 9) Thrust on micro-irrigation for judicious use of available irrigation water through sprinkler and drip irrigation System.
- 10) Precision farming.
- 11) Popularization of High Value Crops like Capsicum, Orchid, Anthurium, Strawberry, Apple ber, Dragon fruit , Rambutan etc.

Govt. has taken Major Initiatives

- Farmers training to infuse commercial concept amongst traditional Horticultural growers in India or abroad.
- Maximum focus on raising productivity of various commercially potential crops of Assam through use of better technology, Management practices, bee keeping and planting materials is being given .
- Establishment of Model Horticulture Nursery at Byrnihat , Guwahati where Root Stock Block and Mother Block of various new varieties of fruit crops has been establish.
- Up-gradation of private sector nurseries which Govt. subsidy under specific guidelines to generate adequate quality planting materials of horticultural crops.
- Similarly, post harvest aspects like pre harvest treatment, scientific harvest, setting up of pack houses collection centers with grading facilities and transport facilities are given due importance.
- The concept of organic farming is induced in the mindset of farmers and cultivation is started in ten clusters covering the districts - Sonitpur, Dhemaji, Golaghat, Majuli, Kamrup, Chirang, Cachar, Nalbari, Kokrajhar, Udalguri, Lakhimpur, Morigaon and Kamrup (M).
- Bee keeping is given due importance and training conducted at various level.
- Green houses are provided to farmers for production of season vegetables and raising of seedling.
- Pack houses are constructed in production pockets.
- Mushroom cultivation is getting due importance in all districts of Assam.
- Formation of FPOs and FPCs has been encouraged for doing the Agri-Business among the small holders.
- Introduction of new and high remunerative crops like Strawberry, Apple Ber , Musk melon, Dragon Fruit etc.
- Massive publicity cum awareness programme taken up in different districts for adoption of Micro Irrigation Systems for improving water use efficiency in the farmers' field
- Massive area expansion programme of thrust crops like Orange, Pineapple, Banana, Apple-ber, Ginger, Turmeric, Dragon fruit, Strawberry and flower crops etc.
- Under Indo-Israeli collaboration, COE Khetri for production of quality vegetable planting materials are operational from this financial years and construction of different infrastructure are taken up with an objective to make high quality planting materials easily available to the farmers and also to provide technical knowhow for vegetables production.

Significant achievement in Horticulture and Food processing sector through

HMNEH:

1. Setting up of 5 no of Mushroom spawn laboratory in public sector (DH&FP, HRS, Kahikuchi, KVK Tinsukia, KVK Jorhat, Horticulture college Nalbari) and 3 no in private sector (Dr Aparna Rabha, Boko, Mr Basanta Chirng Pkookan, Titabar and one at Udalgiri) to make mushroom spawn available locally.
2. 350 ha area covered under protected cultivation for off season cultivation of vegetables and 30 nos of Naturally ventilated tubular structure for off season vegetable cultivation.
3. Setting up of 3 no of major spice units- sigma spices in the brand name of everyday masala at Chaygaon Industrial Park, Kamrup, Lunar Agro Chemicals, Tinsukia Industrial Park and one minor fruit processing unit Bhogali Food products specially for Assam Lemon Processing at Chaygaon Industrial Park, Kamrup and 10 no primary processing units.
4. Introduction of high value fruits crops like Dragon fruit, Apple Ber, for commercial purpose.
5. Setting up of one 5000MT capacity Cold storage at Golaghat ready for use and 7 no cold room of 30 MT capacity in Kamrup, Morigaon and Darrang.
6. Setting up of 1no. Banana ripening chamber of 20 MT capacity for Amlighat FPC, Morigaon.
7. Assam Lemon production: Promotional campaign has already been completed in New Delhi, Pune, Bangaluru and Mumbai to popularize GI tagged Assam Lemon among the citizens of the Said cities.
8. 20 nos of FPCs are formed for larger scale production for particular crop for commercial purpose.
9. 50 no of small nursery have been upgraded for production of planting materials and 15 no nurseries are accredited by Central Institute of Horticulture, Medziphema, Nagaland.
10. 55 no of farm gate pack house for cleaning & packaging of fruits and vegetables in the field itself.
11. 70 no of mushroom production units set up for employment of rural & urban youths.
12. 1500 farmers are trained on scientific cultivation and vegetables crops.

