

**Respected Prime Minister,  
Hon'ble Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission,  
Hon'ble Members of NDC, Members of the Union Cabinet,  
Distinguished delegates.**

I am very grateful to the Hon'ble Prime Minister and all of you for giving me this opportunity to address the 55<sup>th</sup> meeting of the National Development Council convened to discuss the Mid- Term Appraisal of the Eleventh Five Year Plan and also to deliberate upon high focus issues namely strategies for Agriculture development, Water Resources, Tribal Development, Urbanization Interface between Strategies for Power Generation and availability of Coal and environment Management etc. These five areas are undoubtedly critical issues in the development of the nation.

1.1 The Mid Term Appraisal brings out the strength of India's economy and also the resilience it has shown during the global economic crisis. In the five years preceding the crisis in 2008-09 our economy grew at an average growth rate of nearly 9 % per year. Despite being hit by a global crisis of exceptional severity we were able to maintain a growth rate averaging nearly 7 % in the last two years.

1.2 Our country faces several challenges and this august house as a collective leadership has the onerous responsibility of leading India's drive to be rid of poverty and disease, to be prosperous and equitable and to make the 21<sup>st</sup> century – India's century and to be acknowledged as the world's most successfully functioning multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi- lingual and multi-religious democracy.

1.3 The concern for inclusive growth has been projected in 26 monitorable targets during the Eleventh Plan which include setting targets for agricultural growth, poverty reduction, employment generation, school enrollment, reduction in gender gap, reduction in IMR and MMR and access to clean drinking water.

1.4 In critical sectors like agriculture a concern is the disturbing aspect of our performance over the past several years wherein agricultural growth had decelerated

after the mid 90s. Agriculture had grown at 3.2 % from 1980 to 1996 and decelerated to 2.1 % during the Ninth Plan. The Tenth Plan strategy seeks to bring about a reversal of the declining trend in the growth rate of agriculture with a target growth rate of 4 %.

1.5 On the other hand concerns of urgently relieving rural distress necessitated a strategy to increase employment in the rural areas and this commenced with the earlier 'food for work' programmes morphing into the present Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) wherein the employment generated in 2009-2010 is about three times the level achieved from wage employment programmes earlier.

1.6 The issues that confront us are several fold and in various sectors such as Agriculture, Industry, Education, Health, Social Justice, Rural Development and poverty reduction, infrastructure, environment, energy and so on. We need to address these effectively and progressively.

### **Economic state of Assam**

2. The economy of our State is gradually showing upward trend. During the Tenth Plan Period from 2002-2007 the annual average growth rate of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at constant (1999-2000) prices has shown a growth of 5.33 percent. This is a significant improvement over the 1.97 percent GSDP growth rate of Assam during the Ninth Plan period. As per advanced estimates, the growth rate of Assam's GSDP in real terms at constant prices is 6.35 percent during the year 2009-10 as per quick estimate. This was 6.16 percent during 2008-09 and 5.73 percent in 2007-08. The GSDP of Assam during 2008-09 has been worked out at Rs. 53,319 crores at constant (1999-2000) prices and at Rs. 79,277 crores at current prices as against Rs. 50,222 crores and Rs. 71,625 crores respectively during 2007-08. The State economy has grown at 6.34 percent during the year 2009-10 as per Advance Estimates of GSDP worked out recently, indicates a marginal increase over 6.16 per cent in 2008-09 (QE) considering the anticipated production and performance of agricultural and industrial sector and also under the service sector. The 'Industry' sector has grown by 3.28 percent in 2009-10 as compared to

the growth of the previous year in 2008 -9. The Service Sector has increased by 9.24 percent during the year 2009-10 which has helped to maintain the growth momentum in the State economy. The Net State Domestic Product (NSDP), also known as State Income, at 1999-2000 prices has increased by 6.30 percent during 2009-10 in comparison to the growth rate of 6.16 per cent in 2008-09. The Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) of Assam in 2008-09 was Rs. 71, 164 crores at current prices and Rs. 48,262 crores at constant (1999-2000) prices. As per advance estimates, the NSDP growth rate in real terms is estimated at 6.30 percent during 2009-10. The per capita NSDP of Assam at constant prices and current prices stood at Rs. 16272 and Rs. 23993 respectively during the year 2008-09. As per advance estimates, for the year 2009-10 the per capita income at constant and current prices has increased to Rs. 17,080 and Rs. 26,242 respectively. In terms of growth rate, this increase calculated as 4.80 percent in 2008-09 and 4.24 percent in 2007-08 respectively over the previous years. The Assam Economy [GSDP at constant (1999-2000) prices] has been growing with the average growth rate of 5.08 percent per annum during the last ten years. Except “Agriculture and allied sector”, “Industry” and “Service” sectors witnessed notable growth during the period. While the Industry sector grew at the rate of 7.74 percent, the Service sector also showed impressive growth of 7.13 percent during the period.

### **Agriculture and allied sectors**

3. Agriculture as the largest private enterprise in India is the lifeline of the economy. Agriculture provides the underpinning for our food and livelihood security and support for the economic growth and social transformation. During 2008-2009 the agricultural sector contributed to approximately 15.7 % of the Indian GDP (at 2004-2005 prices) and 10.23 % (provisional) of total exports besides providing employment to around 58.7 % of the work force. In the recent past, the impact of various food, financial and economic crises has been felt across the world. This has compromised the lives, livelihood and food security of the people. Therefore, there is a compelling case for increased investment in this sector. The continued high growth of agriculture is essential to meet the food and nutritional security requirements of the people and provide livelihood and income in rural areas. Agriculture will continue

to have the pride of place in national policies and plans, since the nation's food security depends on the performance of the agricultural sector.

3.1 For overcoming stagnation in agricultural growth we need to act on several fronts. We need to focus attention and increase investments in the entire chain of activities related to agriculture – the supply of inputs (i.e raising the quality of inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and pesticides) and credit, wherein improving access to credit both in terms of quantity and in terms of its reach, diversification of crops, designing of credible and effective agricultural insurance schemes, better production practices and improved post harvest management. The agricultural credit system needs urgent attention and revamping to ensure supply of adequate credit at a reasonable cost. Our irrigation planning has deteriorated greatly with very slow progress in completing ongoing irrigation projects. We need to implement a workable strategy for water management in rain fed areas and also adopting the watershed approach in drought prone and wasteland areas. We must realize that the management and effective, equitable utilization of our shared water resources is a key element in improving agricultural performance, alongside promoting water efficient technologies and crops.

