

Report of the Special Team to study the ground realities with actionable points on improving the situation in Kishanganj area

The PMO vide their ID note No. dated 4.7.2005, enclosing therewith six representations received from Shri Taslimuddin, MOS(Agriculture) requested Planning Commission to depute a special team to Kishanganj area to study the ground realities in the region and to submit a comprehensive report with actionable points on improving the situation in Kishanganj covering various sectors like education, health, flood control, drinking water supply, roads & bridges and railways as given below :

- (a) Education : Construction of an Education Complex for higher studies with all facilities especially for minorities and women.
- (b) Health : Construction of a Hospital in Kishanganj with all modern medical facilities.
- (c) Flood Control : (i) Flood control measures in Kankai, Mahananda, Bakra, Parmaan, Noona, Kol and New Kankai rivers passing through Kishanganj, (ii) Construction of embankments on both sides of National Highway No.57 passing through Kishanganj and (iii) Relief to Cyclone affected people and development/improvement of barren land in Kishanganj.
- (d) Drinking Water: Provision for drinking water since the water in Kishanganj Constituency contains excess iron.
- (e) Roads and Bridges : Construction of Bridges at Bhadrapur in Nepal and at Galgaliya in Kishanganj on the river Maichi.
- (f) Railways : Construction of Galgaliya-Supaul railway line.

The sixth representation relates to the alleged exploitation of women belonging to minority community by Seema Suraksha Bal (SSB). One set of the representations is at Annex.I(a to f). In addition to this, the team members also received a number of representations from various individuals and organizations during their visit to Kishanganj. Issues raised in all those representations relate to ground realities, which have also been examined and taken into consideration, while preparing the report.

The team consisted of the following members :

1. S/Shri Chandrapal, Adviser (State Plans-East and MLP) - Team Leader
2. A. Shekhar, Adviser (Water Resources)
3. S.S. Batra, Adviser (Health)
4. Sugan Singh, Director (Transport)
5. Dr. R.P. Singh, Senior Research Officer (Education), and
6. Abhiram Choudhury, Director (State Plans-Bihar)

The team members held detailed discussions on various ongoing schemes and reviewed the progress of their implementation with DM and Officers of Kishanganj district on 29.7.2005 (AN) and 30.7.2005 (FN). This was followed by review of various schemes that are under implementation in Purnea Division consisting of the remaining three districts, namely, Purnea, Katihar and Araria on 30.7.2005 (AN). The team members undertaken field visits on 31.7.2005, both individually and also in groups. They interacted with villagers, school teachers, medical staff, voluntary organizations, farmers and beneficiaries of various beneficiary oriented programmes such as MSTP, IAY, etc.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Head Quarters of Kishanganj district is located 425 km. from the State Capital, Patna. The district is situated in North East border areas of West Bengal, Nepal and Bangladesh. The total geographical area of the district is 1,93,840 ha. or 1938.55 sq. km. of which the net sown area is 1,32,798 ha. or about 69%. A total of 18,097 ha. of area has so far been brought under high yielding varieties of crops.

1.2 The district consists of three urban agglomerates, namely, Kishanganj, Thakurganj and Bahadurganj; 7 blocks, 126 Gram Panchayats and 803 villages. The total population of the district is 12,96,348. As per the information received from the Kishanganj District Administration, its distribution is given below :

Category	Number	Percentage to total
Rural	11,67,340	90.0
Urban	1,29,008	10.0
Minority	9,84,232	76.0
SC	85,833	6.6
ST	47,116	3.6
Others	1,79,167	13.8

1.3 The major rivers flowing through Kishanganj district are Mahananda, Kankai, Mechi, Donk, Ratua and Ramzan Sudhani. The soil being fertile and river bed flat, these rivers change their courses frequently resulting in siltation in paddy fields. Embankments and earthen bunds are required to be built to control flow of water.

1.4 The position of availability of ground water in the district is quite comfortable and hence, hand pumps are the main source of drinking water supply. There are 3 Urban Pipe Water Supply Schemes in the three urban agglomerates and 6 (4 existing and 2 ongoing) Rural Pipe Water Supply Schemes. The iron content in the water in the district is reported as high as 3-20 mg/l against the permissible limit of 0.3 mg/l. Iron removable system was initially installed in hand operated tube wells but due to lack of awareness and lack of responsibility with users, the systems did not sustain.

1.5 The conditions of all the roads in this region including National Highways (NH) are generally very bad and need immediate maintenance and development. NH-31 from Barauni to Guwahati passes through Kishanganj district. The length of State Highways in the district is 78.20 km. and that of Major District Roads 181.45 km.

1.6 There is one Sub-Divisional hospital in Kishanganj which has not yet been given the status of District Hospital. There are two Referral Hospitals, seven Primary Health Centres, nine Additional Primary Health Centres and 136 Health Sub-Centres in the district. There is one private Medical College in Kishanganj town. The college authority has already obtained permission from Indian Medical Association to start Para-Medical courses. However, No Objection Certificate from the State Government is awaited.

1.7 As per 2001 Census, the overall literacy rate in the district is 31.09% and the female literacy rate is 18.63%. Based on Selected Educational Statistics 2002-03 and latest available information, there are 550 Primary Schools, 96 Middle Schools, 35 Secondary/Intermediate/Higher Secondary Schools, 337 Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) Centres, 154 Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) Centres and 240 Madarsa in the district. The number of teachers in the Primary Schools is 1038, that in Middle Schools 534, and in Secondary/Intermediate/Higher Secondary Schools 267. The Pupil-Teacher ratio in Primary Schools is 83, whereas it is 76 in Middle

Schools. The corresponding figure in respect of Secondary/Intermediate/Higher Secondary Schools is 25.

1.8 As per the information gathered from the district authorities and the public, the law and order situation in the district is by and large peaceful.

2. General Observations and Recommendations

General observations and recommendations made by the subject matter specialists in the areas of Flood Control, Drinking Water, Education, Health and Road and Bridges are enclosed at Annex. II to VI respectively. Some of the major observations and recommendations made by the team members are as follows:

2.1 Flood Control : Kishanganj district experiences flood problems due to river Mahananda and its tributaries viz. Mechi, Western Kankai, Eastern Kankai and Ratua and a number of smaller tributaries. While the Mahananda originates in Darjeeling hills in West Bengal, the other tributaries originate from Nepal. During monsoon, heavy rainfall occurs in the Himalayan catchment of the tributaries. Due to landslips, the flood waters bring lot of silt which deposit in the upper reaches of the tributaries in Bihar reducing their bankful capacities. The river system has very flat slopes and very low banks in Kishanganj district resulting in flood water overflowing the banks and submerging vast tracts of agricultural land and habitations. Another phenomenon of the river system is its meandering nature where many river courses shift causing erosion and loss of land.

