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## **Foreword**

Meghalaya State Food Commission was constituted on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2016 with a Chairman, five Members and a Member-Secretary, who was Commissioner and Secretary of the Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs. The Chairman joined in May 2016, and the other Members joined in October 2016. During 2016-17, the Commission reviewed the action being taken by Food & Civil Supplies, Social Welfare and Education Departments in implementing provisions of the Food Security Act in relation to the Targetted Public Distribution System, the Integrated Child Development Services and the Mid Day Meal Programmes. The Commission held six meetings, and their observations and recommendations were published in the Annual Report 2016 – 17, which was laid before the State Legislature in December 2017.

During 2017–18, the Commission held nine meetings and Awareness Programmes in different district headquarters covering the three regions of the State. The objective of the programmes was to sensitise the Departmental Officers as well as the general public on the entitlements and services to be provided under the National Food Security Act 2013. The Commission has also taken up with the concerned departments to activate the internal grievance redressal mechanism and appoint independent District Grievance Redressal Officers as per directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court. The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India, also held a meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2018 with all Chairpersons of the State Food Commissions to discuss the functioning of the Commission and their role in effective implementation of NFSA. These meetings are proposed to be conducted regularly by Government of India.

This is the second Annual Report prepared by the Commission, and the focus is on the awareness campaigns conducted and follow up action on various aspects of the Food Security Act. The Commission will be grateful for any suggestions to improve the functioning of the Commission and the content of the Report.

B.K. DevVarma  
Chairman  
Meghalaya State Food Commission

## **INTRODUCTION**

In addition to the Rules published in 2016-17, the Meghalaya State Food Commission (Amendment) Rules 2018 was notified on 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 with the following additions:

**Powers of the State Food Commission:** The State Food Commission shall have the following powers, namely :-

- (a). inspect or cause to be inspected, the non-compliance of policy decisions of the Government relating to the Act ;
- (b). organize regional camps for building awareness about benefits and entitlements under the Act and define measures for redressal of grievance ;
- (c). appoint, in consultation with the Government, consultants and technical staff to assist the State Food Commission; and
- (d). lay down procedure for day-to-day functioning.

**Duties of the Member Secretary :** The Member-Secretary shall, in addition to functions as provided in the Act and rules and in accordance with the direction of the Chairperson, have the following duties, namely :-

- (a). execute all decisions taken by the State Food Commission in exercise of its powers and functions of the State Food Commission;
- (b). exercise and discharge such powers and perform such duties as may be required for the proper administration of the affairs of the State Food Commission and its day to day management.
- (c). convene the meetings of the State food Commission in consultation with its Chairperson and cause service of notices of the meetings to all concerned
- (d). prepare, in consultation with the Chairperson, the agenda for each meeting of the State Food Commission and have notes prepared, which shall be self-contained;

- (e). make available records covering the agenda items to the State Food Commission reference;
- (f). ensure that the agenda papers are circulated to all the members at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting, except in cases when urgent attention is required;
- (g). prepare the minutes of the meetings of the State Food Commission and shall execute the decisions of the State Food Commission taken in the meeting and shall also ensure placing of the Action Taken Note of the decisions of the State food Commission before the State Food Commission in its subsequent meetings;
- (h). ensure that the procedure of the State Food Commission is followed by it in transaction of its business;
- (i). Take up all such matters with the government for release of grants, creating of posts, revision of scales, procurement of vehicles, appointment of staff, laying of annual and audit report in Assembly, re-appropriation of funds, residential accommodation and any other matter requiring the approval of the State Government;
- (j). exercise such financial powers as may be delegated to him by the Chairperson on behalf of the State Food Commission;

**Procedure for hearing Appeal** : (1) Any citizen aggrieved by a decision of the District Grievance redressal Officer (DGRO) may file a Memorandum of Appeal with the State Food Commission within thirty days of such decision.

- (2). When the Memorandum of Appeal is presented after thirty days, such Memorandum of appeal shall be accompanied by an application supported by an affidavit setting forth the fact on which the Appellant relies to satisfy the State Food Commission that he has sufficient cause for not presenting the appeal within the period of limitation.
- (3). Any Memorandum of appeal so filed with the State Food Commission must be heard and disposed of within a period of sixty days of the filing of such appeals.

(4). The Memorandum of Appeal shall be filed in triplicate and accompanied by a true copy of the orders of the District Grievance Redressal Officer appealed against and such other documents as may be required to support ground of objections mentioned in the Memorandum of appeal.

(5) The Chairperson shall have power to constitute a Bench consisting of two or three members and declare any members, as he deem fit, to preside over the Bench, where the Chairperson is not the member of such Bench:

Provided that the Chairperson may constitute or reconstitute Benches from time to time.

(6). The decision of the Bench is to be made according to the opinion of the majority of the Bench:

Provided that if the member of a Bench consisting of an even number differ in opinion on any point, they shall state the point or point on which they differ and make a reference to the Chairperson who shall either hear the case or refer the case to another Bench for decision.

(7). While hearing the appeal, the Bench shall consider the grounds of appeal and shall decide the case accordingly.

(8). Orders of State Food Commission on appeal shall be signed and dated by the Members thereof hearing the appeal and shall be communicated to the parties free of charge.

**Financial Powers of the State Food Commission:** (1) The State Food Commission shall be responsible for expenditure from the funds received by it for the purposes of the implementation of the Act.

(2). The Chairperson shall have all powers relating to financial transaction of the State Food Commission, except in cases which require prior approval of the Government.

(3). The Chairperson shall obtain prior approval of the Government in the matters of creation of posts, revision of pay scales, procurement of vehicles, re-appropriation of funds from one head to another, permitting any officer of the State Food Commission to participate in seminars, conferences or training programme abroad and such other matters as may be determined by the State Government, by order.

(4). The Chairperson shall, subject to such conditions and limitations, control and supervision, have powers to delegate his financial power to the Member-Secretary of the State Food Commission.

Provided that no such powers shall be delegated in respect of incurring an expenditure on an item exceeding rupees twenty-five thousand.

(5). The Chairperson with the prior approval of the Government shall have power to engage any person or persons as consultant or consultants for a specific purpose and for a specific period on the terms and condition agreed in advance with that person relating to honorarium, travelling allowance and dearness allowance.

(6). The Member-Secretary shall have powers to execute all decisions taken by the Chairperson on his behalf relating to financial matters.

(7). All financial powers of the State Food Commission shall be governed by delegation of financial powers, rules and circulars, orders, instructions as may be issued by the Finance Department of the Government from time to time, in this behalf.

## **Creation of Posts, and Office of the Commission**

In 2016-17, the following posts were sanctioned:

(1) Upper Division Assistant	-	1
(2) Lower Division Assistant	-	1
(3) Data Entry Operator	-	1
(4) Stenographer Grade III	-	1
(5) Duftry	-	1
(6) Peon	-	2
(7) Driver	-	1
(8) Cleaner	-	1
(9) Chowkidar	-	1

Since the post of Accountant-cum-Cashier was needed urgently, the post of Upper Division Assistant was converted into the post of an Accountant and filled up on contract basis by a retired Accountant of the Directorate of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs. The other posts were not filled up due to lack of a permanent office of the Commission. The Government was also requested to create one post of Bench – Assistant to assist in hearing of appeals.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017, the State Government allotted Quarter B-17-C, Lake Side Cottage, Rita Road, temporarily to the office of the Meghalaya State Food Commission. The matter was taken up with the Estate Officer of General Administration Department for repair, renovation and painting of the Quarter. Funds were also sought from the Government for procurement of furniture and office equipment to make the office functional. In view of the allotment of the office, the posts of Cleaner and Chowkidar were filled up on Casual/Contract basis.

## **Budget and Accounts of the Commission**

In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, the fund for the Meghalaya State Food Commission was provided under the Sub-head -(27)- Meghalaya State Food Commission, subordinate to the Major Head of Account-“3456-Civil Supplies-800- Other Expenditure-General of the Grant No.32, and the total Provision was Rs.73,39,000/=. Out of the total Provision, Rs.51,12,516/- was spent during the financial year 2017-2018.

Due to shortage of Fund under the following object heads:-

- (1). 02-Wages, Rs. 2,18,800/= was obtained by Re-appropriation.
- (2). 11 – Domestic Travel Expenses, Rs.1,17,000/= was obtained by Re-appropriation.

