

PAC-132

**COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
(2013-2016)**

HUNDRED AND THIRTY SECOND REPORT



सत्यमेव जयते

(Thirteenth Assembly)

Report of the Committee on Public Accounts,
Assam Legislative Assembly on the Reports of the
Comptroller and Auditor General of India (Civil) for the
years 1983-84, 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87
relating to Agriculture Department,
Government of Assam.

Presented to the House on 15-02-2014

Assam Legislative Assembly Secretariat,
Dispur, Guwahati-6.

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(i)

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

Chairman:

1. Shri Keshab Mahanta

Members:

2. Shri Abdul Muhib Mazumdar
3. Shri Gautam Bora
4. Capt. Robin Bordoloi
5. Shri Binanda Kumar Saikia
6. Shri Aklius Tirkey
7. Shri Kamal Sing Narzary
8. Shri Emmanuel Mosahary
9. Shri Utpal Dutta
10. Md. Sirajuddin Ajmal
11. Shri Swapan Kar
12. Shri Prasanta Phukan
13. Shri Jatin Mali

Secretariat:

1. Shri G.P.Das, Principal Secretary
2. Shri P.K.Hazarika, O.S.D.
3. Shri Animesh Chaudhury, Under Secretary
4. Shri Karuna Kanta Deka, C.O.

(ii)

PREFATORY REMARKS

I, Shri Keshab Mahanta, Chairman, Committee on Public Accounts, Assam Legislative Assembly having been authorized to submit the report on its behalf present this Hundred and Thirty Second Report of the Committee on Public Accounts on the Audit paras contained in the Reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (Civil) for the years 1983-84, 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87 pertaining to Agriculture Department, Government of Assam.

2. The Reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (Civil) for the years 1983-84, 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87 was laid before the House on 5-10-1987, 7-6-1989 and 5-10-1990.

3. The Reports mentioned above relating to the Agriculture Department was considered by the Sub-Committee-'B' of the Committee on Public Accounts under the Convenership of Shri Abdul Muhib Mazumdar, M.L.A.(as at Annexure-I) in their sitting held on 22nd July, 2013. The Sub-Committee also adopted the draft Report in their meeting held on 03-12-2013 for considered and approved by the main Committee. The out-going Committee as in Annexure-II had considered and approved this draft Report in their sitting held on 03-12-2013, but could not present the same before the House owing to expiry of its term.

4. The Committee has considered the draft report and finalized the same in their sitting held on 30-01-2014.

5. The Committee places on records their appreciations to the Sub-Committee-'B' for their strenuous works for obtaining various records, information and clarification pertaining to the Audit paras relating to the Agriculture Department. The Committee also wishes thanks to the departmental witnesses for their co-operation. The Committee is also appreciates the Accountant General (Audit), Assam and his Junior Officers for their valuable assistance. The Committee also pleased to offer thanks to the Principal Secretary, Assam Legislative Assembly with his officers and staff of the Committee on Public Accounts Branch for their valuable services rendered to the Committee.

6. The Committee earnestly hopes that the Government would implement the recommendations made in this Report.

Dispur:
The 30th January, 2014.

SHRI KESHAB MAHANTA,
Chairman
Committee on Public Accounts.

The Report

Agriculture Department

Avoidable expenditure

(Audit para 3.1/C& AG(Civil)/1983-84/p-16)

1.1. The Audit has pointed out that in order to combat pest menace which threatened different areas of Cachar District, the District Agricultural Officer (DAO), Cachar proposed squad operations and placed requirement with the Director of Agriculture (between May 1982 and May 1983) for different kinds of pesticides. Accordingly, 4200 litres of sumithion (1350 litres in 100 ml. bottles; 1470 litres in 250 ml. bottles and 1380 litres in 5 litre tins @ Rs. 154.70, Rs. 128.30 and Rs. 112.10 per litre respectively) was obtained from the Assam Agro Industries Development Corporation on payment of Rs. 5.25 lakhs. While indenting for the pesticides the DAO had not indicated the packing size in all these cases. The District Agriculture Officer stated (October 1983) that the supply of sumithion in 5 litre container would have served the purpose better. The supply of 2820 litres in smaller container entailed avoidable expenditure of Rs.0.55 lakh. Government stated in June 1984 that the Director of Agriculture, who placed the supply order, did not mention the pack-size for 2000 litres, while for 820 litres the supplier did not supply the pack-size mentioned in the supply order.

1.2. The Department by their written reply has stated that the department used to place indent on the AAIDC Ltd. for requirement from time to time, and the supplies were received in different pack sizes according to our suitability and convenience for distribution. Usually, the small pack sizes are preferred for distribution amongst the small and marginal farmers. The pesticides are issued to the farmers according to the size of holdings. The procurement in bigger containers and thereafter distribution in loose condition according to requirement of farmers can be hazardous to human life as the loose pack would remain without label and seal and may also be wrongly utilized by the farmers resulting into health hazard. Further it is also prevented by Pesticides Act. Moreover, there might be wastage and loss due to spillage which may create pollution problem also. Due to the large attack of Rice Hopper and other insects, pests, D.A.O.,

Silchar indented for supply of Somithion (pesticide). Accordingly order was placed by the Director Agriculture to AAIDC for supply without mentioning pack size. AAIDC had supplied some quantity in smaller packs according to availability with the corporation at that time due to urgency of situation as the procurement from outside the State could have taken long time and delay could have affected the crop adversely. The supply was accepted for immediate use to protect the crop pest attack. The question of avoidable expenditure in this case therefore does not arise .In this connection it is mention here that the para had been already discussed by the Public Accounts Committee on 12th December/1988 in their spot study tour to Barak Valley.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.3. The Committee is satisfied with the submission of the departmental representatives and pleased to drop the para.

Defective implementation of Minikit programme.

(Audit para 3.2/C&AG/(Civil)1983-84/p-16-17)

1.4. The Audit has pointed out that a test-check in September 1983 of the accounts of the District Agriculture Officer, Dhubri revealed that in 1982-83 there was delay in procurement/distribution of seeds under the programme as mentioned below:-

Type of Seeds	Sowing season	Period of procurement	Quantity procured	Cost (In lakhs of Rs.)	Period distribution
Mustard	Mid-October to Mid-November	20 th November 1982 to 7 th Dec-82	379.75 quintals	2.88	Not available and actual receipt of 101.75 quintals not acknowledged.
Pea	Ditte	21 st Dec/82	112 quintals	0.86	Distributed to AEO in the last week of Dec/83. Date of Distribution to farmers not on record but instances of distribution upto 5 th Feb/85, when it was time for harvesting came to notice.
Gram seeds	Mid-August and Mid-September	7 th October 1982 to 23 rd Dec/82	92.55 quintals	1.01 4.75	Not available on records

Since timely sowing, a vital factor for the success of a crop, was essential for introducing and popularizing it, the inability to provide the seeds in right time and absence of co-ordination frustrated the very purpose for which expenditure (total Rs. 4.75 lakhs) was incurred by Government.

1.5. The department by their written reply has stated that the reasons for delay in procurement/distribution of Seeds of Mustard Pea & Gram under Minikit programme during 1982-83 in Dhubri District are detailed below:- MUSTARD: Although the optimum sowing season of Mustard crop is October to Mid November yet the crop can be sown in the month of December considering the soil condition as well as the prevailing weather condition of the locality . Accordingly the entire quantity of Mustard seeds (379,75 qtls.) was distributed to the farmers from last week of November to end of December 1982. As regards acknowledgement of receipt for 101.75 qtls. of Mustard seeds it may be stated that the actual receipt of the beneficiaries were misplaced and could not be produced at the time of audit. Later on, receipted challans were traced out and kept in records.

PEA SEEDS : As regards distribution of 112.00 qtls of Pea Seeds to the farmers it is stated that the pea seeds were received during the period upto 21st December 82 and distributed completely during the last week of the month (December /82) and not upto 5th February/83 as recorded by audit. However, the actual payees receipt for some quantities of seeds distributed during December/82 were submitted by respective V.L.E.W. by 5th February/83. However, in some cases the dates of distribution were not recorded by the concerned V.L.E.W.s due to their ignorance.

GRAM SEEDS: During December/82 the following pulse seeds were distributed to the farmers under Minikit Demonstration Programmes.