3.2 Other critical requirements for agricultural dynamism include new generation technologies, since there appears to be a technology fatigue at present and effective extension machinery for delivering technology products to farmers. There has to be a sharper focus on strategic research for evolving the latest technologies through the ICAR and the State Agricultural Universities. Field extension activity should be clearly assigned to the State machinery. Indian agriculture in future should move away from the traditional grain based strategy in the past towards diversification, emphasizing horticulture, poultry and livestock. This transition poses new challenges including new institutional arrangements. There is also need to improve post harvest management of agricultural produce.

3.3 Farming is increasingly becoming an unviable activity, particularly because of the nature of landholdings, small and marginal farmers have become an unviable proposition and till we make farming as a whole viable, it would be virtually

impossible to reduce rural poverty and distress. We must reflect whether subsidies are being delivered effectively. Are input subsidies better delivered directly to the farmer or by subsidizing the input itself; and as to whether the quantity and the manner in which the subsidies are delivered is adequate. We also have the larger issues of increasing the total investment in agriculture – both public and private investment against the context of a larger trend whereby subsidies have been increasing but investment has been declining.

3.4 In agriculture we need to move away from mechanical implementation of fragmented schemes towards an integrated holistic approach which is based on a mix of interventions consistent with local conditions and local requirements. As agriculture is a state subject, most of the planning and implementation of the strategies and programmes is best done at the State level. We need therefore state specific strategies which take into account the resource endowments and capabilities and build on these for a strong and vibrant sector.

3.5 Agricultural growth in Assam at the end of 10<sup>th</sup> plan was -0.27% against National average growth rate of 2%. Keeping in conformity with the National target to double the growth rate i.e.4% in Agriculture & allied sector during 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, the growth target of the State was also set at 2%. The growth in Agriculture has shown upward trend in the beginning of the Eleventh Five Year Plan .In 2007-08 the rate of growth increased to 0.23% and in 2008-09 to 1.20 %. Growth target for the year 2009-10 was 2.17 %, but due to the adverse effect of severe drought condition during Kharif season growth seems to be lower. However, we are streamlining strategy to achieve higher growth rate in the sector.

3.6 About 83% of the farmers of the state are small and marginal farmers having small land holdings. Though the use of High Yielding Varieties, fertilizers, micronutrients and other modern practices are considered focus areas for development production and productivity but these are not used due to lack of resources with the small and marginal farmers. However, to meet the requirement of quality seeds altogether 1.05 lakh registered growers of 2100 seed villages have been engaged which resulted in production of 3.78 lakh quintals of quality seeds.

3.7 For addressing growth in agriculture on the highest priority the state Government shall work on a strategy of convergence of resources' of MGNREGA, watershed management and BRGF to achieve improved water access, to meet requirement of quality seeds private seed growers have been involve in seed production programmes by associating them in Seed Village programme, , building on the success of the Horticulture Mission (in vegetable production) to ensure growth of non food grain production at a higher rate, upgrading the agriculture universities as centres of excellence by providing financial support and ensuring the filling up of vacancies, undertaking extensive agriculture extension works, focus on diary sector by adopting cluster approach in potential district, emphasis on soil testing and increase in the present low fertilizer usage, provision of rural godowns and agro produce value addition shall be factored. But the resources of the State being very low, higher investment by the Central Government in agriculture is an absolute necessity for Assam.

3.8 To ensure smooth credit flow we have given thrust on KCC. We have provided KCC to 6.30 lakh farm families with loan assistance of Rs. 1583.72 crore. There is a huge gap between the potential and issue of KCCs as more than 76 percent farm families are still deprived of valid KCCs. Banks need to come forward to provide credit to the farmers without any hassles. However there still remains a disturbing gap in the flow of agricultural and rural credit in the State. The per capita agriculture advance in Assam in only Rs 1,351 as compared to the national average of Rs 3,638. I am told that land holding certificated are insisted from the farmers. I feel that 'land use' certificate issued from the field officials of the Agriculture or Revenue Departments should suffice for verifying genuineness of the farmers. Understaffing of the rural bank branches coupled with short tenures of the officers posted there are also factors that have contributed to low level of rural credit flow in Assam. It is noticed that the targets under the Annual Credit Plans (ACP) are very conservative and there is a huge gap between the potential linked Credit projections (PLPs) of NABARD and the ACP targets. This needs to be addressed seriously by the banks.

3.9 Agriculture continues to retard the overall growth of the economy. Inefficiencies in the production system leading to poor productivity, post harvest handling, absence of processing ails the sector. There is urgent need to address the issue of increasing productivity per hectare. For this we need to have a serious re-look on improved irrigation systems as most of our arable land is rain-fed. Urgent need to produce high yielding varieties of seeds, backed by strong credit availability to farmers is of urgent necessity. I am of the view that agro processing should be undertaken in a very large scale by involving big corporate into agri-businesses. I also strongly favour the involvement of corporates in contract farming. This will reduce the intermediaries and reduce the agriculture wastages which have assumed alarming proportions. Value addition to agriculture produce, at the point of production is key to the increase in the purchasing power of the largely agrarian population of the country. This will propel rural growth and in turn take the country to new heights.

3.10 Animal husbandry, Fishery and Dairy development plays a prominent role in the rural economy in supplementing the income of rural households, particularly, the landless and small and marginal farmers. It also provide subsidiary occupation in the urban areas and more so for the people living in hilly, tribal and flood and drought prone areas where crop output may not sustain the family. However the problem of animal feed is a major constraint in the dairy industry of Assam. The level of consumption of milk in the State is much lower than the recommendation of ICMR. Dairy sector in the state can grow faster if the breed of the cattle is improved. Stall feeding is required to provide adequate nutrition to the cattle. Therefore promotion of fodder crops and cattle feed are essential to give boost to this sector. A policy on feed including incentive like transport subsidy, tax exemption on feed, subsidy on feed are to be encouraged as a short term measure whereas the cultivation of feed crops should be taken up systematically as a long term measure.

3.11 Fish production in the State has increased to cater for around 87% of the total requirement of 2.36 lakh ton per year. There has been increasing fish productivity from an average 1500 Kg per hectare per year to 2200 Kg per hectare. Thrust has been laid on reclamation of derelict water bodies, fish seed farming, and fishery extension training with the main thrust on making the state self sufficient in fish production.

