

**TOUR REPORT OF SHRI ANIL KUMAR AGARWAL, IAS, SECRETARY,
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCHEDULED TRIBES, GOVERNMENT OF
INDIA, NEW DELHI IN RESPECT OF HIS TOUR TO MEGHALAYA, FROM
22.06.2016 TO 25.06.2016.**

Shri Agarwal, Secretary, NCST reached Shillong in the afternoon of 22nd June, 2016 by road from Guwahati. He visited Civil Hospital Shillong in the evening. Surgeon Superintendent Dr. Mrs. B. Mawlong took the Secretary, NCST around the hospital. It was a 600 bedded hospital, having 7 beds in casualty. They needed some more beds for the cancer ward. The inpatient registration during 2015-16 was 15065. The OPD registration during the same period was 175583. It had CT machine, digital X-Ray machine, but no MRI machine. They had all the specialists that they needed, but not the super-specialists. They had some shortage of nursing staff and ward boys. Ambulance service worked on 108 number. They had three ambulances for transferring patients from this hospital to other hospitals. Shillong had a separate hospital for OBG and paediatric patients. It also had a separate hospital for T.B. and chest diseases. Overall it was a well-run hospital.

2. The Secretary, NCST on 23rd June, 2016 visited Swer village. He visited Primary Health Centre in the village and Dr. R. Kyndiah GDMO took him around the PHC. There was only one quarter on campus for GDMO. The PHC had 5 male and 5 female beds and it did limited pathological tests. Generally, the medicines were available. In case there was any shortage, GDMO was authorised to make local purchase. Average OPD attendance was about 80. The PHC did 170 deliveries during 2015-16. There were 3 tables in the labour room. They had four staff nurse; but, they had only 2 family quarters on campus for them.

3. The Secretary, NCST saw during the visit that out of 10 beds, 9 beds were occupied. The PHC needed one more GDMO, preferably a lady doctor. They needed 2 nurse's quarters and a few more beds. The State Government may examine the feasibility of outsourcing X-ray and additional pathological test, if such facilities were available in the private sector locally. The PHC also needed fencing to prevent cattle from entering

into the PHC campus. The Secretary, NCST observed that it was quite commendable that a single doctor was managing a 10 bedded facility.

4. The Secretary, NCST visited the Swer village. The village has 376 households and a total of 1554 persons, of which 184 persons were BPL. It has three lower primary, one upper primary, one secondary and one higher secondary school. All the schools were run by a Managing Committee consisting of villagers and government officials. The village had three village health sanitation and nutrition committees and three ICDS centres.

5. The Secretary, NCST held a meeting with villagers in presence of the local public representatives. It was reported that, barring a few new households, all the households had toilet facilities. The villagers reported shortage of drinking water, particularly during the winter months. Also, the water was coming directly from the streams through pipes and there was no siltation tank involved in between. At the PHC, a number of patients were found to be suffering from diarrhoea. The villagers suggested that a check dam could be constructed on the stream, so that they had enough water throughout the year. The Secretary, NCST felt that it was important to have the water tested, so that appropriate measures could be taken.

6. Villagers reported that new ration cards were taking considerable time in being issued. Under NREGA, about 21 days work was given during 2015-16. However, the NREGA payments were generally delayed. The villagers also mentioned that there was no pucca road in the village. There was also some demand for housing in the village.

7. 60% of the population was involved in agriculture, mainly potato cultivation. The State Government may consider the feasibility of providing them high yielding variety potato seeds and extension support. The villagers mentioned that they needed fertilizers at reasonable rate. This may be looked into. In addition, the State Govt. may think of promoting vermin-composting in the village in a big way.

8. The Secretary, NCST visited ICDS centre in Swer village. There were a total of three ICDS centres in the village. Two centres did not have their own building. They were being run from the house of the anganwari worker concerned. The third centre,

which had its own building, was visited. It has 58 children between 6 months to 3 years, 22 children from 3 to 4 years and 38 children from 5 to 6 years, totalling 118 children.

