

## **MISSION ORGANIC MIZORAM: Impact and Challenges**

**Lalkhawngaiha**, Research Scholar, Department of Public Administration, Mizoram University  
**Dr. Laltanpuui Ralte**, Associate Professor, Department of Public Administration, Mizoram University

### **ABSTRACT**

*The Prime Minister of India initiated a scheme for development of commercial organic farming for the North Eastern states of India called “Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCDNER)” in 2015. MOVCDNER is a Central Sector scheme (CS) and is of key significance as organic farming becomes a flourishing farming practice which has the potential to improve the economic conditions of farmers within the North Eastern region of India. The mission at the state is implemented by the State Level Executive Committee (SLEC) and executed through a designated state Lead Agency called “Organic Commodity Board” or “Organic Mission”. In Mizoram the scheme is implemented by “Mission Organic Mizoram (MOM)”. The study highlights the concept of MOVCDNER and how it is implemented at the state level. Attention is drawn to the impact of the scheme and challenges faced by farmers engaging in organic farming. The article also provides some insightful suggestion which will be significant for the success of the scheme in future.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Organic, Farming, Farmers, Economic conditions, Fertilizers, Livestock, Consumer, Post harvest, Value Chain, Branding, Packaging, Certification, Food Grains, Cereals, Marketing.*

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Organic farming is an agricultural farming method which avoids the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, growth regulators, and livestock feed additives. The method solely rely on crop rotation and uses crop residues, animal manures, legumes, green manure, off-farm organic wastes and bio-fertilizers, mechanical cultivation, mineral bearing rocks as fertilizers. Organic farming can create a sustainable existence for future generations as it can produce all sort of agricultural products that

conventional farming methods produce, including grains, meat, dairy, eggs, fibers such as cotton, jute, flowers etc. without degrading soils health.<sup>1</sup>

The North Eastern (NE) region can be identified as the part in India that has not been spoilt by modern agricultural practices which demands the use of chemical fertilizers and other agro-chemical bi products in farming method. Due to its undulating and rough terrain, green revolution cannot have a major impact in these areas resulting in lower production of food grains and other cereal crops. Therefore, development of an innovative farming method for agriculture in the NE area becomes a massive priority for the government and experts in the field of agriculture. Of late, the NE has been described as an organic hub with Sikkim being the model state for its neighbouring state by banning its import on chemical fertilizers. Prime Minister (PM), Narendra Modi is of the view that organic farming can become a major life changer for farmers in the North East. The PM in 2014 has quoted ***“There is a major demand for organic produce in the world today. People today are very much interested in ‘holistic healthcare’. They are willing to pay any amount of money for such organic products”. “If a small state like Sikkim can do it, why can’t we dream of developing the whole of our north-east as an organic state? The Government of India will help it in capturing the global market,”*** the prime minister added<sup>2</sup>.

Recognizing the significance of organic farming and its products, the Prime Minister of India initiated a scheme for the development of commercial organic farming during 2015 which later came to be known as “Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region” (MOVCDNER). MOVCDNER become a significant body for revolutionising the lives of organic growers in the North Eastern region as it provides end to end support to the farmers from farm to fork-including quality production, effective post harvest management, and value addition through processing and direct market linkages to national and international markets<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.acubeias.com/article/ecological-economical-and-social-benefits-of-organic-farming>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.india.com/business/sikkim-shows-india-can-emerge-global-organic-hub-narendra-modi-74085/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1697160>

***SCOPE OF THE STUDY:***

The study focuses on the impact of Mission Organic Mizoram (MOM) in Mizoram. Mission Organic Mizoram (MOM) is the leading agency of Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North East Region (MOVCDNER) in Mizoram. MOVCDNER is a sub-mission under the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA).

***OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:***

1. To study the concept of Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCD-NER) and Mission Organic Mizoram (MOM).
2. To study the working of Mission Organic Mizoram.
3. To study the impact of MOM in Mizoram.
4. To study the challenges faced by the mission and to give suggestions

***METHODOLOGY:***

Primary and Secondary sources are used for data collection. A combination of qualitative and quantitative research designs is also adopted for data collection. Structured and unstructured interview are conducted with mission directors, CEO of FPOs, Master Trainers and other relevant personnel and staff.

