

## **XTH FIVE YEAR PLAN: A SPECIAL CASE FOR TRIPURA**

1.1. Tripura, the second most populous State in the North Eastern Region is one of the most backward State in the Region. In infrastructure index, it is only second to Arunachal Pradesh from the bottom. Tripura is surrounded on three sides by Bangladesh with more than 850 kms. long border. With approximately 60% of its area under forest, it has only 27% cultivable area. The economy of the State being agrarian, majority of its rural population is dependent on agriculture.

1.2. Before partition the people of Tripura had access to well developed markets, trading centres through a well planned system of Railways. The region also had access to Chitagong Port which is in the vicinity southern most tip of the State. After partition and independence, the well developed markets and the railway system got separated from Tripura. All this rather pushed back the region by about 25 years or so, as in the new set up, important market/trading centers such as, Calcutta, which was only about 400 Kms. away from Agartala by shortest route, became far away from Tripura with a distance of 1645 kms. of Calcutta from Agartala. All this has had its impact on the economy of the region and on its people.

1.3. Tripura is rich in agricultural/horticultural Produce, natural gas, flora and fauna with a large number of medicinal and aromatic plants. If expenditure on the successive plans in the State is taken into consideration, the investment so far made has not been adequate to build the minimum infrastructure necessary for bringing Tripura at par with the mainland States. Therefore while successive plans for the State have been formulated only with some percentage increase from one plan period to another, the Tenth Plan has been formulated with adequate increase in investment in the important and critical areas of the State economy with a view to accelerate the pace of development, in tune with the over all targeted growth in GDP of 8% at the National Level for the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan period.

1.4. The State for a long time has been dependent on import of food grains from out side to meet its requirement its local production being not sufficient to meet the demand. With a view to attaining self-sufficiency in food grains production, it has, therefore, embarked upon a 10 year Perspective Plan for attaining the self-sufficiency as mentioned earlier. The proposed Tenth Plan proposes to give a push to agricultural production through increase in productivity of major agricultural crops, by use of improved technology increased area under High Yield Varieties, higher nutrient consumption, precision farming through a system of conducting soil tests in different parts of the State.

1.5. Tripura as mentioned earlier, is rich in horticulture produce with large varieties of fruits being grown in rural Tripura. Horticulture is important for the State owing to its topography and terrain keeping in view that area under agricultural cultivation is limited. In the State Horticultural crops provide much needed nutrition to the poor in the rural areas, particularly tribals. Tripura is also known for its varieties of pineapple. In some parts of the State, orange cultivation is being successfully taken up. The per capita income of Tripura is much lower when compared with the per capita income at the national level. With a view to taking up all round horticulture development for dealing with underemployment in the rural areas and for supplementing the income of the farmer, a perspective plan for 10 year period for horticulture development in the State has also been drawn up with the launching of the programme from the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the 10<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan. All ground work for launching the perspective plan has already been completed with the holding of workshops in the State on various aspects of the perspective plan. During the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan, area under various horticultural crops is proposed to be expanded with the planting of quality material. Side by side, rejuvenation of the existing stock is also proposed to be taken up. Creation of post harvest infrastructure in the State is already being taken up in the form of cold storages and proposals for a few more cold storages are already under consideration under the Non-Lapsable Pool. Under Horticulture, besides expansion in area of fruit crops, cultivation of vegetables including off season vegetables is also proposed to be taken up on a large scale as part of the perspective plan for the horticulture development.

1.6. For supplementing the incomes of the rural poor, with limited area under cultivation, the importance of animal husbandry and dairy sector hardly needs to be emphasized. Being second most populous State in the North Eastern Region, there also exists a wide gap between the demand and supply of animal and dairy products. During the Tenth Five Year Plan period, a perspective Plan for development of animal resources and dairy sector has also been drawn up which is proposed to be launched during 2002-03. Proposals for the Tenth Plan in this sector include strengthening of the animal husbandry institutional frame work with provisions for cultivation of improved varieties of animals including poultry and duckery besides imparting training to farmers in management of animal resources. The proposed interventions are essentially needed, as Tripura does not have the benefit of much flow of investment from outside on account of its geographical remoteness.