For the fund under the object head -27-Minor works, which was not provided in the Budget, the amount of Rs.9,84,862/= was obtained by way of Re-appropriation sanctioned by Fin(EC.II) Department, Memo No.FC.II/879/2017-18/RA/162 dt. 14.03.2018 for meeting the expenditure for renovation of Govt Quarter B.17C located at Lakeside Cottage, Rita Road, Shillong, allotted for the office of Meghalaya State Food Commission.

So, the total expenditure was Rs.60,97,378/= ( 51,12,516+9,84,862) i.e from 01.04.2017 to 31.03.2018.

### **Retirement of Members**

During 2017-18, two Members retired ie Shri R.L.Sethia, on attainment of 65 years of age, and Shri P.Ch Sangma, Member Secretary, on superannuation. The Member Secretary was replaced by Smt.M.S.N.Marak, MCS, Joint Secretary to Government of Meghalaya, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department. Her Room No is 320 in Additional Secretariat Building, and Mobile No is 9774094829.

The Chairman and other Members remain the same as in 2016-17.



## **Activities during 2017-18**

At the fag end of 2016-17, a questionnaire was circulated to Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Department, Social Welfare Department and Education Department regarding rules framed under Sec 40 of the NFSA relating to identification of priority households, qualification and appointment of District Grievance Redressal Officers and hearing of complaints and filing of appeals. Queries were also sent on the composition of Vigilance Committees, uploading of TPDS records in the public domain and Social Audit of Fair Price Shops. Information was also sought on payment of Food Security Allowance under Sec 8, reforms under TPDS regarding computerisation and transparency, responsibilities to local authorities and steps to further advance food and nutritional security as specified in Schedule III and other welfare schemes under Sec 32.

The three Departments were requested to inform whether under Sec 14, each Department had set up their own grievance redressal mechanism with toll free numbers and a designated officer to ensure its effective functioning, and to provide details on the complaints mechanism, including registration of complaints and providing acknowledgement receipts. Food and Civil Supplies Department was requested to intimate whether rules have been framed for the DGRO to discharge his responsibilities, power to inspect, search and seize, receive evidence on oath and the proceedings before him to be summary proceedings. The Department was requested to inform of measures to ensure accountability of the grievance redressal mechanism, and complaints to be regularly updated on the websites, and monthly and annual reports to be submitted.

Information was also sought on whether Rules have been framed for the functioning of the Vigilance Committees at four levels, manner of their selection, term of office, frequency of meetings, quorum, powers functions and other responsibilities, honorarium to be paid to the members and finances of the Committees. Information was also sought whether the Vigilance Committees have the mandate to supervise implementation of all the schemes under NFSA eg Mid Day Meal and Integrated Child Development Services. Whether the rules provided for all documents relating to MDM Schemes and ICDS to be put in the public domain and institutions such as government schools, anganwadis and fair price shops, and adequate measures to be taken to create awareness

among the public about their entitlements and various services provided under the Act.

Another letter was issued to the three Departments to earmark one room in the office of the Deputy Commissioners for 'NFSA Cell' with toll free number for receipt of complaints and redressal of all grievances which could not be resolved satisfactorily at the level of the District Social Welfare Officer, the District School Education Officer and the Deputy Director of Food and Civil Supplies. The Departments of Social Welfare and Education Departments were requested to issue orders to the District Social Welfare Officer and District School Education Officer to assist the DGRO in disposal of grievances at the district level. These Departments were also asked to utilise the services of the Vigilance Committees constituted by the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department for receipt of complaints under NFSA at the village level.

In April 2017, public notice pamphlets were prepared in English, Khasi and Garo languages and printed at the Directorate of Printing and Stationery, giving a gist of the provisions of the Food Security Act and informing of the telephone numbers for launching of complaints. These notices were circulated at the awareness programmes conducted at the District Headquarters, and also to the media for publication in the newspapers. Copies of these pamphlets are enclosed at annexure. These pamphlets were publicised in the newspapers in August 2017. Education Department also directed all District School Education Officers to assist the DGRO's in disposal of grievances at the district level. The Department informed that District Vigilance Committee has been formed under the Chairmanship of the Member of Parliament. It also added that the grievance redressal mechanism has been set up in the office of the Deputy Commissioner in each district, and Nodal Officers have been designated for attending to complaints.

Education Department also informed that instructions were issued to all Sub Divisional Education Officers to strictly follow the Mid Day Meal Rules 2015 under the NFSA, and to inform all the schools availing Mid Day Meals in their jurisdiction. A meeting of all SDEO's was held to discuss the implementation of the Rules, and to take action on those schools who fail to serve cooked meals to the school children as per the Rules. Training was conducted in West Jaintia Hills and East Khasi Hills where the School Managing Committees and Head Teachers of the schools attended and the MDM Rules were discussed. Trainings to other districts also will be taken up.

Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Department informed that Rules have been framed for identification of priority households setting up of grievance redressal mechanism and constitution of the State Food Commission. They informed that the Meghalaya Food Security Rules will be placed in the public domain. Provisions have been made for payment of Food Security Allowance, doorstep delivery to Fair Price Shops, IT tools and computerisation, transparency etc. However, no steps have been taken under Sec 31 to further advance food and nutritional security as specified in Scheduled III. Regarding grievance redressal, a Toll Free number 1967 is in place for citizens to lodge complaints or find out information about the Department. To address complaints from citizens, the Department has identified Grievance Redressal Officers and Assistant Grievance Redressal Officers in each District and Sub-Division. Citizens can also lodge complaints Online via the Meghalaya Public Grievance Redressal and Monitoring System in the website [www.megpgrams.gov.in](http://www.megpgrams.gov.in).

The Department also informed that :

- (1) The DC/SDO shall be the Grievance redressal Officer (GRO) as designated by the State Government. The appointment of the GRO is as per the notification of the State Government and the qualification of the GRO is that he should be in the rank of a Deputy commissioner or a Sub-Divisional Officer. Apart from GRO, the Government through the Directorate/DC/SDO may also appoint an Assistant Grievance Redressal Officer (AGRO) at each District and Subdivision. The AGRO should not be below the rank of Inspector of Supply.
- (2) The roles and responsibilities of the AGRO are:-
  - (a) Accept and address complaints/queries from public, Call Centre (toll free number 1967), in writing, in person, via email, phone, fax, post, etc.
  - (b) Monitor and redress complaints lodged and address it within the timeline as per Rule 7.
  - (c) Submit a quarterly report to the GRO and Directorate informing the complaints received during the period, nature of complaints, number of complaints redressed, number of complaints pending and note/suggestion
  - (d) Comply and conduct the duties as per the provision of the Act

- (3) If there is a change of AGRO, the DC/SDO shall immediately write to the Director of Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, the replacement with full name, designation and contact details like email, mobile number, etc.

As regards Vigilance Committees, the Department stated that:

- (1) The Vigilance Committees constituted/revamped at different levels shall effectively function, on the due date.
- (2) Function of the Vigilance Committee is to -:
- (a) Regularly supervise the implementation of all schemes under the Act
  - (b) Inform Grievance Redressal Officer, in writing, of any violation of the provision of the Act
  - (c) Inform the Grievance Redressal Officer, in writing, of any malpractice or misappropriation of funds found by it
  - (d) Hold meeting on quarterly basis

**I. State Level Vigilance Committee:-**

- (a) Chairman: Minister In-charge Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs
- (b) Secretary: Principal Secretary/Commissioner & Secretary, Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs
- (c) Members:-
  - i. Minister In-charge Community & Rural Development/Urban Affairs
  - ii. Members of Parliament
  - iii. Principal Secretary/Commissioner & Secretary, Urban Affairs/ C& RD/Statistics etc
  - iv. Director, Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs
  - v. State Co-ordinator, Indian Oil Corporation
  - vi. General Manager, Food Corporation of India
  - vii. All Deputy Commissioners
  - viii. President of Chambers of Commerce, Shillong
  - ix. Three representatives from local authorities
  - x. President of Women Organisation/Youth Organisation.