***MISSION ORGANIC MIZORAM:***

Government of India under National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) is promoting Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCD-NER) during the 12<sup>th</sup> plan (2012-2017). It is implemented within North Eastern States of India, namely; Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura since 2015-16. MOVCDNER is a Central Sector scheme (CS) and is of key significance as organic farming becomes a flourishing farming practice which has the potential to improve the economic conditions of farmers within the North Eastern region of India. The Mission structure at National level comprises of National Advisory Committee (NAC), Executive Committee (EC), Mission Monitoring Committee (MMC) and Mission Head Quarter at DAC&FW. At state level,

the mission is implemented by the State Level Executive Committee (SLEC) and executed through a designated state Lead Agency in the form of state “Organic Commodity Board” or “Organic Mission”. The State Lead Agency function under the overall supervision of the Department of Agriculture/ Horticulture and State Lead Agency shall be manned by professional experts on contract<sup>4</sup>.

MOVCDNER is implemented at district and village level depending on the interest of the farmers and agricultural practitioners within the state. The central aim of the scheme is to develop a certified organic product in a value chain mode. The plan is to build a conduit between growers with consumers and to support the sustainable development of entire value chain starting from inputs, seeds, planting materials, certification, to the creation of facilities for collection, post harvest management, aggregation, processing, brand building and marketing.

In accordance with MOVCDNER guidelines, a State Level Executive Committee (SLEC) was created on 18th February, 2016. As a result of the SLEC meeting, Mission Organic Mizoram (MOM) was formed on 29th February, 2016, there by becoming the leading agency of MOVCDNER in Mizoram. The Directorate of Agriculture, Government of Mizoram is the nodal agency of the MOM in the state. The Mission is headed by Mission Director (MD) and State Coordinator (SC). At present, there are 2 Officers and 6 Staff holding different posts. The Director of Agriculture is given the charge of MOM Director. The directorate of Agriculture houses the office of the MOM.

#### **WORKING OF MOM:**

As mentioned before, MOVCDNER is a central sector scheme created for the North Eastern states of India. The functioning and working of the scheme within Mizoram is under the hands of ‘Mission Organic Mizoram’. MOM alone cannot suffice the requirements of the scheme therefore entrepreneurs/companies in the name of ‘Service Provider’ are engaged. These service providers conduct awareness campaign, trainings etc. in different parts of the state, challenging farmers to shift from shifting cultivation to engage in organic farming under MOM. Clover Organic Pvt. Ltd, Ecocert

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<sup>4</sup> [https://agricoop.nic.in/sites/default/files/movcdner\\_revised.pdf](https://agricoop.nic.in/sites/default/files/movcdner_revised.pdf)

India Pvt. Ltd., GreenCert Bio Solutions Pvt. Ltd., Angel Business Promoters of Mizoram, One Organic Partnership and International Competence Centre for Organic Agriculture (ICCOA) are the companies that are being employed by MOM for the current phase. These companies are in charge of different components- including soil testing, organic certification, creation of Farmer Producer Organisation/Farmer Producer Companies (FPO/FPC), marketing, post harvesting, etc.

The main components of MOM can be highlighted below:

1. **Value Chain Production-** which includes-
  - a) Clusters development and formation of Farmer Producer Organisation /Companies(FPOs/FPCs),
  - b) Assistance in the form of on-farm input and off farm production unit.
  - c) Assistance for a variety of quality seeds and plantation equipment.
  - d) Assistance for introduction of input delivery, distribution centres, and Agri-machinery custom hiring centre.
  - e) Organise Training, documentation and certification of crop production through service providers.
  