2.1.1 Damage due to Floods : During field visits, it was observed that at some places, the erosion stretch was very long even upto 3 km. It was gathered that people move to higher grounds when floods occur but damage to agricultural crops and kuchcha houses are extensive. The following flood damage data for the district was collected from the District Magistrate for the last 4 years:

Year	Persons affected	Crop damage (ha)	Value of crop damage (Rs. lakh)	House Damage			Human Lives Lost
				Pucca	Kachcha Value	Value (Rs. in lakh)	
2001-02	19859	4646	50.00	10	1858	33.63	NIL
2002-03	22137	21111	145.57	20	3151	34.01	NIL
2003-04	7922	564	15.25	-	496	18.70	13
2004-05	83400	3800	23.00	150	9680	98.70	4

2.1.2 Comprehensive Plan for Mahananda prepared by GFCC : The comprehensive plan prepared by Ganga Flood Control Commission (GFCC) for Mahananda has recommended embankments on Kankai and Mechi rivers and raising of villages where suitable. It has been assessed that about 340 km of embankments are required in upper reaches of Mahananda and its tributaries mainly in Kishanganj. These embankments, on their completion, will provide relief to 2.79 lakh ha. The Government of Bihar, as informed by the Engineer-in-Chief, had earlier formulated a scheme after detailed survey for embanking the main Mahananda at a cost of Rs.7.3 crore. This cost is now updated to Rs.46.51 crore. The revised scheme needs to be got techno-economically cleared by GFCC, accepted by the Advisory Committee of Ministry of Water Resources and processed for investment clearance by Planning Commission. Surveys for embanking tributaries also needs to be taken up and a separate scheme formulated with provision of tying of embankment to high ground in Nepal. This could cost about Rs.25 crore. While preparing this scheme, Government of Bihar should also consider inter linking of tributaries and construction of pilot channels in river loops to bring down costs wherever feasible.

2.1.3 Short Term Measures : The district flood department officers also informed that as a temporary, short term measuring about 50 schemes for erosion control costing Rs.11.69 crore. These schemes are yet to be sanctioned and are required for providing immediate relief to the people.

Planning Commission could consider some assistance immediately to Government of Bihar by way of one time ACA to implement these short term measures.

2.1.4 Long Term Measures : As a long term measure, some reservoir sites have been identified in the basin by Government of Bihar and the Government of West Bengal including site in Nepal. Implementation of these could afford permanent flood relief. Dialogue with Nepal which has already been initiated for preparation of comprehensive Master plan for North Bihar needs to be pursued especially as construction of embankments in Nepal jacket the river and have an effect on floods on Indian side. The Ministry of Water Resources had recently set up a Committee for assessing flood problems of Mahananda in North Bihar. The Committee in its report of July 2005 has also endorsed the above line of approach in regard to long term measures.

2.1.5 Physical Model of the Rivers Systems : In 1994, the Second Irrigation Commission set up by the State Government had recommended laying out of a physical model of the river systems to understand the phenomenon of river erosion better and for proper design of structures. Such a model study could be got done in Central Water and Power Research Station, Pune.

2.2 Drinking Water Supply : Due to comfortable position of ground water availability in the district, hand pumps are the main source of drinking water supply. There are 12147 hand pumps in the district of which 3068 are non-functional. Four piped water supply schemes for rural areas have also been implemented and two are on going schemes. The district has 3960 habitations of which 1387 have been fully covered with rural water supply. 760 are partially covered and 1813 have slipped to not covered category as per 2003 survey. State government will have to tackle NC/PC habitations by 2009 as per Bharat Nirman targets.

2.2.1 High Iron Content : The iron content in the water in the district is reported as high as 3-20 mg/l against the permissible limit of 0.3 mg/l.

2.2.2 Water Supply Scheme for Kishanganj Town : The tube well scheme for the Kishanganj town water supply scheme is very old. It was implemented in 1955. The 30 HP pump yields 25000 gallons per hour and pumped into a 1 lakh gallon overhead tank. Power supply is a

problem. There are 70 public stand posts and 500 house connections. The per capita water supply works out to only 8.7 lpcd which is far short of the minimum requirement of 70 lpcd for urban areas. The disinfection is by bleaching powder put into the overhead tank.

2.2.3 Tayabpur rural water supply scheme : The scheme covers 7000 population in 3 villages. It is inoperational since last 1½ months due to breakdown in electricity supply.

2.2.4 Sanitation : There is practically no sanitation in the district. Even in Kishanganj town, the sewage disposal is in open drains.

2.2.5 Proposed Schemes of PHE Department : The PHE Department has prepared estimates for the following (a) Water Supply and (b) Sanitation schemes, some of them can be posed under National Urban Renewal Mission, now under approval. For Kishanganj iron removal, one time ACA of Rs.40 lakh could be considered to provide immediate relief to the urban population.

Sl. No.	Name of the Scheme	Estimated Cost (Rs. crore)
	<u>Water Supply</u>	
1.	Iron removal facility for Kishanganj town	0.40
2.	Kishanganj town water supply improvement	20.00
3.	Bahadurganj Nagar Panchayat water supply	3.00
4.	Iron removal plants in other areas	15.75
	<u>Sanitation</u>	
5.	Drainage, sewerage in Kishanganj town	25.00
6.	Drainage sewerage in Bahadurganj and Thakurganj	15.00
	TOTAL	79.15

2.3 Education : The literacy rate of Kishanganj is 31.09%, which is one of the lowest in India. Female literacy rate is as low as 18.63%, which too is one of the lowest in India. Literacy rates of Purina, Katihar and Araria districts are 35.10, 35.09 and 35.01 respectively. Female literacy rates of

these districts are 23.42, 23.80 and 22.37 respectively. These are far below the average literacy rates of the state (47.00) and of the country (64.84) as a whole; female literacy rates too are far below the state average (33.12) and of the country (53.67) as a whole. However, some progress has been made on the literacy front in the preceding years. Kishanganj district was awarded the highest national award in literacy (Satyen Maitra Award) in 2004 on the basis of an external evaluation commissioned by the National Literacy mission by the National Institute of Rural Development, Jaipur. Pioneering work in the literacy of Muslim girls has been rendered in the preceding years by way of preparation of remarkable quotes based on the Quran and the Hadis.

The national norm of having a primary school within 1 KM distance and an upper primary school within 3 KM distance is not being followed in the district. The national norm needs to be strictly enforced.

2.3.1 Elementary Education : There are 140 Early Childhood Education Centres (ECE), 493 primary and 150 upper primary schools, 337 Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) centres and 154 Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) centres in Kishanganj district. Although Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is operational in since 2002-03, Kishanganj is still facing an unprecedented crisis of having more than 36.57 thousand out of school children. The total number of existing classrooms is not sufficient to accommodate the total number of enrolled students. Elementary schools are in dire need of additional classrooms. The provision of additional classrooms in existing elementary schools and new structures in EGS centres are a felt need in the district. With the appointment of Panchayat Shiksha Mitra, the absenteeism of teachers in Primary Schools has improved.

2.3.2 Secondary Education : There is a felt need for provision of infrastructure facilities in high schools including construction of additional classrooms, laboratories, toilets for girls, teachers' and students' common rooms, libraries and hostel rooms. Thus, sanctioning new secondary schools and strengthening existing ones is a felt need in the district. Efforts are also needed to introduce public-private partnership with a view to opening secondary schools in the district by giving one-time grant to interested individuals provided they arrange land and personnel on their own. This can reduce the load on scarce Government resources. Private initiative with State patronage may solve the problem of inadequate secondary infrastructure in the district.

2.3.3 Technical/Vocational Education : There is no ITI in the district. Although there is a Polytechnic in the district, it was reported that the same was not fully functional. Students of the district therefore have to go to the nearby Katihar district or to other distant places to acquire technical education. Vocational education in the district is also non-existent; Higher Secondary Schools/Inter-Colleges have no facilities for imparting vocational education. There is a felt need for setting up a technical/vocational education complex with limited trades to begin with. There is also a need for opening guidance and coaching/counseling unit each in the Employment Exchange and a Degree Colleges so as to empower both the school pass outs and dropouts to seek ways for self-employment with the assistance of Government agencies/banks.

In every block , ITIs should be started. Opening of separate ITIs for girls from minority community may be explored. Trades such as fitter, turner, machinist, electrician, wireman, surveyor, draftsman, mechanics (motor vehicle, radio, TV, electrical, refrigeration, air conditioning, diesel, tractor, etc.), plumber, welder, carpenter, stenography, tailoring, DTP, Data Entry Operator, AUTOCAD, Fashion Design, etc. should be immediately started.

