

CHAPTER - 1

Introduction

1.1 The 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendment Acts marked a watershed in the federal democratic structure of India. Prior to that, the set up of Indian polity was bicameral with Union Government at the Centre and State Governments as the federating units. The Amendment, for the first time, conferred Constitutional status to the Panchayats and Municipalities and recognized them as the third tier of government. The salient features of the Amendment were:

- Establishment of a three tier structure of Panchayats and Municipalities.
- Regular elections to Panchayats and Municipalities at the expiration of every fifth year.
- Reservation of seats and offices of Chairpersons for SC, ST and Women in proportion to their population.
- Constitution of State Election Commission at the expiration of every fifth year.
- Constitution of State Finance Commission at the expiration of every fifth year.

1.2 In terms of the aforesaid Amendments, a new Article 243 was inserted in the Constitution of which Art. 243I and 243Y require that a State Finance Commission shall be appointed at the expiration of every fifth year to recommend measures needed to improve the finances of Panchayats and Municipalities respectively. Simultaneously, two new clauses were added to the existing Art. 280, viz. Art. 280(bb) and Art. 280(c). The added clauses required the National Finance Commission to recommend measures to augment the Consolidated Fund of the State to supplement the resources of Panchayats and Municipalities in the State based on the recommendations of the State Finance Commission. Another salient feature of the Amendment as incorporated under Arts. 243M and 243ZC was that nothing in this Part shall apply to Sixth Schedule areas and treated them as Excluded for the purpose of Finance Commission award.

1.3 In keeping with the provisions of 73rd and 74th Amendments, the States have enacted relevant legislations to install rural and urban local bodies in their respective States. Accordingly, in Assam a three tier Panchayat Raj System was established in conformity with the Assam Panchayat Act, 1994. At the base level is the Gaon Panchayat (GP) consisting of a cluster of villages. At the intermediate level is the Anchalik Panchayat (AP) coterminous with the Sub-Division. At the apex level there is the Zilla Parishad (ZP) coterminous with the District. At present there are 2197 GPs,

185 APs and 26 ZPs. Similarly, for the urban areas, a three tier Urban Local Bodies (ULB) system was introduced with a Municipal Corporation for larger urban areas, a Municipal Board (MB) for a comparatively large urban area and a Town Committee for transitional and emerging township. However, Government of Assam, of late, has decided to convert all the TCs into MBs and grouped them into five categories based on size of population. Category I includes MBs having population above one lakh, population ranging between 50,001 to 1,00,000 Category II, between 20,001 to 50,000 Category III, 10,001 to 20,000 Category IV and upto 10000 Category V. At present there is one Municipal Corporation at Guwahati and 102 MBs, 81 in General Areas and 22 in Sixth Schedule Areas.

- 1.4 It may be mentioned that in the Sixth Schedule Areas of Dima Hasao & KAAC Assam, PRIs never existed. However, in Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD), PRIs existed before the creation of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). Along with the creation of BTC, these institutions were gradually dismantled. During the post-Amendment period, the Autonomous Councils (AC) in the Sixth Schedule Areas of Assam felt the necessity of having some grass-root level organization to carry forward the process decentralized administration. Accordingly, BTC has constituted 415 Village Council Development Committee (VCDC) and Karbi-Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) has constituted 26 Village Development Council (VDC). Dima Hasao Autonomous Council (DHAC) is also contemplating to constitute 20 VDC. The Village Councils are analogous to the GPs in General Areas. As such, with the creation of Village Councils, the Sixth Schedule Areas of Assam are now having a single tier Panchayati Raj System. Moreover, all the ACs have expressed their willingness for the extension of 73rd Amendment to their respective areas.
- 1.5 In the pre-Amendment period, the ULBs were functioning in the Sixth Schedule Areas in the same way as they did in General Areas. The only difference being that the Assam Municipal Act, 1956 as Amended was not applicable to them. The MBs in Sixth Schedule Areas are governed by the Rules framed by the respective ACs from time to time. At present there are 22 MBs in the Sixth Schedule Areas, 9 in BTC, 9 in KAAC and 4 in DHAC.
- 1.6 As per Constitutional provisions, the Panchayats and Municipalities are endowed with wide powers, authority and responsibilities including raising of revenue so as to enable them to function as institutions of self government. The devolution of powers and responsibilities involve preparation of plans for economic development and social justice and its implementation including 29 subjects listed in the Eleventh Schedule for the Panchayats and 18 subjects listed in the Twelfth Schedule for the