**II. District Level Vigilance Committee:-**

(a) Chairman: Deputy Commissioner (S)

(b) Secretary : Joint Director/Deputy Director of Supply/Superintendent of Supply

(c) Members:-

- i. Sub-Divisional Officer (S) within the District
- ii. Block Development Officer within the District
- iii. District Manager, Food Corporation of India
- iv. President of various Chamber of Commerce of the District
- v. President of women Organisation/Youth Organisation/Self Help Group of the District
- vi. Two public representatives to be notified by the Chairman (MLA & MDC)

**III. Block Level Vigilance Committee:-**

(a) Chairman: Sub-Divisional Officers (S) within the jurisdiction of the Block

(b) Secretary: Block Development Officer/Superintendent of Supply

(c) Members :

- i. Inspector of Supply
- ii. President of various Chamber of Commerce of the District
- iii. President of Women Organisation/Youth Organisation/Self Help Group of the District
- iv. Two public representatives to be notified by the Chairman (MLA & MDC)

**IV. Fair Price Shop Level Vigilance Committee:-**

(a) Chairman : Local Headman/Nokma

(b) Secretary : Secretary of the Local Durbar/Village Committee

(c) Members:

- i. President Women Organisation within the jurisdiction of the Fair Price Shop
- ii. President Youth Organisation within the jurisdiction of the Fair Price Shop
- iii. President Self Help Group within the jurisdiction of the Fair Price Shop

iv. Six Members of Card Holder families residing within the jurisdiction of the Fair Price Shop

(d) Ex-Officio Member: Inspector/Sub-Inspector of Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs In-charge of Fair Price Shop

## **Grievance Redressal**

On 25<sup>th</sup> July 2017, the Departments of Social Welfare and Education were informed that the Toll Free Cell (Number 1967) set up by the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department is also proposed to be used for complaints under Integrated Child Development Services and Mid Day Meal Schemes. The Departments were requested to notify a Nodal Officer alongwith address and telephone number to receive complaints under NFSA, and maintain a record of the complaints, its redressal, pendency etc. The Nodal Officer was requested to send a report on complaints received disposed and pending on a monthly basis to the Food Commission. A Format for sending such reports was also enclosed with the letter.

Food and Civil Supplies Department was requested to instruct the Toll Free Centre to maintain a register of complaints and enquiries received, and to whom forwarded for necessary action. Complaints relating to Mid Day Meal and ICDS may be communicated to the Nodal Officers concerned. At the end of the month, a report may be sent to the Commission on the number of complaints/enquiries received and action taken in the matter.

Similarly, the Deputy Commissioners, who had been designated as District Grievance Redressal Officers under the NFSA, were also requested to send monthly reports to the Commission on the number of complaints received, addressed and pending disposal under all the three schemes under the Act. Reports from some of the Deputy Commissioners have started coming to the Commission, and others have been reminded to send the reports.

- Social Welfare Department has notified the Programme Officer, ICDS Cell, State Headquarters, Directorate of Social Welfare as the Nodal Officer to received complaints on Toll free Cell (1967) under the ICDS. The name of the Officer is Smti. H.R.Pyrtuh, and the address is the Directorate of Social Welfare, Lachumiere, Shillong, Tel No. (0364) 2229992. The Department has also notified the District Programme Officers of all eleven Districts as the Nodal Officers in these Districts and communicated their Telephone numbers which are at Annexure.

- Education Department have notified Shri A.Ch. Marak, MCS, Director of School Education and Literacy, Meghalaya, Shillong as the Nodal Officer to address complaints under NFSA, 2013, with contact No. 94367 30713, and address at Kennelworth Road, Opposite Shillong Public School, Laitumkhrah, Shillong.

In August 2017, letters were issued to the three concerned Departments seeking information on the following issues:

- (a) Relevant notifications/instructions issued under Sec 14 of the NFSA relating to putting in place as internal grievance redressal mechanism including Call Centres, helplines, designation of nodal officers;
- (b) Appointment of alternative District Grievance Redressal Officers as per observations of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in its order dated 21<sup>st</sup> July 2017 that it would be appropriate if an officer dealing with delivery of entitlements under NFSA is not appointed or designated as DGRO, since he or she might not be able to entertain a complaint against his or her functioning;
- (c) Action taken to implement Sec 28 of the Act related to conduct a Social Audit on the functioning of Fair Price Shops, TPDS and other Welfare Schemes,
- (d) Setting up of Vigilance Committees under Sec 29 at four levels to regularly supervise the implementation of all the schemes under the Act, and relevant notification/instructions; whether Social Welfare and Education Departments are utilising the services of the Vigilance Committees set up by Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Department;
- (e) Under Section 40 of the Act, the Food Security Rules 2017 to be finalised to make the grievance redressal mechanism functional;
- (f) Rules to be framed under Section 8 and Section 39 for issue of Food Security Allowance in case of non-supply of entitled quantities of foodgrains or meals.



- (g) Keeping list of eligible households and TPDS records in public domain and delivery of foodgrains at the doorstep of FP Shops as well as for other schemes.

Food and Civil Supplies Department informed that they do not have any information with regard to creation of NFSA Cell with one room earmarked for it in the Deputy Commissioners Offices. The Directorate of Food and Civil supplies does send report on number of complaints received and action taken at the end of each month and keeps a register of complaints details. Setting up of internal grievance redressal mechanism including Call Centre with Toll Free helplines are all in place. Toll Free Number 1967 is functional. Nodal Officers are identified except for Shillong, Nongstoin, Baghmara, Williamnagar, Amlarem and Sohra. Reminders on the same have been sent to the concerned D.C's on 17.01.2018. Citizens can also lodge their complaints online through [www.megprams.gov.in](http://www.megprams.gov.in). However, the Department is yet to identify alternative District Grievance Redressal Officers as per the latest Supreme Court observations. Also, the Food Security Rules 2017 has not yet been notified as it is being vetted by Law Department. Rules for issue of Food Security Allowance in case on non supply of entitled quantity of foodgrains are also under vetting. Instructions have been issued to the Deputy Commissioners on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017 with regard to implementation of doorstep delivery upto FPS, and for keeping all records of ration shops and public distribution system in the public domain.

As regards Food Security Allowance, the Department is following the Rules framed by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution in 2015. (Copy at Annexure). The rules provide for payment of food security allowance to entitled persons where quantity of foodgrains has not been supplied due to non-availability of foodgrains at the fair price shop on or any unforeseen reasons. The amount of food security allowance admissible to entitled persons shall be computed by multiplying the difference between the 1.25 times the minimum support price of the relevant foodgrains for that marketing season and the prices specified in Schedule I to the Act with the quantity of non-supply.

The Director of Social Welfare informed that they are following the Central Rule on Food Security Allowance from Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India. A copy of the Rule is at Annexure. Rule 8 stipulates that in case of non-supply of meal to the beneficiaries in anganwadi centre on any day due to non availability of foodgrains or any other reason, the State Government shall pay food security allowance as defined in clause (d) of rule 2 to every beneficiary referred to in rule 3 as per rates specified in rule 11. The cost norms for supplementary nutrition for various categories of beneficiaries as per rule 11 is as follows:

- (1) Children (between 6 to 72 months) - Rs. 6 per day
- (2) Malnourished Children - Rs. 9 per day
- (3) Pregnant women/lactating mothers - Rs. 7 per day

The Department also informed that instruction have been issued to all District Programme Officers and Child Development Project Officers to utilise the services of the Vigilance Committees set up by the Food Civil Supplies Department to monitor the functioning of the Anganwadi centres relating to the provisions of the Food Security Act 2013. As per the Rules issued by the Central Government, the respective State Governments and the Monitoring and Review Committees at the National , State, District, Block and Anganwadi levels, constituted by the Central Government in the Ministry of women and Child Development from time to time, shall be responsible to monitor and review the status of arrangement for Supplementary Nutrition, convergence with the line departments to ensure water and sanitation facilities, ensure regular functional of anganwadi centres, ensure regular supply of Supplementary Nutrition at anganwadi centres without disruptions and use of iodised or iron fortified salts, ensuring monitoring and supervision visits by officials at different at different levels, method of delivery of food, engagement of Self Help Groups ensure supply and quality of supplementary nutrition through them and all other issues relating to the above.

Education Department informed that instructions have been issued to all District School Education Officers and Sub-Divisional School Education Officers to assist the Deputy Commissioners/DGRO's in disposal of grievances at the District Level in matters related to distribution of entitled foodgrains or meals under Chapter II of the Act. As per the Mid Day Meal Rules 2015, the Department informed that the Headmaster/Headmistress of the school has been

empowered to utilise any fund in the school temporarily for the purpose of continuation of the Scheme in the school. Rule 8 emphasises on the quality of food to ensure that meals meet the nutritional standards and quality as prescribed. The rule also provides that the Food and Drug Administration Department of the State may collect samples from randomly selected schools to ensure adherence to quality. Rule 9 is about Food Security Allowance to be paid by the State government if Mid Day Meal is not provided in any school for three consecutive days or five days in a month. The State Government shall take action to fix responsibility on the person or agency in accordance with the procedure laid down for non supply of meals.