3.12 For water management in agriculture, stress is on completing ongoing projects in major and medium irrigation projects and regaining lost potential alongside generating additional potential sensibly. The same applies for minor irrigation and command area development projects. Assam has more than adequate underground water resources but it remains unused due to financial constraints of small farmers and small land holdings. However, the potential for STWs exists and is a strategy that shall yield immediate results. The strategy of setting up Water User Associations within the PRIs and levy of water user charges alongside incorporating stakeholder and social mobilisers, hydrologists in irrigation and water use planning shall be adopted.

3.13 We have given thrust on farm mechanization to raise productivity as well as cropping intensity by providing various farm machineries with appropriate level of assistance to the low income farmer groups. The present farm power has increased from .02 HP per Hect to 0.66 HP per hectare against National average: 1.20 HP per hectare. We are giving special attention to provide more farm machineries to small farmers in the form of SHG. We need enhanced allocation under RKVY in this regards.

3.14 Horticulture has been well recognized as a major tool for raising farmers income as well as employment generation. Due to intervention through Horticulture Technology Mission, Assam could achieve a spectacular growth rate of 64 percent in case of vegetables. The State is steadily progressing both in productivity and production of all horticultural crops. With gradual strengthening of production base, it is high time now to look into post harvest aspects of these perishables to minimize huge post harvest loss. Further, Drip and Sprinkler irrigation needs to be encouraged.

3.15 Market access for farmers of Assam of remote areas, is still a distant dream. In view of very limited private sector investment in Assam, the Agricultural Produced Marketing Committee Act in its revised form is not useful to our state. Government may adopt 'DOT' approach in this regard to set up one most modern Terminal Market at viable locations i.e. **D**evelop it, make it **O**perational and **T**ransfer the ownership under terms & conditions.



3.16 The coverage of notified crops in Assam under the National Agriculture Insurance Scheme is inadequate. Only 3 Khariff crops and 5 rabi crops area covered. I feel the coverage needs to be extended to include all khariff and rabi crops in the State. This will also increase the comfort level of the banks in providing the loans. Further the notified area of coverage may be brought down to the Gram Panchayat Level because Blocks and Revenue circles are too large for proper assessment of loss of yield. Moreover, the claim disposal procedures under the Scheme also need to be simplified. Since most of the damages caused to standing crops are due to localized natural causes like drought, flood, erosion and hailstorms. The Agriculture Insurance Company of India may evolve a short and simple procedure for estimating the crop loss of individual farmers in consultation with local Revenue and Agriculture authorities in all the districts of the State which will ensure quick disposal of the claims.

3.17 Recently launched “Strategic plan for extending green revolution” includes the eastern states of West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa and Jharkhand. As already mentioned, the State of Assam is a low productivity state at present. A huge potential is required to be tapped in this state. Therefore, it must be made part of the strategic plan for extending green revolution. I also urge upon the Government of India to introduce a North East Agricultural Policy to cater to the specific needs of the North East States.

### **Water Resource Management**

4.1 In Assam, the gigantic flood and acute erosion problem of the State has been taking a menacing form. The flood and erosion problems which cause damage every year to the agricultural lands and affect production in Brahmaputra valley and Barak Valley regions. Large scale erosion in the State is not only a major problem, in fact it is a problem bigger than floods. The Brahmapurta, Barak and their tributaries have eroded 4.27 lakh hectares of fertile land since 1954. The number of villages eroded away is 2534 and the number of families affected is 90,700. Some towns, tea gardens and heritage sites have also been vanished due to erosion. A main factor responsible for economic backwardness of Assam is its recurring floods which till date since 1954 to 2010 has taken a heavy toll to the tune of Rs. 6500.00 crores as

total food damages, there by considerably dampening Agricultural and Industrial growth. Since 1951 a total cumulative area of 4.27 lakh hectares has been affected covering a total of 1.30 Lakh families. The CRF guidelines need to be modified to provide for undertaking of repair works of all damages caused by natural calamities to public utilities, infrastructure and other assets and restore them to pre-calamity level and to also cover erosion related damages. In Assam for erosion affected areas a Water Resource Management Commission has been set up to suggest measures for reclaiming lands, but to rise to the National Average or to achieve target irrigation potential the state shall need Central Assistance.

4.2 In the MTA documents, Planning commission has rightly mentioned that the construction of large and moderate storage reservoirs is effective and reasonably permanent solution to the vexed flood and erosion problem .The two valleys of the State lies in the both upper reaches of the main rivers and the tributaries. Similar recommendations had been made by Rashtriya Barh Ayog (RBA) in its report submitted in 1980 and also in the Master Plan prepared by the Brahmaputra Board. Such dam projects will ensure moderation of flood heights with generation of bulk and cheap hydro-power which have not been harnessed as yet. Steps need to be initiated for a closer coordination of the State Government with the Brahmaputra Board and a further strengthening of the Brahmaputra Board to expeditiously address its mandate.

4.4 It needs mention that as per provisions laid down under section 17.2 of National Water Policy of 2002 which categorically states *“Adequate flood cushion be provided in water storage projects where feasible, to facilitate better flood management in highly flood prone area, flood control should be given overriding consideration in reservoir policy even at the cost of sacrificing some irrigation or power benefits.”* The various multipurpose projects proposed in the Master Plan prepared by Brahmaputra Board viz Tipaimukh, Pagladiya, Kameng, Siang etc. should be taken up as storage projects so that the riparian rights of the State of Assam is not denied and flood moderation is taken due care . The construction of the Subansiri Lower Hydro Electric project has been commenced by the NHPC and flood moderation aspects should be a critical component of the project. Despite the

announcement of the formation of the North East Water Resource Authority (NEWRA) the initiative could not be taken forward due to the reservations of the State of Arunachal Pradesh. The Govt. of India needs to take up the matter of constitution of North East Water Resource Authority (NEWRA) with the Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh in the interest of the downstream areas in Brahmaputra valley. It is suggested that the forum be commenced with all willing North East States for a wholistic approach to address the water resource management strategy in the North East as so critical an issue need immediate attention.

4.5 Till implementation of the above storage projects the State has to tackle the chronic flood and erosion problem with resources from the Govt. of India and the Govt. of Assam is contemplating engaging team of international experts to evolve mechanism for finding long term solution to the chronic erosion problem. In this regard it may be mentioned that the European Union funded Indo-German collaborative effort in the BRAHMA TWINN project needs to be taken.

