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To

All Collectors and Chief Executive Officers Zilla Parishad.

Sub: -

Transparency in rural development programs: Use of computer & Information Sharing.

Sir/Madam

The administration gets modernised with the introduction of e-governance. During your day-to-day involvement in the developmental process may I once again reiterate certain areas where you can concentrate to give the administration a transparent look.

1. The Department of Panchayati Raj has already hosted all its Acts and Rules including latest circulars on its new-look web-page on government website maintained by NIC (<http://orissagov.nic.in/panchayat/default.asp>). The website is being accessed by many people to know about the latest guidelines and availability of fund in each district. This will enable all the persons interested in rural development to understand the degree of transparency and clarity that we wish to achieve by using Information technology. Empowerment of Panchayati Raj Institutions is a journey and better information about schemes, funds and guidelines are the necessary first step.

2. **Rural Soft:** National Informatics Centre(NIC), New Delhi has developed a very dynamic software for physical and financial monitoring of anti-poverty programme specially SGRY-I and II, IAY and SGSY. **Rural Soft package** has also provision for location of projects taken up under wage employment programs like SGRY at all the 3 levels i.e. Zilla Parishad, Panchayat Samiti and Gram Panchayat level including physical and financial progress being achieved by you. A glimpse of some of the projects reported on rural soft indicates that in most of the cases the project cost and mandays generation have been pasted on the web mostly without application of mind. You are aware that **Rural Soft is a web based project monitoring tool** developed by NIC Delhi on the advice of Ministry of Rural Development and has become a necessity in view of direction of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. Dr. N.C.Saxena, Commissioner, Supreme Court has been monitoring on day to day basis the expenditure and mandays generation of wage employment for landless agricultural laborers as part of hunger monitoring. A citizen can know the, amount allotted, expenditure made and balance available in all projects of wage employment programs at a click of a button either herself or with the help of civil society organizations.

3. In the past we were being criticized for not getting money in time as submission of U.C, audited statement etc. usually took longer time. Your district has got SGSY and IAY allocation in the beginning of the year and SGRY I and II including food grain in due course. Only thing left is proper utilization of money already available amounting Rs.223 crores as on 1.10.2003. Money available within your district as on end of September 2003 as downloaded from our website is enclosed for ready reference. Post flood employment scenario in your district may be having much to be desired. Most agricultural labourers need wage employment. May I once again reiterate the position of this department that 11th Finance Commission award (Rs.64 crores) should be used in each G.P in one of the most populous village for creation of at least one KM concrete road-cum- drain by using cash available under 11th Finance Commission and food grain available in SGRY I & II and special Component already allotted. We are getting 1.10 lakh MT of rice, which is being allotted, to you. We should quickly take up at least 1 Km. road in one of the most populous villages in each G.P with the emphasis in flood-affected areas. There should not be any problem to take up these works forthwith. The MIS put in operation by Special Relief Commissioner may be used to send information about potential job seekers. I am sure that under your dynamic leadership Project Director, DRDA and BDOs will leave no stone unturned to take the desired initiative.

4. Huge amount of unutilized cash is available in your blocks. The inspection of one block by Director, P.R and one DRDA by Director, Special Project revealed that Rs. 2.5 crores money at Block level and Rs. 171 crores at DRDA level remains unutilized. Keeping cash unutilized is equally a crime. The state

is passing through financial crisis. We are able to release matching state share for all the anti poverty programmes for last year and are making efforts to give adequate money available with you to ensure that poverty reduction works do not suffer. Government of India has been kind enough to release 75% of this year's allocation and State Govt. has already released matching share. The poor expenditure of your district needs closer look by you.

5. To analyze the cash available in G.P level /Block/PS level DRDA/ZP level in a scientific manner. Panchayati Raj institutions Accounting Software (PRIASOFT) has already been initiated in your DRDA. But the entries of the blocks and Gram Panchayats require your personal intervention. I am glad that you have appreciated the initiative taken by this Depts. in this regard. I hope and trust that you will take all necessary action to implement. Some initiative in this regard from your side will help in immediate operationalisation of PRIASOFT in 6234 G.P,314 Blocks and 30 DRDAs including consolidated figure of all and your district available to you and all for comparative viewing We are negotiating with reputed software vendors to buy ENRICH software where in each PRI can have its own website and update locally based on ASP technology without help of a professional and with perhaps zero cost.

6. Engagement of computer operators (Data Entry Operator) at Block level was the prime necessity. P.R.Deptt. has taken a major initiative to appoint Information Technology Engineers at each Block with consolidated remuneration of Rs. 5,000/- (Rupees five thousand) only. This Deptt. has already created these posts and issue necessary instruction vide letter No 17015/GP .dt 22/10/2003 (copy enclosed for ready reference). May I request you to look into this aspect a little more carefully? We are hoping to complete this process within another 30 days. Most of the Blocks are known for non-maintenance of accounts and lack of trained manpower. In the past we have strengthened the engineering wing of the block but little effort was made to strengthen the accounting part. Blocks are handling more than 30 types of programs spread over 70 to 80 schemes both area-development and skill- development. Need for transparency and proper maintenance of accounts cannot be over emphasized. I hope and trust you will take immediate initiative for engaging an I.T Engineer/MCA/BCA belonging to same block to avoid dislocation in future.

7. MIS reporting of SRC is being viewed by Govt. very seriously. In the past you have been directed to take help of Ward Members to ensure door delivery of social security benefits like Annapoorna (free rice) and old age pensions etc to prevent eventual starvation. Your district has large number of elected PR members ready to help in delivery of development at doorstep.

8. Government has already taken a decision in P.R.Deptt.and is likely to give order soon to NICSI for supply of 2 personal computers (pentium-4) in first phase with necessary peripherals like UPS and Printers to each block in addition to one PC to be given under GRMSAT programme. All the blocks have already reported availability of the premises with RCC roof and three phase electric connection. A physical verification under your supervision of the readiness of the premises will enable installation of GRMSAT by ORSAC. Some DRDAs have taken steps for supply of one PC to some of the blocks by using interest money of anti poverty programme

9. Gram Panchayats are now being managed by one Executive Officer whose job has been defined by Panchayati Raj department vide letter No. 15627/GP.dated 6/9/2003. (a copy of the letter is enclosed). I am sure that VAW and VLW require initial training to function as Executive Officer. You have already posted them to the G.P where there was no Secretary initially. A training programme in DRDA under your leadership can smoothen this transition. Gram Panchayats are the most important institution of local self-government. We have already given 11th Finance Commission money to them in addition to SGRY II and 50% of IAY house to be implemented by G.P. A little hand holding support by you will speed up the progress. You may be happy to know that we have approved conversion of STD booth to I.T Kiosks under SGSY. Use of IT for transparency in rural development needs no emphasis. We may take advantage of this initiative.

I would request you to look into the above priority areas of development. A line of reply in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Chief Secretary, Orissa