2. **Value Chain Processing** – which includes-
  - (a) Value Chain post harvest management.
  - (b) Financial assistance for creation of functional infrastructure for collection units, grading units and establishment of organic Bazaar
  - (c) Setting up of integrated pack house for organic produced food items.
  - (d) Providing assistance facilities/ equipment in forms of Transportation / 4 wheeler up to 12 lakh (50%) (Assistance to Farmer Producer Companies and private entrepreneurs both will be restricted to 50% of TFO restricted to Rs 6.00 lakh, whichever is less)
  - (e) Assistance for refrigerated transport vehicle and pre-cooling/ cold storage/ ripening chambers etc.
  - (f) Procedure of subsidy component for post harvest infrastructure. Subsidy under the scheme shall be released through North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (NEDFi).

**3. Value chain Marketing Branding-which includes-**

- (a) Assistance in the development of Labeling, Packaging, Publicity and Certification of processing units etc.
- (b) Consumer awareness Information dissemination through publicity, printed literature, films and local advertisements.

**4. Value Chain Support Agencies – which includes –**

- (a) Setting up of Lead agency
- (b) Setting up of certification bodies
- (c) Setting up of Project Management Unit (PMU).

***IMPACT OF MOM IN MIZORAM:***

**1. Change from Shifting to Permanent farming:**

Organic farming becomes influential to farmers in the more remote areas of the state. Government of the state and private entrepreneurs has taken massive steps in post production, storage, branding, packaging and marketing of organic products. With the potential of huge market and a better harvest, farmers and agricultural practitioners have opted to shift from conventional farming method of slash and burn to organic permanent farming.

During Phase I & II (2015-19) of the project, 349 Villages from 6 district ; namely - Aizawl, Lunglei, Champhai, Kolasib, Mamit and Serchhip are selected for implementing the project. A total of 14104 farmers under these 349 villages are allotted 13000 Ha of land to practice permanent farming. During Phase III (Current) a total number of 8000 farmers are added to the list. These new farmers are allotted 1Ha of land each for practicing permanent farming. Consequently, there are a total of 22104 farmers practicing permanent farming on 21000 Ha of land in the current phase.



FPC UNDER MOVCD-NER PHASE-I & II					
District	Name of FPC for Phase 1 & 2	No. of Villages	Area (Ha)	No. of Farmers	
Aizawl	1. <u>Aizawl Organic Spices Producer Co. Ltd., Durtlang</u>	42	727	876	
	2. <u>Tlangnuam Organic Producer Co. Ltd., Thingsul Tlangnuam</u>	45	1208	1287	
Lunglei	3. <u>Leitlang Organic Producer Co. Ltd., Pukpui, Lunglei</u>	20	679	646	
	4. <u>Tlabung Organic Producer Co. Ltd., Tlabung, Zodin</u>	29	965	918	
	5. <u>Organic Spices Producer Organisation, Hnahthial, Rotlang</u>	24	1,110	1,115	
Champhai	6. <u>Ginger Farmer Producer Organisation 1, Ruanflang</u>	19	599	945	
	7. <u>Hliappui Spices Producer Co. Ltd., Hliappui</u>	22	1,048	1,129	
	8. <u>Champhai Organic Producer Co. Ltd., Tlangsam, Champhai</u>	37	1,702	1,875	
	9. <u>Zaupui Organic Producer Co. Ltd., Ngopa</u>	30	946	1,072	
Kolasib	10. <u>Kolasib Organic Turmeric Producer Co. Ltd., Lungdai</u>	26	698	755	
Mamit	11. <u>Reitlang Organic Producer Co. Ltd., Reiek</u>	9	748	633	
	12. <u>West Phaileng Block Bird Eye Chilli Grower Society, West Phaileng</u>	12	1,182	1,182	
	13. <u>West Lungdar Organic Producer Co. Ltd., West Lungdar</u>	14	526	526	
Serchhip	14. <u>Chilli Growing Farmer Producer Organization, Serchhip</u>	20	862	1,145	
		TOTAL	349	13,000	14,104