Municipalities. Since then nearly three decades have elapsed and during that period the Panchayats and Municipalities of Assam had benefitted from the award of five State Finance Commissions and as many Central Finance Commissions. Nevertheless, there seems to be no perceptible improvement in the ground reality. Panchayats and Municipalities are still languishing in a sad state of existence. This is so because no meaningful devolution of functions and functionaries has taken place as yet. For a positive turnaround of this deplorable scenario, what is needed is devolution of 3Fs in letter and spirit rather than on paper.

Constitution of SFC

- 1.7** In terms of Arts. 243 I and 243 Y of the Constitution read with Section 2(I) of the Assam State Finance Commission (Misc Provision) Act, 1995, the Governor of Assam is required to constitute a State Finance Commission (SFC) at the expiration of every fifth year to review the financial position of the Panchayats and Municipalities in the State and to make recommendations as to the measures needed to improve their finances. Accordingly, the Governor of Assam vide Notification No.FEA (SFC) 179/2017/74 dated 9th November, 2018 constituted the Sixth Assam State Finance Commission headed by Smti. T.Y. Das, IAS (Retd), former Chief Secretary, Assam as the Chairperson. The other Members of the Commission are the following:

I. Sr. Most Secretary, P&RD Department	-Member
II. Sr. Most Secretary, UD Department	-Member
III. One non-official Member to be nominated from Academia	-Member
IV. Commissioner & Secretary, Finance Deptt.	-Member Secretary
V. Sr. Most Secretary, G.D. Department	-Special Invitee

- 1.8** Soon after constitution of the Commission, Dr Mrinal Kanti Dutta, Professor & Head, Department of Humanities and Social Science, IIT, Guwahati was appointed as Member (non official part time) of the Commission under Notification No. FEA (SFC) 179/2017/88 dated 27th December, 2018.

- 1.9** The composition of the Commission reveals that other than the Chairperson all Members including the Member Secretary are State Government officials. The non-official Member is also appointed on a part-time basis.

Terms of Reference

- 1.10** The broad features of the Term of Reference (ToR) are that it requires the Commission to make recommendations as to the following:
- (a) The principles, which should govern,

- (i) the distribution between the State of Assam and the Panchayats and Municipalities of the net proceeds of the taxes and duties, levied and collected by the State,
 - (ii) the determination of the taxes, duties, tolls and fees, which may be assigned to, or appropriated by, the Panchayats and Municipalities,
 - (iii) the grants-in-aid to the Panchayats and Municipalities from the Consolidated Fund of the State.
 - (b) The measures needed to improve the financial position of the Panchayats and Municipalities with special reference to the feasibility of raising funds by the Local Governments from financial institutions and markets, proper up-keep of assets owned by the Local Bodies, rationalisation of taxes and revenues including user charges with innovative methods providing incentives for higher mobilisation of own resources, improving the quality of service delivery, economy and efficiency in expenditure with better monitoring of physical performance and creation of urban infrastructure by the ULBs through Public Private Partnership (PPP).
 - (c) Any other matter referred to the State Finance Commission (SFC) by the Governor in the interest of sound financial position of the Panchayats and Municipalities.
- 1.11** The other salient feature of the ToR is that the Commission is asked to make recommendations for devolution and grants-in-aid to the Local Bodies of three Autonomous Councils under Sixth Schedule Areas.
- 1.12** In making its recommendations on the various matters aforesaid, the Commission shall adopt the population figures of that Census for which the PRI-wise and ULB-wise figures are available in cases where population is regarded as a factor for determination of devolution of taxes and grants-in-aid.
- 1.13** Finally, the Commission is required to prepare its Report on the basis of the Template of the 13th Finance Commission, with such modification as may be necessary.
- 1.14** The Commission is required to make its Report available to the Governor of Assam by 30th October, 2019 covering the five year period from 1st April, 2020.
- 1.15** A copy of the Notification No. FEA (SFC) 179/2017/74 dated 9th November, 2018 constituting the Sixth Assam State Finance Commission is appended at **Annexure-1.1**.