## **Amendments/Additions to the Rules**

In May 2017, the Commission took up the matter with the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department to add certain provisions in the “Meghalaya State Food Commission Rules 2014” for smooth functioning of the Commission. The suggestions included powers to inspect non compliance of policy decisions, organise regional camps and define measures for redressal of grievances, appointment of consultants and technical staff, and procedure for day to day functioning, holding of meetings, quorum and preparation of agenda for the meetings. The Commission also suggested provisions relating to the duties of the Member-Secretary, procedure for hearing of appeals, timelines for disposal, constitution of benches and financial powers of the Commission including the Chairman and Member-Secretary.

The Commission also suggested certain additions to the draft “Food Security Rules 2017”, which included provisions for the DGRO to discharge his responsibilities eg power to inspect, search and seize, receive evidence on oath and proceedings before him to be summary proceedings. Measures to ensure accountability of the grievance redressal mechanism and complaints to be regularly updated on the website and monthly reports to be submitted. The Department was also advised to include a rule whereby Social Welfare and Education Departments would set up their own grievance redressal mechanism with Toll Free numbers, and a designated Officer to ensure its effective functioning. Details should be provided on the complaint mechanism including registration of complaints and providing of acknowledgement receipts, timeline for disposal of complaints and reporting to the DGRO of pending complaints.

Another rule was proposed for provision for all documents relating to Mid Day Meals and Integrated Child Development Services to be put in public domain and institutions such as government Schools, anganwadis and Fair Price Shops. Adequate measures should be taken to create awareness among the public about their entitlements and various services provided under the Act.

## **Social Audit**

In April 2017, the State Government enacted the “Meghalaya Community Participation and Public Services Social Audit Act 2017”, to review delivery of public services and implementation of government schemes and programmes through a participatory social audit by government and the stakeholders, by ensuring timely review and concurrent course-correction in the delivery of schemes and programmes, to achieve realisation of desired development outcomes. In October 2017, a questionnaire on the implementation of the provisions of the Act was sent to the Nodal Department i.e. Programme Implementation and Evaluation Department (PIED), and also to three Departments implementing the schemes under the NFS Act. The PIED informed that the State Social Audit Council has been notified on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2017 with Shri Toki Blah as the Chairman. However, the Department did not inform whether the other Members including representatives of the Departments, representatives of districts, Non-official members representing Village institutions, organisation of workers and disadvantaged groups etc were also notified, as required under Section 6.

As per Sec 7 of the Act, the State Council through Meghalaya Society for Social Audit and Transparency (MSSAT) shall perform and discharge the following functions and duties, namely, to establish a systematic concurrent audit system by involving trained Civil Society organisations. Details of the functions and duties of the Council are at Annexure.

The Governing Body of MSSAT are:

1. Chief Secretary, Govt of Meghalaya – Chairman
2. Principal Accountant General (C&AG) Meghalaya – Member
3. Principal Secretary to Govt of Meghalaya,  
Community & Rural Development Deptt. - Member
4. Principal Secretary to Govt of Meghalaya,  
Finance Deptt. - Member
5. Principal Secretary to govt of Meghalaya  
Planning Deptt. - Member
6. Director, C& RD Department - Member
7. Mission Director  
State Rural Employment Society - Member
8. Director, State Institute of Rural Development - Member

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| 9. All Deputy Commissioners and District Programme Coordinators | - Member |
| 10. Principal, Extension Training Centre Nongsder and Tura      | - Member |
| 11. Administrator, Bosco Integrated Development Society         | - Member |
| 12. Director, BAKDIL, Tura                                      | - Member |
| 13. Shri. P. Kharkongor, IAS (Retd)                             | - Member |
| 14. Director, MSSAT   | - Member |

The Deputy Commissioners have been notified as District Social Audit Coordinators under Section 9. The service of the staff of Meghalaya Society for Social Audit and Transparency (MSSAT) were placed at the disposal of the PIE Department. However, as required under Sec 9 of the Act, it appears that the Deputy Commissioners have not finalised the Block – wise Social Audit calendar and Public Hearings, nor selected and empanelled reputed and experienced Non-Governmental Organisations and Self Help Groups for conduct of social audit.

PIE Department informed that all the line Departments have been requested to identify the (i) State Nodal Officer (ii) District Nodal Officers and (iii) Block Nodal Officers as laid down in Sec 10. Some of the Departments including Social Welfare and Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Departments have complied, whereas information from Education Department is awaited. All Deputy Commissioners and State Nodal Officers of line Departments are in the process of carrying out the implementation of the Act. The Director, Meghalaya Society for Social Audit and Transparency (MSSAT) has been instructed on engagement of Village Resource Persons to assist the social audit process under the Act. These VRP's are proposed to be engaged on contract basis to capacitate the Social Audit Committees of the respective VEC's.

Some more follow up action needs to be taken by the Deputy Commissioners such as notification of Village or Locality level Social Audit Committees under Sec 11, appointment of reputed NGO's and SHG's as Social Audit Facilitators under Sec 13 and preparation of Social Audit Reporting Formats by the Nodal Department. The State Implementing Agency is also required to prepare the guidelines for the conduct of social audit and public hearings. The Nodal Departments are to arrange for wide dissemination of information through websites and IEC activities regarding Government Programmes, schemes guidelines and public services as listed under Schedule I. A web portal is to be maintained for displaying the social audit calendar and minutes of the public hearings and timelines and responsibility for effective redress of grievances raised therein. Departmental proceedings need to be initiated against wilful defaulters in case of delays in taking corrective measures. The Department also needs to issue Rules and regulations in furtherance of the objectives of the Act as required under Sec 19.

Social Welfare Department informed that social audit was conducted in 18 villages and it was observed that all the Anganwadi Centres did not display the entitlements of beneficiaries in their respective AWCs. Instructions were issued to all the District Programme Officers in December 2017 to display the entitlements in all AWCs, and to coordinate with the concerned Departments to provide water supply, and toilets in the AWCs. The format on beneficiaries entitlements were sent to all Child Development Project Officers, a copy of which is at Annexure.

Social Welfare Department has also notified the Nodal Officers under Section 10 of the Meghalaya Community Participation and Public Services Social Audit Act, 2014. Copy is at Annexure. The State Nodal Officer is the Director of Social Welfare, and the District Nodal Officers are the District Programme Officers of all the eleven Districts. The Block Nodal Officers are the Child Development Project Officers of the 41 Blocks. However, the Department is yet to prepare the guidelines for the conduct of social audit and public hearings as per Sec 15 (a). The Department is utilising the Central Rules for Special Nutrition Programme in furtherance of the objectives of the Act as per Sec 19.

Replies to the Questionnaire circulated on Social Audit are yet to be received from Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department and Education Department.

### **Awareness Programmes and Meetings of the Commission:**

The Commission organised Awareness Programmes in coordination with the Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs and the Deputy Commissioners of the Districts. The Programmes and meetings of the Commission were held as follows:

- (1) 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2017 : Awareness Programme for East Khasi Hills and Ri-Bhoi Districts held in Shillong.
- (2) 8<sup>th</sup> June 2017 : Awareness Programme for West Garo Hills, South West Garo Hills and South Garo Hills held in Tura.
- (3) 7<sup>th</sup> July 2017 : Awareness Programme for West Jaintia and East Jaintia Hills held in Jowai.
- (4) 7<sup>th</sup> August 2017 : State Food Commission (SFC) Meeting in Shillong.
- (5) 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017 : State Food Commission (SFC) Meeting in Shillong.
- (6) 24<sup>th</sup> October 2017 : State Food Commission Meeting in Shillong.
- (7) 16<sup>th</sup> November 2017 : Awareness Programme for West Khasi Hills and South West Khasi Hills held in Nongstoin.
- (8) 29<sup>th</sup> November 2017 : Awareness Programme for East Garo and North Garo Hills held in Williamnagar.
- (9) 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018 : State Food Commission Meeting in Shillong.