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|-------------|
| 1. | Gram (Bengal gram) | 45.00 qtls. |
| 2. | Black gram | 67.61 qtls. |
| 3. | Green gram | 37.55 qtls |

BENGAL GRAM: The period of sowing season of this variety is Mid October to November and not mid August to mid September as observed by audit in the flood prone areas of the District, this kind of variety of Gram Seeds can be grown upto December depending upon the soil and weather condition. The period of distribution of gram seeds were actually recorded by the respective V.L.E.W.s on the body of A.P.R.s from 24th December to 28th December/1982 which are available in the office.

GREEN GRAM & BLACK GRAM : The sowing time of this variety is 15 August to 30th September, but this crop can also be grown particularly in the flood-prone low-lying areas of the District upto October and accordingly seeds were distributed to the farmers within the month of October which was recorded in A.P.R.s by the concerning V.L.E.Ws. In some ,delay occurred due to late receipt of seeds. However such delay did not considerably affect the success of the crops.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATION.

1.6 The departmental representatives in their oral deposition before the Committee, pointed out that the audit para relates to the district of Dhubri which is mostly flood prone and land is low-lying where seeds can be sown beyond the actual sowing season. So, the contention of the audit in their case is not applicable. After threadbare discussion, the Committee is satisfied with the reply of departmental representatives and decided to drop the para.

Unauthorized diversion of fund

(Audit para 6.1.C&AG(Civil)/1983-84/P-124-125)

1.7. The audit has pointed out that in September 1979, Government sanctioned Rs.13 lakhs to the Assam State Agriculture Marketing Board for maintenance of staff and construction of infrastructure facilities, e.g godowns, auction platform, etc, in the principal market yards and sub-market yards in the market area. Out of this, the Board utilized Rs.1.92 lakhs upto February 1979 for purchase of four, Hindustan Trakker vehicle (one each for Dhing, Gauripur, Howli and Kharupetia market Committees), which constituted unauthorized diversion of funds.

1.8 The department by their written reply has stated that the during the year 1978-79 Rs. 13.00 lakhs was released as grants-in-aid to the Assam Agril Marketing Board for maintenance of State and construction of infrastructure facilities in principal market yard and sub market yard in the market areas. Out of which Rs. 1.91 lakhs was utilized for purchase of 4 Hindusthan Diesel Tracker vehicle. Considering the necessity of the vehicles for 4 nos. of regulated market committee namely, Gouripur, Howly ,Kharupetia and Dhing as the markets under the market areas are scattered at long distance from one another. The market committee officials were required to travel in the entire market area to control the traders for implementing the regulatory provisions and to bring the trading community under the Licensing system. The diversion of fund was regularized by the Board by obtaining ex-post facto sanction from Govt.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.9. The Committee observes that ~~an~~ the diversion of fund, regularized by obtaining ex-post-facto ~~from~~ ^{sanction} Government, the Committee therefore, decided to drop the para.

Plant Protection Programme

(Audit Sub para 3.1.1. & 3.1.2/C&AG(Civil)/1984-85/p-19-23)

1.10. The audit has pointed out that to increase the productivity of land it is essential to protect the plants from pests and diseases besides the use of better seeds, fertilizer and irrigation. Assam has a crop area of 33 lakh hectares. Each year a large portion of its production potential is reported to be affected by pests, insects, rodents and various crop diseases. With a view to preventing crop losses caused by pests etc., various plant protection measures have been taken up (1950) by the Agriculture Department. For implementation of the plant protection programme the department undertakes (i) surveillance and forecasting of plant infestation (ii) plant protection campaign (iii) quality control of pesticides and (iv) procurement and distribution of pesticides and plant protection equipments.

The expenditure on the programme during 1980-81 to 1983-84 was as follows :-

Year	Total budget provision	Total expenditure(Rupees in lakhs)
1980-81	47.00	45.93
1981-82	46.75	37.08
1982-83	28.20	27.89
1983-84	37.60	27.89
1984-85	83.68	83.68

The budget provisions during 1981-82, 1982-83 and 1983-84 were lower in comparison to 1980-81 which is contrary to the strategy adopted by the Government for Sixth- Five

Year Plan to provide adequate plant protection coverage particularly for High Yielding Variety (HYV) crop as such crops are more susceptible to pest attack.

1.11. The department by their written reply has stated that the budget provisions for such programme are usually based on estimation of requirement during the relevant year. Actual requirement cannot be assessed because of the fact that other than some endemic areas, Out break of pest & disease is purely unpredictable and thus budgetary provision is made on tentative basis only. However in case of any emergent requirement of pest/ disease attack the provisions of supplementary demand or re-appropriation can be resorted to. But the pattern of actual expenditure in the years mentioned in the audit report reveals that the budget provisions made were adequate.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS.

1.12 The Committee is satisfied with the deposition of the departmental representatives and decided to drop the para.

Surveillance

(Audit sub para 3.1.3 C&AG(Civil)/1984-85/(P-19-23)

1.13. The audit has pointed out that the Director of Agriculture (DA) Assam formulated (June 1979) guidelines for pest surveillance programme to have an advance knowledge on probable pest/disease build up in an area. The programme envisaged the setting up of three pest surveillance teams at Sibsagar, Silchar and Guwahati to cover the entire state. These teams were to visit 500 selected places within their respective jurisdiction once in two weeks selecting different routes in return journeys. Each type of pests and diseases affecting major crops viz. paddy, jute, potato, mustard pulses and wheat was to be given a code number and the party was to inform the Deputy Director of Agriculture (plant protection, Khanapara) from the place of visit each afternoon about the incidence of disease. Despite appointment of Surveillance Officers at Silchar, Jorhat and Guwahati in 1980-81 and spending of Rs. 6.03 lakhs under the programme on surveillance staff during 1980-81 to 1983-84 there was no record with Surveillance officers, Silchar and Guwahati about the code number allotted to the pests/diseases. Also there was no record to indicate whether any telegram was issued to the Deputy Director of Agriculture informing him about the incidence of pest attack or disease although there were moderate and large scale pest attacks in different years (September 1985). Records also indicated that implements necessary for the surveillance work had not been supplied till March 1985. Department did not bring out any manual in respect of major crops. Other than rice for guidance of surveillance teams. The Surveillance Officer, Silchar state (August 1985) that although his jurisdiction included the sub-division of Silchar, Hailakandi, Karimganj, North Cachar Hills Karbi Anglong districts the areas under Silchar and Karimganj sub-divisions only be covered during the initial period because of the vast area under his jurisdiction and also because of shortage of field staff. The Joint Director of Agriculture (Zonal) in their meeting held at Khanapara on 30th September 1983 observed that except at Jorhat (Sibsagar) the functioning of pest surveillance work was not satisfactory. There was no record to indicate whether any action had been initiated to improve the surveillance work thereafter.

1.14. The department by their written reply has stated that the pest surveillance Units consisting of one Surveillance Officer and one Field Assistant were set up one each at Sibsagar, Silchar and Guwahati during 1980-81. It was in the infant stage of Pest Surveillance scheme of the department. Immediately after setting up these three Units, necessary apparatus and vehicles could not be provided due to limited budget to all three Units. In absence of Vehicles, surveillance works could not be perform as per norms. Gradually, the existing Pests Surveillance units were strengthened by providing one vehicle to each unit, and funds were made available. Required equipments were also provided. Reports on survey works from the three units were received. The issue of telegrams from the pest surveillance units is not essential in normal situation, but if situation so warranted the telegraphic communication are adopted. Further, personal communications to the concerned officers are also being practiced. With a view to improve the surveillance work, surveillance units were increased to 6 (six) units and they were placed at Jorhat, Silchar, Nagaon, Kokrajhar and Tezpur and one at Khanapara creating the following posts during the year 1985. 1. Six nos. Zonal Surveillance Officer, 2.Six nos. L.D. As, 3.Six nos.of Peons, 4.Six nos.of Driver, 5.Three nos.of Field Asstts. Besides the above six nos. of vehicles were also procured and allotted to each Zonal Surveillance Officers, necessary equipments and apparatus were also provided to each of the units to facilitate better and smooth functioning. The officers were sent for training to reputed institutions. A Seminar was organized during 1986-87 on Surveillance and training was imported by experts from Govt.of India. Now Surveillance works are chalked out regularly covering entire state in routine and survey reports are received from the six zones as per norms regularly. In their oral deposition before the Committee, the departmental representatives stated that in the initial stages of the schemes, there were some problem due to budget constraint, but the position has improve from 1985. Now GOI do not sanction any fund unless data entries of surveillance is properly done.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS.