Administrative Arrangements

- 1.16** It has been the common experience of all the previous SFCs that after the constitution of the Commission they had to face several teething problems relating to infrastructure availability including office space and deployment of staff. These difficulties stood in the way of initiating their preliminary task timely. Deployment of suitable staff and providing office space to them is a time consuming affair and usually takes a period of 3-4 months in making the required arrangements. Understandably, this period is cut from the available time at the disposal of the Commission. Fortunately, this time the gap is narrowed down to about one month, the Commission was constituted on 9th November, 2018, the Chairperson joined on 22nd November, 2018 and the Commission was fully functional by the first week of December. Nevertheless, the time admissible from the date of constitution (09.11.2018) to the date of submission of Report (30.11.2019) is barely one year, to be precise only 356 days including holidays, which is further curtailed by one month due to preparatory works.
- 1.17** The SFC is constituted at the expiration of every fifth year. As such, the time frame for constitution of a new SFC is fairly predictable. Having regard to the importance of ensuring that future SFCs are able to commence their work as quickly as possible soon after constitution, it is advisable that the problems are effectively sorted out beforehand.
- 1.18** In regard to deployment of manpower, soon after assumption of office by the Chairperson, two Consultants were appointed and their full time services were put in place by the 2nd week of December, 2018. Meanwhile, the full time services of two Assistant Research Officers drafted from Transformation & Development Department were placed at the disposal of the Commission. In addition, services of one Computer Operator and two Data Entry Operators were made available to the Commission. Besides that, Chairperson was provided with a Personal Assistant, one Computer Operator and two Grade IV staff. Above all, the SFC Cell in Finance (Economic Affairs) Department is required to provide Secretarial assistance to the Commission.

Design of the Report

- 1.19** As far as practicable, the Report is designed as per the template suggested by the 13th Finance Commission. For the sake of uniformity across the country, chapterisation is done as per the template and the total number of chapters kept at 13. Each chapter contains appropriate sub-headings based on specific issues mentioned in the template. However, any new issue required to be addressed as per ToR is accommodated in a chapter relevant to the issue instead of adding a new chapter.

- 1.20** Each chapter contains tables and annexure and the numbering of such tables and annexure is done chapter-wise. Small calculations, data etc. are placed in tabular form in the body of the Chapter. Whereas, detailed calculations, voluminous data, copies of circulars etc are placed as annexure at the end of the Report.

Key Activities

- 1.21** The ToR requires the Commission to have regard, among other considerations, to the objective of balancing the receipts and expenditures on revenue account of the local bodies. In making a review of the financial position of local bodies for an accurate assessment of their need in the context of resources available to them, the first and foremost necessity is the availability of authentic, upto date and audited data. At present, there is no designated agency to collect, collate, analyse and consolidate data from the field level. The SFC Cell in Finance Department is mandated to do this job, but the Cell does not have adequate manpower to accomplish this job on a regular basis. The inevitable fall out is that, as soon as a SFC is constituted it has to grapple with the problem of data collection. The greatest handicap in this regard is that field level functionaries of the local bodies are also unable to furnish the data in useable form because budgeting and accounting is not done as prescribed and more importantly, there is acute shortage of trained accounts staff.
- 1.22** Given the above background, the Commission has to determine its own procedure in the matter of data collection and gathering other relevant information from the grass-root level. Accordingly, it was decided to formulate a set of questionnaires relating to different aspects about the demographic, physical and financial aspects of PRIs and ULBs both in General and Sixth Schedule Areas. The set of questionnaires was then circulated to all concerned followed by regular interactions with the elected representatives and official functionaries of the local bodies to clarify doubts and explain how the questionnaire was to be filled and to emphasize the need for accurate and timely submission of information and other required materials to the Commission.
- 1.23** After the assumption of office by the Chairperson on 22nd November, 2018, a public notice was issued on 26th December, 2018 seeking views and suggestions on the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Sixth Assam State Finance Commission. Some suggestions were received.
- 1.24** Thereafter, the Chairperson addressed a letter on 24th January, 2019 to all MPs and MLAs of Assam seeking views and suggestions on the ToR and other specific issues. However, only Shri Bhubaneswar Kalita, MP (RS) responded and his views are reproduced below:

- (i) I agree with the views of the National Commission for Review of the Constitution that the subjects listed in XI and XII Schedules of the Constitution should be mandatorily assigned to PRIs and ULBs respectively.
- (ii) The population size for GP and Town Committee should be within the range of 6000 and 30000 respectively.
- (iii) Efforts need to be made to ensure that PRIs and ULBs enjoy full autonomy.
- (iv) NGOs are capable of giving desired results provided there is effective monitoring machinery.
- (v) Privatisation of municipal services will certainly be cost effective and add to efficiency in the delivery system besides creating job opportunities for the local people.