The Awareness Programmes were inaugurated by the Deputy Chief Minister in-charge Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, and attended by many Headmen, Sordars, Nokmas, Vigilance Committees, NGO's, Fair Price Shop Licences and Govt Nominees or wholesalers. In his inaugural address, the Dy.Chief Minister informed the public that the Meghalaya State Food Commission has been constituted by the State Government as mandated under the NFSA, to monitor and review the implementation of the National Food



Security Act in the State. The Commission has the powers of a Civil Court to conduct inquiries into anomalies which may be present in the implementation of the Act. There are challenges being faced in the implementation of PDS, but Govt is committed to tackle the problems and challenges and empower the citizens to know their rights and entitlements under the ACT. He urged the people to avail the services of the Commission for getting their rights.

It is also mandated under the National Food Security Act to provide nutritional support to pregnant and lactating mothers, and to the children from 0-14 years. There is also a provision under the Act for prevention and management of child malnutrition. Therefore, the nutrition scheme of ICDS and Mid Day Meal programme catered through Anganwadi Centres and Schools have been incorporated in National Food Security Act. The State Food Commission has the responsibility to monitor that these programmes are implemented properly. If there is any grievance in the implementation of the Mid Day Meal Programme or Women and Child Nutrition Programme under ICDS, there are appropriate forums at the District and State level to redress such grievances.

It has always been the mandate of the State Government to bring about a transformation in the implementation of all schemes, including the Public Distribution System. The aim for such transformation is to bring about transparency and accountability in the delivery mechanism of the Government. The State Government has been implementing the Targeted Public Distribution System for decades. However, under the NFS Act, the State Government had to implement it by incorporating a lot of technological initiatives. Under such initiatives, digitisation of beneficiary data has been done, and this data is displayed in the public domain so that people can check their names without coming to the Dy. Commissioner Office. FPS automation have been planned to start in urban areas of Shillong in selected centres which will be rolled out in the other districts soon.

The State Govt has taken steps to incorporate Food and Public Distribution system in e-District framework to provide better services to consumers. In matters relating to issue of new ration cards/duplicate ration cards to deserving families, the process will now be made online which will be easier and convenient for the people. The computerization of Supply Chain Management is also under process and will be completed soon. This will increase the

efficiency of the delivery system of food grains to consumers. An effective grievance redressal mechanism including the Toll-free number 1967 has been put in place for effective redressal of complaints. Grievance Redressal system has been put in place in all the 11 districts, and all the Deputy Commissioners and Sub Divisional Officers (Supply) have been notified as District Grievance Redressal Officers and Sub-Divisional Grievance Redressal Officers in their respective jurisdiction.

Government has also introduced the Meghalaya Community Participation and Public Service Social Audit Act 2017, with a vision to bring greater benefits to the people. The Act aims at monitoring and evaluation of the schemes by the people, empowering them to learn more about their rights and entitlements through participation in Social Audit, bringing about more transparency and accountability among various stakeholders, and also thereby improving the delivery system in the government machinery. Both Consumers and Distributors have responsibilities to fulfil the goal of NFSA. Therefore, implementation of NFSA is one subject included under this MCPPSSA (Meghalaya Community Participation and Public Service Social audit Act) and a pilot study has already been carried out in few selected villages of seven districts. In East Garo Hills District and North Garo Hills District too, some villages were selected for Social Audit. This exercise has been helpful in bringing more awareness about the scheme and the manner by which schemes are implemented.

The main stakeholders involved in the implementation of NFSA in the State are the Government Nominees (Wholesalers) and the Fair Price Shop Owners/Dealers. The cooperation and support they have shown to the Govt and to the people despite the delay in payment of intra State movement, handling charge of foodgrains and dealers margin under NFSA for the past one year is commendable. Once the supply chain automation and digitization of Fair Price Shops is completed, the distribution system of foodgrains will be much more effective and transparent. The Social Audit will also improve the system of food distribution in the villages and remote areas, as our stakeholders such as whole sellers and Fair Price Shop dealers will also be involved in the process of Social audit.

He hoped that the Commission will serve as a useful platform in addressing the issues faced by the public, and expected the Commission to come up with positive suggestions to provide the best of services in redressing all matters related to the implementation of the Act as has been empowered in the Act itself. The Commission is mandated to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Act in relation to the State, either suo moto or on receipt of complaints and enquire into violation of entitlements. The Commission has also been empowered to advise the State Government on effective implementation of this Act and hear appeals against the orders of the District Grievance Redressal Officer. He hoped that through the Food Commission, justice will be brought to the consumers.

The Chairman, Meghalaya State Food Commission stated that the concept of food security has existed throughout history, and ancient civilizations have been known to release food from storage in times of famine. Initially, food security was defined with an emphasis on supply i.e. availability of adequate food. Later definitions added demand and access issues, and in the 1996 World Food Summit it was agreed that food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Household food security exists when all members, at all times, have access to enough food for an active, healthy life. The Food and Agriculture Organisation or FAO, identified the four pillars of food security as availability, access, utilisation and stability.

The FAO has reported that almost 870 million people were chronically undernourished. This represents 12.5% of the global population, or 1 in 8 people. Higher rates occur in developing countries, where about 15 % of the people are undernourished. The United Nations noted that about 2 billion people do not consume a sufficient amount of vitamins and minerals. In India, the second most populous country in the world, 30 million people have been added to the ranks of the hungry since the mid 1990's, and 46% of the children are underweight.

Food Security has been a major developmental objective in India since the beginning of planning. India achieved self-sufficiency in foodgrains in the 1970's and has sustained it since then. But the achievement of foodgrain security at the national level did not percolate down to the households. Over 225 million Indians remain chronically undernourished, and almost half the

rural population below the age of five suffered from malnutrition, and 40% of adults suffered from chronic energy deficiency.

The food security system and price policy initially consisted of three instruments: Procurement prices or Minimum Support Prices, buffer stocks and the public distribution system. However, in order to achieve food security, it is also important that the poor have sufficient means to purchase food. Poor people cannot afford to purchase the food they need at market prices, and therefore, the need to subsidise food through social protection programme like PDS and employment programmes. Even if there is availability as well as access to food, there is no guarantee of adequate absorption or nutrition, especially since nutrition depends on many other factors such as the condition of pregnant women, breast feeding, health factors, hygiene, drinking water, sanitation etc. Food intake in terms of sufficient calories, proteins and micro nutrients is important for nutrition. Availability and consumption of different types of micro nutrient rich foods such as animal products, fruits and vegetables is also required.

In order to partially address this issue, the Integrated Child Development Services was launched in 1975 and aims at the holistic development of children upto six years of age with a special focus on children upto two years, besides expectant and nursing mothers. This is done through a package of six services i.e health check-ups, immunisation, referral services, supplementary feeding, non formal pre-school education and advice on health and nutrition.

To cover the children from six years to fourteen years, the Mid Day Meal Scheme was revised and universalised in September 2004, and extended to Upper Primary Schools from 2007. The scheme was supposed to cover around 18 crore children. The ICDS and MDMS are child specific programmes. One of the household responses to schools is that children have less time to study, or spend less time in school, or drop out of school. The short term measure can be increased funding to school feeding programmes so that the quantity and quality of food that children get is not compromised. The long term measures is to provide incentives to children to continue in school. School feeding programmes and quality education are some of the long term programmes.

The National Food Security Act 2013 converts into legal entitlements the existing food security programmes of the Government of India. The Mid Day

Meal and Integrated Child Development Services scheme are universal in nature for the targeted group, whereas the PDS will reach about two-thirds of the population i.e 75% in rural areas and 50% in Urban areas. The intent of the Food Security Act was to ensure availability of sufficient foodgrains to meet the domestic demand as well as access, at the individual level, to adequate quantity of food at affordable prices. The legislation marks a paradigm shift in addressing the problem of food security from the Welfare approach to a Right based approach. The Act is a form of investment in human capital. It will bring security in peoples lives and make it easier meet their basic needs, protect their health, educate their children and take risks. The objective of the Act is to provide for food and nutritional security in human life cycle approach by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity. It will also confer legal rights to women and children and other special groups living in starvation, to receive meal free of charge or at affordable price, as the case may be. The Act also empowers women since the eldest women of eighteen years of age or above will be the head of the household for issue of ration card. A grievance redressal mechanism has been mandated at the District level with the District Grievance Redressal Officer, and a State Food Commission at the State level. The Act provides for role of local authorities in proper implementation of the Act in their respective areas. Provisions have been made for disclosure of records relating to PDS, social audits and setting up of Vigilance Committees in order to ensure transparency and accountability. The Act also contain provisions for access to safe and adequate drinking water and sanitation, health care, nutritional health and educational support to children and women. The Act also provides for penalty to be imposed on public servants or authority, by the State Food Commission, if found guilty of failing to comply with the relief recommended by the D.G.R.O.

