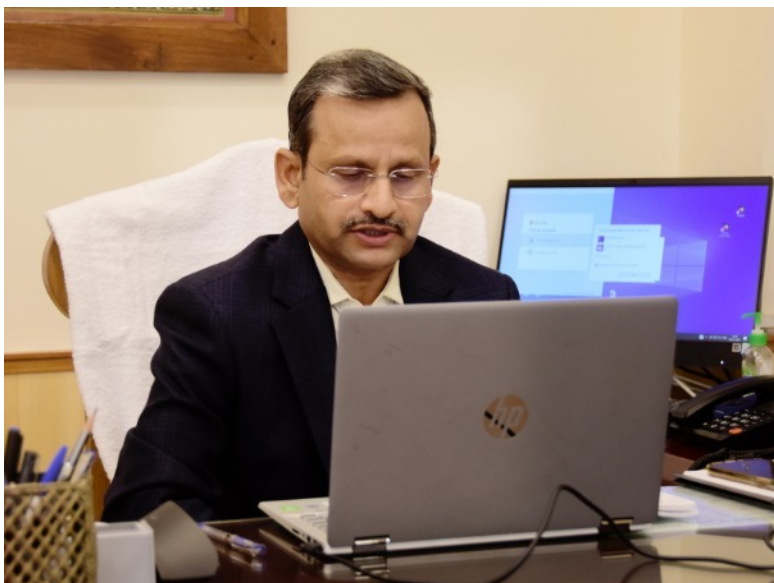




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CROP DIVERSIFICATION BROUGHT TO FOCUS

Target set to achieve 60% crop diversification in MILP ayacut areas

Chief Secretary directed for early engagements with farmers and expansion of

Marketing facilities

Bhubaneswar, 28 April

In another significant step towards enhancing the cash return to the farmers and creation of subsidiary employment opportunities in the agricultural sector, Government has started ambitious initiative of crop diversification in mega lift point (MILP) ayacut areas of the State. The action plan for coming Khariff season towards this effect was discussed in a high level meeting held on digital mode under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary Sri Suresh Chnadra Mahapatra in *Lokseba Bhawan* wherein Secretary Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment Sri Suresh Kumar Vashishth outlined the issues for discussion.

Emphasizing upon the positive impact of crop diversification on agricultural sector of the economy, Chief Secretary Sri Mahapatra directed to enhance non-paddy cultivation in MILP

areas during the ensuing khariff season. Development Commissioner Sri Pradeep Kumar Jena said, “There is potentiality of non-paddy cultivation in more than 70% of the MILP ayacut areas”

Additional Chief Secretary and Agriculture Production Commissioner Sri Raj Kumar Sharma advised to undertake intensive awareness and engagements with farmers for effecting real changes at ground level. Principal Secretary Water Resources Smt Anu Garg appraised that the ayacuts would be redesigned and water supply would be regulated as per the requirements of non-paddy crops. With due deliberation, target was set to achieve non-paddy cultivation in 60% of the MILP ayacut areas during the coming cropping seasons.

Further, Chief Secretary Sri Mahapatra directed to assess the annual non-paddy requirement for utilization in different programmes like PDS, MDM, ICDS supplementary nutrition programmes, residential school hostels *etc.* The department was also asked to explore different marketing facilities of non-paddy products through e-NAM, Markfed and online marketing systems both in the Government and private sectors. The details of the procurement plan were discussed in the meeting. Presently, non-paddy produces are being procured through agricultural primary cooperative societies. The proposal for involving WSHGs and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in the procurement process was given in principle approval by the Chief Secretary. Chief Secretary Sri Mahapatra also directed to “start early engagement with farmers before onset of the ensuing khariff season”.

Secretary Sri Vashishth appraised, “The total ayacut area of the MILPs is around 1.22.835 hect. As per the present irrigation design, each outlet is programmed to irrigate 20 hec. In the meanwhile, actual crop area and cropping pattern of these ayacut areas have been assessed. Arrangements have been done through Nafed, Markfed, CCI, TDCC and JCI for procurement of the non-paddy produces”.

Director Agriculture Sri Muthu Kumar presented the feasibility of district wise programme for non-paddy products like vegetables, Pulses, sesamum, ragi and maize, sugarcane, cotton, maize groundnut and Ragi. He also appraised that directorate horticulture is preparing a web portal for market engagement and FPO operations. The system for marketing through E-NAM is also being strengthened.

District wise target was set for cultivation of non-paddy products as per the inputs received from different districts. Ambitious target was set to achieve 100% crop diversification in Ganjam district and more than 70% diversification in the districts like Bargarh, Gajapati, Koraput, Malkanagiri, Nabarangpur. More than 50% diversification target was set for Kalahandi, Rayagada and Sambalpur districts. Crop wise yield rate, cost of production and net profit for non-paddy products were also discussed in the meeting and it was decided to make the farmers aware about it through intensive campaign.

Development Commissioner Sri P.K.Jena, Additional Chief Secretary and Agriculture Production Commissioner Sri R.K.Sharma, Principal Secretary Finance Sri Ashok Kumar Meena, Principal Secretary Water Resources Smt Anu Garg, Secretary Cooperation Sri Veer Vikram Yadhav, Director Agriculture Sri Muthu Kumar along with senior officers and engineers of concerned departments participated in the deliberations.

****U.K.Mohapatra, PRO to Chief Secretary.****