2.3.4 Computer Literacy in Schools : Under SSA, computers have been provided in selected Middle Schools in the district. How ever, due to erratic power supply these are not fully functional. The district administration should link up with agencies dealing with alternative sources of energy so as to use photovoltaic and other such technologies to enable continued power supply for running computers.

2.3.5 Scholarships/Stipends : The District Welfare Department administers the national scheme for merit-cum-means scholarships for SC/ST students, which is reportedly running well. It is not clear whether there is any scheme for scholarships to minorities. Stipend should be given to all students irrespective of their social status up to class X. For girl students, education should be made free up to graduation level.

2.3.6 Residential Education for SC/ST/Minority Girls : There is one Government Residential SCs/ STs School in Kishanganj (Sadar) run by the District Welfare Department, but there is no provision for residential education to SCs/STs and minority girls in the district. There is a need for setting up residential education centres for SC/ST & minority girls, as the district lags behind in education of girls of weaker sections.

2.3.7 Status of Madarasas : There are 240 recognized Madarasas in Kishanganj district. Most of these Madarasas are imparting education from classes I-XII and beyond (i.e. till graduation / *Fazil*). The education being imparted in these Madarasas is based on *deeni talim* (religious education). It was reported that the government-aided Madarasas have within them the component of elementary education (SSA) and the provision of cooked mid-day meals. Introduction of modern education is the key to the improvement of the state of Madarasas in the district.

Villages having sizeable Muslim population should be provided with facilities like welfare homes, schools, etc. for creating awareness among them. The State Government should implement the 14-point programmes relating to Muslim community for their development.

2.4 Health : Kishanganj and Araria districts are without District level Hospitals. The team was informed by the Director (Health) that there was already a move to upgrade these two hospitals to the level of District hospitals and that a proposal to make a provision of Rs.6.14 crore was already with the Finance Department.

2.4.1 Sub-Divisional Hospital at Kishanganj : The 30-bedded Sub-Divisional hospital at Kishanganj is located in the middle of a bazaar and is in a congested area. It is operating from an old single storey residential building, least suited for running a hospital. The sanctioned strength of seven doctors and all the paramedical staff are in position. The lady doctor present in the hospital informed that only normal delivery cases were being attended to in the hospital as there were no stand-by facility for emergency light. Hence, no caesarian operation could be handled in the operation theatre and hence there were no in-patients in the Gynecology wing. The Operation Theatre was only being used for family planning operations. She also said that there were no toilet facilities for the ladies and there were no retiring room for her so that she could stay at the hospital till late in the evening.

2.4.2 Health Centres at Block level : Kishanganj district has two CHCs and both are located in the Pothia block whereas other six blocks have no CHC. An X-ray machine acquired three years back is lying unused in the store, due to non-availability of an operator. The Operation Theatre is under repair for a long time. The people of that area complained about non-availability of medicines. In this block, a beautiful hospital building was constructed as per standard design, about fifteen years back with two residential quarters for the doctors, three garages to park vehicles and two staff quarters. Unfortunately, the building is still lying vacant and is

used by the local residents for keeping their animals. The CMO stated that the building of the hospital had not been handed over to the hospital so far.

2.4.3 Hospital Buildings and other Infrastructure : Some Hospitals/Centres are operated from old residential buildings and are least suited for that purpose. There is complete absence of maintenance of these buildings. There was either absence of Operation Theatres/laboratories or they are not functional or ill equipped. There is no arrangement for the emergency stand by electricity. X-ray machines are either not provided or are non functional because of lack of repairs or lack of technical manpower. Essential medicines are not available. Because of lack of services, the in-patient facility is virtually not being utilized by the public. The provision of 24 hours emergency service is virtually non existent due to non availability of residential accommodation for some of the doctors and paramedical staff. There is acute shortage of essential equipment and other infrastructure in all the Sub-hospitals, PHCs and CHCs. The available manpower is also grossly under-utilized.

2.4.4 Manpower Availability : The Hospitals and Health centres are grossly under-staffed in terms of doctors, specialists, paramedical staff and other supporting staff. At some places the specialist are being made to discharge the functions of Medical Officers. The Director (Health) from the Bihar Government during the course of discussion at Kishanganj had stated that there had been virtually no recruitment of doctors and staff for the last 10-12 years. She had also stated that this was filed in the court of law through a PIL and the State Government was taking steps to fill up the vacant posts. The task of making recruitment was now to be handled by the State Public Service Commission. The private practice permitted to Government doctors is also responsible to some extent for the shortage of doctors in the hospitals. This issue requires serious consideration and it is felt that alternative mode of compensation by way of Non-practicing allowance may be more useful from administrative point of view.

2.4.5 Transfer and Posting of Medical Staff : A plan needs to be drawn to fill up the existing vacancies of doctors, para-medical staff and other supporting staff in a phased manner either on regular appoint or on hiring basis. As far as possible, some of the services need to be outsourced. The posting of para-medical staff and other supporting staff needs to be carried out keeping in view the availability of related infrastructure. It is also desirable that the CMO concerned is involved in the posting and

transfer of these personnel. The specific place of deployment needs to be left to the discretion of the CMO to enable him to make the best use of the available staff and to handle the problem of absenteeism. Some amount of authority to take disciplinary action against the subordinate staff should be vested with the CMO to enable him to check the problem of indiscipline.

2.4.6 Pay Scales of Doctors : After the implementation of the Fifth Pay Commission Report, the Pay scale of Medical officer is fixed at Rs.6,500-10,500 PM which is the scale of a Class II Gazetted Officer. Surprisingly, the Civil Surgeon-cum-Chief Medical Officer of Kishanganj, after two promotions was also operating in the pay-scale of Rs.6,500-10,500 PM. The Deputy Superintendent and Medical Specialists are also working in the same pay scale. The low pay-scale together with the permission to do private practice are largely responsible for the low moral, poor service, absenteeism and resistance to transfers among doctors. The pay scales of doctors needs to be rationalized so to make it commensurate with their qualifications and duties and comparable with similarly placed Officers in the State.

2.4.7 Need for Strengthening of Medical Infrastructure : The medical network in the State needs to be expanded and strengthened in accordance with the population norm. Each district should have at least one district hospital and wherever necessary the existing sub-district hospital be upgraded to district hospital and strengthened so that it can effectively discharge its functions. Provision for Operation Theaters, emergency services and stand-by power supply should be made in selected hospitals and Centres. For upgradation and creation of additional infrastructure in the district, the State Government should formulate a comprehensive scheme and pose the same to the Government of India. The general maintenance and upkeep of the hospital/centres and their surroundings need proper attention. Some reasonable level of residential accommodation for the doctors and the para-medical staff needs to be provided in the vicinity of the hospital/centre so that their availability improves and the provision of round the clock service becomes feasible. The provision of piped safe drinking water and the functional toilets in hospitals, PHC and CHC for ladies and gents and for doctors and patients should also be made.

2.5 Roads, Bridges and Railways : Development of NH-31 has been taken up by NHAI under East-West Corridor and is under progress. The development of State Highways in Kishanganj district has been assigned to CPWD by the State Government under the Special Plan Component of

RSVY. Rural roads are covered under PMGSY and Central Government agencies have been assigned with the task of their development by the Ministry of Rural Development. The State Government have approached NABARD for funding for development of Major District Roads and roads that do not qualify to be covered under PMGSY.

2.5.1 Demand on Construction of Roads, Bridges and Railway Lines : After the arrival of the team members at Kishanganj on 29th July 2005, a copy of another Memorandum, written by MoS (Agriculture) to the Prime Minister was handed over, which, among others, contained the following demands, pertaining to construction of roads, bridges and railway lines:

(i) Lateral Road Project (LRP) road from Bagdogra to Araria (100 kms) may be converted into a 'Link Super Highway'.