1.25 As noted earlier, a set of questionnaires was prepared for the Panchayats and Municipalities separately and for the General and Sixth Schedule Areas and circulated to all concerned. The questionnaire for the General Areas was circulated on 14th December, 2018 and that for Sixth Schedule Areas on 21st January, 2019. The last date for submission of reply was fixed for 31st March, 2019.

1.26 A Video Conference was also held on 16th February, 2019 with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of ZPs, Executive Officer (EO) of all Municipalities and Principal Secretaries of Sixth Schedule Areas. The Conference laid emphasis on the importance of questionnaires circulated and the need for its submission to the Commission within the stipulated date. The Conference also highlighted other aspects of local body administration like the status of activity mapping and transfer of subjects, existing staffing pattern, Acts and Rules currently in force, preparation of budget, extent of service delivery by PRIs and ULBs, implementation of Schemes and the system of monitoring and evaluation in vogue. However, no reply to the questionnaire was received within the stipulated date or even in the first three months thereafter.

Meetings of the Commission

1.27 The first meeting of the Commission was held on 18th December, 2018. The nodal departments, viz. Panchayat & Rural Development, Urban Development, Guwahati Development, Hills Areas Development and Welfare of Plain Tribes & Backward Classes (WPT&BC) were requested to give their views on the questionnaires framed for collection of data. The nodal departments were also requested to appoint a nodal officer to keep liaison with the Commission and also to place one person each who was well conversant with the task, at the disposal of the Commission. Prof.

M.K. Dutta, Member of the Commission was requested to identify a few research scholars working under him at IIT, Guwahati for engagement to work with the Commission.

Revenue collection by the ULBs and PRIs was reviewed and the urgent need for PRIs and ULBs to adopt online tender system for settlement of haats, fisheries and mahals with a view to bring in transparency and augment revenue was discussed. The meeting also took note of the fact that the Commission's work was badly hampered by lack of validated data and therefore, there was an urgent need for setting up a permanent full fledged SFC Cell in Finance Dept equipped with online platform for data collection from the PRIs and ULBs. It was decided that net collection of State taxes for the purpose of determining the Divisible Pool would be based on the criteria of actual cost of collection of taxes and not on percentage basis as done by the previous SFC. The meeting decided to review the criteria for performance grant for ensuring efficiency.

- 1.28** The second meeting of the Commission was held on 7th January, 2019 mainly to review the progress achieved on issues deliberated in the first meeting. That apart, the departments of P&RD, UDD, GDD and Finance were asked to furnish a comprehensive Status Paper on PRIs and ULBs and State Government finances respectively. Views and suggestions of the concerned departments were solicited on the questionnaires prepared by the Commission and since the response was not received within the stipulated time, the questionnaires were circulated to all local bodies. As regards list of ULBs with population, areas etc, GDD and UDD had already submitted the required information. HAD and WPT&BC departments were requested to comply. P&RD department was also requested to furnish the list of GPs, APs and ZPs with population and area. Directorate of Economics & Statistics was requested to furnish district wise population and area for 33 districts including the newly created ones and also latest available estimates of District Domestic Product (DDP). A status paper on training of elected representatives and functionaries of PRIs and ULBs was requested from the concerned departments. The departments of P&RD and UDD were asked to apprise the Commission about the present position of Bye Laws for levy of taxes by the PRIs and ULBs. The meeting also discussed about chapterisation and drafting of the Report.
- 1.29** The third meeting of the Commission was held on 11th January, 2019. The Chairperson expressed serious concern about the inordinate delay in submission of the reply to the questionnaires and other related matters by the PRIs and ULBs and other concerned departments. Although the date for submission of required information was long over, the rate of compliance is very poor. The Chairperson cautioned each stake holder that unless, information is received in a time bound manner, the Commission will be

unable to finalise its Report within the target date of 30th October, 2019. She reiterated the need for timely submission of required materials by all concerned. The defaulting departments were requested to expedite submission of information relating to status paper on PRIs and ULBs, reply to the questionnaires, ZP, AP, GP-wise population and area, population and area of ULBs and VDCs in Sixth Schedule Areas. The Commission also discussed the methodology to be adopted for distribution of divisible pool between General-Sixth Schedule, Urban-Rural and among individual units of them.