4.6 To come to National average or to achieve targeted irrigation potential, the state needs a review on the award of Central Assistance for irrigation schemes. The present award of 90 % grant from Govt. of India and 10% loan needs to be 100% grant for schemes under AIBP and the present award of 50:50 in respect of CADWM schemes need to be 90:10 between centre and state

#### **Development of Sixth Schedule Areas, Hill Areas and Special Areas**

5. Welfare and development of economically and socially backward people of the state are the major thrust areas of Eleventh Five Year plan. The total population of the State is 266.55 lakhs( as per 2001 census). Out of this, total scheduled tribes population of the state is 33.08 lakhs which constitutes 12.41% of the total population of the State. The total ST populations in the plains districts are 27.27 lakhs which constitutes 10.63 percent of the population of the plains districts. The ST population of the two hill districts constitutes 2.18 percent of the state total population. The Scheduled Castes Population of the State is 18.26 lakh which is 6.85 percent of the State population. Literacy percentage is 66.78 percent.( as per 2001 census)

5.1 To substantiate the commitment of my government for the welfare of the tribal population during the current year, an amount of Rs.425.16 cr. (17.98%) is allocated out of total NCA of Rs.2364.87 crores for 2010-11 for the Tribal Sub Plan for development of the plain tribes of Assam. Similarly, an amount of Rs. 165.27 crores is allocated for SCSP which is 6.98 %. We have initiated action to make the plan fund allocation for Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) and Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCSP) out of Normal Central Assistance (NCA), Non Lapsable (NCA) as per the directions of the Planning Commission. Separately, funds have been provisioned to the Autonomous Councils to undertake various developmental initiatives as per local needs in their respective jurisdiction.

5.2 State Govt. is implementing various schemes for socio economic upliftment of ST & SC people and the plain tribes of the state namely Award of Post-matric scholarship, Pre-matric scholarship, Book bank for Medical, Engineering and Agriculture students, Stipend for craftsman training, Coaching and allied scheme, Construction of hostel for Boys' and Girls', Vocational training centres and Special incentive to ST(P) meritorious students, family oriented income generating schemes, Construction of Link road and bridges, Drinking water supply scheme, Irrigation facilities, Construction of school buildings, Construction of Community Hall, Construction of Cultural Complexes, Rural Electrification are taken up out of the State Plan fund and fund received from Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India under Article 275(I) of the Constitution.

5.3 Left Wing Extremism (LWE) is yet to surface in the state but its possibility cannot be ruled out as it may try to make inroads among the vulnerable communities. It is also a fact that Assam has been affected by the violent activities perpetrated by militant outfits over the last three decades. As Left Wing Extremists and militant outfits exploit the perception of neglect and feeling of alienation among sections of the population, it is necessary that special programmes for development of the backward and remote areas including border areas are undertaken. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to request the Chairman, National Development Council, to extend the Critical Infrastructure Development Scheme meant for the

LWE affected areas to the affected districts of Assam also so that funds are provided exclusively for these districts to meet the infrastructure gaps.

5.4 My Government has always been concerned about the interest of the tribal and ethnic communities regarding their exclusion in the Governance of Development activities and has taken various steps to assuage the feeling and redress the grievances of the communities and ethnic group who feel deprived. More and more autonomy has been given to the different groups in the forms of Autonomous Councils and Development Councils so that the communities living in the far flung, remote and under-developed areas don't feel deprived and can take part in the development process in their areas. I have already created four Autonomous Councils in addition to the existing three Autonomous Council and fourteen Development Councils for the tribal and other ethnic communities of the plains districts of the state. Out of these councils, only the Bodoland Territorial Council is under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

5.5 I would like to place the issue relating to development of the two hill districts and BTAD of Assam which are covered under Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. In the last meeting of the NDC, held in December, 2007 also this issue was raised. The population of the two hill districts of the State is ten lakhs and the population of BTAD is 29.21 lakhs as against the State of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Mizoram, which were carved out of Assam earlier, have a population of 23 lakhs, 20 lakhs and 9 lakhs respectively as per 2001 Census. The Plan allocation provided out of Normal Central Assistance (NCA) of the State to these two districts and BTC as per norms is comparatively substantially lesser than the Plan Assistance received by Meghalaya amounting to Rs. 1014 crores, Nagaland ,Rs. 991 crores and Mizoram, Rs. 950 crores during the year 2008-09. This has resulted in slower development for these areas generating support for extremist activities and demand for State within the State (Article 244A of the Constitution of India) and even for separate statehood. The development activities in the two districts and BTC are undertaken by the Autonomous Councils. Central assistance provided for two Hill districts of the State remains stagnant over the years although the needs have increased. This assistance needs to be augmented. I urge upon the Planning

Commission that the anomalies need to be tackled by raising Central Assistance under Hill Area Development Plan (HADP) to the tune of Rs. 300 crore annually from the present of Rs.100.00 crores Similar assistance should also be provided to the Bodoland Territorial Council every year.

5.6 The passage of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 has set the framework for the redress of historical injustices and marginalization suffered by the forest dwellers and tribal people. The effective implementation of the Forest Rights Act holds out the promise that finally the enormous bounty of natural resources that tribal areas are endowed with can be harnessed for the holistic development of the tribal people themselves. The effective approach would be to provide an ideal platform to the tribal forest dweller to undertake economic activity such as rearing of medicinal and aromatic plants with due linkages and attention to ecological concerns, which would allow them increased income. State Government has already committed resources but Central assistance in the form of a special package would be necessitated to address the concerns in the eyes of certain quarters amidst the tribal people who have experienced growing alienation from the mainstream.

5.7 I seek to draw special attention to the problems of the Char or the riverine island areas of Assam which suffer from serious locational disadvantages. These are essentially deposit of silt and their problems emanate from the fact that the Brahmaputra is a highly braided river. The shifting nature of the river channels make surface communication and creation of permanent assets extremely difficult. Most of the char areas are also not cadastrally surveyed and there are no land records but because of the fertility of the soil, these are thickly populated. Of late, these areas have also been used by insurgent groups as hideouts due to communicational bottle necks. To provision for the proper security and development of the Char area population which are is largely from the minority community there is urgent necessity of (i) River police stations well equipped with speed boats (ii) Mobile health units (iii) Cadastral survey and generation of land records (iv) Basic administrative structures like Circle and Block Officers, panchayat offices, police stations and outposts etc (v) Inland Water transport services (vi) Non conventional energy and (vii) flood and

erosion protection measures. For these the State of Assam needs to be supported by way of special assistance.