In order to ensure the effective implementation of the Food Security Act, it is necessary to involve the Headmen or Rangbah Shnongs, the Vigilance Committees and the NGOS. They must act as the protectors of the poor and downtrodden, and ensure that they receive their entitlements under the Act. If there is any deficiency in the process of implementation, they should bring it to the notice of the Deputy Commissioners, who have been designated as District Grievance Redressal Officers. They may also lodge complaints with the State Food Commission, which has the powers to suo moto enquire into reports of non-compliance to the provisions of the Act.

## **Presentations by the Departments**

The first Presentation was made by the Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affair. The objectives of the Department are to ensure food security in the State, implement the Public Distribution System and monitor the price situation and availability of essential commodities. Under the National Food Security Act 2013, eligible beneficiaries are entitled to 5Kgs of rice at Rs 3 per Kg or Rs 2 per Kg for wheat, and the population covered is 3,03,464 (50.87%) for Urban areas and 18,45,631 (77.79%) for rural areas. The poorest of the poor households, or Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY), receive 35 Kg of rice at Rs. 3 per Kg. There are certain eligibility criteria for Priority Households (PHH) or eligible households in both rural and urban areas. Details of exclusion criteria are given at Annexure. The Department has set up a Toll Free Number 1967 for receipt of any complaints or feedback regarding the public distribution system.

The second presentation was made by Social Welfare Department covering the implementation of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) in the State. The project is being implemented in all the 39 C&RD Blocks and 2 Urban Projects in Shillong and Tura. The Scheme provides a package of six services to children below 6years, pregnant and lactating mothers. The Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) has the objective of bridging the recommended dietary allowance (RDA) and the average daily intake (ADI) of the children aged 6 months to 6 years and pregnant and lactating mothers. Morning snacks and hot cooked meals are served daily at the Anganwadi Centres (AWC) to all children between 3 to 6 years attending preschool at AWC for 25 days a month. For children 6 months to 3 years, and pregnant/lactating mothers, monthly Take Home Rations are provided.

The types of foodstuff provided are conventional, which includes Bengal gram, fortified suji, fortified atta, Kitchidi and non-conventional food includes milk, cereal based weaning food, kheer etc. Nutrition is provided for 300 days in a year. The nutritional and financial norms for SNP per beneficiary per day is at Annexure. The grievance redressal mechanism and the role of the District Grievance Redressal Officer (DGRO) and the State Food Commission were explained to the public.

The third presentation was made by Education Department on the National Programme on Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP – NSPE) commonly known as Mid Day Meal (MDM). The scheme was launched in 1995 by providing dry rations, and in 2004 it was revised to provide cooked meals with 300 calories and 8-12 grams of protein to all children studying in Class 1 to V (Govt and Aided Primary) including Special Training Centres. In 2007-08, the Scheme was extended to Upper Primary Schools all over the country. The main objectives of the MDM programme was to boost universalisation of elementary education, increase enrolment, attendance, retention and to bring down the dropout rate, as also to improve the nutritional status of children, and encourage poor children to attend school regularly and help them to concentrate on classroom activities, and stop classroom hunger.

Under the scheme, meals are provided on 200 school working days for Lower Primary Schools and 220 days for Upper Primary Schools. Foodgrains entitlement per child is 100 grams for LPS and 150 grams for UPS. Cooking cost is Rs. 4.13 p for LPS and Rs.6.18 p for UPS for procurement of cooking ingredients. Foodgrains is supplied free of cost by Govt of India through Food Corporation of India (FCI), and lifted by the Govt nominees/wholesalers from FCI godowns. Transportation and distribution of foodgrains are done through the Wholesalers/Govt Nominees to the school level. To ensure lifting of Fair Average Quality (FAQ) foodgrains, the inspecting staff of the Deputy Commissioner (Supply) and District Education Officers jointly conduct inspection of foodgrains. School Managing Committees(SMC) are also required to check the quality of foodgarins being supplied to the schools.

The Department has tied up with four other departments under the convergence model. Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department takes up supply of drinking water, hand washing facilities, water tank and toilet facilities. Health Department conducts School Health programmes and provides micro nutrients Vitamin A, de-worming tablets and issue of health cards, measuring of height and weight of school children, eye check-up and distribution of free spectacles. Food and Civil Supplies Department supervises the smooth supply, lifting and delivery of foodgrains to the schools. Social Welfare Department covers pre-primary school children since MDM is eligible only for students from Class I to VIII.

Funds under MDM are transferred to schools through e-transfer from the Directorate of School Education to the bank accounts of the schools. A Corpus Fund of Rs. 10 crore is maintained and used as and when fund is awaited from Govt of India. As per the Mid Day Meal Rules 2015, if a meal is not provided in school on any day due to non-availability of foodgrains, cooking cost, fuel or absence of cook or any other reason, the State Government shall pay Food Security Allowance to every child referred to in rule 3, ie, quantity of foodgrains as per entitlement of the child and cooking cost prevailing in the State. As regards complaints on the implementation of the scheme, a toll free number 1967 has been installed for the public.

### **Meetings**

In the meeting of the Commission held on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2017, the draft Annual Report for the year 2016-17 was placed before the Members of the Commission and after discussions, the Report was approved. It was also decided to send a reminder to the Commissioner of Division, Garo Hills, to allot one room in their office in Tura for the Members of the Commission to set up an office and receive complaints and suggestions. The Chairman informed the Members that as per the observations of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, he had taken up the matter with the Additional Chief Secretary, Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs for appointment of alternate District Grievance Redressal Officers other than the Deputy Commissioners. However, until a decision is arrived at, complaints and appeals have to be made through the present D.G.R.O's only. The Commission also discussed about the Procedure to be adopted for taking suo-moto action and conduct of enquiries on reports of anomalies in the newspapers. The Commission requested the Member Secretary to prepare the estimates, for expenses of the Commission, and also approved the appointment of Accountant-cum-Cashier on contractual basis for one year.

In the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017, the Chairman informed the Members that in view of the pending appointments of D.G.R.O's in the Districts, the grievance redressal mechanism has been stalled. It was decided to take up the matter with the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department to expedite the process of appointing alternative DGRO's. The three Departments were also requested to send the relevant notifications/instructions regarding setting up the grievance redressal mechanism including call centres, helplines, designation of nodal officers etc. The Chairman informed the Members that the draft Website of the commission



has been prepared and is in the final stages of completion. As regards inspection of schemes, Shri Gurung, Member, informed that other Commissions have resorted to inspections and the Courts have not objected to this. Under Sec 16(6) of the NFSA 2013, the Commission may suo-moto inquire into violations of the entitlements provided under Chapter II, and under Sec 33, the Commission may authorise any of its Members to be an adjudicating officer for holding an enquiry in the prescribed manner for the purpose of imposing penalty. The Commission noted that there were some newspaper reports of irregularities in the implementation of schemes under NFSA and comments have been sought from concerned Departments. The Commission also observed that under Sec 28 of the Act, a social audit machinery is to be established by the Departments implementing the schemes. A copy of the “Meghalaya Community Participation and Public Services Social Audit Act, 2017” was obtained from Programme Implementation and Evaluation Departments, and it was observed that all three schemes i.e Targetted Public Distribution System, Mid Day Meal, and Integrated Child Development Services are covered under Schedule I of the Act. The Commission decided to follow up with the Departments to take steps to ensure that social audit of these schemes are taken up as prescribed under the Act. The Commission also decided to conduct some more awareness programmes at the regional level to educate the public about the entitlements under the schemes, and the procedure for redressal of grievances.

A meeting of the Commission was held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and it was decided to avail legal opinion for conduct of inspections and enquiries on Press Clippings regarding anomalies in implementation of NFSA, and to send reminders to concerned officers to send their comments on the press reports sent to them earlier. Dr.Sangma, Member, informed that she received information that in one Village i.e Lower Bokmagre, the Mid Day Meal was stopped due to lack of fund for purchase of condiments, and also meals were being provided only thrice a week. The Commission decided to call for a report from the Director of School Education and Literacy.