(ii) Some of the villages having population 5000 and more have not yet been connected by road. After a survey, all the villages having population more than 500 may be connected with roads.

(iii) Border roads on Nepal and Bangladesh border which are used by the BSF, may be got repaired.

(iv) In order to control crime and insurgency, a road may be constructed from Galgaliya to Darbhanga. The same road will be used by the BSF.

(v) The Bulaki Marg being constructed in Nepal with the assistance of India may be connected to different roads in the surrounding areas of Bihar.

(vi) A number of police posts in the border areas i.e. Galgalia, Churli Kot, Pathamari, Jiapokhar, Bibiganj, Fatehpur etc. are not connected with LRP roads. Hence, the same may be connected with these roads.

(vii) Construction of bridges on various rivers in the region, as noted below :

(a) Mechi river – at Kutti

(b) Donk river – at Tangamari, Kharkhari, Harvardanga, Baldihatta

(c) Chonga river - at Kanakpur Panchayat (Thakurganj)

(d) Nari Kankai river - Near Dogachhi

(e) Mechi river - connecting Nepal and India near Galgalia (Thakurganj)

(f) Kol river - near Matiari Locha Nisandra

(g) Ratua river - at Kashibari Sohniya Haat

- (h) Nuna river - on Nepal border near 60 (Kalu Chowk)
- (i) Bakra river - near Kudhali, Taribari, Madanpur Dehti (Purnea)
- (j) Parwan river - on Khabaspur Ghat, Rampur Ghat, Khushali Ghat, Mongra Ghat, Khata Ghat, Rasaili Ghat and Palsa Ghat
- (k) Kankai river - on Vaisa Ghat, Khadi Ghat, Mangalpur Ghat, Andhasur Ghat and Purandaha Ghat
- (l) Budhi Kankai River - at Bhagal, Domuhini, Domuhan and Scindia, and
- (m) Tas river - at Lokhadia, Baharbari, Talmalpur and Channi.

(viii) Construction of (a) Galgaliya-Supaul (81 kms) and (b) Jalalgarh-Kanki (40 kms) railway lines.

2.5.2 Preparation of Master Plans for Development of Roads : The District Administration needs to prepare a Master Plan showing district road maps of all type of roads with length, missing links, culverts, bridges and the names of the roads. Requirement of funds should be worked out both for maintenance and construction/development of road network by the District Administration so that works could be taken up in a phased manner depending on availability of funds and priorities fixed by the State Government.

2.5.3 Development of Border Roads : Development of border roads should be undertaken under the “Border Area Development Programme (BADP)”. The annual outlay under BADP has been enhanced to Rs.16.93 crore in 2005-06 from Rs.7.28 crore.

2.5.4 Conversion of LRP Road : The State Government should take up the proposal for conversion of LRP road from Bagdogra to Araria (100 km.) with the Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways.

2.5.5 Construction of a bridge on river Mechi River : Construction of a bridge on the river Mechi near the India Nepal border would help the people on both sides of the border by way of economic development of the area and reduction in travel time. In view of above, there appears to be a need for the construction of the said bridge. However (a) availability of funds and (b) agreement for the construction of the bridge between Government of India and the Government of Nepal would need to be taken into consideration.

2.5.6 Maintenance of NH-31 (422 - 445 km.) : DM, Katihar mentioned about the dilapidated condition of NH-31 (422 - 445 km.) and requested to take up the matter with the Ministry of Shipping, Road transport and

Highways and NHAI for immediate repairs. The Road Construction Department, Government of Bihar may be requested to take up this work on priority.

2.5.7 Construction of Bridges : The State Government representatives intimated that all the five bridges included in the Memorandum of the MoS (Agriculture) were important and funding should be made for their construction. The Divisional Commissioner, DMs and other officers, present in the meeting, were of the firm view that the five bridges for which proposals have been furnished should be given first priority and the other bridges were also very important and they should also be constructed in due course.

2.5.8 Rural Connectivity : With regard to connectivity with villages having population 5000, it is quite possible that the villages have been connected by all weather roads. Other wise, the State Government may take up the matter with the Ministry of Rural Development to connect such villages under PMGSY.

2.5.9 National Highway 57 : For construction of bunds on both sides of the National Highway 57, the State Government should take up the matter with the Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highway so as to avoid destruction caused to it by perennial floods.

2.5.10 Construction of Railway Lines and ROB : For construction of Galgaliya-Supaul (81 km.) and Jalalgarh-Kanki (40 kms) railway lines and ROB at Kishanganj, the State Government should send proposals to the Ministry of Railways for consideration.

2.6 Indira Awas Yojana : The following table gives target and achievement of construction of houses under IAY during 2004-05 and 2005-06 :

Indira Awas Yojana – Physical Progress

District/ IAY Type	2004-05		2005-06	
	Target	Achievement	Target	Achievement
Purnea				
New	20,799	9,243	15,609	4,183
Upgradation	10,168	3,738	6,905	1,607
Katihar				
New	10,333	6,294	5,303	1,841
Upgradation	4,255	2,823	2,247	904
Kishanganj				

New Upgradation	23,291 6,960	9,510 4,460	15,482 2,500	4,262 787
Araria New Upgradation	22,775 9,534	3,650 1,900	11,487 7,634	576 460

It may be seen from the above table that implementation of Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) is not at all satisfactory and needs to be expedited. More than 50% of the targets are yet to be completed. Araria district is the major defaulter in the Division. Transparency in selection of beneficiaries under IAY programme is essential. Gram Sabhas should be actively involved in selection of beneficiaries. The list of beneficiaries indicating SC/ST/Minority should be prominently displayed in the villages and Panchayat/Block offices. Transparency in disbursement of funds to beneficiaries needs to be maintained so that the beneficiaries receive the allotted funds fully and also in time. The general impression of not disbursing the total amount to the beneficiaries by the Block Development Officers, was also experienced in this region. The entire fund should be released to the beneficiaries in two instalments through Savings Bank Accounts as against the existing three instalments. The construction work should also be undertaken by the beneficiaries themselves. It was reported that a cluster of houses under IAY was constructed in Araria through contractors against the set principle of IAY. DM, Araria informed that Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development expressed serious concern about this and the depressing implementation of IAY during his last visit to Araria district. It is recommended that a High level committee should be constituted by the State Government to enquire this matter for further action.

2.7 Million Shallow Tubewell Programme under RSVY : Though the progress of implementation of Million Shallow Tubewell Programme in terms of disbursal of loans for Tubewells with pump sets is very satisfactory, a number of small and marginal farmers of Chakla village (Kishanganj block) stated that they were not aware of such a programme and were very much interested to have tube wells in their fields. A statement giving target and achievement of this programme is given below :

Number of Tubewells for which loan was disbursed to beneficiaries

Name of District	2004-05		2005-06	
	Target	Achievement	Target	Achievement
1. Purnea	6235	7683	6896	415

2. Katihar	3628	5650	2990	647
3. Araria	5200	6586	6327	252
4. Kishanganj	3840	4281	4989	559
Total	19103	24200	21202	1873

2.8 District Plans under Backward District Initiative component of

RSVY : The districts of Purnea, Katihar and Araria are included under the Backward District Initiative component of RSVY. The first instalment of Rs.7.50 crore was released to these districts in 2004-05. The DMs of Purnea, Araria and Katihar stated that the first instalment of Rs.7.50 crore was received in March-April 2005 and hence implementation of various schemes approved in the district plans under RSVY had not commenced so far. The District Administrations were in the process of obtaining administrative approval, preparation and sanction of estimates, tendering and selection of contractors for construction activities etc. The present status of implementation of various schemes approved under the District Plans are given below district-wise :

Katihar : Out of Rs.7.50 crore released in 2004-05, 47 schemes amounting to Rs.5.23 crore have been taken up and expenditure up to June 2005 was Rs.0.51 crore. The schemes cover sectors such as roads, health, flood control, urban development, welfare, education, agriculture and forest.

