

## Mission Lakadong (2018–2023): A Strategic Roadmap for Meghalaya's Golden Revolution

Monaliza Syiemlieh and \*Dharani Chelladurai

Department of Agronomy, PGCA, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University, Pusa, Bihar

\*Corresponding Author's email: [dharani381@rpcau.ac.in](mailto:dharani381@rpcau.ac.in)

### Meghalaya's Mission Lakadong

Recognizing the need to maximize the potential of this variety, the Directorate of Horticulture, Government of Meghalaya has launched the "Lakadong Mission (2018-2023)" to increase Lakadong turmeric production, improve post-harvest management, strengthening processing and promoting value chain activities in the region. This strategic initiative aims to enhance the livelihoods and income of Lakadong turmeric farmers by leveraging its unique quality



and targeting a production of 50,000 MT within five years. It envisions to transform the Lakadong's turmeric into a high-value global product through both online and offline marketing. This mission also emphasizes the adoption of advanced technologies, including the establishment of tissue culture labs to ensure the supply of quality planting material with institutional support from NEHU and relevant state departments. Additionally, it seeks to build a supportive ecosystem by encouraging local entrepreneurship, providing capacity building initiatives and creating strong market linkages across the value chain.

### Mission components

**A. Capacity Building & Farmers mobilization:** The capacity building and mobilization efforts are undertaken by the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) and the District Horticulture Office (DHO) working in tandem with administrative units like the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) and the Community and Rural Development (C&RD) Department through the Block Development Officer (BDO), Laskein. The developmental agencies like Meghalaya Basin Development Unit (MBDA) and the Meghalaya State Rural Livelihoods Society (MSRLS), Laskein. The entrepreneurship support from the Meghalaya Institute of Entrepreneurship (MIE) through meetings, awareness programme, workshops, seminar, farmers conferences, kisan mela / exhibitions, field day, field demonstration / on farm trial, exposure visit, media and radio talks.

**B. Area Expansion:** The current area under Lakadong turmeric is around 2577 ha with a total production of 16324 tonnes (2015-16) and a productivity of 6 MT per hectare which many sources have quoted as not being enough to feed the demand. The Mission aims to enhance the productivity to 8 MT per hectare through scientific cultivation methods, utilizing superior planting materials, aiming for a production of 50,000 metric tonnes with an area expansion of 6,070 hectares over the next five years (2018-2023), while maintaining high curcumin content.

**C. Planting material propagation and multiplication:** The Mission aims to improve the availability of quality planting material across the district by strengthening systematic propagation and multiplication strategies. Priority will be given for the production of superior mother rhizomes through seed production programmes at the Horticulture Turmeric Farm, Longkyndar, Mookaiaw, as well as through Community Seed Bank/Seed Villages for rapid multiplication through single bud rhizome pro tray method (standardized by TNAU, Coimbatore) and tissue culture.

**D. Post harvest management and processing:** This mission provides comprehensive support for Post-Harvest Management and Processing. The mission equips well functioning processing units like turmeric steamers / boiler, polisher, packaging equipment and facilitating quality assurance and compliance through certification and testing infrastructure facilities to boost up their production and quality. Solar dehydrators would also be provided to farmers to maintain hygienic product.

**E. Ecosystem Building & Enterprise Promotion:** Beyond infrastructure and production, the Lakadong Mission focuses on Ecosystem Building and Enterprise Promotion through motivating, mobilizing and training agribusiness entrepreneurs to manage “higher end” functions of the Lakadong value chain like establishment of aggregation centres, organised processing and strategic trading of this valuable spice and promoting ethically and socially responsible business.

**F. Marketing:** The Mission’s Marketing strategy focuses on correcting price disparities and reducing the influence of intermediaries. Farmers sell raw turmeric at Rs. 30/- to Rs. 35/- per kg while the dried slices fetch around Rs. 150/- to Rs. 160/- per kg as per current market rates. Processors then turn it into powder and sell it at around Rs. 160/- to Rs. 170/- per kg. The conversion ratio of rhizome to slices is 6:1 while the ratio of slice to powder hovers around 1:0.8. A quick scan of the futures markets shows turmeric trading at around Rs. 6900/- per quintal while spot markets indicate a price of Rs. 8500/- per quintal for fingers. High end online retailers are also selling Lakadong turmeric at approximately Rs. 1280/- per kg, highlighting a massive “premium gap” that the Mission seeks to reclaim for the community.

## References

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