With regard to appointment of alternate DGRO's, the Chairman stated that Addl.Chief Secretary, FCS & CA informed that the Department had written to all DC's and SDO's to identify officers who are not dealing with PDS in their respective jurisdiction to appoint them as DGRO. The Chairman instructed the Member Secretary to compile all the grievance reports received from various districts and sub-divisions, and issue reminders to those who have not yet

responded. The Chairman informed the Members that a questionnaire had been issued to the three Departments with regard to the implementation of 'Meghalaya Community Participation and Public Services Social Audit Act 2017'. It was also decided to hold awareness programme in West Khasi Hills District in November 2017, and to send reminder to Commissioner of Division, Garo Hills, for allotment of one room for the Commission in Tura. The Member Secretary was instructed to issue purchase order for furniture for the allotted office in Shillong.

In the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018, the Director School Education informed that most of the Deputy Commissioners have earmarked one room for NFSA Cell, but without Toll Free Number. The Chairman requested the Addl.Chief Secretary, FCS & CA, who was present in the meeting to take up the matter with the D.Cs to install Toll Free Numbers so that the public can lodge their grievances. The DSEL informed that Nodal Officers to assist DGRO's have been notified in the Districts as well as the State headquarters. The Chairman requested him and Asst. Director, Social Welfare, to send copies of the orders to the Commission, and to instruct the Nodal Officers to send monthly reports on the number of grievances received, addressed and pending.

The Addl.Chief Secretary, FCS & CA, informed that DGRO's for some districts have been notified as per orders of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, and for others the notification will be issued soon. He also informed that framing of Food Security Rules 2017 and Food Security Allowance are still under examination of the Department. The Asst. Director, Social Welfare, informed that there is a Central Act on Food Security Allowance and they are following the same. Director, School Education informed that the Food Security Allowance is prescribed in Rule 9 of the Mid Day Meal Rules 2015.

Social Welfare and Education Department were also requested to issue instructions to the District Officials to utilise the services of the Vigilance Committees constituted by FCS & CA Deptt. for complaints under ICDS and MDM. The Project Manager. PMU informed that the list of eligible households have been put in the public domain, and there is no short supply of foodgrains as of now. On social audit, the Director, School Education informed that preliminary social audit has been conducted by Programme Implementation and Evaluation Department, and the report is available in their Website.

The Chairman requested the Department to respond to the questionnaire circulated to them and suggested that all three Departments should have Corpus Funds to meet the necessary emergency expenses for uninterrupted implementation of the schemes. He also requested the Departments to take necessary action on the suggestions incorporated in the Annual Report of the Commission for 2016-17.

## **Nature of Complaints received in call Centre/Districts**

The complaints received in the Call Centre and District Offices have been compiled and forwarded to the Commission from time to time. These are broadly as follows:

- (1) Distribution of less than entitled quantity of foodgrains eg 4Kgs instead of 5Kgs per head.
- (2) Charging of higher price eg Rs 6 per Kg instead of Rs. 3 per Kg.
- (3) Transfer of name from one Fair Price Shop to another FPS, but dealer refusing to distribute rice.
- (4) Addition of names of family members in the Ration Card not being entertained by office of Deputy Commissioner (Supply)
- (5) Loss of ration card and procedure for obtaining new card.
- (6) Whether it is necessary to submit documents like EPIC and Bank Account Number to avail PHH card
- (7) Non availability of foodgrains in the FPS; irregularities in distribution by FPS dealer
- (8) AAY rice is being sold at Rs. 5 per Kg.
- (9) Procedure for applying for new ration card.
- (10) FPS dealer charging higher rates claiming it to be transportation charges.
- (11) How to apply for Non NFSA Card.
- (12) FPS dealer collecting all the ration cards from the beneficiaries in the name of verification
- (13) Number of passport size pictures to be attached with the application form.
- (14) How much transportation charges are received by Wholesalers and FPS dealers and whether it has any effect on the issue prices.
- (15) FPS dealers threatening villagers not to complain against distribution of rice at higher rates
- (16) Rice is not distributed throughout the whole month so, due to lack of funds, complainant misses his turn when rice is distributed.
- (17) Transfer of Ration Card from one District to another not being done-  
delays thereof

- (18) Non inclusion of name of family members in the NFSA/PHH inspite of being eligible
- (19) Measurement in distribution of rice by FPS dealer not accurate-dealer using tin for weighment
- (20) Dealer informed that he has been given an order from the State Govt to reduce distribution by one Kg per person
- (21) FPS dealer also owns a Private shop where he is selling NFSA rice at Rs. 25 per Kg.
- (22) Application for ration card submitted one year back but not yet issued.
- (23) Complaint against Managing Committee of School for non issue of Mid Day Meal rice
- (24) Complaint against FPS dealer for illegal dealings with controlled rice and sugar
- (25) Ration card received but no rice distributed to complainant
- (26) NFSA scheme not properly implemented
- (27) Whether APL Card entitled to draw rice
- (28) Demand for separate Fair Price Shop, or bifurcation of existing FP Shop,
- (29) Beneficiaries names appeared in the PHH list who are not local residents of the village

As reported by the Deputy Commissioners/Sub Divisional Officers, all the complaints have been attended to and redressed, or are in the process of enquiry etc. No appeals have been received by the Commission against the Orders of the District Grievance Redressal Officers or Assistant GRO's.

## **Key Findings of Social Audit**

The Meghalaya Society for Social Audit and Transparency (MSSAT) have conducted pilot social audit in some selected villages to review the implementation of the Meghalaya Community Participation and Public Services Social Audit Act, 2017, and their findings are summarised as follows:

### **Mid Day Meal -**

- (1) No water facilities in school. There are two toilets but not in use due to lack of water.
- (2) Menu chart was not on display.
- (3) Students provided dried fish and egg in some schools, no fruits
- (4) School Management Committee formed but the meeting held only once in six months in Block Headquarters
- (5) Attendance Register, Stock Register maintained
- (6) Cooks are getting their salaries.
- (7) Utensils and upkeep of vessels is good and hygienic
- (8) There is no Kitchen in the school
- (9) Egg and fruit not provided in some schools
- (10) School Managing Committee (SMC) is not functioning properly. Meetings are not held monthly but randomly
- (11) No monitoring done by MDM Committee
- (12) The actual cost meal is Rs. 16 per child but only Rs. 6 is sanctioned
- (13) Disbursement of funds for MDM is not regular from SDEO office
- (14) Honorarium for cooks not sufficient to earn their daily livelihood
- (15) Cooking cost is not sufficient
- (16) MDM is provided only twice a week as per directions of SDEO
- (17) Attendance register is tampered with by using white ink

(18) Rations are supplied to less number of children than the total number enrolled.

(19) MDM students register not found, as also Grain and Cash Register, Cooking cost register Honorarium register etc.

(20) Cooks are not paid regular honorarium

### **Targetted Public Distribution System:**

- (1) Measurement is done by tin(dabba) as they do not have weighing machine
- (2) Many eligible families were included in Non NFSA category. Mistakes found in the beneficiaries Card.
- (3) Beneficiaries getting 4Kg per head of rice against entitlement of 5Kg, and FPS dealer is charging Rs.5 per Kg instead of Rs.3. He said that the extra charge is the transport cost and it was decided by the Dorbar to charge this rate.
- (4) Stock Register is not available
- (5) The number of Priority Households is more than the number actually selected as PHH.
- (6) Number of persons in the ration Card is less than the actual number of persons in the family
- (7) Persons have applied for ration cards for PDS but not received for long time
- (8) No Notice Board displaying list of commodities and price list in the FP Shop.
- (9) No Stock Register/Issue Register maintained by FPS Dealer
- (10) FPS is not open for the whole month-only two weeks
- (11) Persons who have expired also included in the PHH list
- (12) Training should be provided to the FPS dealer for record keeping
- (13) FPS Dealer is giving rice to non-entitled persons
- (14) Less rice is distributed since they sometimes receive spoiled rice, or some rice spill over during transportation
- (15) There is no separate FP Shop. Distribution is done in the Community Hall
- (16) There is no active Vigilance Committee
- (17) The electronic weighing machine is set at 0.150 gm and not 0gm.
- (18) If FP dealers are not given sufficient incentives, this should be addressed