Purnea : Initially, schemes were prepared with the presumption that they will be executed departmentally. The State Government vide letter No.981 dated 17th May 2005 intimated that henceforth all construction works would be executed through contractors. Accordingly, the estimates were revised and sent to Departments concerned to invite tenders. Estimates exceeding Rs.25.00 lakh were returned for getting Technical sanction of the Authorised Officer (Chief Engineer). Till now, administrative approval of schemes amounting to Rs.5.354 crore has been accorded and forwarded to Line Departments for inviting tenders. Schemes amounting to Rs.6.1654 crore have been returned to concerned Departments for getting Technical sanction of the Authorised Officer. Expenditure so far is 'NIL'.

Araria : The first instalment of Rs.7.50 crore was received in March-April 2005. Physical progress as well as expenditure, so far is 'NIL'. The district administration has initiated action for getting technical sanction

and administrative approval of various schemes approved under the District Plan.

2.8.1 It is suggested that transparency in identification of beneficiaries and implementation of developmental schemes are maintained by the District Administration. For every twenty villages, a nodal officer should be earmarked for verification. A task force at the district level having Technical Officers may be constituted. They should hold verifications camps in the fields to ascertain the quality of implementation of development and welfare schemes of all the departments. The Government should take into account the following points while formulating and implementing Special Component Plans (SCP) for the benefit of Scheduled Castes (SC) and Tribal Sub-Plans (TSP) for Scheduled Tribes (ST) :

- Earmarking of funds for SCP/TSP from total State Plan outlay at least in proportion of SC/ST population in the total population of the State.
- Making the Social Welfare Department/Tribal Development Department/or the Department concerned with the welfare and development of SC/ST as nodal Department for formulation and implementation of SCP/TSP.
- Placing the funds earmarking for SCP/TSP at the disposal of the nodal Department concerned for the welfare and development of SC/ST, which in turn will relocate the funds to the sectoral Departments for implementing schemes directly relevant to the development of SC/ST.
- Placing the funds earmarked for SCP/TSP under separate budget head/sub head for each development department implementing SCP/TSP.
- To constitute State and District/Block level Monitoring Committees to monitor the implementation of various schemes under SCP/TSP of various development Departments. The District/Block level committees may review the progress of implementation of schemes and utilisation of funds on monthly basis and the State level committee may review the progress on quarterly basis.

- Members of Parliament, State Legislative Assembly in the concerned Zila Parishad/ Block Panchayat area, prominent SC/ST personnel/ social workers well acquainted with the problems of SC/ST, representative of NGOs working for the welfare of SC/ST and SC/ST members of village Panchayats may also be included in the State/District/Block level Monitoring Committees.
- The District/Block level Monitoring Committees may be made responsible for identifying the developmental needs of concerned District/Block and suggest suitable schemes for their development. This process may be completed by the end of the third quarter of the financial year and reported to the nodal department concerned with SC welfare and development which will in consultation with concerned development departments may formulate suitable schemes with financial and physical targets for implementation during the next financial year.
- The nodal Department may ensure timely release of funds to the concerned development Departments and the latter may ensure immediate release of funds soon after the receipts of funds from nodal department to their field level implementing agencies. Any lapse on the part of field level implementing agencies in timely utilisation of funds and proper implementation of the schemes may be viewed seriously.
- Evaluation to assess the impact of economic development schemes implemented under SCP/TSP, on the socio-economic conditions of SC/ST may be got conducted by the nodal Department on regular basis. Dissemination of information to SC/ST all over the State about the schemes/programmes available for their development may be the responsibility of the nodal Department. The nodal Department may also ensure the follow up of the schemes implemented and maintenance of proper records on assets created under SCP/TSP in Districts/Blocks etc.

2.9 Production of Jute and Jute based Cottage Industry : Raw jute refers to both jute and mesta and both the crops are taken together to reflect the jute sector. About 90% of the jute crop farmers in the country belong to marginal and small categories (65% with 1 ha. and below and

25% with 2 ha. and below land holdings). The jute growing States are West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Meghalaya and Tripura.

2.9.1 Administrative Set up of Jute Sector in Government of India : The Office of the Jute Commissioner, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India is located at Kolkata. Jute Corporation of India (JCI) is engaged in procurement of raw jute directly from farmers and also in implementation of Minimum Support Price. National Seed Corporation (NSC) is responsible for procurement of seeds and is the sourcing authority for seeds. The Directorate of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India, Kolkata develops and supplies seeds. The National Centre for Jute Diversification (NCJD) is engaged in promotion of diversified sector and provides Skill Development aimed at setting up of production units. It also provides financial support by way of interest free loan to small entrepreneurs and SHGs, grants to NGOs and capital subsidy to bigger units having project cost not exceeding Rs.5.00 crore.

2.9.2 Status of Jute Production in Bihar : The major jute producing district in Bihar are Kishanganj, Purnea, Araria, Katihar, Supaul, Madhepura and Saharsa. Jute is produced in all the four districts in Purnea Division and is a major cash crop. The office of the Joint Director (Jute), Government of Bihar is located at Purnea and one Assistant Director (Jute) is stationed at each Jute producing district in the State. There was a demand to open a regional office of Jute commissioner, Government of India in this Division. The table below gives information on production of Jute and Mesta, area covered and yield rate in Bihar since 2000-01.

Year	Area (Hectare)		Production (in bales) One bale = 180 kg.		Yield (bales/hectare)	
	Jute	Mesta	Jute	Mesta	Jute	Mesta
2000-01	1,14,409	3,435	10,42,572	17,679	9.11	5.15
2001-02	1,11,201	4,102	10,17,512	21,286	9.15	5.19
2002-03	1,19,962	3,715	11,41,281	19,572	9.51	5.27
2003-04	1,15,553	2,556	11,01,910	13,517	9.54	5.29
2004-05	1,22,128	5,071	11,39,211	26,968	9.33	5.32
2005-06	1,28,843	7,304	NA	NA	NA	NA

During 2005-06, against the target of 148.80 thousand ha. of area for jute and 9.70 thousand ha. area mesta, the actual coverage was 128.84 thousand ha. for jute and 7.30 thousand ha. for mesta respectively in Kishanganj district.

2.9.3 Requirement of Jute Seeds : Out of the total requirement of around 50 thousand quintal of seeds per annum in the country, the availability of certified seed is 34% only. About 1% of the seed is produced by growers for their own consumption. The remaining 65% is termed as non-descriptive/truthfully labeled seed, quality of which is questionable. It is, therefore, necessary to take up organised production of good quality seed. Jute seed is mainly produced in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, which are far away from jute growing area. The distribution of certified seed is a perennial problem as a result of which farmers often do not get good quality seed in time at a reasonable price. The existing distribution channel needs to be restructured so as to ensure pre-positioning of seeds at various distribution points. The inter-seasonal fluctuation of seed requirement is also an important factor resulting in seed shortage and the current jute season (2005-06) is a glaring example. Hence, creation of buffer stock in jute seed is necessary.

