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Minutes of the Meeting

5th Coordinated Mission Steering Committee Meeting of the Tripura Bamboo Mission
Conference Hall No. 3, Secretariat, Agartala
12:00 Noon, 11th February, 2011

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discuss

The list of Participants is enclosed in Annexure I.

The meeting was chaired by The Chief Secretary, Shri S.K. Panda. He welcomed all the members of the Committee to the fifth meeting of the Coordinated Mission Steering Committee (CMSC) constituted under the purview of Tripura State Bamboo Mission and requested Dr AK Krishnakumar, Chief Operating Officer of IL&FS Clusters Development Initiative, the Project Implementation Agency of the Tripura Bamboo Mission to make the presentation on the progress achieved by Tripura Bamboo Mission, present the key issues to be addressed and the action plan for the next financial year 2011 - 2012.

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Thereafter, Sharmistha Mohapatra, the Project Coordinator of the TBM made a presentation on the progress achieved by the Tripura Bamboo Mission during the last three quarters of the Financial Year (2010 - 2011) and also presented the Action Plan for the current financial year 2010 - 2011.

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The Key Discussions and Decisions:

1. The Chief Secretary, Shri S.K. Panda reiterated the importance of bamboo in Tripura's economy and added commendable work has been done by TBM especially the activities in Value addition of bamboo and to keep up the progress two key areas need to be addresses:

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- The need for working capital to scale up the business by the various SHGs, SHG federations / cooperatives, entrepreneurs engaged in the bamboo sector
- Availability of adequate quality and quantity of bamboo raw material to sustain the growth of the sector in future.

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2. Addressing the Working Capital Requirement

The Commissioner & Secretary, Rural Development, advised that all SHG members can access bank finance with a limit of Rs 12,000 through the Kissan Credit Cards being issued under the MNREGA program implementation in the state. For the higher levels of credit requirements, he proposed that the artisan owned societies and entrepreneurs can be linked to the Tripura Gramin Bank and the Tripura State Cooperative bank and can also avail of finance under Swabhalambhan scheme of the Government OF Tripura. The Chief Secretary has advised that a separate meeting

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should be organized with TGB and TSCB so as to ensure that bank linkages are effectively established.

3. Addressing the availability of Bamboo.

- The Chief Secretary stated that the single largest challenge that the state is facing in the bamboo sector is the bamboo resource crunch. To address this he informed that the Department of Forest has already planted 25 lakh bamboo saplings and has increased the target to 1 crore of bamboo planting material this year that will be made available for plantation activity to be done by the department and also through the MGNREGA.
- Dr AK Krishnakumar reiterated that given the importance of the bamboo sector in the state, a sustainable growth of the sector will require a “farm to Market” approach and a strong institutional framework to establish a strong bamboo resource base critical to drive the future growth of the sector. He pointed out that the State Government may consider establishing a separate Bamboo Plantation Development Corporation or house the unit as a part of TFDPC. The Chief Secretary recommended that the MD, TFDPC should be invited to the next round of the CMSC and the proposal can be discussed with him separately.
- Shri VG Jenner stated that to meaningfully address the bamboo resource availability it is imperative to address the productivity of the bamboo plantations and also grow the bamboo species of commercial importance. He also highlighted the importance of addressing the jigat shortage that will become the major bottleneck for the rolled aggarbati sector in the state
- The Chief Secretary stated that TBM should take the responsibility for establishing a model for undertaking managed bamboo plantations with high levels of productivity in the state. He has advised IL&FS Clusters to prepare a *Bamboo Plantation Development scheme* which can be included to undertake plantation activities as a livelihoods option under the NRLM implementation in the state. He also advised TBM to undertake minimum 100 Ha of plantation based on the newly formulated scheme guidelines that can be funded under the NBM funds available with the Forest Department.
- The Chief Secretary advised that 1000 Ha of bamboo plantations in the land allocated to forest dwellers under the Forest Rights Act as a means of livelihoods for the patta holders. This initiative can be managed jointly by TBM and TFDPC and the funding can be mobilized from the NBM and MNREGA schemes. Jigat

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plantation can also be undertaken in the periphery of the 1000 Ha of bamboo plantations.

- Given that the handicrafts cluster are experiencing an acute shortage of bamboo raw material, the Chief Secretary advised that TBM should facilitate community and backyard plantations of bamboo to be undertaken by the societies that have been promoted under TBM.

4. Marketing of Bamboo Products

- Dr AK Krishnakumar apprised the committee about the formation of the state level SPV that will drive the marketing of all bamboo handicraft products being produced by the various societies and SHGs across the state. The SPV has commenced work from November 2010 will also retail products directly using the existing marketing infrastructure of Purbhasha at Delhi, Kolkata and Guwahati. The Chief Secretary advised TBM to organize a workshop for the SPV members at Pragyan Bhawan.
 - The Chief Secretary stressed on the importance of aggressive marketing of the new product lines that have been developed under the TBM initiatives. He advised that a branding initiative that highlights the key characteristics of the bamboo products: eco-friendly, fair trade practices and ethical sourcing should be used to drive product sales. He also advised that the e-portal should be used effectively for marketing the products.
 - The Director, SIPARD ^KShri Rameshwar Rao offered that the various departments including SIPARD will be happy to source conference bags and file folders from the Societies if they are customized to their requirements and are competitively priced.
 - The Mission Coordinator informed that although Tripura supplies 80% of the country's incense stick it has no influence on the price. He informed that TBM will establish a state level SPV for incense sticks that will drive the marketing, enable better negotiation power and ensure better price realization for the poor engaged in this activity.
5. The Chief Secretary advised that to replicate the successful initiatives undertaken by TBM the communication material and short films should be widely circulated in all block level meetings and in the programs being organized under the JICA and the Indo-German project. The Director SIPARD informed that he will make necessary arrangement to screen the films and circulate the communication material in all the training programs that are conducted by SIPARD.

6. The Chief Secretary advised that for the Dhalai district, the funds available under the BRGF scheme should be utilized for creation of common infrastructure.
7. Regarding the issue of TP/ GP, VAT and the problem of double taxation in bamboo value added products, The Chief Secretary advised the Mission Coordinator of the Tripura Bamboo Mission to prepare a paper highlighting the key issues and with clear recommendations for simplification of the existing procedures so that the same can be done.

8. Project Extension

The Chief Secretary expressed his satisfaction over the progress achieved by Tripura Bamboo Mission's. He advised that as the next financial year will be the last year of implementation under the existing agreement, The project should be extended for another five years under the 12th Plan Period. He advised that an evaluation of the project should be conducted by a competent third party institution and thereafter a fresh strategy should be prepared for the next phase of the project implementation.

9. The CMSC approved the Action Plan prepared by the Tripura Bamboo Mission for the Financial Year 2010 – 2011. (Enclosed in Annexure II)

-sd/-
(S.K.Panda)
Chief Secretary
Govt. of Tripura

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Government of Tripura
Department of Industries & Commerce
Tripura Bamboo Mission

Dated, Agartala, the March, 2011

Copy to
All Members/Official

(V.G.Jehner)
Mission Coordinator &
Member Secretary (CMSC)