1.15. As the position of surveillance has improved the Committee decided to drop the para.

Statutory and Regulatory functions

(Audit sub para 3.1.4/C&AG(Civil)/1984-85/(P-19-23)

1.16. The audit has pointed out that under the provision of the Insecticides Act, 1968 and Insecticides Rules 1971 an authorized Inspector is required to inspect all premises licensed for manufacture of pesticides and all establishments selling pesticides, not less than three time a year. He is also required to draw samples of the pesticides formulations manufacture /formulated and to send them for test analysis in a recognized laboratory. At the end of March 1985 there were four licenses for manufacture of pesticides in the state, but during the last five years not a single sample had been drawn and sent for analyze . The number of inspections carried out was not on record. The number of inspections conducted of establishment selling insecticides the state was not available with the Deputy Director of Agriculture, Plant Protection (DDA-PP). Although the total number of dealers in pesticides are reported to be several hundreds (exact position not available with DDA (PP)), only 215 samples were received in the Quality Control laboratory (pesticide) at Ulubari, Guwahati between 1980 and 1984-85. The Laboratory was set up in 1976 and due to delayed procurement of appliances started functioning from 1980-81. Total expenditure incurred on it between 1978-79 and 1984-85 was Rs. 8.39 lakhs. Out of 215 samples received, 156 sample could be analyzed by the laboratory and the rest 59 could not be analyzed for want of proper apparatus. This was 67.24 per cent of the target (232 samples) sent for the laboratory. The poor performance was attributed by the Quality Control Officer to non-coperation of the Inspectors. The sample were to be sent properly sealed. Only one sample out of 215 received satisfied the prescribed sealing norms. As such the laboratory could not submit report any case as required under the Insecticides Act 1968. As such the entire expenditure on the laboratory became infructuous. It was, however, found that considerable time was being taken by the laboratory for testing the samples. A table showing the average time taken is shown below :-

(a) More than one year	2 samples
(b) between 6 months and 1 year	11 "
(c) between 2 months and 6 months	11 "
(d) Within 2 months	132 "
	<hr/>
	156 "

Under the Act the finding on the analysis were to be reported within 60 days. Samples of Organic Phosphorus, Carbonates insecticides, fungicides, herbicides and rodenticides could be analysed in the laboratory reportedly for want of certain apparatus/instruments. Some of the samples received (73 Numbers were from a Government owned Company. The laboratory could not realize any fee for the testing done for the company reportedly due to non-fixation of rate.

1.17. The department by their written reply has stated that in order to enforce the provisions of the Insecticides Act, 1968 and Insecticides Rules, 1971 the Govt. has delegated the powers by appointing all Agril. Extension Officers, Sub-Divisional Agril. Officer, Asstt. Plant Protection Officer, Subject Matter Specialists and Joint Directors of Agriculture as Insecticides inspectors under the Rule. In normal course the pesticides samples are regularly collected and are sent to the Pesticides Laboratory at Guwahati for analysis. Out of the 4 (four) manufacturers/formulators of pesticides in the State, only 2 (two) firms are now doing the works of formulation. This department has proper check on them so far their product is concerned. The procurement of pesticide was made through AAIDC Ltd. which ensured that only good quality pesticides were supplied to the farms. Facilities in the Laboratory have been improved with the installation of Gas Liquid Chromatograph, Thin layer Chromatograph, Karl Fischer Automatic Titrator, Dithiocarbamate and one pH meter. With these new instruments, formulation and residual analysis of common insecticides are being carried out and this has helped in

ensuring availability of quality products in the State. The target and achievement of the insecticides samples analysed in the laboratory since 1980-81 is shown as below ;-

Year	Nos.of samples targeted	Nos.of samples analysed
1980-81	36 nos.	39 nos.
1981-82	36 nos.	26 nos.
1982-83	50 nos.	8 nos.
1983-84	50 nos.	38 nos.
1984-85	60 nos.	45 nos.
1985-86	120 nos	85 nos.
1986-87	120 nos.	64 nos.
1987-88	120 nos.	113 nos.

Total number of dealers in pesticides in the state up to 30/6/88 was estimated as 1466 nos. break up which is as follows:-

1. Public Sector - 30 nos.
2. Private Sector- 1364 nos.
3. Co- operative sector- 72 nos.

Total - 1466 nos.

From the data given above, it can be noticed that there has been a significant improvement in equipping Laboratory with vital equipment and the same resulted in marked improvement in the working of the laboratory.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS.

1.18. As the position has improved, the Committee decided to drop the para.

Plant Protection Campaign

(Audit sub para 3.1.5/ C&AG(Civil)/1984-85/(P-19-23)

1.19. The Audit has pointed out that the Assam Agricultural pest and Disease Act, 1950 envisages that in case of large scale pest disease of crop the Government shall by notification in the official gazettee declare an epidemic. In April 1978 the Deputy Director of Agriculture (Plant Protection) directed the District and Sub-divisional Agricultural Officer (DAO and SDAO) to press into service the plant protection squads where large and compact areas were affected by pest. In sporadic cases the cultivators should be advised to purchase pesticides themselves. The plant protection squads were to help the cultivators with equipments, if necessary. Between 1980-81 and 1984-85 there was no instance where the Government declared epidemic by a notification in the official gazette although Rs. 1,17,95 lakhs had been spent on squad operation under plant protection campaign upto 1984-85. 'Pesticides were issued by the Sub-Divisional Officers to the Agricultural Extension Officers from time to time and they in turn distributed the same to the farmers through Village Level Extension Workers. In the absence of any declaration squad operation/free issue of pesticide, was not contemplated.

The target and achievement of coverage under plant protection campaign are shown below :-

	Target (in hectare)	Achievement (in hectare)	Percentage of achievement
1980-81	1,40,000	1,64,530	117
1981-82	1,50,000	1,00,438	67
1982-83	7,70,000	4,79,300	62
1983-84	8,00,000	3,37,280	42
1984-85	10,00,000	7,97,760	80

Reason for shortfall during 1981-82 to 1984-85 were not on record. Although it was reported by the DAOs/SDAOs that squad operations were reported to in case of high pest infestation it was observed that in none of the 4 sub-divisions (Silchar, Guwahati, Dhubri and Kokrajhar) the records of which were test checked, was there any report about the presence of insects before undertaking the squad operation nor was any evaluation done to find out the result of the operation and the effectiveness of the insecticide used. In November 1984 pesticides worth Rs.0.89 lakh were issued to the Agricultural Extension Officers by the SDAO Dhubri 18 to 30 days after receipt of report about pest infestation. The issue was made to villagers free of charge but mentioned as issued for squad operation to justify the free issue. No attempt was made to ascertain whether or not insecticides were actually utilized in the field.

1.20 The department by their written reply has stated that the plant protection squads are put in to service when reports on incidence of pests/disease are received from the D.A.O./SDAOs and from the zonal J.D.As. In most of the cases the concerned Deputy Commissioners, S.D.O. (Civil) and local MLA's have also emphasized the need for the deployment of PP squads operations to help the poor farmers who are actually unable to go ahead to save their crops from the attack of pests and diseases by purchasing pesticides. It is a common experience that pests and diseases occur in a severe form during monsoon immediately after recession of flood waters in the flood prone areas of the State. The incidence of pests and disease on such flood beaten crops caused a substantial loss and some time total loss to the crops. Considering the economic hardship of farmers. The PP squads are put in to the services to save the crops. Although there is no reference of declaration of pests and disease as epidemic, however there are often directions from D.C./S.D.Os(Civil) and from the Govt. to render to the farmers in pests and diseases control measures and hence such directions are carried out by the department.