1.7. The State due to its peculiar terrain, is endowed with a large number of water bodies including rivers and reservoirs. A majority of the population of the State being consumer of fish, there are immense opportunities of Fishery Development in the State. The State at present is not self-sufficient in

production of fish to meet the requirement of the population. A large number of fishermen belonging to the poor category have fisheries as their livelihood. There is thus a large potential for further supplementing the agricultural income of the farmer through enhanced fish cultivation/production, thereby creating additional employment opportunities in the rural areas. Keeping this in view, a perspective plan of fishery development for the next 10 year period has also been drawn up by the State. Like other perspective plans, ground work for the same has already been completed. During 10<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, fishery development thus is proposed to be an important area of development. Larger allocations, therefore, have been proposed to this task in the desired manner.

1.8. Scheduled Tribes constitute over 30% population of the State. Among the poverty groups, persons belonging to ST constitute the bulk. Scheduled Tribes are also characterized by higher drop out ratios in education in case of both boys and girls. Tripura has a separate Autonomous District Council Constituted under the Sixth Schedule for decentralization of power to areas predominantly inhabited by Scheduled Tribes. In order to make sufficient impact through programmes for welfare of the weaker section in these areas, a larger allocation under the Special Area Programme has been proposed during the 10<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan. Under the general Plan for the Welfare of Scheduled Tribes, a number of other interventions are proposed for improving the educational standard of the tribal population. The State Government has already launched a 25 Point Package for the welfare of Scheduled Tribes in the year 1999. For Welfare of Scheduled Caste, OBCs and other Religious Minorities the State Government has launched another 44 point package in line with the approach of the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan, for their over-all development.

1.9. Provision of minimum health facilities to the rural poor is another priority area for the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan. To provide the health cover to the poor masses spread across the length and breadth of the State, the health infrastructure is proposed to be further strengthened during the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan period. A decision is already taken to set up a Medical College in the State to meet the requirement of health professionals.

1.10. In the North Eastern Region, Tripura is only second to Mizoram in literacy. The State has a fully functional University with 14 General Degree Colleges, besides an Engineering College and other Institutions of higher learning. The State at the same time also has a large number of educated unemployed. Its geographical isolation puts its people, particularly the educated men and women at a further disadvantage compared to the rest of the country. The State has come out with a IT Policy of its own in 2000 and is now on the threshold of an IT revolution. Keeping in view the future of IT in the country, introduction of IT

Courses and creation of IT infrastructure is planned during the 10<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan.

1.11. The North Eastern Region requires to be dealt differently compared to other regions of the country. The State surrounded on three sides by Bangladesh requires transit facilities to be opened up through Bangladesh. In the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan period, collaboration with Bangladesh is likely to be strengthened further with the opening up of access to Chittaganj Port. In that event, Tripura has the potential of becoming the gateway of the entire North Eastern Region to the outside world. Though rich in natural gas and other natural resources, Tripura does not have many industries. During the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan period, emphasis has therefore been laid on progressive industrialization of the State, particularly in the small/cottage industries sector.

1.12. Availability of natural gas in Tripura has also opened up the potential for power generation. Keeping in view the demand for power by the terminal year of the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan, it is proposed to take up additional power generation during the plan period besides strengthening/ installation of the transmission system.

1.13. Outlay for Tripura for the 9<sup>th</sup> Plan period at 96-97 prices was fixed at Rs.2577.40 crores, as against which the anticipated expenditure at the 96-97 prices works out to about Rs.1876.71 crore i.e. 72.81%. The proposed outlay for the 10<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan at five and half times the current year's outlay, in actual terms, works out to less than the 9<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan outlay if the effect of inflation in the intervening period is taken into consideration. Tripura with its problems of unemployment and under employment, low per capita income, a high poverty ratio requires a special treatment and therefore for the 10<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, an outlay of Rs.6908.25 crores has been proposed with plan outlay for 2002-2003 of Rs.1114.76 crores.

1.14. The State presently is being run by a transparent administration with strong presence of developed Panchayati Raj Institutions. It is thus all set to take on the direction of the speedier development in the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan period, for which the proposed outlay would be essential. Speedier development of the region is also needed to solve the problems of unemployment and under employment, particularly of the youth, which is also otherwise essential for maintenance of law and order and peace in the region.