5.8 Assam has approximately 2100 km long inter state border with Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland and West Bengal and 532 Kms long international border with Bangladesh and Bhutan. These border areas are mostly forest and extremely underdeveloped in terms of basic facilities like roads and bridges, water supply, sanitation, electricity etc. Certain section of the inhabitants also got alienated from the State because of the lack of development in the border areas. The distinctive nature of the problems of these areas demand that some proactive steps are taken urgently to develop the road connectivity, convert the timber bridges into concrete bridges and renovate the dilapidated ones, setup adequate number of schools to ensure that each habitation has a lower primary and upper primary school within a radius of 1.5 Km and 3 Km respectively. In view of the serious cross border migration and terrorism and frequent law and border problems in the inter- state border areas a special emphasis on the development of these areas need support from the Government of India.

#### **Welfare of Plain tribes, Scheduled castes and backward classes**

6. Welfare and development of economically and socially backward people of the state are the major thrust areas of Eleventh Five Year plan. The total population of the State is 266.55 lakhs( as per 2001 census). Out of this, total scheduled tribes population of the state is 33.08 lakhs which constitutes 12.41% of the total population of the State. The total ST populations in the plains districts are 27.27 lakhs which constitutes 10.63 percent of the population of the plains districts. The ST population of the two hill districts constitutes 2.18 percent of the state total population. The Scheduled Castes Population of the State is 18.26 lakh which is 6.85 percent of the State population. Literacy percentage is 66.78 percent. (as per 2001 census)

6.1 State Govt. is implementing various schemes for socio economic upliftment of ST & SC people and the plain tribes of the state namely Award of Post-matric scholarship, Pre-matric scholarship, Book bank for Medical, Engineering and

Agriculture students, Stipend for craftsman training, Coaching and allied scheme, Construction of hostel for Boys' and Girls', Vocational training centres and Special incentive to ST(P) meritorious students , family oriented income generating schemes ,Construction of Link road and bridges, Drinking water supply scheme, Irrigation facilities, Construction of school buildings, Construction of Community Hall, Construction of Cultural Complexes, Rural Electrification are taken up out of the State Plan fund and fund received from Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India under Article 275(I) of the Constitution

6.2 My Government is committed to the all round development and protection of the Minorities through implementation of various welfare and developmental programmes and legislative measures addressing sectors like education, economic empowerment and access to amenities. We are also giving special attention for education to the children of minority community living in char areas. We have taken action for upliftment of the Government approved Madrassas institutions. The Government of India is urged to provide 100 % central Assistance for the welfare of minorities especially in the field of Madrasa Education which includes general educational curriculum of the State. This will supplement the commitment by the State Government in assisting by way of grants in aid to 700 no. of kheraji Madrassas in 2010-11 and grants in aid for venture schools.

6.3 Around 50/60 Lakhs of tea and ex-tea tribes are residing in Assam. Majority of them are socially, economically and educationally backward and may fall within the purview of below poverty line. In order to achieve socio-economic development of these tea garden tribes population, Government of Assam has been implementing the welfare schemes through a separate directorate. A special package needs to be considered to ensure that the initiative under inclusive growth reaches out to this marginal section of the population.

### **MGNREGS**

7. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was enacted in 2005 and now covers all the districts of the country. Under the scheme, as many as 36.12 lakh job



cards have been issued in the state of Assam. The ratio of job cards to rural households compares favorably vis-à-vis the All India coverage.

7.1 Under MGNREGA during last year 2009-10, the rural people worked on as many as 22392 schemes in Assam, generating 735 lakh mandays. As many as 21.37 lakh households were provided jobs which are at 56% of total job cards issued which is higher than the National Average. However, due to monsoons the intensity of jobs provided is found to be lower. From this year the state is therefore concentrating on social forestry activities, which can be taken up during the monsoons. For transparency and assuring full payment of wages to workers, emphasis on payment of wage through Bank/Post Office accounts has been made. The State is now making 76% of wage payment through accounts.

7.2 Govt. of Assam had already initiated action on implementation of smart Card (Bio-metric) based on the Andhra Pradesh model as the State has some districts which are poorly banked. Banks had agreed to provide services at 2% Service Charge which was agreed to by the State Government, However, the Rural Development Ministry informed that the scheme can be taken up at 0% charge , quoting the case of Rajasthan. However, verification in Rajasthan shows the progress is extremely slow, as the banks are not showing interest in the absence of service charge. The Ministry of Finance needs to take on overall view and issue directions so that precious time is not lost in bring in this methodology of financial inclusion and transparency.

### **Energy related (Power)**

8. Our country has drawn up ambitious program for accelerated capacity addition to match growing power demand to sustain high economic growth. Non conventional technologies hold great promise in enhancing power availability. R & D in solar technologies need to focus on cost reduction to make it competitive. In the context of Assam, resources such as shale gas and small coal deposits need to be explored for power generation. Development of small coal deposits may be decentralized and management given to the State Government.

8.1 NTPC is setting up a 750 MW (3x250MW), coal based power plant at Bongaigaon. Standing Linkage Committee (SLC), under the Ministry of Coal, in the year 2006 had accorded coal linkage for this power project from two sources of Coal India Limited (CIL) i.e. , 1.65 Million Tons per Annum (MTPA) from North Eastern Coalfields Limited (NECL) and 0.95 MTPA from Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL). The construction activities at the power plant front are going on at full swing and the power production from this power plant is slated to be commenced during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan period. We would like to request the Govt. Of India to take effective steps so that the power station does not suffer from coal shortage.

8.2 There are large number of small coal deposits which are not economically feasible to be operated by companies like Coal India. I strongly advocate the urgent necessity of handing over this small coal blocks to the States who can in turn use it for power production. Since large coal deposits are already linked to big power projects, these small deposits will help states to produce decentralized power.

8.3 Government of India's initiative to expeditious implementation of hydro potential of Brahmaputra basin conceives of construction of a number of dams on the upper reaches of the river. While designing such projects studies are conducted on the impact of these projects on the population in the upstream areas from the point of view of submergence. Population inhabiting the downstream areas feels aggrieved as no comprehensive measures are inbuilt into the designs so as to mitigate the impact of such projects on the livelihood of the people.