As per departmental records the physical targets and achievements were as follows:-

Year	Target (in hac)	Achievement (in hac)	Percentage of achievement
1980-81	5,00,000 hac	4,65,000 hac	93%
1981-82	6,10,000 hac	5,80,000 hac	95%
1982-83	7,70,000 hac	6,79,140 hac	90.53 %
1983-84	8,00,000 hac	7,47,900 hac	93.48%
1984-85	10,00,000 hac	7,79,760 hac	79.77%

Immediately after the first pest report on the incident, deployment of p.p. Squads is made on the basis of intensity of infestation. When the pests are observed on high scale and beyond economic threshold level, then the pesticides and P.P. equipments are issued to A.E.O/ VLEWs for necessary P.P. squad action. One of the foremost task of AEOs/VLEWs at field level is to advise and support poor small and marginal farmers whenever pest and disease is noticed. In many cases, a day's delay may cause irreparable damage. Under such situation, they seek immediate intervention from concerned DAO/SDAOs and the DAO/SDAO in tum may necessarily and temporarily overload formal procedural systems in the interest of poor farmers and rather act on war footing manner before the situation worsens. In their oral deposition before the Committee, the departmental representatives stated that they do not wait for epidemic to happen, but as a preventive measure, take advance action so as not to take any risk in this regard. In the interest of plant protection, DAO/SDAOs may some time take immediate action over looking the formal procedure.

OBSERBATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.21. After threadbare discussion, the Committee is satisfied with the reply of departmental representatives and decided to drop the para.

Procurement of pesticides/rodenticides**(Audit sub para 3.1.6/C& AG(Civil)/1984-85/(-19-23)**

1.22. The audit has pointed out that as per Government orders, the Assam Agro Insecticides Development Corporation is responsible for the supply of pesticides/rodenticides to the Department. The Corporation reportedly failed on many occasions to effect timely supply of pesticides to sub-divisions. Twenty one such instances between 1981-82 and 1984-85 could be for on record. Extent of damage to crop as a result of delay in supply/non-supply, however was not on record.

1.23. The department by their written reply has stated that since sometimes AAIDC Ltd. could not provide insecticides in time, the SDAOs were also asked to make efforts to stock Pesticides to meet sudden and severe attack of pests. That's how the damage was minimized.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.24. The Committee discussed the matter thoroughly and satisfied with the reply of departmental witnesses and hence the Committee has been pleased to drop the para.

Other points

(Audit sub para 3.1.7/C&AG (Civil)/1984-85/(P-19-23)

1.25. The audit has pointed out that (i) a spectrophotometer purchased in March 1979 by the Soil Survey Officer at a cost of Rs. 0.98 lakh remained unused reportedly for alleged anomalies in purchase and all relevant records in connection with the purchase were seized the State Enquiry Officer in 1981.(ii) It was seen that the SDAO (Nalbari) purchased and received insecticides/rodenticides valuing Rs.1.58 lakhs between April 1975 and November 1981.of these insecticides/rodenticides worth Rs.1.13 lakhs were lying in stocks (November 1984) although these insecticides had lost their potency as the expiry date was 31st August 1982 (iii) 136 Dusters valuing Rs. 0.83 lakh received by the Sub-Divisional Agricultural Officer, Silchar from the Directorate between May 1982 and November 1984 (34) May 1982,22 in June 1983 and 80 in November 1984) remained in stock (August 1985 and the SDAO mentioned that the possibility of their getting deteriorated due to pre-load storage could not be ruled out. (iv) Between 1981-82 and 1984-85, 82 Hand compression sprayers valued at Rs. 0.46 lakh had been stolen from the store of Silchar sub-division (10 Nos.valued Rs. 520 each in October 1981 and 72 Nos.valued at Rs. 572 each in October 1985 Cases were reported to the Police and the result of Police investigation and information about action taken were awaited (August 1985).(v)In March 1981, the DA purchased 6 Sujala High pressure spraying units (@ Rs. 26,750 each) at a total cost of Rs. 1,60,500. The delivery of sprayers was taken at the Directorate. Five of the sprayers were distributed in 1981 to farms and divisions and one sprayer was retained in the Headquarters. The DAO, Silchar state (August 1985) that despite several attempts the machine could not be given a run and it was not possible to be taken to field due to its weight. There was no receive to show that the machine retained in the headquarters was utilized. (iv) In March 1982, the DA Assam purchased 7 water tanks (280 gallons capacity @ Rs. 14,000 each. Of these one taker was retained in the headquarters (khanapara) for squad operations and the remaining six were sent to Dhemaji, Nogaon, Jorhat,Guwahati, Dibrugarh and Silchar in May 1982. Although the stock register of SDAO Dhubri and Silchar did not indicate the receipt of Tanker, SDAO,

Dhubri intimate to audit that a tanker was received but the same remained unutilized. The received of headquarters office and SDAO, Guwahati also did not indicate utilization of the Tanker (August 1985). (vii) The Department purchased Hand Compression Sprayers and dusters of same capacity but of different brands at rates varying between Rs. 701 for duster. In March 1983 DA admitted that the Department should not have purchased so many brands especially when there was difference of rates and there was no adverse reports about the sprayed and dusters available at lowest rates. Due to non-purchase of 449 sprayers and 245 dusters at the lowest rates of Rs. 504 and Rs. 480 respectively the department incurred an avoidable expenditure of Rs. 0.60 lakh. Similarly purchase of 900 sprayers (nine different brands) and 450 dusters (six different brands) at rates between Rs. 572 to Rs. 619 for sprayers and Rs. 567 to Rs. 701 for dusters in 1983-84 resulted in avoidable expenditure of Rs. 0.49 lakh. The SDAO stated that purchase of sprayers and dusters of different brands created problem for them as repair work of sprayers and dusters were held up due to non-availability of spares of different brands.

1.26. The Department by their written reply has stated that the (i) An amount of Rs. 98,440/- (Rupees Ninety eight thousand four hundred forty) only as total value including 7% AF tax was sanctioned by the Govt. for the procurement of the Spectrophotometer as per specification. But the said instrument was found to be of inferior quality after the payment of about sanctioned amount. So the Director of Agriculture sealed the same instrument for making enquiry. Subsequently, a thorough enquiry report was submitted to the Govt. for necessary action. The Govt. had investigated the case thoroughly and findings were as follows :- Against the purchase, payment made for Rs. 98,440/- including A.F. Tax. Actual cost price of the instrument Rs. 20,000/- only. Therefore Govt. has incurred loss for Rs. 71,500/- Excluding A.F. Tax on the purchase. The Govt. has finalized the case the imposition of penalties upon Sri Ranjit Choudhury the then Senior Scientific Asstt. And upon Sri B.N. Acharjee, the then Dy. Director of Agril and i/c Soil Survey Officer to recover the about loss vide Govt. order No. AGA.119/81-PC/170, Dtd. 26.4.86. The rate of recoveries from them as shown below:-

1. From Sir Ranjit Choudhury Rs. 53,625/- and stoppage of three increment with cumulative effect.
2. From Sir B.N. Acharjee Rs. 17875/- and stoppage of one increment with cumulative effect. Action was taken accordingly. (i) The SDAO, Nalbari used to stock insecticides/rodenticides to meet any emergent requirements. During the relevant period, there was not much pest attack. There fore part of the stock lost their potency. (ii) The dusters totaling to 252 nos. were received by the DAO, Silchar during the period and out of which 160 nos. issued to AEO circles and 92 nos. were kept in the Head quarter for emergency squad operation. (iii) The police could not furnish any report in this regard. (iv) Six numbers Sujala High Pressure spraying units were purchased during 1981 and out of which five numbers were supplied to five centers during the same year with a view to take pests/diseases control measures covering large within a short time when pests occurred in severe forms. The use of Sujala High Preasure as intimated by the D.A.O. Silchar is that they utilized the same in P.P. squad operation for the control of B.P.H. and other pests in pests affected areas. The machine was used for spraying operation by mounting in tractor covering an area of 100 bighas a day along the specified road. But to carry the machine in unspecified field road by manual labour was found risky. The machine could also be used in Horticulture garden as expressed by the D.A.O. Silchar. One Sujala High Pressure machine was relained in this Directorate to be used by the central Plant Protection squad at the time while the pests situation arise in epidemic forms in any subdivisions and while the sub-divisional machineries would fail to control the pests situation. (v) Seven numbers water tankers were purchased during 1982 and out of these six numbers were supplied to six centres with a view to prepare the pesticides solutions at a time for extensive plant protection squad operation in the area where source of water was not available nearby. The remaining one was retained in the Directorate to be used by the centre Plant Protection squad. Thus the water tankers were procured to carry water in bulk to the area where pests control operation was to be conducted and where there was no water source nearby mainly during season. The concerned officers had been directed to carryout operation as per guide lines issued to them by the Directorate from time to time. (vi) The different brands of P.P. equipments

(Sprayers and dusters) having ISI mark were selected by the Technical Committee for department use. In stead of procuring one brand having cheapest price all the recommended brands were patronized in view of creating a health competition amongst the distributors of different branch in respect of quality, durability, efficiency and price. The Assam Agro Industries Dev. Corporation. Ltd. was requested to make available stock of spare parts of sprayers and dusters in their sale points. For such repairing works of P.P. equipment fund was also allotted to all Sub-Division's each year.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.27. The Committee is satisfied with the replies furnished by the department and decided to drop the para, except sub-para 3.1.7 (IV). The Committee directed the department to submit a report to the Committee within 3 months from the date of presentation of this report before the House.