1.30 The Fourth Meeting of the Commission was held on 20th September, 2019. The Chairperson apprised the members about the progress made so far including the meetings held with line departments and representatives of PRIs and ULBs. Director, Finance (Economic Affairs) Department gave a brief power point presentation highlighting the information / clarification which are submitted by the P&RD, UDD, GDD, Director (Economics & Statistics) etc. The Chairperson requested all concerned line departments to immediately rectify the figures and furnish the required clarification within seven days. It was decided a separate meeting may be convened to discuss issues related to WPT&BC and Hill Areas Department. Moreover, the Chairperson directed the Director, Economics & Statistics to submit the District wise NDDP within seven days. UDD and P&RD Departments were requested to furnish views and suggestions for strengthening coordination between Local Bodies and concerned Departments for incorporation in the recommendations of the Commission. Keeping in view the extension of tenure of the 15th FC by the GoI upto 30th November, 2019 and also having regard to disruption in normal functioning due to NRC works, the Commission felt it necessary to seek extension of tenure beyond 30th October, 2019. Accordingly it was decided to move the State Govt. for extension of tenure upto 31st January, 2020. Meanwhile, Govt. of Assam has extended the tenure of the Commission by 3 months, upto 31st January, 2020 vide notification No. FEA(SFC) 179/2017/90 dtd. 25th October, 2019. The Govt. of Assam has further extended the tenure of the Commission for one month w.e.f. 1st February, 2020 to 29th February, 2020 vide notification No. FEA(SFC) 179/2017/94 dtd. 29th January, 2020.

1.31 The Fifth Meeting of the Commission was held on 1st October 2019. The Chairperson reviewed the progress made in works of the Commission and expressed her concern over the delay in submission of required materials by various departments. The Chairperson requested the P&RD Department to arrange a Video Conference with PRIs to sort out the discrepancies in the data/ information. The Commission discussed the progress made in drafting of the Report of the 6th ASFC. Six Chapters had been completed out of 14 (fourteen) chapters and circulated among members of the Commission for views if any. Chapter 11 was also reported to have been

completed and ready for circulation. The departments of UD, GD, WPT&BC, Hill Areas were asked to give status paper on the Monitoring & Evaluation System in their respective departments. The P&RD, Finance, UD and GD Departments were further requested to identify all incomplete Projects / schemes of the Fifth State Finance Commission and furnish cost estimation of funds required to complete the projects to the Commission. The need for MIS system to gather, compile and analyse data for both ULBs and PRIs in the SFC was discussed in the meeting. The Chairperson informed the members that the next review meeting will be convened after 15(fifteen) days.

- 1.32** The Sixth Meeting of the Commission was held on 25th October, 2019. The Chairperson reviewed the progress made in preparation of the Report. The Chairperson requested P&RD Department to furnish details regarding the number of GPs without office building / upgradation required for extension of GP buildings / cremation and burial ground in each tier of PRIs / number of markets / multipurpose hall for ZPs and APs for consideration of the Commission for specific purpose grant. The Commissioner & Secretary, Finance Department and Member-Secretary, 6th ASFC suggested transfer of fund directly to the concerned PRIs to avoid delay in implementation of schemes. Finance SFC Cell needed to be strengthened in order to streamline the process of fund release and utilization. The Chairperson requested members that all required reports should be submitted urgently as the report of 6th ASFC was scheduled to be completed by 31st December, 2019. Further the Seventh Meeting of the Commission was held on 6th February, 2020.

