



# VIBRANT NORTH EAST 2018

3-5 May, 2018 | Guwahati (Assam)



Organized By:



**Centre for Agriculture and Rural Development**

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## Vibrant North East 2018

Vibrant North-East 2018 jointly organized by the Centre for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD), and Indian Council of Food and Agriculture (ICFA) was held from 3rd -5th May 2018 with the support of North Eastern Council (NEC) at Khanapara, Guwahati. The event provided an opportunity for the region to showcase its potential and opportunities to the rest of the country and instigate the growth and development of the region. The three day event ensured participation of stake-holders from the industry, institutions, government and the development sectors across the nation to showcase the programs and schemes, products, technologies and services; and deliberate upon the issues and opportunities and the way forward. The event comprised of an exposition, a Development meet on North Eastern states and ICFA working group meet.

### Day 1: Inauguration of VNE 2018

The mega event was inaugurated by Shri P L Thanga, Member Secretary State Planning Board, Mizoram, in the august presence of Mr. Sundeep Kumar Nayak, (MD NCDC), Smt Vandana Kumar (Joint Secretary DIPP), Dignitaries from Centre and State Governments, Representatives from the Industry and visitors and farmers from across the North East. Shri Thanga along with other dignitaries visited the exhibition pavilions and interacted with the exhibitors. He showed great interest in the products and schemes exhibited by various Ministries, organizations and companies. He was keen to learn about the newer technologies and developmental activities being carried out by centre and state governments meant for the development of the entire region. The Inaugural session that followed honoured the dignitaries.

Dr. Anis Ansari, Chairman, Center for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) welcomed the guests and said “we have a variety of the farming advantages in the region. If we can use them to the benefit of the sectors that will be a great boost. Every year we organize farmer’s meet across the country to discuss about their dreams and aspirations and the ways to fulfill them. We are also trying to make the public as well as the government aware of farmer’s issues by organizing meeting with them” he added.

In his address Chief Guest Shri PL Thanga said the North east region has a rich history and it was developed in many areas even before the rest of the country. “The region has a potential for an agriculture boom. Increasing investment in agriculture sector is another major initiative taken by the government,” he said. He further said the purpose of the event is to mainly benefit the farmers of the region by linking them to the market directly. Shri Thanga stressed upon the application of latest technology, latest equipment, tools and other improved agricultural inputs in order to meet the emerging challenge of food security. “A well-researched scientific approach is the need of the time for overall development of the society,” he stressed.

The inaugural ceremony was also addressed by other eminent personalities including Shri Sundeep Kumar Nayak, (MD, NCDC), Dr. Vandana Kumar, (JS, DIPP) Dr. Rajaram Tripathi, CEO Maa Danteshwari Group and President- All India Farmer’s Alliance and Shri Saurabh Agarwal., CEO Stevia Biotech Dr. AK Srivastava, Executive Director, CARD proposed the vote of thanks

## Development Meet

A brainstorming session that followed the inaugural session saw the participation of many eminent personalities in the agriculture and sector of the country. The Development Meet took place at Hotel Lily, Khanapara and the event discussed and generated a roadmap for the development of the NE states.

**Dr. M J Khan, Chairman, Indian Council of Food and Agriculture(ICFA)** highlighted the potential of livestock sector, poultry, fisheries or piggies as they have got a good domestic market. “High value crops like spices, herbs and stevia should be major thrust areas of work of various stakeholders. Institutional support has always been available to this area provided there is a competent proposal and credible organizations that take up those projects. A consortium of companies can be formed where meaningful interventions can be designed accordingly and a sound project can be taken up. Multiple sources of funding to good projects are available. Some innovative thinking has to go into what projects can be sustainable over a long period of time initially supported by the government but not on a perpetual basis,” proposed Dr. Khan. He also proposed instituting agribusiness Centres as they were viable projects that can be taken up in each block, wherein a block contains 40-50 villages, and act as resource centres in terms of technology; schemes to be availed, market connect programs, skill development and everything that a farmer needs to increase his income. He opined that these centres can provide limited number of employment opportunities and larger number of self employment opportunities. “A serious try needs to be given to these projects, such agribusiness centres need to be connected to one platform which is connected nationally and internationally and help these centres engage with farmers to benefit them. Such centres can be started up on an experimental basis by one state with less than 50 centres and 10 centres under one agribusiness specialist and respective project coordinators,” he said. He also stressed on the importance of branding and the value it brings. “Model like HPMC successful in the Himachal Pradesh can be simulated here and one brand of the north east can be developed and at major railway stations and airports north east juice centres can come up. Farmers, in this manner get assured procurement of whatever they produce

A feasibility study can be done in a couple of states under the light of national perspective in sourcing the raw material and marketing of the finished produce and HPMC is an effective model to replicate in the north east. The HPMC is a state-run and state-funded project; however in the north east it can be undertaken as public private partnership because times have changed from government being the sole functionary of any developmental project to being a source of support or a partner," he suggested.