Extra expenditure
(Audit para 3.2/C&AG(Civil)/1984-85/(P-23-24))

1.28. The audit has pointed out that March 1984, the District Agricultural Officer ((DAO) Haflong invited a short tender notice for supply of goat-proof fencing. OF the 21 offers received, the lowest was rejected for want of sales tax/income tax clearance certificate. The DAO, Haflong accepted the second lowest rate offered by the Assam Agro Industries Development Corporation (a Government of Assam undertaking) and forwarded the papers to the District Council for final approval. The District Council accepted (March 1984) the rate offered by the Assam Agro Industries Development Corporation but directed the D.A.O. to issue supply orders for 704 rolls costing Rs. 8.04 lakhs to four local suppliers. In June 1984 the District Council revised the rates from Rs. 1142 to Rs. 1377.09 per roll and directed the DAO Haflong to make payments to the suppliers. This resulted in extra payment (January 1985 of Rs. 1.66 lakhs). Enhancement of rates after placing supply orders and not obtaining supply from the Government Undertaking, resulted in an extra expenditure of Rs. 1.66 lakhs.

1.29. The department by their written reply has stated that as directed by the District Council N.C. Hills, District Agril. Officer, Haflong invited short tender notice for purchases of goat fencing. Altogether 21 offers were received. Out of 21 quotations, the rate quoted by M/S D.P. & Co. Haflong was found lowest as reported by the D.A.O. But the lowest rate had to be rejected for want of tax clearance certificate and the second lowest rate quoted by M/S Afeo Industries Dev. Corporation was recommended. The recommendation along with tender/comparative statements were forwarded to District Council, N.C. Hills for approval. The rate offered by the Agro Industries Dev. Corporation as recommended was accepted by the Council and directed District Agril. Officer, Haflong to place supply order with the following firms as per AAIDC rate of Rs. 1142 per roll of 100 R.M. The D.A.O. Haflong placed order with firms as per quantity and amount shown against each as directed by the council.

<u>Name of the party</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1.sri Dipak Kr. Daulagupu, Haflong	102 rolls	Rs. 1,16,484/-
2.Sri Jesperly Rupsi,Jatinga	200 rolls	Rs. 2,28,400/-
3.Sri Dinesh Fidung Haflong	102 rolls	Rs. 1,16,484/-
4.Smti Shiela G.P.Lyngdu	300 rolls	Rs.3,42,600/-
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Total	704 rolls	Rs.8,03,968/-

However during May/84 the above 4 firms submitted a joint petition to the Secretary (T) N.C. Hills, District Council for revision of rate.The District Council revised the rate from Rs. 1142/- to Rs. 1377/- per roll of 100 RM as prayed for and directed DAO, Haflong to accept the supply at enhanced rate. DAO Haflong carried out the orders of the District autonomous Council.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.30. After threadbare discussion the Committee pleased to drop the para.

Undue favour leading to avoidable expenditure
(Audit para 3.3/C &AG(Civil)/1984-85/(P-24)

1.31 The audit has pointed out that in March 1984, the District Agricultural Officer, Haflong invited quotations for supply of Rhizomic (Mizo variety) Ginger under Integrated Jhumia Development Scheme. The Comparative Statement was forwarded to the District Council on 20th March 1984 and on 27th March 1984, the District Council directed the District Agricultural Officer to place supply order on Contractor A, the 4th lowest tenderer, (whose rate was Rs.387 per quintal) though Rs. 370 per quintal was quoted by the second lowest tenderer (the first tender being rejected for non-supply of sample). On 29th March 1984, Contractor A expressed his inability to supply the ginger at Rs. 370 per per quintal. On the same day the District Agricultural Officer again invited tender for supply of ginger. The lowest tender was for Rs. 445 per quintal, but the District Council accepted (31st March 1984) the rate of Rs. 548 per quintal, quoted by Contractor A. Supply orders for ginger worth Rs. 2.57 lakhs were issued by the District Agricultural Officer on 30th March 1984 of which 83 per cent were allotted to Contractor A and the balance 17 per cent to the two tenderers at Rs. 548 although they had quoted the rate of Rs. 445 per quintal. It was also seen that according to the records of the Agricultural Marketing Officer, Haflong, the prevailing market rate of ginger during March and April 1984 was Rs. 350 per quintal. Expenditure to the tune of Rs. 0.84 lakh could have been avoided if the second lowest tender had been accepted.

1.32. The department by their written reply has stated that as per decision of the Dist Council for procurement of Ginger Rhizome and Tumeric locally necessary quotations were called for and in response 14 nos.of quotations were received. Out of 14 nos. qotations the rate quoted by Sri B.K.Kar, Haflong was the lowest, but no sample was supplied along with the quotation and rate quoted by Sri Lokohamoni Ardao, Haflong was accepted and forwarded to the Dist Council for final acceptance. On 28.3.84 the Secretary (T) Executive Committee, North Cachar Hills District Council, Haflong Communicated the acceptance of quotation of Sri Biresh Ch.Paul of Jatinga at the lowest

rate i.e. the rate quoted by Sri Lokohamoni Ardao. On the basis of the acceptance the indent for supply of 60 qtls.Zinger Rhizome was placed with Sri Biresh Ch Paul on 29.3.84 Sri B.C.Paul, informed DAO, Haflong that he would not supply the Zinger Rhizome beyond 60.00 qtls at the accepted rate. The matter was referred to the council and as per decision of the council a fresh quotation was called for. In response 11 nos.of quotations were received. Out of 11 nos.quotations the rate quoted by (1) Smti Chongi, (2) Sri L.S.Tuolor & (3) Sri Pradip Dibragede were the lowest i.e. Rs. 445/- per qtls. The quotations along with the comparative statement were forwarded to the Dist.Council on 30.3.84 for formal acceptance. The Secretary (T) Executive Committee, N.C.Hills, District council, Haflong in his letter NO.DC/AGRI/3/83-84/224, Dtd.31.3.84 communicated the acceptance of 2No. lowest quotations and directed to place indent for supply of Zinger Rhizome as follows :-

Name of the party	Quantity	Rate
1. Sri L.S.Tuolor, Muolhoi	40 qtls	Rs. 548/-
2. Sri Pradip Dibragedo, Haflong	40 qtls.	Rs. 548/-
3. Sri B.C.Paoul,Jatinga	40 qtls	Rs.548/-

The rate quoted by Sri L.S.Tuolor & Sri Pradip Dibraged were the lowest i.e. 445/- per qtls. & their rate have not been accepted by the council though they have been selected for supply of Zinger Rhizome at a higher rate. D.A.O.Haflong carried out the orders of District Council.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.33. After threadbare discussion the Committee pleased to drop the para. ,

Sub-normal productivity of sugarcane farm

(Audit para 3.4/C&AG(Civil)/1984-85/(p-24-25)

1.34. The audit has pointed out that a test check (March 1985) of the records of Barama Sugarcane Farm under Sugarcane Development Officer, Nogaon revealed that despite application of all inputs, the yield of sugarcane in 1982-83 was "nil" and in 1981-82 and 1983-84 the yield was much below the norms prescribed by the Department. The position is given in the table below :-

Year	Total area Under cultivation (hectare)	Yield per hectare as per norms	Actual production per hectare	Shortfall (MT)	Value of Short production.	Remarks
1981-82	3	50 MT	32.6 MT	52.2	8,362	
1982-83	4.5	50 MT	NIL	225	36,000	
1983-84	4.5	50 MT	21.75	127.125	20,342	

					64,704	

Rupees 16 per quintal has been taken as the minimum price although cane is sold to outsiders at Rs. 22 per quintal. No. reasons for shortfall of production during 1981-82 and 1983-84 were given by the Sugarcane Development Officer. Nil production for the year 1982-83 was attributed to local disturbance. However, the farm spent Rs. 9597 on wage of labour (1371 mandays @ Rs. 7 per day) during the year. There was no record to indicate the action, if any, initiated by the department to improve the performance of the farm even after it sustained a production loss worth Rs. 0.65 lakh during the three years.