Other Meetings

- 1.33** Apart from Commission meetings, the Commission took several rounds of meeting with the Secretaries of concerned departments, Heads of Departments concerned and other Agencies related to local administration.
- 1.34** A meeting was held on 18th January, 2019 with the Secretary, PWD and Chief Engineer, PHE Department. The present status of piped Water Supply Scheme, rural and urban, number of such schemes completed, number of completed schemes handed over to PRIs and ULBs, formation of Users' Committee, norms and annual cost of maintenance, number of Spot Sources of water supply, constraints in implementation etc. were discussed. PHE Department was also asked about feasibility of solar energy in running schemes in remote areas having no electricity.
- 1.35** Discussions were held and the PWD was asked to furnish data on different type of roads, rural and urban, length of such roads, category of road, norms for maintenance of each type and annual cost of maintenance and repairs.

- 1.36** On 2nd February, 2019, a meeting was held with Secretary, GDD and Commissioner, GMC where various issues like stream-lining of revenue collection machinery by GMC, system of granting building permission, Master Plan for Drainage System for Greater Guwahati, mechanisation of MSW etc was discussed. That apart, the need for preparation of annual budget by GMC and formulation of Financial Rules and Accounting Manual etc was also discussed.
- 1.37** On 20th February, 2019, a meeting was held with Director of Audit (L.F). The present status of accounting and auditing of PRIs and ULBs with emphasis on TG&S by the C&AG was discussed. The need for maintenance of registers and account books by the PRIs and ULBs and Financial Rules/ byelaws was discussed.
- 1.38** A meeting was taken on 11th March, 2019 with Directors of MA, T&CP, Commissioner, GMC and Deputy Secretary, R&DM Department. The issues taken up for discussion were preparation of online budget, online tax collection, timely disposal of audit objections, putting in place Financial Rules and Service Rules for ULBs, activity mapping of subjects allocated to ULBs, maintenance of prescribed registers, staffing pattern of ULBs, master-plan of drainage for all ULBs, identification of government land for office building and PRIs and ULBs
- 1.39** A meeting was held on 21st June, 2019 with Commissioner & Secretary, P&RD Department. In reply to the questionnaire the data received revealed discrepancies in respect of own revenue and expenditure of the PRIs, population of GP, AP and ZP, number of elected representatives in each tier. The department was asked to reconcile discrepancies. Regarding office buildings of PRIs at all levels, a separate proposal is needed indicating the number of buildings required along with unit cost. It was reiterated that activity mapping and devolution of functions, functionaries and funds needed to be completed soon.
- 1.40** On 12th July, 2019 a meeting was held with UDD / WPT&BC / HAD / UWS&SB / T&CP regarding submission of reply to questionnaire of 6th ASFC regarding staffing pattern, status paper on ULBs, activity mapping monitoring and evaluation system, master plan and drainage system etc.
- 1.41** A meeting was held on 16th July, 2019 with PWD (Bldg. & NH), Agriculture and Environment & Forest Departments to discuss current status of implementation of schemes under award of 5th ASFC and other matters related to 6th ASFC.
- 1.42** A meeting was held on 25th July, 2019 with the Member-Secretary, Assam Pollution Control Board. Among other things, the meeting discussed the extent of air and water pollution and management of solid waste in urban

areas. The scientific disposal of bio-medical waste generated in hospitals and nursing homes and the measures being taken by PCB to control them. The hazards of e-pollution taking on a menacing proportion and need for scientific handling was discussed.

- 1.43** A review meeting was held on 11/09/2019 in the conference hall of Finance Department under the Chairmanship of Commissioner & Secretary, Finance department and Member-Secretary, 6th ASFC with the Nodal officers of implementing Departments and officials / staff of Finance Department. The Member Secretary desired to hold a Video Conference with all ZPs regarding all pending issues and requested P&RD Department to arrange for the same
- 1.44** A meeting was held on 23rd September 2019 in the Office of the 6th ASFC to discuss best Practices and Monitoring and Evaluation systems of ULBs and PRIs. Dr. V. Suresh Babu, Associate Professor NIRD, Shri S.K.Pegu, Director, SIRD and the Commissioner, P&RD apprised the Commission on Best Practices and Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism for PRIs.

The Director, Financial Inspection was also asked to submit a write up on the important observations made during financial inspections of ULBs and PRIs along with suggestions for improving accountability and monitoring.

