

**Custom Hiring Centre (CHC) Inaugurated by Chief Minister**

**Shillong 2nd October 2020:** Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma today inaugurated the State's first Custom Hiring Centre (CHC) at Kyiem Village in East Khasi Hills District, in the presence of Mawphlang MLA, S. K. Sunn.



Custom Hiring Centre is an initiative to popularise and achieve the objective of farm mechanisation and empower farmers to tide over the shortage of labour and improve efficiency of agricultural operations.

Terming the timing of the inauguration as a befitting occasion to commemorate the 151<sup>st</sup> birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, the Chief Minister said that the project will greatly increase the efficiency and productivity of rural farmers in the State.

Stating that agriculture and farming are the mainstay of roughly five lakh rural families in Meghalaya the Chief Minister emphasized on the need to push for revenue enhancing interventions to increase and augment farmer income.

‘The various interventions under the Megha-Lamp project of the MBDA is to facilitate increased productivity and efficiency of our farmers. Technology plays an important role. Simple technical interventions such as access to affordable farm machinery and equipment will lead to overall improved efficiency and production and farmers can realise better income through increased sales’. The Chief minister said.

Speaking at length on the various initiatives to improve the agriculture and allied sectors the Chief Minister said that 1350 villages across the State stands to benefit from this particular initiative of the MBDA and the proposed 72 CHS to be set up will allow farmers to hire equipment and tools at nominal cost without having to bear the huge financial burden associated with owning and operating farm machinery.



Guest of Honour, S.K. Sunn, during his address said that the machinery availed from the CHC will greatly benefit farmers from the area as it will reduce the manual hours leading to increased productivity.

Commissioner and Secretary Planning and CEO MBMA, Dr. Vijay Kumar, while speaking at length on the various programs and projects of the MBMA, informed that the objective of the Megha-Lamp project seeks bring together all the components that are needed for overall development of the farming sector and to realise the dream of doubling farmers' income.

'The essence of the project is to empower community institutions for better rural finance, protection of natural resources, improve agriculture productivity and facilitate value chain development so that our produce can go to better markets', he said

He further added that in addition to custom hiring centres, collective marketing centres will be set up in the near future in all the 1350 villages that are under the project.

The Chief Minister also distributed Smokeless Cooking *Chulhas* to beneficiaries from the village. The *Chulhas* are developed by the engineering wing of the Soil and Water Conservation Department.

Others who spoke on the occasion were Deputy Commissioner and Chairman Basin Development Unit East Khasi Hills. Kum. I Laloo.

The function was jointly organised by the District Project Management Unit, East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya Basin Management Agency and the Soil and Water Conservation Department.