2.9.4 Availability vs. Requirement of Certified Seeds in 2005-06 : Most of the small and marginal farmers complained that the Government could not provide them with certified seeds for jute cultivation in 2005-06 as a result they had to purchase seeds from West Bengal at the rate of Rs.400 per kg. Shortage of jute seed was observed in 2005-06 as the quantity of seed received was less than one thousand quintals against the requirement of 3 thousand quintals. DM, Kishanganj stated that he had informed the State Government about shortage of seed in Kishanganj. However, timely action was taken to obtain seeds from local sources to meet the demand. The support price of Jute was Rs.1,500 per quintal in 2004-05. Earlier there was no shortage. The reason for less supply of seed in 2005-06 are as follows :

- a) Increase in coverage of area in 2005-06 as compared to previous years because of higher remuneration received in 2004-05 by farmers.
- b) Supply of less quantity of certified seeds by NSC in 2005-06.
- c) Higher Support Price in 2004-05.
- d) Less receipt of seeds from Andhra Pradesh due to Tsunami in 2004.

In Kishanganj district, the area targeted for jute cultivation in 2005-06 was 40,500 ha., of which the actual area covered was 37,830 ha. as against the corresponding coverage of 35111 ha. in 2004-05. DM, Kishanganj assured to indicate the requirement of seeds in the district

next year and write to the Planning Commission so as to take up the matter with the Ministry of Textiles and the Ministry of Agriculture.

APC, Government of Bihar had taken up the matter with NSC for enhancing supply of certified seeds of Bihar. Supply of seed is made by NSC through private dealers. The Director, Agriculture, State Government of Bihar agreed that there was some lacunae in providing quality seeds to the farmers in the State.

2.9.5 Procurement of Raw Jute by Jute Corporation of India : The Bihar State Cooperative Jute Marketing Society (BISCOJUTE) is the apex Cooperative organization for jute procurement in Bihar. It is an affiliated body of Bihar State Cooperative Marketing Federation (BISCOMAN) The BISCOJUTE procures jute from the farmers as an agent of JCI. There was a demand to open Jute Marketing Centres at block level. It was gathered that BISCOJUTE did not purchase jute directly from farmers. As a result, farmers sell their produce to traders/middlemen. The latter, in turn, sells to BISCOJUTE.

The quantity of Jute procured by the four JCI Centres in Kishanganj during the last 3 years is given below :

Year	Quantity in quintals
2002-03	60,535
2003-04	85,713
2004-05	6,322

It may be seen that procurement of Jute by JCI has come down from 85,713 quintals in 2003-04 to 6,322 quintals in 2004-05 in Kishanganj district. There is a need to expand the activities of JCI in the procurement of jute directly from farmer. The general complaint by jute growers during field visit has established that the procurement system needs to be re-organised by JCI to enable the farmers to sell their produce directly to JCI. At present, they are being compelled to sell to middle men. More number of procurement centres should be opened and farmers should be informed well in time about functioning of these centres. These centres should start operation well in advance so that farmers do not have to approach middle men to sell their produce. A copy of the statement giving procurement of Jute in Kishanganj by JCI is enclosed as Annex. VII.

Jute Commissioner stated that, the annual requirement of seed in India is about 50,000 to 55,000 quintal, of which about 40% is certified.

The actual requirement of seed is of the order of 40,000 quintals. In the case of other crops, it is hardly 10-15%. Jute is a freely traded commodity. Jute seed is grown in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. Farmers of these two jute seed producing States should be convinced and taken into confidence for covering more area and enhancing seed production. There may be a need to review the present assessment of requirement of jute seeds and actual land use. There is also a need to take up the issue with the JS (seeds), Ministry of Agriculture. A copy of the Report received from Jute Commissioner is enclosed as Annex.VIII.

2.9.6 Training Programmes : NCJD has organised a number of training programmes and awareness workshop in the Jute Service Centres, located at Routa and Kishanganj. A copy of the statement indicating its activities during the last two years is enclosed at Annex.IX. A Jute Service Centre has been opened in Kishanganj recently. It provides training and promotes SHGs for making jute produces. The Jute farmers should be provided with power looms along with suitable training.

One training centre was opened in Kishanganj about two years back. About 800 members have been trained so far, of which 150 members are engaged in jute making process in the training centre itself. There is a need to provide training at the block level by creating a network of trainers training. The minimum period of training involving basic training, design and actual working in the form of project work is three months.

2.9.7 Involvement of SHGs in Jute Sector in Purnea, Katihar and Araria districts : DM, Katihar stated that they have already formed 50 SHGs in the district in the jute sector. Additional 25 SHGs will be formed during the next two months. Each member of the SHGs is earning Rs.150 per day at present. They are engaged in making various jute products. DM, Katihar was requested to arrange extension of these facilities to neighbouring districts.

In Purnea district, already 40 SHGs are working in jute sector and the JCI is providing training to the members. DRDA funding is made to these SHGs.

In Araria district, Sahara Group has proposed to set up jute based industrial unit in the district. A training centre is already in operation. About 50 SHGs have been formed in Araria.

The Kishanganj Jute Development Society has submitted a Memorandum requesting for (a) setting up of Jute mills in Kishanganj, (b) bringing uniformity in VAT with the rate prevalent in West Bengal (that is, exemption of VAT on raw jute in Bihar, as has been done in West Bengal) and (c) strengthening of road and power infrastructure in the State to attract investment in Jute Sector. DM, Kishanganj has assured to provide land, if there is a proposal for setting up of Jute industry in the district.

2.9.8 Recommendations on Jute Sector

For timely supply of certified seeds in the next khariff season, the Ministry of Textiles may take up the matter with the Department of Agriculture, Seed Corporation of India and the State Governments of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra for enhancing the quantum of production of certified seeds and rationalization of its distribution. The Ministry may also review the actual coverage of area under jute cultivation, requirement of seeds and scope for increasing the production of certified seeds in India.

The State Government of Bihar may assess requirement of jute seeds for the next khariff season district-wise and place their indent to Seed Corporation of India well in time.

Farmers mainly grow jute and paddy in the region during khariff season. There is need to have diversification of crops. There is scope for development of cash crops such as pineapple, banana, spices, tea, etc. in this region.

Programme for setting up of food processing units, agro based industries and jute based cottage industries should be designed with necessary financial support for implementation in this area.

The activities of Jute Corporation of India should be expanded in the procurement of jute and the procurement system needs to be re-organised to enable the farmers to sell their produce directly to the Corporation immediately after the harvesting season.

Opportunities for self employment of educated girls in the Jute sector, particularly from the minority community, by providing them with training, power looms and interest free loans, should be created. More encouragement for development of Jute based Cottage industry through SHGs may be given.

For processing of jute, large size pond with running water facility is required. However, there is no such proposal under consideration by the district administration of Kishanganj.

The request of Kishanganj Jute Development Society for exemption of VAT on raw jute in Bihar should be taken up with the State Government by the Society. As regards setting up of Jute Mills in the District, the society may advise its stakeholders to take advantage of various schemes of National Centre for Jute Diversification and also through Public-Private participation.

It was agreed in the meeting that NCJD would organise training programmes in the Jute Service Centres and train about 500 people in jute sector annually in every district. Linkage with banks for financing the trained persons would also be established by these training centres.

A Regional Office of the Jute Commissioner, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India should be opened in Purnea, Bihar to cater to the need of the jute growing districts of Bihar.

2.10 Complaint against Seema Suraksha Bal (SSB) : Shri Chandrapal, Adviser had a separate meeting with the officers of the Purnea Division and the Deputy Commandant of SSB, Kishanganj on 30th July 2005 regarding the representation on role of SSB vis-à-vis that of Minority women and local people in border area. After discussing the matter with the SSB and senior officers of the Division, Shri Chandrapal requested the SSB representative, Divisional Commissioner, Purnea and DM and SP of Kishanganj to take confidence building measures so that peace is maintained in the border area. The copy of the minutes of the discussion is at Annex.X.

