

## CHAPTER – III

### SPECIAL AREA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME.

#### 3.1. BORDER AREA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME.

3.1.1. Meghalaya is bounded on the south as well as the west by Bangladesh. The length of the international boundary is about 423 Kms. On the other sides, the State is surrounded by Assam. People living in the Border Areas of Bangladesh used to cultivate cultural crops like oranges, satkora, bananas betelnuts, betel leaves, black pepper, tespatta, etc. These were exported to Bangladesh from where in return they use to bring all their essential commodities. The communication facilities from these border areas to the interior of the State are more or less non-existent prior to partition and the economic well being of the Districts of Sylhet and Mymensing. The partition of the country in 1947 arise to abrupt stoppage of free open trade with the District of Sylhet and Mymensing. The result was that the economy of the people living in these border areas was very badly affected. Although they had their horticultural crops, they were deprived of the traditional markets to sell them. Moreover, the traditional source of supply of these essential commodities was also cut off. In order to ameliorate the suffering of the people in the Border Areas and to rejuvenate the once prosperous economy, special schemes were taken up, in these areas, in addition to the normal State Plan schemes. As a result of implementation of the special scheme, the economic condition of the people has improved marginally and there is more to be done so as to bring this area at par with the rest of the areas of the State.

#### 3.1.2 Review of the Ninth Plan :-

Although the original approved outlay for this sector for the Ninth Plan is Rs. 1200.00 lakhs only yet the expenditure incurred during the first four years of the Plan is already Rs. 2554.24 lakhs and the total anticipated expenditure during the Ninth Plan is Rs. 3366.24 lakhs. The approved outlay for the year 2001-2002 being Rs. 812.00 lakhs. The higher level of expenditure during the Ninth Plan period in respect of this sector is due to the implementation of the special scheme of BADP for which the Planning Commission provides Special Central Assistance (SCA). As per approval of the Planning Commission, the SCA for BADP formed a part of the State Plan Resources and the schemes implemented under this programme are also treated as State Plan Schemes. With the outlays and expenditure as stated above the following programmes have been implemented during the Ninth Plan period :-

- (1) **Agriculture:-** Under this programme, a loan-cum-subsidy scheme for purchase of tractors/ pumpsets at subsidized rate was implemented. In addition, schemes for development of horticulture and introduction of drip and sprinkler irrigation were also undertaken.
- (2) **Education :** The scheme aims at providing stipends/ scholarships to the students hailing from border areas as well as providing financial assistance for construction of school buildings in the border areas.
- (3) **Cooperation :-** The scheme of Agro-Custom-Hiring Centre was set up in 12 (twelfth) centres during the Eighth Plan for helping the farmers in ploughing their land by hiring the agril. machineries at subsidized rate. The operation of the scheme did not

yield the expected result rather it was found to be very costly. As such, the scheme was abandoned. However, the Government have had to pay the salaries of the man power running the scheme recently, the Government has disband the staff by providing the golden handshake.

- (4) **Soil Conservation:-** Under this programme, two schemes, namely, Cash Crop Development Works and Water Conservation Works/ Irrigation Control Works were taken up up to the end of 1998-99.
- (5) **Roads Programme:-**In the Border Areas there are many isolated villages which are not linked by communications.As a result, the villages are far behind other villages in economic development. To develop the economy of the villages, road communication is a top most priority. Efforts have been made since the creation of Meghalaya to bring the Border Villages within the road communicatio system. Though substantial progress has been made in this direction, much more is required to be done.
- (6) **Schemes implemented by the Border Areas Department:-** The Department is implementing schemes for construction of both residential and non-residential buildingsfor the officers and staffposted in the Border Areas Development Offices. The Department is also providing subsidy to the local educated unemployed youths for purchase of buses/ trucks. In addition, the Department has also taken up the work of construction of footpaths/ foot bridges.
- (7) **Schemes taken up under the SCA for BADP :-** The Border Area Dev.Programme(BADP) was launched by the Central Government in the Seventh Plan with an objective of facilitating balanced development of the sensitive areas of the western region of the country having inter-national border. During the 8<sup>th</sup> Plan, the coverage of the Programme has been extended to include the eastern States which have inter-national border with Bangladesh. The Programme has been re-oriented to give a sharp focus for tackling special problems which arise in the areas contiguous to the international border. Prior to the year 1997-98, the programme was considered as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme(in Meghalaya) for which the Govt of India provide 100 percent Central Assistance. Thereafter, the SCA for BADP formed a part of the State Plan funding and the Schemes taken up under the programme also are treated as State Plan Schemes. Schemes in areas like communication (including construction of ropeways), water supply facilities, school buildings etc. are taken up under this programme.There is a State Level Screening Committee under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary to scrutinize and approve the schemes proposed to be taken up under this Programme. In the State Level Screening Committee, the Central Home Ministry is to be represented by an Officer of not below the rank of Joint Secretary along with representatives also from the para-military organizations operating in the State's inter-national border. The concerned Adviser (State Plan) of the Planning Commission, the Secretary, Planning and the Secretary , Home of the State Govt. are also members of the State Level Screening Committee.

### **3.1.3. Tenth Plan Proposals:-**

In order to speed up the developmental activity in the Border Areas, the schemes in the sectors of Education, Soil Conservation and Departmental schemes will be continued. The people inhabiting the areas bordering Assam are also remaining very backward especially in terms of socio economic infrastructure. The State, is therefore, actively considering to implement a new scheme to be known as the **“Village Development in areas bordering with Assam”** to cover only those areas inside Meghalaya falling a radial distance within a crow- fly of 2 Km. from the inter-State border with Assam. The type and nature of schemes to be identified and implemented under the “Village Development Programme in areas bordering Assam” should be only those which may cater to the basic infrastructural needs of the villages whether it is in human habitated area or in areas of farming/ cultivation of the villages or in areas leading to any place of work/ farming/ cultivation, etc. with a view to facilitating better movement of people, goods and services, etc. The cost of any individual scheme to be taken up under this programme should in no case exceed Rs.5.00 lakhs.

**3.1.4. The outlays proposed for the Border Area Development Programme for the Ninth Plan and the Annual Plan 2002-2003 are Rs.4470.00 Lakhs and Rs.895.00 Lakhs respectively. The proposed outlays include the outlays falling under SCA for BADP. However, in case the Planning Commission provides higher level of SCA for BADP, the outlays will be adjusted accordingly.**