- 1.45** Another review meeting was held on 23/10/2019 in the conference hall of Finance Department under the Chairmanship of Commissioner & Secretary, Finance department and Member-Secretary, 6th ASFC with the Nodal officers of implementing Departments and officials / staff of Finance Department.
- 1.46** A meeting was held on 21st November 2019 in the Office of the 6th ASFC under the Chairmanship of Commissioner & Secretary, Finance Department and Member-Secretary, 6th ASFC to discuss incomplete Water Supply Schemes / Town Halls / Multipurpose Halls, Land fill sites and Conservancy particularly regarding requirement of modern equipment etc. The Member Secretary, 6th ASFC asked the SFC Cell to process a D.O. letter to the line departments from his end requesting to furnish status of incomplete schemes / cost escalation / additional coverage or new schemes for examination and consideration 6th ASFC.

Field Visits

- 1.47** Field visits play a vital role in getting knowledge of ground realities. It provides an opportunity to get acquainted with problems firsthand and understand the needs of the people through interaction with elected representatives and other cross section of functionaries. The Commission toured districts extensively throughout its tenure.

- 1.48** The first phase of field visit started on 19th January, 2019 with a visit to Jorhat Municipality Board. Thereafter on 25th February, 2019 a team of SFC officials headed by the Chairperson visited one Anchalik Panchayat and two Gaon Panchayats in Kamrup (Metro) district. This was followed by the visit of the Commission to Rangia Municipal Board, Rangia Anchalik Panchayat and two other Goan Panchayats in the district of Kamrup (Rural). In course of the discussions, available data was ascertained and the questionnaire circulated by the Commission was explained to the functionaries.
- 1.49** The Chairperson, 6th ASFC visited All India Institute of Local Self Government, Mumbai to discuss various training programs conducted by the Institution for ULB functionaries with the Director General on 29/03/2019.
- 1.50** The Autonomous Councils of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao were kept for field visit in the second phase. On 2nd May, 2019 the Commission visited Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu. In the morning session, discussions were held with the Chief Executive Member and other members of the Autonomous Council including the officials of the line departments. The evening session was confined to the Chairpersons and Executive Officers of the concerned ULBs. However, the visit to the Autonomous Council of Dima Hasao had to be deferred due weather condition.
- 1.51** In the next phase, the districts of Dhubri and Kokrajhar were taken up on 13th May, 2019 and 15th May, 2019 respectively. In the morning meeting was held with the Presidents of ZP, APs and GPs, all Members of ZP, Chief Executive Officer of ZP, Executive Officers of Anchalik Panchayats and Secretaries of Gaon Panchayats within the district. In the evening session meeting was held with the Chairpersons and Executive Officers of ULBs followed by discussion with officials of line departments. On 15th May, 2019, in the morning session discussion was held with the representatives of Bodoland Territorial Council and other officials of BTC in Kokrajhar. The evening session was confined to discussions with the Chairpersons and Executive Officers of ULBs of BTC.
- 1.52** In the month of May, 2019 another three district were covered. The Commission visited the office of the CEO, Kamrup (Metro), ZP on 20th May, 2019 and held discussion with the Presidents of ZP, APs, GPs, and members of ZP, the CEO, ZP, Executive Officers of APs, Secretaries of GPs and Chairpersons and Executive Officers of all ULBs. This was followed by visit to Barpeta district on 28th May, 2019 and Nalbari district on 29th May, 2019.

- 1.53** In the month of June, 2019 altogether four districts were covered. The Commission visited Kamrup (Rural) district on 7th June, 2019 followed by Darrang district on 12th June, 2019, Goalpara district on 14th June, 2019 and Bongaigaon district on 15th June, 2019.
- 1.54** During the month of July, 2019, three more districts were covered which include Morigaon district on 8th July, 2019, Nagaon district on 9th July, 2019, and Hojai district on 10th July, 2019.
- 1.55** The Commission visited the Dima Hasao Autonomous Council, Haflong on 16/09/2019. The discussion was held with the Chief Executive Member and other Members of the Autonomous Council / Chairpersons & Executive officers of ULBs including officials of line department.
- 1.56** During the month of October 2019 altogether three more districts were covered. The Commission visited the Tinsukia District on 19/10/2019, followed by Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur districts on 21/10/2019.
- 1.57** In the month of December, 2019 three more districts were also covered namely, Cachar on 11/12/2019, Hailakandi & Karimganj on 12/12/2019.
- 1.58** Diary of events and other activities undertaken by the Commission are at **Annexure- 1.2.**