Centrally sponsored schemes in Assam are :

1. Horticulture Mission for North East and Himalayan States (HMNEH) :-

This is a centrally sponsored scheme implemented in the State with a 90:10 (Central share : State share) sharing pattern since 2001-02. The main objective of the scheme is holistic support in production of high value crops, production of elite planting materials, development of project based activities and market infrastructure, farm mechanization, plant protection, skill development and post harvest management in food processing sector. The scheme provides 50% Government assistance for following major components :-

- (i) **Planting Material production**-Establishment of Nursery under Public (100 % assistance) and private sector(50% assistance.)
- (ii) **Area Expansion** under high value fruit, vegetable, spices and flowers-Dragon Fruit, Strawberry, Capsicum, Turmeric, Zinger, Orchid, Anthurium.
- (iii) **Mushroom spawn production unit and Mushroom production unit.**
- (iv) **Protected cultivation** –naturally ventilated tubular structure, bamboo structure poly house/shed net house, plastic marching film.
- (v) **Horticulture mechanization**-Power Tillers, self propelled machineries-pole pruner, power operated sprayer, garden tools.
- (vi) **Post harvest management**-farm gate pack house, cold room, cold storage, primary processing unit, food processing unit, integrated pack house, Refridgerated Vehicle.
- (vii) **Pollination Support** through Bee-Keeping.
- (viii) **Capacity Building of Farmer & Technical Staff** –short term training & skilled training on gardening, Green House operator, Organic Farming.

2. Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana - Per Drop More Crop (PMKSY-PDMC):

The Govt. of India has introduced the centrally sponsored scheme of **PMKSY-PDMC** with objective to enhance water use efficiency in the agricultural sector by promoting appropriate technological intervention of Micro Irrigation like drip and sprinkler irrigation technologies and encourage the farmers on water saving and conservation in existing water source. Under the scheme 55% assistance is given for Small and Marginal farmers and 45% for other farmers with additional top-up of 30% from State CMSGUY scheme. Pump sets are provided to eligible farmers at 50% subsidy under other intervention component of **PMKSY-PDMC**

Another component of **PMKSY-PDMC** is other intervention component, which is implemented as a supplementary component for creation for micro water storage activities and efficiently water convenient in rainfed areas. Subsidy pattern for the component is 50:50 between government.

3. Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), Horticulture :-

The RKVY aims at achieving 4% growth in the Agri-horticulture sector during the XI and XII plan period, by assuring a holistic development of agriculture and allied sectors. The main objectives of the scheme are to incentivize the States so as to increase public investment in agriculture and allied sector in a flexible mode so that local priorities can be emphasized. To bring about quantifiable changes in the production and productivity of various components of agriculture and allied sectors and thereby increase farmers' return.

4. States own Priority Development Schemes (SOPD)

In horticulture sector, SOPD aims at skill development of rural and urban youths through imparting training on food preservation, maintenance of Govt assets like building, progeny orchards, production of quality planting materials, preservation of local species and taking up innovative schemes like biodegradable plat making from arecanut leaf sheath. State Floriculture Mission has also been taken up under SOPD.

New Schemes proposed by the Directorate

No new Scheme is taken up in the year 2024-25.

**ACTION TAKEN REPORT FURNISHED ON THE OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS MADE
IN TWENTY FIFTH REPORT OF THE DRSC ON DEVELOPMENT (B) DEPARTMENTS FOR 2023-24 ON**

GRANT NO.67

1. During the course of discussion, the Committee observes that the farmers are not fully aware about different schemes implemented by the Directorate of Horticulture & FP. The Committee also observes that Public representatives are not involved in implementation of Horticultural Schemes.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that a Strategy is to be taken so that the Farmers are able to know about the ongoing schemes under Directorate of Horticulture & FP and also locals MLAs are to be apprise about the schemes at District/Sub-Division level by the concern DAOs. For this, a suitable amount maybe made from SOPD.

Action Taken Report :

As per recommendation of DRSC, all DAOs are instructed to appraise local MPs , MLAs, ZPC members about all the ongoing schemes such as HMNEH,MOVCD-NER,PMKSY,RKVY,SOPD,APART,NBHM etc under Directorate of Horticulture & Food Processing (DoH&FP) and also to invite them in all kind of ceremonial distribution of agricultural inputs, inauguration of training, awareness program etc.

2. During Discussion, the Committee observes that educated Entrepreneurs/Farmers do not possess knowledge of Horticulture.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that necessary steps to be taken for arranging training and awareness program among the educated Entrepreneurs and Farmers.