3. Major Actionable Points and Recommendations

All issues relating to developmental activities, raised in the representations of the MoS (Agriculture) and those of the local representatives seem to be correct. Development of physical and social infrastructure are lacking in the region. The team suggests the following major actionable points and recommendations :

3.1 Flood Control

Construction of Embankments : The scheme of the State Government for embanking the main Mahananda river at an updated cost of Rs.46.51 crore, recommendations of the Ganga Flood Control Commission (GFCC) for embankment of Mahananda, Kankai and Mechi rivers and raising of villages should be taken up by the State Government with the Union Government as noted in para 2.1.2 above.

Surveys for Embankment of Tributaries : Surveys for embanking tributaries also needs to be taken up and a separate scheme formulated with provision of tying of embankment to high ground in Nepal. This could cost about Rs.25.00 crore. While preparing this scheme, Government of Bihar should also consider inter linking of tributaries and construction of pilot channels in river loops to bring down costs wherever feasible.

Short Term Measures : As a short term measure, about 50 erosion control schemes costing about Rs.11.69 crore, which were proposed by the District Administration during discussions, should be considered by the Government of Bihar by way of one time ACA from Planning Commission.

Long Term Measures : Preparation of comprehensive Master Plan for North Bihar for which the Ministry of Water Resources has recently set up a Committee for assessing flood problems of Mahananda in North Bihar should be pursued by the State Government as noted in para 2.1.4 above.

Physical Model of the Rivers Systems : A physical model of the rivers systems to understand the phenomenon of river erosion and for proper

design of structures should be got done in Central Water and Power Research Station, Pune by the State Government.

Funding for flood Control Measures : The team recommends financial assistance under the Special Plan component of RSVY for “Construction of Embankments of Mahananda River and its Tributaries”. The State Government should submit the proposal along with DPR to the Planning Commission for its approval.

3.2 Drinking Water Supply

The iron content in the water in the district is reported as high as 3-20 mg/l against the permissible limit of 0.3 mg/l. The PHE Department of the district has prepared estimates costing Rs.79.15 crore for a number of schemes which are reflected in para 2.2.5 of the report. Some of them can be posed under National Urban Renewal Mission, now under approval. For Kishanganj iron removal, one time ACA of Rs.40.00 lakh could be considered to provide immediate relief to the urban population.

3.3 Education

Elementary Education : The national norm of having a primary school within 1 km. distance and an upper primary school within 3 km. distance is not being followed in the district. The national norm needs to be strictly enforced by the State Government. There should be a school say up to the 7th standard in every village. Kishanganj is facing an unprecedented crisis of having more than 36.57 thousand out of school children. Elementary schools are in dire need of additional class rooms. The provision of additional classrooms in the existing elementary schools and new structures in EGS centres are needed in the district.

Secondary Education : There is a need for provision of infrastructure facilities in High Schools including construction of additional classrooms, laboratories, toilets for girls, teachers’ and students’ common rooms, libraries and hostel rooms. Sanctioning new secondary schools and strengthening existing ones is necessary in the district. Efforts are also needed to introduce public-private partnership with a view to opening secondary schools in the district by giving one-time grant to interested individuals provided they arrange land and personnel on their own. Each block headquarter should have an educational institute consisting of a residential intermediate college/sports college with provision for future

expansion. The infrastructure available in such colleges should be used for vocational training centres and coaching cum guidance centers for the educated unemployed youth.

Technical/Vocational Education : There is no ITI in the district. In every block, ITIs should be started. Opening of separate ITIs for girls from minority community may be explored. Trades such as fitter, turner, machinist, electrician, wireman, surveyor, draftsman, mechanics (motor vehicle, radio, TV, electrical, refrigeration, air conditioning, diesel, tractor, etc.), plumber, welder, carpenter, stenography, tailoring, DTP, Data Entry Operator, AUTOCAD, Fashion Design, etc. should be immediately started.

Self Employment : To provide quality self employment to educated trained youth, group of 2-3 such educated unemployed youth should be provided interest free loan up to Rs. 5 –15 lakh. The interest subsidy should be borne by the State Government out of the Special Component Plan or the RSVY fund. There should be exhibition cum shopping complex constructed out the special component funds in each district headquarter to provide a shop to such groups, which will be an avenue for marketing their products. Trained persons belonging to SC and minority community should be provided with a house cum working shed for making jute based handicrafts and a multi-purpose hall which can be used as an exhibition center.

Scholarships/Stipends : Stipend should be given to all students up to class X, irrespective of their social status, as has been done in the neighboring State of Uttar Pradesh.

Status of Madarasas : Introduction of modern education in all recognized Madarasas is the key to the improvement of the state of Madarasas in the district. Villages having sizeable Muslim population should be provided with facilities like welfare homes, schools, etc. for creating awareness among them. The State Government should implement the 15-point programmes relating to Muslim community for their development.

The State Government should make adequate provision in the State Plans for development of education system including technical education in Kishanganj district.

3.4 Health

Need for Strengthening Medical Infrastructure : The medical net work needs to be expanded and strengthened in accordance with the population norm. Each district should have at least one district hospital and wherever necessary, the existing sub-district hospital be upgraded to district hospital and strengthened so that it can effectively discharge its functions. Provision for Operation Theaters, emergency services and stand-by power supply should be made in selected hospitals and Centres. For upgradation and creation of additional infrastructure in the district, the State Government should formulate a comprehensive scheme and pose the same to the Government of India. The general maintenance and upkeep of the hospital/centres and their surroundings need proper attention. Some reasonable level of residential accommodation for the doctors and the para-medical staff needs to be provided in the vicinity of the hospital/centre so that their availability improves and the provision of round the clock service becomes feasible. The provision of piped safe drinking water and the functional toilets in hospitals, PHC, and CHC for ladies and gents and for doctors and patients should also be made. The State Government should make adequate provision in the State Plans for development of medical infrastructure in Kishanganj district.

Manpower Availability : The private practice permitted to Government doctors is also responsible to some extent for the shortage of doctors in the hospitals. This issue requires serious consideration and it is felt that alternative mode of compensation by way of Non-Practicing Allowance may be more useful from administrative point of view. A plan needs to be drawn to fill up the existing vacancies of doctors, para-medical staff and other supporting staff in a phased manner either on regular appoint or on hiring basis. As far as possible, some of the services need to be outsourced. It is also desirable that the CMO concerned is involved in the posting and transfer of these personnel. Some amount of authority to take disciplinary action against the subordinate staff should be vested with the CMO to enable him to check the problem of indiscipline. CMOs need to be vested with more power to take action against medical staff. The DM and CMO may jointly make surprise inspection of hospitals to see cleanliness and check absenteeism of doctors and medical staff. SDM/ADM/DDC should also be involved in checking absenteeism of doctors and medical staff. Strict action should be taken against unauthorized absentees and staff found in the dereliction of duties.

Pay Scales of Doctors : The pay scales of doctors need to be rationalized and it should be commensurate with their qualifications and duties and comparable with similarly placed Officers in the State.

Medical Training : There is a need for start medical training centers for nurses, ANMs, physiotherapists, technicians, radiologists etc in each district. The State Government should examine the request of the Private Medical College, Kishanganj for starting para-medical courses and expedite issue of No Object Certificate without further delay.

3.5 Roads, Bridges and Railways

Preparation of Master Plans for Development of Roads : The District Administration needs to prepare a Master Plan showing district road maps of all type of roads with length, missing links, culverts, bridges and the names of the roads. Requirement of funds should be worked out both for maintenance and construction/development of road network by the District Administration so that works could be taken up in a phased manner depending on availability of funds and priorities fixed by the State Government. The State Government should take up construction of all road and bridges noted in para 2.5.1 above by funding from RSVY/State Plans/PMGSY/RIDF of NABARD. Some of the roads and bridges may also be included in the District Plans covered under RSVY.