8.4 Per capita Power consumption in NE States is one of the lowest in the country. A large number of hydro, thermal projects have been planned in NE region. Some of this power will need to be evacuated to other regions of the country. It must be ensured that full requirement of NE States is met first. For this purpose transmission and distribution infrastructure of NE States needs to be upgraded. I am thankful to Government of India for preparing a comprehensive Detailed Project Report (DPR) and posing it to the World Bank. The scheme needs to be expedited for early implementation.

8.5 To address AT & C(Aggregate technical and commercial) Losses one needs to factor that the distribution system of the state has suffered several because of non investment in almost two decades. Loss reduction in distribution is a capital intensive exercise and to be liberally funded from the Centre.The North East has been described as the potential “power house’ and at present per capita power consumption in NE is very low. The hydro and thermal projects planned for power generation will mandate evacuation of power to other regions of the country and this needs the upgradation of the Transmission and Distribution system on priority and the projected DPR posed to the World Bank needs to be expedited for implementation.

8.6 Distribution System of the State had suffered severely because of non-investment for almost two decades. On the one hand substantial migration is taking place to urban areas requiring expansion of 33/11 KV Sub-stations and distribution line and transformers. On the other hand we have a very aging distribution system which needs to be replaced to avoid losses in the system as well as to improve the quality of power. However, the investment in the sector has been inadequate which restrict our ability to achieve a drastic loss reduction in the distribution sector. Extension of Network into rural areas under RGGVY is also adding to losses.

8.7 Assam has taken up a large programme of appointment of input based franchisees in the feeders providing power to Rural Areas. However, the existing network and metering system in rural areas is in a very dilapidated shape leading to huge technical and commercial losses. A programme has been taken up to rectify some of these. We have also initiated for setting up Assam of 12 Nos. of Special Police Stations and to set up Special Court to control power theft.

8.8 The progress under RGGVY up to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2010 is reflected in the statistics of en-electrified villages at 30.37 %, already electrified villages at 28% and BPL connections at 32.77 %. It may be noted that more than 80 % of the villages where electrification has been completed by ASEB have been energized. There were problems in the districts where Power Grid is the implementing agency but now the

ASEB has deputed one officer in these districts with the powers of Electrical Inspectorate to grant charging permission.

8.9 At the current rate of royalty a huge amount (approximately 1436 crore ) is collected annually from the oil fields of Assam alone but this oil cess is diverted to the Consolidated Fund of India instead of being committed for the development of oil industry. Presently crude oil production in Assam has declined from a peak of 5.6 million tons in 1989-90 to 4.7 million tones. It is strongly suggested that 50% of the oil cess should be deployed for development of oil Industry and the remaining 50% should be given back to the concerned states to address developmental needs. There is huge potential in the marginal oil fields which are not being adequately addressed by the ONGC and OIL and the State Hydrocarbon Company (Assam hydrocarbon and energy Company Ltd) can undertake the responsibility as has been repeatedly put forth.

### **Connectivity**

9. My Govt. has accorded priority to connectivity as it propels growth in rural and semi urban areas. In pursuance of the same we have completed 8178 KM of roads creating connectivity for 3950 Nos. of 1000+ habitations till June, 2010. However, the progress of PMGSY is being hampered due to in proportionate release of fund since December, 2009. Ministry of Rural Development, Govt.of India need to look in to the matter for timely and adequate release of funds so that the entire work can be completed within the targeted period.

9.1 At present, the fund for the maintenance work of PMGSY road is provided from our State resources. But after completion of more than 10000 KM of roads, the burden will be beyond capacity of State Govt. As such, Central Govt. may grant special fund of at least Rs.500 crore every year for maintenance of the road network in Assam.

9.2 The strategy proposed to be adopted as mentioned in MTA document for expeditious execution of NHDP by restructuring the NHAI is most essential. I urge upon the Planning Commission to include one member from east zone more

particularly one part time member from NE Region having well conversant on the region.

9.3 Under various phases of National Highway Development Project & Special Accelerated Road Development Project of –NE region, Assam as well as NE States has been benefitted a lot. But there is necessity to create a fully developed Highway network of the State. In Assam there are yet about 1200 KM of NH which need to be strengthened & widened to bring them to required standard, but not yet covered by any of the above programme. As such, the State would need about Rs.300 crore annually to make them fully developed in the coming ten years. Therefore, allocation under NH is to be increased, based on the criteria of 10 percent allocation of plan fund to the Northeast. These criteria should be adopted for periodical repair works as well.

9.4 The Mid-Term Appraisal has very rightly revealed infrastructure as a major weak spot, which is preventing the economy from transiting to higher rates of growth. This observation is more relevant for Assam in particular and North East region in general. Moreover, Assam being the gateway to the other NE States, development of these adjoining States is largely dependent on the development of road network in Assam. There are some important roads which need immediate development namely, Dhodar Ali in Upper Assam a vital link to Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh. Dhubri- Phulbari is a vital road link for Meghalaya, Lakhimpur- Dhakuakhana- Majuli- Nimati- Jorhat is a important link to remove remoteness of Majuli and shortening the distance of Eastern part & Northern part of Arunachal Pradesh. These roads need special consideration for overall development of the NE States as a whole and Assam in particular.

9.5 I would also request for expeditious completion of the broad -gauge link between Lumding and Badarpur, which passes through North Cachar Hills District (since re-named Dima Hasao District) which will be a boon not only to the infrastructure development in the hill district but for the Barak Valley region of South Assam as well as the States of Mizoram and Tripura. Similarly, the completion of National Highway passing through North Cachar Hills District as a part of East-West

Corridor also needs to be expedited. The above two projects would go in a long way to fulfill the needs and aspirations of tribal population in Hill Districts and will add to the efforts of State bringing peace in these areas through development initiatives.

9.6 The East West corridor work with a total length of 670.65 km in the State of Assam which commenced in Sept, 2004 with a projected conclusion date of 2010 Sept, has till date witnessed completion of only 175.60 km of road till date and an revised extended completion date of 2012 April excluding a key portion of approximately 140 km stretch in the Dima Hasao District which will take longer. Further the existing road has also not been maintained by the NHAI which compounded by the sluggish pace of work has adversely affected transportation and logistics and caused inconvenience to people travelling within the state from Upper and Lower Assam. The issue needs to be addressed on a priority.