Pic 1- FPC/FPO Members during Phase I&II

UPDATED LIST OF FPC UNDER MOVCD-NER PHASE-III					
District	Name of FPC for Phase 3		Villages	Area (ha)	No. of Farmers
Lunglei	1.	Zobawm Organic FPC Ltd., Yanhne	10	500	500
	2.	Tawitlang Organic FPC Co. Ltd., Tawipui N-I	7	500	500
	3.	Buannel Organic FPC Co. Ltd., Mulathuam North, Lunglei	7	500	500
Lawngtlai	4.	Lairam Organic FPC Co. Ltd., Nghengpuikai	8	500	500
	5.	Kaladan Organic FPC Co. Ltd., Council Veng	11	500	500
	6.	Phongpi Organic FPC Co. Ltd.	18	500	500
	7.	Laitlang Organic FPC Co. Ltd.	8	500	500
	8.	Bungzawl Organic FPC Co. Ltd.	8	500	500
Siaha	9.	Chamdur Organic FPC Co. Ltd.	15	500	500
	10.	Ilapi Organic FPC Co. Ltd., Anganwadi bul, Rawmibawk	7	500	500
	11.	Saphao Organic FPC Co. Ltd., New Laty	7	500	500
Khawzawl	12.	Pala Tipo Organic FPC Co. Ltd., Zyhno	6	500	500
	13.	Zawluhak Organic Prod Co. Ltd., Hall Veng, Rabung, Sinzawl Road	8	500	500
Saitual	14.	Tuichangral Organic Prod Co. Ltd., Khawhai Venglai	8	500	500
	15.	Sialkal Organic Producer Co. Ltd., Dilkawn, Suakdam Section, Teikhang	4	500	500
	16.	Mawmrang Organic Producer Co. Ltd., Pawlrang, Manipur Road	4	500	500
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>136</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>8,000</b>

- Total No. of Farmers: 22104
- Total Area: 21000 ha

Pic 2- FPC/FPO Members duing Phase III

## 2. Sustainability:

Under the MOVCDNER scheme, FPO is created by inviting 500 farmers. These farmers are supplied with seeds, organic manures, bio-fertilizers, bio-pesticides, neem cakte etc., amounting to Rs. 7,500/ha is given to farmers who is registered under the scheme. This provision helps farmers to engage in a more sustainable farming method. Currently there are a total of 30 FPC/FPO operating under Mission Organic Mizoram.



1.	Kaladan Organic FPC. Ltd	16	Champhai Chilli 1
2.	Tlapi Organic FPC. Ltd	17	Hnahthial
3	Pala Tipo FPC. Ltd	18	Durtlang
4	Saphao Organic FPC. Ltd	19	Ropco
5	Lairam Organic FPC. Ltd	20	Zunzam Farmer Producer Company
6	Chamdur Organic FPC. Ltd	21	Thingsul
7	Zobawm Organic FPC. Ltd	22	Hliappui Ginger II
8	Bungzawl Organic FPC. Ltd	23	West Phaileng
9	Phongpi Organic FPC. Ltd	24	Serchhip
10	Zawlngthak Organic FPC. Ltd	25	West Lungdar
11	Sialkal Organic FPC. Ltd	26	Kolasib
12	Tawitang Organic FPC. Ltd	27	Ngopa Chilli II
13	Buannel Organic FPC. Ltd	28	Laitlang Organic FPC Ltd
14	Tlabung	29	Mawmrang Organic FPC. Ltd
15	Pukpui	30	Tuichangral Organic FPC. Ltd

Fig 1- FPC/FPO under MOM

**3. Promotion of Organic food products:**

Organic food products become the main agent for healthy food. Cancer causing chemical and pesticides e.g.; DDT, DDD, Endosulfan etc., are not permitted in the production and farming of organic crops and vegetables. As men become more conscious about his health and his diet, he is aware of the benefits organic foods entail. MOM with their service providers have become a life changer for many citizens within the state as they are the promoter of organic food products.