Development and Maintenance of National Highway : For construction of bunds on both sides of the National Highway 57, the State Government should take up the matter with the Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highway for necessary action. As regards maintenance of NH 31 (422 - 445 km.), the Road Construction Department, Government of Bihar should take up this work on priority.

Conversion of LRP Road : The State Government should take up the proposal for conversion of LRP road from Bagdogra to Araria (100 km.) with the Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways.

Development of State Highways : The development of State Highways in Kishanganj district has been assigned to CPWD by the State Government for preparation of DPR and implementation of the scheme on turnkey basis under the Special Plan Component of RSVY. Work has not started so far. The State Government should pursue the matter with CPWD to take up the work in Kishanganj area on top priority.

Development of Border Roads : The State Government should take up development of border roads under the “Border Area Development Programme”, for which the outlay has been enhanced to Rs.16.93 crore in 2005-06 by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Development of Major District Roads : The State Government should take up with NABARD for funding development of major district roads in the State including that in Kishanganj district.

Development of Rural Roads : Rural roads are covered under PMGSY and Central Government agencies have been assigned with the task of their development by the Ministry of Rural Development. As reported by DMs of Purnea Division, so far no progress has been made. The State Government may pursue the matter with the Ministry of Rural Development and the implementing agencies. The team was informed that some villages having population 5000 and more are still not connected by all weather roads. In such cases, the State Government should ensure that these roads are developed on priority basis and accordingly, take up the matter with the Ministry of Rural Development to connect such villages under PMGSY.

Construction of a bridge on river Mechi River : Construction of a bridge on the river Mechi near India Nepal border is necessary. However, availability of funds and agreement for the construction of the bridge between Government of India and the Government of Nepal would need to be taken into consideration. In case it falls on State Highways, then funds would be made available from the RSVY under the scheme “Development of State Highway in Bihar”.

Construction of Railway Lines and ROB : For construction of Galgaliya-Supaul (81 km.) and Jalalgarh-Kanki (40 kms) railway lines and ROB at Kishanganj, the State Government should send proposals to the Ministry of Railways for consideration.

3.6 Indira Awas Yojana

Implementation of Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) is not very satisfactory in the entire Purnea Division and needs to be expedited. More than 50% of the targets are yet to be completed. Araria district is the major defaulter in the Division. The list of beneficiaries indicating SC/ST/Minority should be prominently displayed in the villages and Panchayat/Block offices. Transparency in selection of beneficiaries and in the disbursement of

funds to beneficiaries needs to be maintained so that the beneficiaries receive the allotted funds fully and also in time. The entire fund should be released to the beneficiaries in two instalments through Savings Bank Accounts as against the existing three instalments. The construction work should also be undertaken by the beneficiaries themselves. The State Government should constitute a High Level Committee to enquire into the matter relating to Construction of a cluster of houses under IAY in Araria through contractors against the set principle of IAY.

3.7 Jute Sector

Supply of Certified Seeds : There is degradation in the quality of jute seeds due to failure in supply of certified seeds to the farmers. The seed replacement ratio is 34% only. As a result, farmers depend on private sources for getting seeds. There is a need to reassess actual land coverage and requirement of quality jute seeds in jute producing States and their convergence with seed producing States so that the demand for certified seed is met fully. The Ministry of Textiles should constitute a committee representing the jute producing States, jute seed growing States and the Ministry of Agriculture to study this aspect and take suitable action. The State Government should take up assessment of requirement of seeds in advance in consultation with the District Authorities and place order with Seed Corporation of India and the Seed growing States. The Jute Commissioner and the Seed Corporation of India should ensure that seeds are available to farmers as per requirements.

Procurement of Jute : The activities of Jute Corporation of India should be expanded in the procurement of jute and the procurement system needs to be re-organised to enable the farmers to sell their produce directly to the Corporation immediately after the harvesting season. Procurement Centres should also be opened in every block by JCI and started functioning in time in all notified places. To avoid distress sale of raw jute, bankers should come forward to provide loans to farmers by mortgaging raw jute. This would prevent middle men/private traders from purchasing raw jute from needy farmers at lower rates.

Jute based Cottage Industry : Opportunities for self employment of educated girls by forming SHGs in the Jute sector, particularly from the minority community, by providing them with training, power looms and interest free loans, should be created. It was agreed in the meeting that NCJD would organise training programmes in the Jute Service Centres and train about 500 people in jute sector annually in every district.

Linkage with banks for financing the trained persons would also be established by these training centres. Various incentive schemes of the Ministry of Textiles should be suitably advertised so that the rural people take advantage of the same.

Opening of a Regional Office of the Jute Commissioner in Bihar : A Regional Office of the Jute Commissioner, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India should be opened in Purnea, Bihar to cater to the needs of the jute growing districts of Bihar. The State Government may send a suitable proposal to the Ministry of Textile, Government of India in this regard.

Setting up of a Raw Jute Mill in Bihar : For proper utilisation of raw jute produced in Bihar, apart from setting up a composite jute mill, yarn/twine manufacturing units should also be set up which has got local demand and in other States too. Entrepreneurs need to come forward and they should be encouraged by the state Government of Bihar.

3.8 Crop Diversification

Farmers mainly grow jute and paddy in the region during khariff season. There is need to have diversification of crops as there is scope for development of cash crops such as pineapple, banana, spices, tea, etc. The agricultural extension services are missing in the district. It should be strengthened and made available to farmers through due publicity. The region should be covered under the National Horticulture Mission Programme on priority.

3.9 Governance and Planning Process

Plan Formulation at the District Level : There should be a district planning committee/ board for each district as envisaged in the constitution. This committee will be responsible for making district plan on the basis of village and block plans. For each village, plan should be formulated by the Panchayats and schemes prioritized as per local requirement. Consolidation of village plans should be the basis for the block and district plan formulation. Village plan should give emphasis on roads, culverts, rural electrification, solar power, minor irrigation, drinking water, primary schools, sanitation, ponds, check dams, water harvesting system, playground and multi purpose community center for

primary health activities, for training of the youth for self employment, Anganwadi kendra and other educational, social and cultural activities.

Special Component Plan and Tribal Sub Plan : Funds at least in proportion to the SC/ST population of the district, block and village should be earmarked out of the total plan outlay of the district, block and village. This SCP and TSP should be separately prepared, monitored and evaluated to fulfill the constitutional obligation towards SC/ST population.

The State Government should improve the mechanism for sharing information with people representatives such as MPs, MLAs, PRIs and public in general to enhance the transparency and monitoring and implementation of various developmental schemes.

Detailed information with regard to beneficiary oriented programmes should be compiled and maintained by the district authorities so that it could be shared with all members of public. This would also fulfill the purpose of implementation of schemes and Right to Information Act.

The implementation of different schemes need to be verified by district level officers for which the concerned collectors should assign 20 villages to each district level officer and should designate him as Verification Officer / Nodal Officer.

There is a need felt for total transparency and accountability in the implementation of the beneficiary and construction oriented schemes. A board should be displayed at the sites indicating names of the schemes, name of the implementing agency, funds involved, source of funding, specification and duration for completion of work to enable the local people to know about the schemes. A village, block and district level list of all the beneficiary oriented schemes and construction oriented schemes should be prepared and verified by a nodal officer/ verification officer for 10-20 villages from a task force under the chairmanship of the Collector consisting all the district level officers. A punishment and reward mechanism should be inbuilt in the system.

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