**Dr. A. K Shrivastava, Executive Director, CARD** encouraged to focus on convergent goals, as there were on one hand there were possibilities and at the other successful models. "These possibilities are well within the reach of states whether they are pertaining to policy backup or provision of infrastructure or capacity building. Focusing on our strengths, we have floriculture specifically orchids, medicinal and aromatic plants, specialty foods or high value and low volume crop. Our strength are natural resources which can be capitalized by way of organic farming. Our youth needs to be targeted by understanding their aspirational goals and addressing them accordingly, streamlining our efforts to engage them at all levels of our interventions," said Dr. Shrivastava. He emphasized on the importance of a status paper that need to be worked on to cover brainstorming sessions on the potential of the region and subsequently come up with an action plan, determine the feasibility of the product and its viability.

**Dr. Anis Ansari, Chairman, CARD** was concerned about the falling prices of agricultural commodities despite record productions. "Deliberations are to be made on what steps need to be taken to hedge prices. Policy makers need to shift their focus from increasing productivity and production thereby focusing on increasing the income for the farmers so that it commensurates with their investment and labour. Exports in general and agricultural production exports have been reduced to the tune of 10 billion dollars and imports have increased to 12 billion dollars. The import duties have been reduced and restrictions imposed on the export of rice, wheat and maize. Consistency of export policy is required. Unless goods are traded not only to the domestic market but also the international market, dream of doubling the farmer's income cannot be realized," he cautioned. Dr. Ansari reminded the strengths of the region which were good rainfall, biodiversity and good forest cover. Also he exhorted to capitalize on the meat exports as it has shown buoyancy. "The processing of meat will not only be useful to the domestic consumer but also increase the export to the international market. Other major consumption centres like West Bengal and fish deficit states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan etc can be targeted and this strength can be increased manifold likewise," he suggested. He also pointed out to the lack of connectivity in NE states, however, platforms like e-NAM has the potential to effectively ensure movement of goods from one state to other. "Local markets need to be networked to this electronic market to capitalize on the schemes it has to offer and the need to invest in physical infrastructure of market is reduced and the region is able to supply and procure goods and services at national level. A model similar to e-commerce sites should be created for agricultural goods as well," added Dr. Ansari.

**Ms. Kim, former MP Manipur** thanked all the organizers for inviting her to this development meet and requested the management of CARD to organize a similar event in Manipur. She also assured that an event of this scale would result in participation of all stakeholders related to this industry in Manipur. She was worried about the drifting of youth away from agriculture and believed that such events motivate youth to take up farming. This will also result in the difference between the rich and poor narrowing down.

**Mr. Sourabh Agarwal, CEO Stevia Biotech** proposed to develop a brand of north east stevia and to include all those states that have land, weather conditions and farmer groups who are interested in cultivating stevia. "Growing stevia under the umbrella of organic cultivation in the north east will make North East the global leader for stevia. This crop can serve as a cash crop for north eastern farmers," he suggested. Mr. Agarwal observed that Sikkim is one of the first areas where stevia cultivation is being undertaken by Stevia Biotech and similar tie ups have been initiated with Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur. He also spoke about creating a buffer zone of stevia cultivation between forest areas and residential areas of farmers in the north east to reduce the conflicts between animals in these protected areas and farmers or labourers working nearby. Mr. Agarwal also explained the volumetric reduction of the stevia crop adding to the low volume high value unique selling proposition of the crop. He also urged the government officials to undertake a detailed feasibility study to cultivate stevia in various parts of the north east. He observed that a lot of north east agricultural produce was being spoilt and novel methods of preserving crops like irradiation facilities can be set up. Such preservation methods can increase the shelf life of crops like ginger, turmeric and pineapple and holistically looking at the economics of establishing such a facility.

**Mr. Arnab Kumar Hazara, Assistant Secy. General, Indian Steel Association** pointed out that the share of agriculture of the north east region in the services sector is about 49% compared to 48% 10 years ago. "Industry has moved from 22 to 29% and agriculture declined to 22 %, which means share of agriculture in the Gross Value Added is declining. The impetus to growth of agriculture is purely organic as the support has been external in terms of policies and interventions. The farmers have mostly benefited from the seed companies as they provide most handholding in terms of good practices.