1.35. The department by their written reply has stated that the Department fixed the minimum yield of Sugarcane for Assam at 50 MT per ha. (AUG.83). In fact, the average yield of sugarcane was only 45 MT per ha as per Department. Statistical Bulletin (Basic statistic) published by Agril. Statistical branch 1986-87. This low yield can be attributed to many factors like agro climatic condition, soil type natural calamities like flood/draught. Moreover, in Assam, sugarcane cultivation was undertaken as rained crop as there was no irrigated area in the Sugarcane farm.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.36. After threadbare discussion the Committee pleased to drop the para.

Infructuous Expenditure

(Audit para 3.5/C&AG(Civil)/1984-85/(P-25-26)

1.37. The audit has pointed out that the a test check of the records (February 1985) of the District Agricultural Officer,Haflong, disclosed that Pesticides and Fungicides worth Rs. 1.64 lakhs had been damaged in stock. The articles were purchased between 1976 and 1983 but were lying in stock unused. The purchase expenditure of Rs. 1.64 lakhs.

1.38. The department by their written reply has stated that the position of stock of pesticides/Fungicides purchased during the year from 1979 to 1983 has been verified by the Asstt. Agril Inspector i/c Store to D.A.O. Haflong. D.A.O. Haflong stated that the pesticides/fungicides purchased during the year in question have been utilized in field from time to time in full except a negligible quantity valuing Rs. 2738/- damaged at stock due to expiry of date.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.39. After threadbare discusslon the Committee is satisfied with the departmental representatives and pleased to drop the para.

Overdrawal of Travelling Allowance
(Audit para 3.6/C& AG(Civil)/1984-85/(P-26))

1.40. The audit has pointed out that the a test check of travelling allowance bills drawn by 29 drawing and disbursing officers of the Agriculture Department during January 1984 to March 1984 revealed that an amount of Rs. 0.54 lakh was overdrawn as detailed below, beyond what was admissible under the rules.

	Actual amount Of T.A.Admi- Ssible.	Amount of T.A Drawn	Difference(viz.over- drawn amount).
1. Drawn D.A.Travelling less Than 40 km./80 km.without Involving night halt in viol- Ation of rules vide Note 2 below SR 182	Rs.12,126,58	Rs.55,100.39	Rs.42,973.81
2. Drawn road mileage tra Velling less than 32 km In violation of rules vide SR 216 (a).	-	Rs. 5,002.96	Rs. 5,002.96
3. Drawn DA for back journe To H.Q. BELOW 240 Kms.in Violation of Govt.order NO. FM/5/70/4 Dated 7.8.70 (SR 216 A).	Rs. 752.00	Rs.992.00	Rs.240.00
4.Drawn both road mileage And D.A.in violation of rules Vide SR 216(a)	Rs.7,602.37	Rs.13,193.31	Rs.5,590.94.
	Rs.20,480.95	Rs.74,288.66	Rs.53,807.71

1.41. The department by their written reply has stated that perhaps due to wrong interpretation of TA rules some excess amount had been drawn by some of the officers as indicated by audit. However, instructions were issued to all Drawing and Disbursing officers to effect recovery of the overdrawn amounts pertaining to the period in question, as intimated by AG Assam. Due attention has been paid to this aspect thereafter.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.42. The Committee directed the department to submit a report regarding recovery of the overdrawal amount and decided to drop the para.

Finance and Outlay
(Audit Sub-para 3.1.3/C&AG(Civil1985-86/(P-23-25))

1.43. The audit has pointed out that the quantum of Central assistance for the programme varied from 25 to 50 per cent in respect of different components during Fifth Five Year Plan and 50 to 100 per cent during the Sixth Five Year Plan subject to a ceiling laid in each case. The details of allocation, and expenditure and Central assistance are given in the table below :-

Period	Budget Allocation	Expenditure	Fund released by the Government of India
1975-80	10.50	4.77	6.47
1980-85	38.00	14.26	14.55
TOTAL	48.50	19.03	21.02

The above table shows that the State Government incurred an expenditure of Rs.19.03 lakhs on the scheme during the two Plan periods against budget allocation of Rs. 48.50 lakhs resulting in a shortfall of 61 per cent in utilization of available funds. The State Government could not even spend the full amount of Central assistance received. The reason for shortfall in utilization of budget provision as well as of Central assistance was not on record. It, however, appeared that the scheme was implemented without adequate preparation and organization. Only the State level posts were filled up the staff at operational unit level was not provided resulting in delay in execution of the scheme and non- utilisation of funds.

1.44. The department by their written reply has stated that the Shortfall is due to the fact that the vagaries of weather came in the way of extension of area under Kharif Pulse and Lingering of monsoon made land preparation for the Rabi Pulses difficult Storage of seed

was also difficult due to high humidity and non availability of conditioned Godowns. Consequently, Assam had to depend upon its entire seed requirement from outside the state. Generally, other states were reluctant to part with their stock of seed before meeting their own requirement. As a result, seeds even if available reached the state at the fag-end of season or even after the season was over. Every year Assam is faced with 3 to 5 waves of floods for which Govt. had to resort to free distribution of pulses seed under gratuitous relief from the quantum of seed available from outside the state. This caused further reduction in the availabilities of seeds for the scheme in question and hence resulted in low utilization.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.45. After threadbare discussion, the Committee pleased to drop the para.

Physical targets and achievements

(Audit Sub-para 3.1.4 /C&AG(Civil)/1985-86/(P-23-25)

1.46. The audit has pointed out that the following targets for area to be covered under the scheme and production to be achieved were communicated to the Government of India. However, the basis on which these targets were fixed and the district-wise allocation of these target were not on record.

(A) Year	Area targeted under the scheme As reported to the Government Of India. (hectares)	Production targeted under this scheme as reported to the Government of India. (tones)
1980-81	1,25,000	60,000
1981-82	1,40,000	64,000
1982-83	1,50,000	67,000
1983-84	1,75,000	73,000
1984-85	2,00,000	80,000

Total	7,90,000	3,44,000
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(B) Year	Area covered as Per departmental Statistics (hectares)	Production achieved as per departmental statistics (tones)	Average yield in kg per hectare
1980-81	1,13,144	47,072	416
1981-82	1,17,150	52,127	445
1982-83	1,26,403	52,747	417
1983-84	1,30,624	54,484	417
1984-85	1,38,194	59,407	430

The data collected by the statistical section of the Directorate of Agriculture revealed that in 1972-73 (before introduction of pulses development programme in the state) pulses were produced in 96,057 hectares and the total production in that year was 48,410 tones, average yield per hectage being 504 kgs. At the end of the Sixth Five Year Plan (1984-85) the total area covered was 1,38,194 hectares and the total production 59,407 tonnes, the average yield per hectare being 430 kgs. There was thus, an increase in the area under pulses during these years and a marginal increase in total production but there was a considerable decline in productivity. The basic objective of this scheme to increase productivity through improved technology, better seeds and use of fertilizers could not be achieved even after 10 years and after spending Rs. 19.03 lakhs during the period from 1975-76 to 1984-85. The scheme envisaged distribution of minikits of pulses, production and distribution of rhizobium culture for improving productivity and aero-chemical operation for plant protection. No records indicating details of target and distribution of minikits were available, no aero-chemical operation was undertaken and against production target of 9.033 packets of rhizobium culture, only 3833 packets were produced almost 50 per cent of which remained undistributed due to late receipt in the District level offices.