9.7 Assam is a riverine State and as much as 32% of the entire country's water resources flow down through the river Brahmaputra, Barak and its tributaries. The Inland Water transport potential should be exploited to the fullest as it is considered to be one of the cheapest mode of transportation being eco-friendly, labour intensive and also requiring low capital investment. The Inland water Transport Department of the State Government has public ferry services which are economically viable and the platform needs to be extended commercially for transportation with on shore handling facilities.

### **Urbanisation**

10. I welcome the importance being assigned to urbanization by the Planning Commission. Huge gaps exist in the urban infrastructure in the State of Assam. The State Government has been trying its best to improve the urban infrastructure by leveraging the State Plan resources in getting additional funding from the centrally sponsored programmes. These include projects under JNNURM, SJSRY, 10% Lump Sum Pool Fund for north eastern States including Sikkim and our own State Plan Schemes.

10.1 The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) came as a ray of hope for improving the urban infrastructure of the towns of Assam. A total of 46 projects that include 30 UIDSSMT projects and 16 IHSDP projects were approved at a total project cost of Rs. 292.82 crores. These projects could cover only a few towns leaving a large number of towns without any projects under JNNURM. Sanction of new projects under JNNURM has come to a halt because of inadequate allocation to the State.

10.2 My Government is seeking to address inadequate urban infrastructure and urban transport planning on a priority. The strategy of increased devolution and autonomy to the Urban Local Bodies, incorporating e-governance, managerial skill and improvement in service standards, user charges for urban utilities shall be necessary along with emphasis on urban housing, drainage, slum clearance ( under Rajiv Awas Yojana), supply of safe drinking water and sewage and waste disposal. Resource constraints will be addressed to an extent by PPP mode project, but Assam needs more direct fund support as attempting a mechanism to finance urban infrastructure by maneuvering the land value as mooted in the strategy paper could necessitate more gestation time. I strongly advocate that futuristic urban planning should provision for self contained urban habitations, with satellite townships to address concentrated growth in urban centres. These urban habitations should have to be planned in such a manner to provision for civic amenities, mass transport backbone, services and citizen friendly environments with the entire habitation being self contained and financially viable by way of generation of resources for civic and other urban local body functions.

10.3 In this connection, I have taken up with the Government of India on several occasions that 10% of the allocation under JNNURM funds should be earmarked for the North east, so that the state can get adequate resources for covering the rest of the towns. I have been assured by the Ministry of Urban Development that they have no objection to earmarking 10% allocation for North Eastern States but the Planning Commission had to find additional resources for meeting this commitment. I strongly urge upon the Planning Commission to quickly allocate additional

resources for meeting this commitment failing, which the pace of urban infrastructure improvement in the State is bound to fall.

### **Environment**

11. The State Government is conscious of the impact of future climate variation and seriously concerned with initiating appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures. Our budgetary expenditure in case of Environment sector is 1.42 % of the total expenditure against national average expenditure of 0.42%. We have carried out massive plantation progrme in community places under Assam Bikash Yojana which shows a good result. We have formed about 38 Joint Forest Management Committee at District and Sub – Divisional level and taken up afforestation activities covering more than 8725 hectares of land.

11.1 It is indeed laudable that the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF). Government of India is creating a centre of excellence at NEHU to undertake climate related research in the North East. There is need to coordinate and to take on board all research initiatives in the region and I am sure NEHU would take such initiatives in its research fold.

11.2 Agriculture and forest are two climate sensitive sectors in Assam and in the entire N.E region. It is heartening to note that serious deliberations are underway to launch Green India Mission under National Action Plan on Climate Change. The State of Assam will lend its full support in implementing the activities under this mission. Besides, two externally aided projects for Assam are in pipeline. One under Indo-French Development Co-operation will focus on eco-restoration and livelihood security the other with German support is a multi-sectoral regional project and will concentrate on climate change adaptation strategy.

### **Health**

12. Eleventh Plan recognized good health as a source of contribution to economic growth and stressed on a comprehensive and sustained approach to meet the health needs of the population. It included strengthening of primitive, protective and curative to palliative and rehabilitative aspect of the health care system. Targets were fixed



under the NRHM for providing manpower in various health institutions and improving the health infrastructure. More than twenty nine thousand ASHAs are now in place in Assam in tune with these targets, and the number of ANMs has reached 1.7 per sub-centre against the required 2.

12.1 Similarly, the man power in PHCs, CHCs and civil hospitals has been substantially augmented yet the target fixed is still to be achieved. We have also increased our capacity for man power development at various levels and the impact of these would be visible in the coming years. Mobile Medical Unit have been provided for all the districts as targeted and District Health Plans are also in place. Hospital Management Committees are functioning right up to the PHC level and untied grants are being provided to them for local health activities.

12.2 I am happy to inform the august house that there is a visible impact on institutional deliveries which has gone up to 65% from 25% during the last 4 years. Similarly, the immunization has gone up from 20% to 70% in the same period. With this the IMR and MMR have also improved. This performance in the health sector by the State of Assam has been lauded in various forums.

12.3 Our own assessment based on the reports received during the last 6 months and covering 1.33 lakhs births in all the districts of the state , through ASHAs, shows that the IMR has come down to 20 against 64 five years back and the MMR has come down to 180 from 480 earlier. It crystallizes that we are fulfilling the national goal envisaged in the Eleventh Five Year Plan. We need to consolidate these gains in the coming years and for that financial support from the Union Government would be very necessary for at next plan period.

12.4 In accordance with the policy of increasing the number of medical colleges and other health institutions, we have taken steps to establish 5 new medical colleges in the state of which two are proposed to be set up through PPP. Our efforts would need financial support in adequate measures to ensure smooth functioning of these colleges.

12.5 It would be desirable that the services provided by the medical colleges in the state are also covered under the NRHM in as far as the tertiary care rendered by them to the rural population is concerned. As our efforts to handle the communicable diseases and MCH services have already picked up the momentum, it would be appropriate to start new initiative in the direction of non-communicable diseases which are showing tendency to spread fast with the growing urbanization.