Therefore, government moves in terms of establishing the market is not going to help entirely. Organizations such as ICFA and CARD should convince seed companies willing to work in the north east. We are the largest beef meat exporter in the world but meat processing units are not available beyond Aligarh and in some areas of Kolkata. Meat from remote areas are brought to these processing units from areas as far as Gujarat. Therefore this is another area of intervention which can be looked into. There is a need to supplement the income of farmers by creating means other than agriculture and allied sectors through sectors like steel. We need to mobilize the idea of adoption, hand holding and assured buy-back. Local produce as bamboo need to be marketed with brand tie ups as shoppers stop. Lack of storage facilities in the north east add to the woes of the farmer. Investment in storage facilities is very critical for any kind of improvement in the living conditions of farmers in the north east," he said.

**Mr. Satyajit Mohapatra, General Manager – Technical Marketing for Hot Rolled and Downstream, ESSAR Steel** emphasized the need to develop steel as a sector stating that unless the consumption of steel is increased, the development will not happen in as fast a pace as is expected, since development is based on improving the functionalities of the core sectors and developing peripheral sectors. For instance automobile sector in Gujarat has developed to a phenomenal extent mainly due to the incessant efforts of the government. The discussion that had so far materialized dwelled upon the fact that agriculture is the backbone of development. However, one cannot neglect the infrastructure factors that support its development.

Agriculture Production will not materialize into monetary gains for the farmers until suitable infrastructure exists to store, mobilize and pack the produce. This is where steel plays a pre-eminent role. If we have to reduce the agricultural wastages then we have to invest in steel and related materials for building robust agricultural storage infrastructure. One also has to understand the implications of using various technologies for eg. irradiation for increasing shelf life of the produce before implementing them on ground.

**Dr. Neeraj Tandon, Scientist G at ICMR New Delhi** stressed on the need of having a robust medical research system in the region and pointed out to different studies which ICMR has carried out in the north east for instance the study of risk factors of Hepatocellular Carcinoma (HCC) in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh and data collection on the prevalence of diabetes, prediabetes, hypertension and dyslipidemia in the community. Studies ranging from diseases like Malaria, Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (Aes), Lymphatic Filariasis, Visceral Leishmaniasis, Taeniasis, Bacterial and Viral diseases. Such investigative research will go a long way to establish well-being of the people of the community and empower holistic development of the North East.

## Recommendations from Development Meet

- Strengthening Vision 2020 for Northeast India to make region marginally surplus in food production by introducing integrated modern agricultural methods and developing agriculture horizontally and vertically. Cluster approach for development of both farm and non-farm rural enterprises – at least two rural clusters in each of the 484 blocks in the region by 2020.
- Piggery development will ensure availability of the meat to the consumers at low prices and income to the farmers. The markets for processed pork must be studied and the required facilities should be built.
- Upgrading the existing research institution of Central Silk Board for undertaking applied research on sericulture in collaboration with State level Agricultural Institutions. Sericulture is a remunerative enterprise with a very short gestation period, having the potential to generate adequate returns from a very small piece of land. Development of infrastructural facilities by way of getting up grainages for supply of eri silk worm eggs to the eri rears, organizing spinning activities on decentralized basis and helping in the marketing of eri yarn.
- A more aggressive program of horticultural development is required. This will involve not merely paying attention to the existing orchards but new developments for jackfruits, kiwi, and pineapple. Cultivars from other areas in India in similar conditions have to be identified for different parts of the region. Bare areas in forest may also be suitable for intensive horticulture development.
- Effective marketing arrangements for horticulture development in the region. An integrated structure for marketing and processing starting from some arrangements for primary collection through cooperatives, processing, storage, and at the apex, an organization that can undertake marketing outside the region in national and international markets is required.
- All horticultural growers in the area to be brought within cooperative fold and linked to the processing unit.
- Designing the processing and storage operations on the basis of the specific requirements of the region. The climate of the region can also be used to advantage by having cool houses for cold storage in the higher altitudes and solar driers for drying fruit.