- (19) Inspection of FP Shops should be done on regular basis
- (20) Issue of double ration card to some families
- (21) Many households left out of the Priority Household list (PHH)
- (22) People are not aware of their entitlements so publicity should be given.
- (23) Proper check should be taken for dispatch and receiving of foodgrains from FCI to FPS
- (24) Should have an MIS, and should be in public domain

## **Integrated Child Development Services**

- (1) Attendance is less – only 25% of enrolled children are present
- (2) School premises not being used. Food is cooked in Anganwadis house.
- (3) No toilet is available
- (4) Charts and toys displayed but childhood education activity could not be observed
- (5) Hot cooked meal is not provided to children who do not go to pre-school
- (6) Weighing machines not in use
- (7) Only immunisation happening. No regular ANC like BP, urine and blood body check
- (8) No medicines, medical Kit available at AWC
- (9) Lady Supervisor visits every two or three months. CDPO visits only once a year
- (10) No Community Monitoring Committee
- (11) Documentation maintained at home of AWC
- (12) Attendance only 50% but all children are marked present
- (13) Demand to set up one more AWC as the present one is not covering a particular locality
- (14) The AWC was damaged and repairs are needed
- (15) There is no building for setting up AWC.
- (16) Cooked food provided only twice a week
- (17) Play materials are available but was never used.
- (18) Menu not displayed
- (19) Some parents are not bringing their children for checking of weight so Anganwadi Worker unable to track the growth of children
- (20) Some village Community Monitoring Committee (CMC) are asking only for Take Home Ration, and not hot cooked meal.
- (21) CDPO's are requested to visit the villages and inform the people of their entitlements, since they are not aware of the same

- (22) Training is not imparted to the CMC – Members of CMC not aware of their role/responsibilities.
- (23) Anganwadi Workers have requested the Department to increase their pay
- (24) Parents requested to change menu as children do not like to eat same food everyday
- (25) AWCs find it difficult to maintain all the registers provided by the office since they are only 10<sup>th</sup> class pass. (VLCC register, growth monitoring register, grain and cash register)
- (26) Some AWCs do not have facilities for cooking meals, electricity, drinking water and sanitation
- (27) Pregnant and lactating mothers are not getting regular Take Home Rations
- (28) Parents have to carry wood to the AWC for cooking of meals
- (29) Weighing machine not in use as AW worker does not know how to use it.
- (30) ICDS Centre (AWC) runs for only 6-10 days per month instead of 25days
- (31) Anganwadi Workers were not paid for last six months
- (32) AWC does not stay in same village but comes only to distribute ration
- (33) No AWC in the village
- (34) Stock Register/Attendance Register not maintained
- (35) No educational and play material for children
- (36) AWC provides only morning snacks and not afternoon meal, and that also only twice a week
- (37) Pregnant and lactating mothers not getting rations according to their entitlement

(38) AWC does not provide non – formal education to the children

(39) AWC stated that they are not getting adequate foodgrains to provide beneficiaries every day

(40) People are not aware of their entitlements

(41) Only Take Home Rations provided – no cooked meals

## **Observations and Recommendations:**

1. The Commission had taken up the matter with the Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs to earmark one room in the office of the Deputy Commissioners for creation of NFSA Cell with toll Free numbers for receipt of complaints under TPDS, ICDS and MDM. It appears that this has not materialised as yet. Government is requested to issue necessary instructions in this regard to make the grievance redressal system responsive and effective.
2. Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department may identify Nodal Officers under NFSA for Shillong, Baghmara, Nongstoin, Williamnagar, Amlarem and Sohra.
3. FCS & CA Department are also requested to finalise and notify the Food Security Rules 2017, and rules for issue of Food Security Allowance.
4. The Vigilance Committees set up by the Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs are not being utilised by the other Departments for receipt of complaints under ICDS and MDM. The Social Welfare and Education Departments are requested to issue necessary instructions in this regard, and also arrange for wide publicity of the same.
5. The Food Security Rules 2017 should also mandate Social Welfare and Education Departments to set up their own grievance redressal mechanism with Toll Free numbers and a designated officer to ensure its effective functioning. Details should be provided on the complaint mechanism including registration of complaints and providing acknowledgement receipts, timeline for disposal of grievances and reporting to the DGRO of pending complaints.
6. All documents relating to Mid Day Meal and Integrated Child Development Services should be put in public domain and institutions such as government schools, anganwadis and fair price shops. Adequate measures should be taken to create awareness among the public about their entitlements and various services provided under the Act.

7. The State Social Audit Council under the Chairmanship of Shri Toki Blah needs to be activated to review action taken on the findings of the social audit conducted in some selected villages. The State Implementing Agency may also finalise guidelines for conduct of social audit and public hearings.
8. Deputy Commissioners need to finalise the Block-Wise Social Audit Calendar and Public hearings, and select and empanel reputed and experienced NGO's and SHG's for conduct of social audit.
9. The Programme Implementation & Evaluation Department needs to issue Rules and regulations in furtherance of the objectives of the Social Audit Act as required under Sec 19.
10. Automation of Fair Price Shops needs to be implemented throughout the State. Computerisation of the supply chain management, issue of new ration cards/duplicate cards online needs to be made operational.
11. A Bench of the Commission needs to be set up in Tura to cater to the appeal cases being lodged in the Garo Hills region. One room in the Office of Commissioner of Divisions, Garo Hills, Tura, has been requested but is yet to be allotted to the Commission.
12. As suggested in the Annual Report 2016-17, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department and Social Welfare Department are requested to create a Corpus Fund for meeting day to day expenses, in anticipation of fund being released by Govt of India for implementation of their schemes.  
Delays in release of funds by Govt of India impact the delivery of services under the NFS Act, including payment of transport charges, wages, margins etc.
13. The most common complaint under the TPDS is the distribution of less quantity of foodgrains and charging of higher price by the FP Shop dealer. The reason attributed to this is that the FPS dealer has to pay for transport charges. The FCS & CA Department may examine the profit margin and feasibility of the FP Shops as per the current transport and

handling charges, and ascertain whether the profit margin is sustainable for the FP dealer. If not, the charges need to be revised, or other items need to be introduced for the FPS to be made sustainable.

14. FP Shops should be open throughout the month instead of few days a month. This will ensure that all card holders will get their due share/benefits, since they may not have money to purchase rations on a particular day.
15. FP Shops should display the list of commodities available, the price, and eligibility per person. Proper weighing instruments should be used instead of tins/dabbas.
16. The list of Priority Households (PHH) should be updated regularly as some persons leave the village and others come to reside in the village, which is a continuing process.
17. Under Mid Day Meal (MDM) Scheme, many schools do not have toilets or water supply. The Education Department and PHE Department needs to address this issue immediately, since without these facilities, school children especially girls will be discouraged to attend school.
18. School Management Committees (SMC's) need to be more active and hold regular meetings and review the implementation of the MDM Schemes.
19. Disbursement of funds is not regular from SDEO office. As suggested earlier, the Department should maintain a Corpus Fund for regular disbursement of funds.
20. Honorarium for cooks, and cooking cost is not sufficient. State Govt may examine whether the amount provided by Govt of India can be supplemented.
21. Documentation and registers of MDM should be maintained by the officials, and training should be imparted for the same.

22. All Registers should also be maintained by Fair Price Shop Dealer, and training should be provided for record keeping.
23. Vigilance Committees need to be activated and meetings to be held regularly.  
They should also discuss about delivery of services under ICDS and MDM. People should be made aware of their entitlements.
24. Inspection of FP Shops should be done on regular basis. Proper check should be done on dispatch and receipt of foodgrains from FCI/Wholesalers godowns to FP Shops.
25. Under ICDS also, no toilets are available in Anganwadi Centres. Efforts should be made to provide toilets and drinking water to all AWC's.
26. Regular supervision of all AWC's to be ensured by Community Monitoring Committee and CDPO's. People to be made aware of their entitlements.
27. Cooked food to be provided daily, and not twice a week as reported.
28. Training to be provided to Community Monitoring Committees about their role and responsibilities.
29. Menu may be changed regularly since children do not like to eat the same food every day.
30. Anganwadi Workers to be provided training in maintenance of registers
31. Anganwadi Workers are not paid for long periods. Social Welfare Department to maintain Corpus fund for disbursing Pay and cooking cost etc.