Children in the age group of 5 to 6 attended lower primary school; but, before going to school they came to the centre and collected their meal. Children between 6 months to 3 years were provided take home ration once a week. This ICDS centre needed an additional room for keeping stores. There was no complaint from villagers about the supplementary nutrition being provided at the centre. However, they mentioned that the centre did not have any water connection. Anganwari worker or the helper had to fetch water from a tap in the village which was some distance away. The firewood was being paid at the rate of only Rs. 0.45 paise per stick; whereas, the actual cost was Rs. 5 per stick. The balance cost was being borne by the community. In winter, children were encouraged to bring additional firewood sticks from their homes. The supplementary nutrition was cooked in the traditional manner which created lot of smoke. The State Govt. may consider the feasibility of providing them either a gas connection or smokeless chulla. And, immediately, some ventilation should be provided in the area where cooking was being done.

9. The Secretary, NCST visited Darbaar Higher Secondary School in Swer village. The Principal, Mr. Dmai Sing Mawniuh, took him around the school. It was a Higher Secondary School covering classes 6 to 12. They had 380 plus students. On the day of the visit, the exams were going on and it appeared that the exams were being conducted in a befitting manner.

10. The Principal mentioned that he had full complement of teachers as per sanctioned strength. The last result at the higher secondary level was 100% pass and at the secondary level 97% students passed. However, only one girl at the higher secondary level and four students at the secondary level could exceed 70% marks. The school was following the local board. The principal mentioned that they had two sections in class 9 and for rest of the classes they had only one section. They did not have science stream in classes 11 and 12. Therefore, a large number of students took education in Shillong from class 10 onwards. The Principal mentioned that they needed up-gradation of laboratory, library and computer lab. The Principal also felt that the syllabus needed to be revised as the last revision had taken place in 2008. The quality of education needed to be improved particularly in Science, Maths and English.

11. Regarding building infrastructure, one new block was coming up. It would replace some of the existing dilapidated structure. Even after the new block had come up, the school would need some more building space. The school had one toilet unit for girls and one toilet unit for boys. Once the new construction was ready, they would have 6 units of toilets for boys and another 6 units of toilet for girls. However, at present there was no system of regular cleaning of toilets.

12. The Secretary, NCST visited Ram Krishna Mission Centre in Cherapunji. They were providing education to about 10,000 children throughout Shillong, largely in the Cherapunji area. They were employing over 400 teachers. They were well known in the area in the field of education. They were doing commendable work. However, they mentioned that the main problem was getting financial support from Central/State Government on a certain and sustained basis.

13. The Secretary, NCST on 24th June, 2016 held a meeting with State Government official. In absence of the Chief Secretary, the State Government was represented by The Additional Chief Secretary, Health. The other officers present at the meeting were:

- a. Principal Secretary-cum-Commissioner SJETA
- b. Director, SJETA
- c. Social Welfare Officer, SJETA
- d. Asstt. Director, NCST, Shillong

14. While initiating the discussion, the Secretary, NCST thanked the State Government for extending all the courtesies to him during his visit. He also briefed about NCST and its role. He mentioned that, as they were senior officers of the State Government, they would be aware of the ground situation and they must be doing their best to provide quality services to the people. However, such visits like the one by the Secretary, NCST gave an opportunity to the State Government to get an unfiltered feedback from an independent person about the ground situation.

15. The Secretary, NCST then gave his observations based on his visit to different institutions in Swer village. He mentioned about his visit to Darbar Higher Secondary

School. The various features of the school as well as the demand of the Principal, as given earlier in the tour report, were mentioned to the Additional Chief Secretary. In the Health sector, the Secretary, NCST briefed the meeting about his visit to the Civil Hospital, Shillong and Primary Health Centre, Swer. Similarly, he briefed the meeting about the status of household toilets, drinking water, PDS, NREGA, agriculture, status of the ICDS Centres, etc. in Swer village.

16. In response, the Additional Chief Secretary mentioned that the norm for a PHC was to have 3 doctors- 2 GDMOs and one AYUSH Medical Officer. However, there was general shortage of doctors. Therefore, the State Government was not in a position to provide full complement of doctors in PHCs. He further mentioned that about 23 PHCs were running in PPP mode. Regarding shortage of nurses in the civil hospital, he mentioned that this was mainly because of fund constraint with the State Government. Regarding other issues raised by the Secretary, NCST, the Additional Chief Secretary assured that the State Government would give serious consideration to these issues and would take appropriate action.