Action Taken Report:

In this financial year, 4650 no of farmers/educated youths/horticultural entrepreneurs will be trained in different subject matters. As a part of this program, following trainings/awareness are already completed-

- (a) DoH&FP has started practical training on gardening & orchard management in a reputed nursery under HMNEH scheme.
 - (b) Training on food processing & Mushroom cultivation under HMNEH scheme is also continuously going on where entrepreneurs and students from different universities participated.
 - (c) District level Training on Horticultural crops are going on in all districts under HMNEH scheme. Fund has been earmarked for conducting 140 number of training and approximately 4500 number of farmers/entrepreneurs/educated youths will be benefited.
 - (d) DoH&FP has also conducted 4 District level training on Bee Keeping under NBHM scheme where 800 bee keepers participated.
 - (e) Awareness program on **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)** is going on in all districts continuously.
3. The Committee observes that there is a requirement of Food Processing Training Centre at Upper Assam.

Therefore, the Committee recommends for taking initiatives to make functional for taking Food Processing Training Centre at Upper Assam in phase manner particularly at Charaideo District.

Action Taken Report:

As per recommendation, DAO, Charaideo has been instructed to consult the MLA, Charaideo & Deputy Commissioner, Charaideo for arrangement of a building for setting up of a food Processing training centre from the fund available with the district administration. Necessary machineries will be provided from DoH&FP.

4. During the course of discussion the Committee observes that there is a scope for setting up of manufacturing unit of Disc plate and other products from areca nut sheath.

Therefore the Committee recommends that a such types of units are to be set up in Various Parts of the State where Areca nut plantation is found extensively . A proposal should be taken for Bihpuria and Sonari locality under ongoing scheme. For such unit fund may be allotted for under SOPD.

Action Taken Report:

Under SOPD scheme, 15 (fifteen) no of manufacturing unit of Plate made from areca nut leaf sheath has been distributed to 15 no of FPC & farmer's group (10 farmers per group) in 14 districts namely Kamrup, Kamrup(M), Dima Hasao, Goalpara, Karimganj, Kokrajhar, Chirang, Darrang, Cachar, Golaghat, Nagaon, Karbi Anglong , Karbi Anglong (West), Sonitpur. In the next financial year, remaining districts will be covered.

5. During the course of discussion the Committee observes that there is a large growing of lemons in Bhabanipur which needs proper utilization

Therefore, the Committee recommends that the concerned Department should take steps for utilisation of lemons through Assam Agricultural Marketing Board.

Action Taken Report:

Keeping huge production of Assam lemon in view, DoH&FP has taken a marketing initiative namely- " Promotion of Assam Lemon in 4 metro cities namely Delhi NCR, Bangaluru, Pune & Hyderabad". As a part of the initiative, Assam Lemon Promotion program was successfully conducted in Delhi NCR last year and overwhelming response was received from the citizens of Delhi NCR. Under the Promotion program in Delhi NCR 10,000 Assam Lemons were procured from farmers of Baksa district @ Rs.4.50/piece through a local FPC for sending to Delhi NCR. The program will now be conducted in Bangaluru, Hyderabad & Pune.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
(HORTICULTURE & FOOD PROCESSING)

GRANT No.67

The Committee scrutinized the records and took evidence of Departmental Officials and after threadbare discussion made the following observations and recommendations:-

1. During the course of discussion, the Committee observes that the growers are not getting actual price of the product due to lack of storage facilities although the production of horticultural crops is growing up day by day.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that there should be at least one Hybrid Cold Storage of capacity 10-12 tons for storing the agricultural product in each LA Constituency.

2. The Committee observes that Kaji Nemu (Citrus Lemon), a variety of seedless lemon has been declared officially as the State Fruit of Assam on 12th February, 2024 and being the GI tagged product in 2019. So, anticipating the possible opportunity for business and export and to popularise and grow interest among the tourists.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that the Department should take necessary steps for displaying/showcasing Kaji Nemu in the Lobby of each and every 3 star, 4 star & 5 star hotels and to serve Kaji Nemu in different cuisines of other restaurants having Fooding & Lodging facilities in Assam.

3. During the course of discussion, the Committee observes that due to the fragmented land holdings in most of the parts of Assam, double cropping has not been possible like some other States of India . So in Assam, where there is only one crop in a year particularly in Upper Assam, double cropping or multiple cropping may be adopted by land reconciliation.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that a joint meeting may be convened among the respective Department with the Revenue and Disaster Management Department along with other concerned Departments for land reconciliation to adopt double cropping or multiple cropping.

4. During the course of discussion, the Committee observes that marginal and small farmers cannot afford the transport cost to the market.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that Transport cost subsidy should be granted to the marginal and small farmers to reduce wastages of vegetables.

With these observations, the Committee recommends that the total amount of Rs. 11727.13 lakhs as sought for, under Grant No. 67 (Horticulture & Food Processing) for the Financial Year 2024-25 be approved by the August House.

The Action Taken Report on the recommendation may be submitted to the Committee within 90 (Ninety) days from the date of presentation of the Report in the House.

2024

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