1.47. The department by their written reply has stated that the main purpose of the scheme was to increase the areas under pulses and the targets were fixed on the basis of potential available in the districts. The productivity as stated earlier fluctuates, due to favourable or adverse weather conditions during the growing season. Very often moistures-stress become responsible for low productivity since the crop is grown in the rainfed conditions with the help of residual moisture. Normally the seeds and Rhizobium culture are mixed together at the time of sowing for improving productivity. The non-availability of Rhizobium at the time of sowing of pulses causes less utilization of Rhizobium culture.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.48. After threadbare discussion, the Committee pleased to drop the para.

Other points of interest

(Audit Sub-para 3.1.5/ C&AG(Civil)/1985-86/(P-23-25)

1.49. The audit has pointed out that the sum of Rs. 5.75 lakhs was paid as grants to different institutions during 1980-81 to 1985-86 for implementation of some of the components of the scheme, but no utilization certificates were obtained from those institutions to check that the grants so paid were actually utilized for the given purpose.

1.50. The department by their written reply has stated that the Assam Seeds Corporation Ltd. furnished utilization certificate of grants in aids received for 1930-81 to 1985-86 and submitted to the concerned authority.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.51. After threadbare discussion, the Committee pleased to drop the para.

Oil Seeds Development Programme

(Audit para 3.2 /C&AG(Civil)/1985-86/(P-25-26)

1.52. The audit has pointed out that the Assam is deficient in oil seed production, the area under oil seed being around 0.33 million hectare and the average per hectare production 495 kg which is well below the all India average of 622 kgs. The total production does not meet the requirement of the State, the estimated yearly deficit being around 1.2 lakhs tones. To increase the production of oil seeds, the National Oil Seed Development Programme was launched by the Central Government in 1984-85 and the States were provided with financial assistance. Assam was given assistance of Rs. 26.59 lakhs in 1984-85 and Rs. 7.15 lakhs in 1985-86, for this purpose. The programme provided for (i) laying of demonstration plots, (ii) distribution of minikits for improved seeds and fertilizers (iii) plant protection by spraying and distribution of pesticides. The quantum of Central assistance items varied from 50 to 100 per cent. A review of the implementation of the programme by Audit (August 1986) showed that during the year 1984-86, only Rs. 9.77 lakhs could be spent on the scheme leaving bulk of the Central assistance unutilized. No. targets for area to be covered nor production to be achieved were set. A programme for distribution of seeds, implement, minikits, etc. either free or at subsidised rates was taken up through two Government enterprises (Assam Seed Corporation Ltd. and Assam Agro Industries Development Corporation). But no records were made available to Audit to show utilization of funds for providing inputs to the cultivators under the scheme, Rhizobium culture, although envisaged in the scheme, for augmenting production of oil seeds, was not undertaken. The records of the Agriculture Department did not indicate that necessary development measures were taken in Kamrup district which was selected by the Government of India for intensive oil seed development. No. monitoring arrangement for watching implementation of the scheme was made.

1.53. The department by their written reply has stated that the Scheme for Centrally Sponsored Oilseed Dev. Programme was implemented in Assam since 1984-85 and a

total of Rs. 33.74 lakhs as Central Assistance was received out of which a sum of Rs. 11.019 lakhs was incurred and not Rs. 9.77 lakhs as observed by Audit. Due to early cessation of monsoon and prolonged monsoon as well as late occurrences of flood the coverage of area under oilseed as envisaged in the programme was adversely affected. The variety of mustard seeds which is generally grown in this area is toria (M-27) variety and its shortage in the state came in the way of implementation of the scheme and this variety was also not available in other states. Moreover, a large quantity of locally available seed was utilized under gratuitous relief for flood affected farmers. The above factors attributed to the non-utilization of Central Assistance to the fullest extent. The inputs of the above mentioned scheme were indented with ASC/AA/DC/STATEFED Ltd. for distribution to the Sub-Division and the relevant records in respect of distribution are maintained with the Sub-Divisional level officers. Rhizobium culture was recommended for soyabean cultivation and it was taken up by STATEFED. There is an inbuilt system of monitoring of the scheme in the Monitoring and Evaluation Cell of this Department.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.54 The Committee heard the deposition of the departmental representatives and decided to drop the para.

Unproductive Investment

(Audit para 3.3/ C& AG(Civil)/1985-86/(P-26)

1.55. The audit has pointed out that in March 1964, the Project Administrator, Package Programme, Silchar, purchased and installed an offset printing press for printing of publicity materials in connection with "Package Programme (Agriculture)" at a cost of Rs.0.35 lakh. In March 1966, a process camera was also purchased for the press for Rs. 0.20 lakh. Audit inspection in October 1985 showed that the press with these equipments valued at Rs.0.55 lakh never functioned except for a brief spell of six months. A Treadle Printing Machine installed in 1971-72 turned out jobs worth Rs.0.93 lakh between April 1977 and March 1985 after incurring an expenditure of Rs. 2.33 lakhs on the salaries of operating staff. Its utilization between April 1972 and March 1977 could not be checked in Audit as records were not made available. The 'Package Programme (Agriculture)' for which these machines were procured, was completed during 1971-72 but the machines and the staff were retained without any justification thereafter, for the subsequent 15 years. Instructions for disposal/transfer of the presses have not been issued even till July 1987.

1.56. The department by their written reply has stated that as per decision and guideline of the Govt. of India the I.A.D.P. (Package programme) was launched in the District of Cachar during the year 1963. The main objectives of the programme was to raise the level of production of the District through adoption to improved package of practices backed by a team of Agril. Officers with the support of financial institutions and Irrigation etc. The programme had an Information Unit to provide necessary support to I.A.D.P (Package Programme) for transfer of technical know how to the farmers. For successful implementation of the information wing, it was necessary to have an Offset Printing Machine along with a Process Camera (Offset press) and a Traddle Machine as per uniform norms laid down by Govt. of India like other package Districts in other states also. After purchase of the machine, an advertisement was made for recruitment of an Offset Operator. But no qualified technician was available and the machine remained idle. Such

being the case. One person was appointed in the post of Asstt. Offset operator and he was trained at I.A.R.I., Delhi for operation of the machine and the same was run for a period of about 6 months. Thereafter the offset press machine became out of order. The trained person also left the Deptt. and since then the machine was not in operation till June 1967. Again in July, 1967, one Asstt. Offset Press Operator was appointed and trained for one week at Agril. Information Press, Shillong and the machine was put in operation upto June, 1971. The details of works undertaken are given below :-

Year	NO.of Job	No.of plates	NO.of prints
1967-68 to	46 nos.	39 nos.	34,560 nos.
1971-72			

As such it is not a fact that the machine remained idle since the date of its purchase. As regard Traddle Machine, it may be stated that the machine was installed during the year 1971-72 and did works for the period from 1971-72 to 1976-77 about 391 jobs, the value of which comes to Rs. 45,742.00 (which was less than the market value) and April, 1978 to March, 1985 did 511 jobs worth value Rs. 93,000.00. In absence of the Offset Press the Traddle Machine is the only source of printing and the same remained in operation. Moreover the works of the other Development Deptt. are also being done on this press. Thus it is evident that since the date of installation of the said Machine remained in operation to its fullest extent. Further it may be stated that the aim and objectives of the press is to disseminate the technical know-how to the farmers. The Machines served a useful purpose.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.57. The Committee heard the deposition of the departmental representatives and decided to drop the para.

Delay in distribution of wheat seeds

(Audit para 3.4/ C&AG(Civil)/1985-86/(P-26-27)

1.58. The audit has pointed out that a test-check (February 1986) of the records of the Sub-divisional Agriculture Officer, Tinsukia, revealed that in October 1984 the Director of Agriculture allotted Rs.4 lakhs for distribution of 800 quintals of wheat seeds to the farmers affected by July and September 1984 floods in Tinsukia Sub-division. He also diverted (August 1984) Rs. 0.47 lakh, being unutilized amount of relief money for the damage of the Kharif crops with which another quantity of 93.15 quintals of wheat seeds were purchased. Out of the 800 quintals of wheat seeds (value Rs.4 lakhs) received between 7th November 1984 and 13th December 1984 in the Sub-division, only 659.60 quintals were issued to the cultivators between 9th January 1985 and 22nd January 1985, i.e. 10 to 23 days after the ideal sowing period was over. Records in support of issue of balance 140.40 quintals of seeds (value Rs. 0.70 lakh) were not available. Again, out of the other 93.15 quintals (value Rs. 0.47 lakh), 1950 quintals were issued to the cultivators on 21st January 1985, i.e. after 22 days of grace period. The date (s) of issue of the remaining 73.65 quintals (value Rs. 0.37 lakh) could not be shown to audit. The reason for late distribution of seeds were not on record. The late distribution of seeds leading to delay in sowing would have an adverse impact on production.