- Developing HPMC Model under which processing units for select horti produce can be established in each State and their vending points in important cities/Railway Stations all over India. This could provide more profit to farmers, generate more employment and create entrepreneurship opportunities.
- Developing fish production in the North East region of India.
- A floriculture development centre to undertake extensive surveys to locate plant species of high floriculture value and propagate the selected species for commercial purposes.
- Special measures to promote road transport operations through concessional loans for freight transport operations or the extension of freight services.
- Ensuring availability of project leaders and guides to enhance the implementation of the ICTs at the grassroot levels. If implemented properly ICT can surely bridge the gap between economically and technology backward and forward classes.
- Strengthening coordination between all the stakeholders in development process such as Developmental Departments, University of Agricultural Sciences, Indian Institute of Horticultural Research, Commodity Boards, NGOs, Farmers' Associations, Marketing Organization and export promotion organization for development of horticultural crops
- Adequate policy support is needed to intensify small scale cultivation of tea, coffee and rubber crops in suitable areas. Setting up of commodity boards at regional level for food processing industries.
- Establishing community farms where traditional knowledge holders can do experiments and demonstrate their technologies.
- Supporting farmers in bringing their produces to markets (Mandi) by devising mechanism in order to reduce high transportation cost, especially for hilly regions. APMC or SRTC may collaborate for the same.
- Provision for open sharing of vision document of states at each District or Block/Panchayat level. Vision Document which envisions the future for the farm sector so that the farmer will have a respectable income and livelihood in the ensuing decade.

## Deliberations of ICFA Working Group

Dr. MJ Khan informed that summit of similar scale to Vibrant North East 2018 would be held in Manipur and one in Mizoram upon requests of the chief guest and ms. Kim from Manipur. Dr. Dinesh Chauhan commenting on the entire spectrum of agriculture pertaining to the north east observed that there is a need to make a council to bring important stakeholders to push policy in the government. "Quality of the product in the north East is good, however aggregation remains a challenge. Total produce is not enough for the local people as export rates are high. Aggregation will lead to Marketing Clusters of particular crops need to be identified and primary processing needs to be done at source. From a buyer's perspective, consistency of supply is required. This is because various costs are involved in marketing of the produce," he summed up.

Dr. Khan pointed out that a channelizing agency is required and also there is a pressing need for an authentic database which will include but will not be limited to: Total production of crops, Production cycle, Price range of those crops, Quality parameters and Surplus quantity available. He also pointed out that first and most level of money is in branding. As the margin is in brands, Dr. Khan did not quite agree to the point that North East should continue with the same old crops and not enter new, more profitable markets as there are chances of slipping into complaisance if we keep carrying out same old

interventions without the room for innovative interventions. "The improvement and development of value chain for the existing crops should be carried out. Hedging of prices is in the jurisdiction of the central government," he said. Dr. Khan then referred to the conclusions drawn from the MSP round table held by ICFA and pointed the reasons why states should not intervene in price discovery. One person pointed out that there should be a special purpose vehicle to carry out data collection and collation of the agricultural data to which Dr. Khan responded that ISI has a mandate of collecting the data in question. A similar model is adopted by the USDA where during an annual meeting with important stakeholders of the industry USDA recommends limits of every parameter of each agri commodity after collecting real time data from the fields.

Pointing to dearth of good certification regime, Mr. Chaudhury asked for recommendations as to where to seek certification for organic farming. Dr. Khan pointed out that although lot of organic certification agencies are available but GAP certification is not. He pointed out the importance of the GAP certification observed that many corporates have taken collective decision to buy 100% GAP certified raw material. Mr. P.L Thanga raised his concern about the relevance of such certification in all other countries.

The concern of integrated approach towards holistic development of north-eastern agriculture was discussed. It was suggested that all agriculture and allied departments should sit in a council and decide their approach towards each agri commodity. The problem with the lack of this approach is the fact that each department promotes conflicting techniques to grow food, for eg: horticultural dept. promotes chemical whereas agricultural department promotes organic agriculture. Local varieties of seeds that have adapted well to the geography should be put to more use than HYV received through imports. The PGS system of certification hold well even with western market, where per acre cost of organic certification is INR 500-4000. The fact that there is no introspect into the market and product was agreed by all members of the council. There were no local juices being sold, no jelly or jam preparations of local fruits available

## Day 2: Exhibition

The exhibition continued on the second day and visitors remained busy collecting information on schemes and activities. Visitors updated their knowledge in their interested sectors and participated in various promotional activities organized at different stalls. Government officials including CGM NABARD Smt. R. Kakati Baruah paid their visits to the exhibition.

## Day 3: Exhibition Cum Closing Ceremony

The third day of the exhibition remained very eventful. School children, farmers and other visitors came to see the exhibition. People enjoyed the Bihu dance performance and other cultural activities performed by a group of artist arranged by DAVP/ BOC.