17. Mr. John F. Kharshiing met with the Secretary, NCST. He raised the issues of The Grand Council of Chiefs of Meghalaya in connection with seeking constitutional recognition in the 13th Schedule of the Constitution and protection of customary laws and practices. He mentioned that at times the customaries practices of the Chiefs came in conflict with the laws of the country. It emerged during the discussion that it required an amendment of the Constitution. The Secretary, NCST mentioned that the appropriate Ministry to deal with this matter would be the Ministry of Home Affairs. They may like to pursue it with MHA.

18. The Secretary, NCST visited Nongkrem Higher Secondary School. Mrs. Shembha Wankhar, the Principal of the school showed the school to the Secretary, NCST and briefed about the various facilities at the school. The school catered to students from lower primary to class 12. It had 352 students. They had only the arts stream in classes 11th and 12th. The existing building of the school was in a very bad shape and a new building under construction was likely to be completed by December, 2016. However, the Principal mentioned that even after the new building was available,

15/09/2016
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they would need additional 10 rooms. The school had 4 units of toilets for boys and 4 units of toilets for girls. However, there was no system of cleaning the toilets.

19. The school didn't have laboratory or library. It has only 7 computers in the computer lab, which was not sufficient. The Principal mentioned that the drinking water facilities were also not sufficient. Initially, the school was catering to only classes 7 to 10. However, due to local pressure they had to extend this coverage to lower primary on the lower side and up to class 12 on the higher side. The Principal mentioned that they needed a total of 25 teachers, out of which only 7 post were sanctioned. The rest of the teachers were provided by the Managing Committee locally.

20. The Secretary, NCST visited Nongkrem village and held a meeting with the villagers in the local community hall. Various features of the village, including deficiencies, are briefly mentioned below. There was shortage of drinking water; but, the water had been tested in the past and the quality of water was okay. Only 25% of the household in the village had individual toilets. The villagers complained that it took long time to get new ration card. In some cases, it had taken as long as one year to get a new ration card. In some cases, applications for new ration cards had been rejected without assigning any reason. The villagers were reasonably satisfied with the health arrangement at the primary health centre located at Smit.

21. The villagers mentioned that the NREGA payments were delayed. Further, the daily wage rate under NREGA was only Rs.163 per day. They stated that this rate was okay for female workers. However, for male workers this rate was quite inadequate. The villagers mentioned that they did not get seed or fertilizer from the Government. They had to purchase it from the open market at a high cost. Only 3 litres of kerosene per month was available, which was highly inadequate for a family. There were 11 ICDS centres of which 3 did not have their own building. The villagers also mentioned the Aadhaar enrolment was not being done and it, being mandatory, was affecting coverage under National Digital Literacy Mission.

22. The Secretary, NCST visited vocational training centre in Nongkrem, run by Nongkrem Youth Association. They were running one year course on embroidery as well as one year course on computers. They mentioned that the computer course was run in

the evening. They were advised that, during the morning hours, they may provide computer teaching to students of classes 11 and 12 of the Nongkrem higher secondary school, located next door.

23. The Secretary, NCST visited Mowmuthoh ICDS Centre in Nongkrem. The centre was catering to 89 children. The Centre did not have any water connection. The pregnant and lactating mothers present in the centre mentioned that the food given at the centre should have more variety. The cooking was done with firewood; but, they had a chimney and the smoke could go out without affecting the children.

24. The Secretary, NCST visited Primary Health Centre, Smit. The PHC had one GDMO and one AYUSH doctor. The PHC had 10 beds. The doctor-in-charge mentioned that they needed another 5 beds. The PHC was doing about 30 deliveries per month. There was an urgent need for one more GDMO at the PHC. The PHC has 6 staff nurses and they had requisite quarters for them. The GDMO and the AYUSH doctor also had quarters for them. The PHC seemed to be doing a great job in terms of handling 30 deliveries per month with one single MBBS doctor. The State Government may consider providing another GDMO at an early date.

25. The Secretary, NCST advised the State Government to take remedial action on observations as mentioned earlier in this Report and to submit Action Taken Report to the NCST.

26. The Secretary, NCST left Shillong in the morning of 25th June, 2016 for Guwahati.

Signature
15/08/2016

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