1.59. The department by their written reply has stated that the entire quantities of 800 qt. and 93.15 qt wheat seeds received by Sub-Divnl.Agril Officer, Tinsukia during Rabi season 1984-85 under Flood Relief Programme have fully been distributed to flood affected farmers within the period from 9.11.84 to 22.1.85. The A.P.R.s for 140.40 qt and 73.65 qt. were not received by Sub-Divin.Agril. Officer, Tinsukia from distribution points at the time of Audit which however subsequently obtained and are retained in office.As to the delay in distribution it is submitted that the sowing time recorded in the Agril Booklet is applicable in case of normal situation only and this time schedule is strictly maintained in normal situation under normal Departmental Programmes with due

emphasis on the primary objectives of attaining maximum return and thus achieve the desired target of production. But in case of Relief Programme the things become different. Here the primary objectives are to give assistance to the extent possible to the farmer for their survival consequent upon the loss of their entire cereal crop due to natural calamity. Wheat is the only alternate cereal crop in post floods period that farmers may cultivate to make up partly the loss sustained by them. But for existence of excessive moisture contents in soil due to late flood which continued till Sept/85 the sowing of wheat had to be delayed and under this circumstance the seeds were distributed for late sowing although knowing fully that the yield rate would be affected. The action taken by the Deptt. was therefore absolutely appropriate.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.60. The Committee heard the deposition of the departmental representatives and decided to drop the para.

Overdrawal of Travelling Allowance**(Audit para 3.5/ C&AG(Civil)/1985-86/(P-27)**

1.61. The audit has pointed out that a test check of travelling allowance bills drawn by some of the Drawing and Disbursing Officers of the Agriculture Department during April, 1984 to March 1985 revealed that a total amount of Rs. 0.90 lakh was overdrawn by claiming irregularly half or full daily allowance for Journey of less than 40/80 kms performed in a day although not admissible under the rules. The matter was brought to the notice of the Drawing Officers from time to time between January and December 1986; reply from most of them have not been received (August 1987).

1.62. The department by their written reply has stated that perhaps due to wrong interpretation of T/A rules some excess amount had been drawn by some of the officers as indicated by audit. However, instructions were issued to all Drawing and Disbursing Officers to effect recovery of the overdrawn amounts pertaining to the period, in question, as intimated by A.G. Assam. Due attention has been paid to this aspect thereafter.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.63. **The Committee heard the deposition of the departmental representatives and decided to drop the para.**

Short accountal of seeds

(Audit para 3.1/C&AG(Civil)/1986-87/(p-46)

1.64. The audit has pointed out that (a) as per central stock register of the Sub-divisional Agricultural Officer, Abhoyapuri, 999.40 quintals of wheat seeds and 325.05 quintals of mustard seeds were issued to the Agriculture Extension Officer, Baitamari circle. In November 1984 for distribution to the flood affected people of the circle. At the other hand in the stock register of the Agriculture Extension Officer, Baitamari circle, 505 quintals of wheat seeds and 105 quintals of mustard seeds alone were accounted for. This resulted in short accountal of 494.40 quintals of wheat seeds, valued at Rs. 2.37 lakhs and 220.05 quintals of mustard seeds, valued at Rs. 1.91 lakhs. (b) Besides, the receipts given by the beneficiaries for 148.20 quintals of wheat seeds (value: Rs. 0.71 lakh) in Abhoyapuri circle 1 and 897.15 quintals of pea seeds (value : Rs. 4.31 lakhs) in Abhoyapuri circle 11 and for 13.93 quintals of pea seeds (value : Rs.0.12 lakh) in Baitamari circle could not be shown to Audit.

1.65. The department by written reply has stated that during the month of November/84, the Sub-Divisional Agril. Officer, Abhoyapuri received the following quantity of various seeds for distribution among the flood affected farmers of the sub-division.

1. Wheat	=	6000.00 Qtls.
2. Mustard	=	328.05 Qtls.
3. Pea	=	127.69 Qtls.

Distribution of the above mentioned quantity of seeds was made to the different A.E.O., Circle in the following manner :

1. Wheat Seeds :

1.	A.E.O., Baitamari	=	999.40 Qtls.
2.	A.E.O., North Salmara	=	959.65 ;
3.	A.E.O., Srijongram	=	940.00 ;
4.	A.E.O., Abhoyapuri - I	=	1209.20 ;
5.	A.E.O., Abhoyapuri - II	=	1891.75 ;
	Total		6000.00 Qtle.

Out of the 999.40 Qtl. allotted to Baitamari Circle, a quantity of 505.00 Qtl. were received by the AEO, Baitamari and the balance quantity of 494.40 qtl. distributed through the .L.E.W.s of the said Circle as per recommendation of Sub-Divisional Committee. As a result, the quantity distributed through the V.L.E.W. of the said circle had not been reflected in the Stock book of the A.E.O., Baitamari. Thus the actual distribution against Baitamari Circle was 999.40 qtl. As reported.

2. Mustard Seeds :- 328.05 Qtl. Of Mustard seeds were received by the Sub-Divisional Agril. Officer, Abhoyapuri and distributed as follows :-

(a) A.E.O., Baitamari	=	105.00	Qtls.
(b) A.E.O., North Salmara	=	88.00	;
© A.E.O., Srijongram	=	30.00	;
(d) A.E.O. Abhoyapuri - I	=	40.00	;
(e) A.E.O. Abhoyapuri - II	=	65.05	;

Total = 328.05 Qtls.

Thus the A.E.O., Baitamari was allotted only 105.00 qtl. Of Mustard seeds which were received by him and accounted for in his stock book against total quantity of 328.05 qtl. distributed by the S.D.A.O., Abhoyapuri during the period in question.

3. Pea Seeds :- The Sub-Division Agril Officer, Abhoyapuri received only 127.69 qtl. of seeds against entire sub-division for distribution among the farmers and Circle-wise distribution were as follows :-

1. A.E.O., Baitamari	=	40.00	Qtls.
2. A.E.O., North Salmara	=	20.00	;
3. A.E.O., Srijongram	=	40.00	;
4. A.E.O., Abhoyapuri - I	=	13.30	;
5. A.E.O., Abhoyapuri - II	=	14.39	;

Total = 127.69 Qtls.

b) The receipt given by the beneficiaries in respect of distribution shown against Abhoyapuri- I and Baitamari have been kept in the office of the Sub-Division Agril. Officer, Abhoyapur. The non-producing of A.P.R.s to the audit in time was however due to late submission of A.P.R.s to the S.D.A.O. by the respective V.L.E.Ws concerned which is regretted.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.66 After threadbare discussion, the Committee is satisfied with the reply of departmental representatives and pleased to drop the para.

ANNEXURE-I

The Members of the Sub-Committee-‘B’ of the Committee on Public Accounts (2011-2013)

Convener :

1. Shri Abdul Muhib Mazumdar

Members :

2. Shri Gautam Bora
3. Dr. Rumi Nath
4. Shri Emmanuel Mosahary
5. Shri Utpal Dutta
6. Shri Jatin Mali

ANNEXURE-II

COMPOSITION OF THE OUT GOING COMMITTEE
(2011-2013)Chairman:

1. Md. Sirajuddin Ajmal

Members:

2. Shri Gautam Bora
3. Shri Abdul Muhib Mazumdar
4. Shri Binanda Kumar Saikia
5. Dr. Rumi Nath
6. Shri Kamal Sing Narzary
7. Shri Emmanuel Mosahary
7. Shri Utpal Dutta
8. Shri Keshab Mahanta
9. Shri Swapan Kar
10. Shri Prasanta Phukan
11. Shri Jatin Mali