### **Education**

13. Under SSA, access to regular schools or alternative education centres has increased tremendously and the state is coming closer to universal education. Already 1521 Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) centres were upgraded last year to formal schools. Due to our initiatives the dropout rate has gone down. As per data collected by the State Government through District Information on School Education (DISE) 2009-10, the dropout rate from Class-I to IV (LP) is reduced from 10.12% in 2002-03 to 5.75% in 2008-09. Accordingly, the dropout rate of Class-V to VII (UP) is reduced from 30.80 p.c. in 2002-03 to 14.74 p.c. in 2008-09. In case of girl students from class-I to IV (LP) dropout rate reduced from 9.41 p.c. (2002-03) to 5.0 p.c. (2008-09) and from Class-V to VII (UP) drop out reduced from 30.40 p.c. (2002-03) to 13.45 p.c. (2008-09). However, universal retention is our focus now and we do feel the need to improve the quality of education in terms of teachers' training, classroom environment and activities, teaching learning materials, community participation; apart from physical infrastructure such as classrooms, toilet blocks, drinking water etc.

13.1 Under the education sector, the state has taken up the programme of Sakshar Bharat along with the rest of the country, to increase literacy and bring about empowerment, especially of women.

13.2 As the Right of Children to Compulsory and Free Education Act -2009, has come into force, the state would need hand-holding and huge support from centre, to meet its infrastructure and manpower gaps, we particularly need support from the centre to establish sufficient teacher training institutes to meet the demands under RTE Act.

13.3 Emphasis has been given now to education in Science and Maths. I would like to thank the Government of India for extending universal education programme to the Secondary level through RMSA and schemes like Model Schools, Girls Hostel etc. I would urge the Planning Commission and Government of India, however to enhance the coverage of blocks under these programme, from the 81 presently allocated, to all the 145 blocks in the State, as all blocks do have backward pockets. Further it is our request that the Schools be of residential pattern with vocational training as well.

13.4 The Assam Higher Secondary Education Council (AHSEC) has adopted the NCERT syllabi at the Higher Secondary stage in order to provide Education of comparable quality from the current Academic Year 2010-11. The AHSEC has introduced the National Curriculum in Science, Arts and Commerce streams.

13.5 We have submitted two schemes namely Appointment of Urdu Teacher and Infrastructural grant through Moulana Azad Education Foundation to the Govt. of India for sanction under PM's New 15-Point Programme for strengthening of Madrassa Education. These two proposals may be considered urgently.

13.6 Under Higher and Technical Education, the state is in the process of setting up a Women's University, a Sanskrit University, a University of Science & Technology, apart from new Engineering Colleges and Polytechnics. We welcome the various reforms in Higher Education being initiated by MHRD, including the Higher Education and Research Commission, the National Academic Depository and the National Vocational Qualification Framework. These will certainly go a long way in improving the scenario of education at large in the country.

### **Skill Development**

14. Improved training and skill development has to be a critical part of an employment strategy. Both Tenth Plan and the Eleventh Plan noted the large gap between the number of new entrants to the labour force and inadequate availability of seats in vocational and professional training institutes. The Eleventh plan also

identified various sectors with prospects for high growth in output and for generation of new employment opportunities. In accordance, we have given special emphasis for skill development in the State. In the line of the national policy the state skill development Mission has already been formed. Apart from revamping of ITI under Prime Minister' Special package we have also initiated action for setting up of Skill Development Centres in PPP mode.

### **Poverty Reduction**

15. The national target for reducing poverty is to cut the percentage of the population below the poverty line by ten percentage points during the Plan period. This implies a pace of poverty reduction more than twice that experienced in the past. Our success in ensuring inclusive growth depends critically on how well we do in this dimension of performance. It heartens me to inform that the State of Assam has performed commendably well in poverty reduction in the past few years which is noticeable vis-à-vis the Planning Commission assessment that the growth process witnessed in India has led to a reduction in poverty between 1993-94 and 2004-05 though the reduction is less than what might have been expected (for the country as a whole).

### **Issues for attention**

16. In 54<sup>th</sup> NDC meeting held on December, 2007, I have mentioned that over the 10th Plan Period and till date the percentage of NCA in the State Plan outlay has been decreasing . It was 73.03 % in the year 2003-04 and it has come down to 44.8% during 2007-08, it has further gone down to 37% in 2008-09, 36% in 2009-10 and to 31% in 2010-11. The percentage of increase of NCA for the successive plan periods has also shown fluctuating trend. The increase of NCA for the State Plan in 2008-09 over 2007-08 was 10%, increase of NCA in 2009-10 over 2008-09 is 15% but it has gone down to 10% in 2010-11 over 2009-10. Moreover, out of the total NCA about 45% is required to be provided as State Matching share for Centrally Sponsored Scheme and we have also commitments to provide fund for Hill Areas, BTC and Autonomous Councils. Hence, the scope of providing fund for works as per State Govt's priority is decreasing. I feel strongly that the recommendations of the

working group regarding increasing the NCA in the State plan outlays need urgent consideration.

17. North East Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy (NEIIPP), 2007 was announced after a series of deliberations with the State Government, Industries Associations, Committee of Secretaries, Group of Ministers and finally by Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs. On the contrary, the withdrawal of exemption of Central Excise Duty was notified unilaterally by Ministry of Finance on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2008. Subsequently a revised Notification dated 10<sup>th</sup> June 2008 was issued by the Ministry of Finance. The impacts of these two Notifications are negative across all Major Industries of Assam. Needless to mention that after a long time an Investment climate was developing in the State with approximate investment of Rs.20,000 crores in the Pipe line following NEIP, 1997 and NEIIPP, 2007. The modification in the Policy sends a message that the Policy regime is unstable and therefore no long time investments can be planned in this area. I would therefore request you to withdraw the aforesaid Notification and to take measure for enforcement of exemption of Central Excise Duty expeditiously.

18. In view of price rise of food stuff, the existing norms of Rs. 4.00 per malnourished child and Rs. 6.00 per severely malnourished child and Rs. 5.00 for per pregnant women is not adequate. Therefore the unit cost needs to be revised to Rs. 8.00, Rs.10.00 and Rs. 7.00 respectively. Moreover the Unit cost of Anganwadi center building of Rs.1.75 L may be enhanced to Rs. 2.50 lakh for general areas and Rs. 3.00 lakh for hill and riverine areas. This is of utmost necessity given the thrust laid on promotion of nutrition and health status of children and women, empowerment of women and protection of rights of women and inclusive development of persons with disabilities.

To conclude, Sir, I am confident that under your dynamic leadership, the Mid-Term corrections proposed will go a long way in achieving the targeted development of the State in particular and the country in general.

**JAI HIND**