**4. Accessibility of farm inputs:**

To facilitate lead agencies for creation of input facilitation service centre and agri-machinery custom hiring centre at commodity cluster / FPC level a sum of Rs. 10.00 lakh/FPC have been provided for creation of need-based facilities depending upon the crop and activities being undertaken. Not only these, the

MOVCDNER scheme also allows FPOs/FPCs to apply for assistance in different areas such as; Creation of Post Processing unit, Cold storage, Pack house, Refrigerated transport Vehicle, ripening chambers etc.

### ***PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES:***

#### **1. Difficulty to shift from traditional farming to Organic farming**

- (a) One of the main reasons for farmers in rural areas to abandon shifting cultivation is that Village Council/Authority finds it difficult to give farmers a permanent farming land. This becomes a huge challenge for farmers who do not have a permanent land to opt for upholding organic farming.
- (b) Another major challenge faced by farmers is scarcity of water. Since most farm land is located in hill slopes it is difficult for farmers to have enough water all year round. These adverse topographical characteristics of Mizoram's farm land retard the growth of organic farming in many areas of the state.
- (c) Soil Fertility becomes another huge challenge since Organic manures and bio-fertilizers are only used for enhancing plant growth for organic products. These biofertilizers.
- (d) Another significant challenge lies with maintaining status quo in relation to conserving traditional values. Many farmers opted to cultivate their land the way their forefathers have practiced which are traditional and conventional.

#### **2. Marketing:**

- (a) Even though the MOVCDNER scheme entails that farmers are to be assisted in marketing and post production. Connectivity becomes a burden and huge challenges as farm land are located on hilly slopes with poor road connection.
- (b) Poor maintenance of cold storage, packaging and post harvesting/processing unit.

#### **3. Labour cost:**

Poor connectivity often require post harvest product to be carried by man power. With farm land being in rough terrains and hill slopes, head load is a must in a number of farms which requires a huge labour costs.

#### **4. Organic Certification**

- (a) Organic certification is valid for a period of 1 year free of cost. After expiry of this certification, farmers are to renew their certificate on their own expense. A larger number of farmers cannot afford to renew their certificate.
- (b) Since permanent land is not made available to every farmer, soil testing and validation of land area as organic is a challenge. Most farmers are given permission to cultivate land for 1 year only.

#### **5. Transportation**

- (a) FPO/FPC is formed with a membership of 500 farmers. Since, these members are from different villages, a huge problem lies in conduct of training as travelling cost has to be borne by the farmers in most cases which become a burden.
- (b) As directed by the scheme, each FPO/FPC is to have a board of directors that comprises of 10 members. As pointed above, board meetings and visitation poses a huge problem for members to be conducted in a regular manner as TA/DA cannot be given to each member.

#### ***SUGGESTIONS:***

The following suggestions are developed based on the study conducted.

1. State government is to be made aware of the problems faced by farmers regarding availability of farm land. For organic farming, a permanent cultivable land is pre requisite; therefore authorities should find solutions for these complications.
2. Water storage tank and unit if possible should also be made available so that farmers can grow crops all year round. MOVCNDR scheme does not include construction of water tanks. Government department must be alerted so that farmers may receive assistance in these areas.
3. It is found that for a single FPO/FPC, there has to be at least 500 farmers. To assemble such farmers, at least 5 to 6 villages are visited. In some cases the

driving distance between villages is around 4-5 hours. To assemble all these farmers in one place for conducting training and awareness campaign becomes a problem for authorities. If each village could have FPO with members ranging between 100-150 farmers, many hindrances will be solved and the success of the scheme will be elevated.

4. Availability of road directly leads to the success of the scheme. Therefore, it is suggested that connectivity should be made available as early as possible. State government and local authority/bodies needs to take measures to make this a success.

### **Conclusion:**

MOVCDNER is one of the most significant scheme developed by the central government for the development of North Easter region in term of agriculture production. The scheme encompasses countless benefits starting from farm input to post harvest production. The success of the scheme depends largely on the proper utilization of such provisions. Therefore farmers opting to involve in organic farming needs to be made aware of the opportunity they are given and to utilize it intelligently. Also for the general masses, the healthy benefits of organic food product needs to promoted so that farmers can have better market which in turn benefits us all in a value chain mode.

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