The valedictory function held post lunch in the seminar hall. His Excellency the Governor of Assam Hon'ble, Prof Jagdish Mukhi, graced the occasion as the chief guest. He was received by the CARD officials. He paid visit to all pavilions of the exhibition and interacted with the exhibitors. Later he addressed the audience which comprised of progressive farmers, students and the visitors. Speaking at the event, the Governor said, "Agriculture is the back bone of the country where 60% of the population is directly engaged. The farmers and the stakeholders are facing many problems in farming but they carry on with their work to feed the Nation. Programs like this will help the farmers, entrepreneurs, youths and stakeholders of the North Eastern states to be self-dependent. "He applauded the efforts made by the Centre for Agriculture and Rural Development to provide a common platform for different Ministries, Organizations, Industry, and High profile Officials from GOI & Industry, scientists and Researchers, Rural and urban folk to showcase discuss and understand the developmental activities. Hon'ble Prof. Mukhi gave away the certificates and Mementos to the different exhibitors and participants.

Dr. AK Srivastava Executive Director CARD proposed the vote of thanks and conveyed the heartfelt gratitude to all the exhibitors who came from the different Ministries and

within the region. Local entrepreneurship needs to be promoted at all levels within the region. The fact that there's no collated data of production, deficit, cost of production and ruling prices was reiterated. Also the requisite factors of production are available but entrepreneurship is not. The landholding size and legal matters remain of concern and the area cannot be developed in agriculture unless this is sorted.

Mr. Surjeet Sinha from Source Trace pointed to the need for digitization of land records. He also shared that Thailand was doing way better in rice production since the farms were highly digitized. A brief proposal on how to digitize all farms in North Eastern Region could be made to the north eastern council. The possibility of coming up with commodity boards around top 5 crops was also discussed.

organizations to showcase their products and schemes and visitors who took their time out to visit and increase their knowledge on various schemes and activities of government, technology, research and the development in their region.

The three days long activities at Khanapara ground came to an end with the recitation of National Anthem and with the promise to meet again with the next edition of the event in the coming year 2019.

Dr Dinesh Chauhan, CEO and Director , International Agriculture Consulting Group while addressing farmers during valedictory function of VNE 2018 in Guwahati emphasized that such programs to be undertaken by various state government agencies related to developing entrepreneurship skills of the farmers. He also said that North East has a huge potential specially in horticultural crops and there is a need for marketing of these produce and connecting North East with markets both in domestic as well as international markets. Aggregation is a big challenge in north east and he said that there need to identify and map clusters of various crops grown in the region and then developing infrastructure like primary processing etc at village level of these identified cluster so that there can be higher realization of value of these crops. Programs to be developed basis the need of the small and marginal farmers of the region and production of local indigenous crops to be given more emphasis along with the branding of such local produce will help in marketing and positioning of such crops globally.

## Recipients of Vibrant North East Awards 2018

**Main Sponsor:** National Cooperative Development Corporation

**Best Innovative Stall Award:** Regional Outreach Bureau, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

**Best Stall Award:** National Institute of Public Co-operation and Child Development

**Best Informative Stall Award:** Indian Council of Medical Research

**Best North Eastern public body for implementing Swaccha Bharat Mission:** Public Health and Engineering Department, Meghalaya

**Best Commercial Stall Award:** Mahindra Commercial Vehicles

## List of Exhibitors at the Vibrant North East 2018

1. Ahana Ads and Outdoors(Mahindra)
2. Bureau of Outreach Communication/DAVP
3. Central Water Commission (MoWR)
4. Directorate of Horticulture, Government of Meghalaya
5. Export Promotion Council For Handicrafts (EPCH)
6. Department of Horticulture, Government of Arunachal Pradesh
7. Department of Horticulture, Government of Meghalaya
8. Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)
9. Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology (IASST)
10. ICAR- Umiam, Meghalaya
11. ICAR – National Research Centre for Pig
12. Manipur Organic Mission Agency (MOMA)
13. MSTC Ltd.
14. Mohan Motors Services
15. Ministry of Earth Sciences
16. Ministry of Home Affairs
17. National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)
18. National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development(NIPCCD)
19. National Skill Development Corporation(NSDC)
20. National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management (NIFTEM)
21. National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED)
22. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)
23. North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Limited (NERAMAC)
24. Public Health Engineering Department, Govt. of Meghalaya
25. State Bank of India
26. Stevia Biotech Pvt. Limited
27. VST Tillers Tractors Ltd.

