

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STATE DEVELOPMENT
REFORMS COMMISSION HELD ON THE 11TH AUGUST 2000

The Chairman of the Development Reforms Commission welcomed all the members and officials present for the meeting. Initiating the discussion, the Chairman emphasized that for economic growth and prosperity of the State, the health of every citizen is essential. Thus Health Sector requires to be given priority by the State, and it is with the purpose of discussing this very important matter that the present meeting had been called.

The members of the Development Reforms Commission were then briefed by the Commissioner and Secretary, Health Department and all the three DHS 's on various dimensions of the health sector in the state. The Health Department also submitted a detailed write-up to the Chairman and members of the SDRC regarding the Health sector in the State, including the draft Health Policy of the Government of India, the National Population Policy 2000, and a copy of the Memorandum submitted to the Union Health Minister recently.

Detailed discussion then took place, which touched upon the following: -

- The image of the department with respect to extending the health services to the common man;
- Attitudinal aspects of Health and medical personnels towards the public and public service and related aspects of rural service;
- Lack of infrastructure and facilities for proper attention and services to the people;
- Upgradation of CHC's at the District headquarters to the level of District hospitals; upgradation of the Civil Hospital, Shillong to a State General Hospital with special facilities, and strengthening of the Tura Civil Hospital for rendering Regional Referral services for the Garo Hills region;
- Strengthening the District hospitals and upgrading laboratory facilities;
- Making equipment such as X-ray, ECG, CT scan etc. functional;
- Making the health institutions functional by arranging manpower, materials and co-ordinating construction with the provision of service connections of water and electricity within a time-frame of 6 months. For this purpose the Department made a submission that it should be provided with delegated financial powers by the Finance Department to sanction posts and materials as per norms decided and followed once the building construction is complete;
- Providing medicine to the patients, arrangements for hospital pack and mixtures for wider coverage within the limited resources available, procuring and prescribing medicine under the generic categories for economy and coverage;
- Decentralization of purchase and procurement with adequate delegated powers to the authorities, with transparency and accountability;
- Enhancing the scale of finance for the diet and medicine; taking efforts to focus on the poorer section of the society;
- Enhancing the fund allocation for medicine and diet as per the revised scale of finance;
- Increasing the rates for the charges and fees for the services rendered, with comparable rates with other hospitals to be charged from middle-income and richer section;

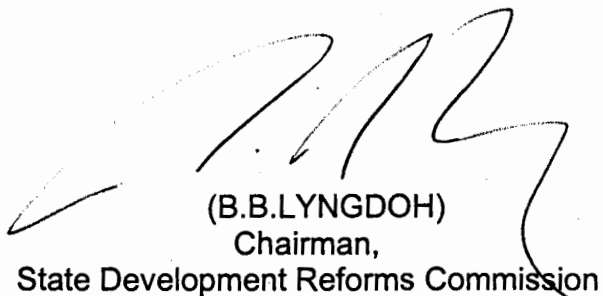
- Attending to the flood, epidemic and other contingencies during natural calamities ;
- Providing facilities for the Accident trauma centers in the district Headquarters and on the main Highways;
- Energizing efforts for safe motherhood and child care with efforts for population stabilization;
- Strengthening the Pasteur institute by utilizing modern methods including Tissue culture for vaccine production;
- Invigorating and mobilizing peoples participation in monitoring, vigilance and management of health care facilities and service;
- Tapping the NGO's and the other institutions available in the on-governmental sector and transferring certain tasks and responsibilities;
- Supporting the health institutions run by the NGO's;
- Creating mass Awareness for Communicable and infectious diseases;
- Health education and mass awareness towards better health care;
- Co-ordination with the other linkage Department's such as PHE for providing safe drinking water, Social Welfare for coordinated delivery system and reach, Education for awareness, inclusion in curriculum;
- Strengthening food and drug testing and enforcement;
- Computerization and use of IT to be encouraged for effective data base, analysis, diagnostics and communication;
- Manpower planning and management should be given utmost attention
- In respect of building infrastructure it was felt that all Health Department buildings should be taken over from the PWD for better attention and upkeep;
- The SDRC discussed the suggestions made by the Department in respect of Manpower, particularly the placement policy and need for focussing on the rural areas ;
- Health Engineering wing needs to be strengthened;
- Mobile Health Dispensaries may be considered;
- The SDRC also endorses the request of the Department to request concerned MLA's to provide Ambulances under the MLA scheme;
- To strictly implement and focus on National Health Programmes with emphasis and intensification of Malaria control and T.B. Programmes.
- To regulate qualitative growth and services of private nursing homes.
- To encourage alternative and indigenous system of medicine . Steps as suggested by the Department may be considered for implementation ;
- Steps may be taken to operate the OPD even on Sundays, in the major Hospitals, even by manning skeleton staff for the purpose

After a detailed discussion , Health Department was advised to take all required steps for improving the quality and coverage of Health care in the State. In particular, the following specific action may be taken by the Health Department:

1. Operationalising centers for Anti-rabic treatment in various District Headquarters .
2. The facilities available at Pasteur Institute could be utilized for branching out into Diphtheria, Whooping Cough, TT etc .The NEC could also be approached for assistance for the Tissue Culture Laboratory.

3. Certain suggestions have been made by the Department in respect of the Decentralized planning process and rational delegation of powers , and for making health institutions functional. It was recommended by the SDRC that these matters may be taken up expeditiously with the concerned Departments. The SDRC may also be kept apprised of developments in the matter.
4. The provision of Free medical treatment / diet may be made more focussed , and may be graded into different categories , so that 100% free facilities are made available only to the needy and poor people
5. Steps for use of computerization and IT in the field of Data base, diagnostics, analysis and communication may be initiated .
6. An analysis of the medicine cost per patient , as compared to other States in the region etc may be made .
7. The functioning of the Cobalt Therapy Unit at Shillong needs to be reviewed, within a time frame of three months.
8. The publicity activities of the Department needs to be strengthened and focussed. The Department may also consider using various media for creating public awareness on various aspects of public health .
9. Both OPD and Laboratory facilities, even though they may be skeletal in nature, would require to be in operation in the District Headquarters and in major Hospitals at State Headquarters, to tackle emergency cases.

The meeting concluded with the Chairman exhorting the officials of the Health Department to examine the recommendations of the SDRC and to put them into operation, in the interest of improved Health coverage in the State.



(B.B.LYNGDOH)
Chairman,
State Development Reforms Commission

Memo NO.PIA. SDRC/5/2000/8-A, Dt.Shillong the 1st November, 2000.

Copy forwarded to :-

1. Private Secretary to the Chairman, SDRC for information of the Chairman.
2. Shri F.B. Lyngdoh, IAS (Retd) Member SDRC.
3. Shri J. Tayeng, Additional Chief Secretary.
4. Shri W.M.S. Pariat, IAS, Member Secretary, SDRC.
5. Shri W. Synrem, IES., Officer on Special Duty, Programme Implementation Department.

By Order Etc.,


(A. Langstieh),

Deputy Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya,
Programme Implementation Department
