The Public Enterprises of India play a vital role in the economy of the country. In Post-Independent India, the Public Sector is conceived as a reconciliation of the national commitment to economic planning, socialism and public intervention in economic activities. In a developing mixed economy, Public Enterprises need to be strengthened and developed to overcome economic problems like frequent failure of the market price to reflect real demand, frequent failure of money profit to reflect social benefits and failure of investment decisions based on market signals to yield more sufficient allocation of scarce resources.

The Public Enterprises, both in the Centre and in the States of India, constitute the core of economic activities and are designed for the purpose of playing a pivotal role in the economic development of the country and in the respective States. The Government of India has been placing greater emphasis on these Enterprises in the successive Five Year Plans and in response to these efforts of the Government, Public Enterprises have been growing continuously in terms of their sizes. Like many other States, the Government of Assam also promoted a large number of Public Sector Undertakings during the Post-Independent period. During the last few decades the Public Sector Undertakings under the Government of Assam have been growing both in numbers and in size, diversifying their activities and entering into new areas of business. The number
of Public Enterprises in Assam at present are 48 in total (including Co-Operative Societies) and cover manufacturing, service, process, public utilities and the high-tech industry like electronics, each enterprise being administered through different Departments. The total capital invested in these Enterprises as on 31.3.92 was 2723 crores of rupees. Against this amount of capital invested, the overall accumulated loss of these Enterprises together amounts to Rs 1370 crores. It has often been alleged that inefficient use of resources by Public Enterprises, political and bureaucratic interference coupled with Managerial and Workers inertia have resulted in these accumulated losses. However, the common refrain is that the Public Sector is required to fulfil certain Socio-Economic Objectives, which preclude them from overtly concentrating on the profit objective and which put an excessive burden on their operating expenses.

Though it still stands to reason that the Socio-Economic Objectives of the State needs to be fulfilled through these Enterprises, however, Public Enterprises today are expected to generate internal resources not only for financing their own plans, but also to generate a surplus for financing other priority sectors. In today's competitive world, the Public Sector Enterprises cannot be allowed to continue to run on losses. It has become impressive that State Enterprises run commercially and contribute to the economy in financial terms rather than through secondary social benefits.
With the rapid changes occurring in our economy in recent times, with the opening up of the National market as a result of the liberalisation process and keeping in view the developments in the International Scene, the Indian Government, accepting the IMF conditionalities, has declared in Para 29 of the Memorandum on Economic Policies for 1991-92 and 1992-93, that "Chronically sick Public Enterprises will not be allowed to continue incurring heavy losses" (meaning thereby that they would be wound up).

Public Enterprises were set up to achieve a Socialist pattern of society, and hence they need detailed scrutiny to make them an effective tool of Socio-Economic development of the State. In this Study an attempt is made to focus on the Managerial problems being faced by Textile Enterprises of Assam. This Study also takes into account the Organisational Structures and Management Patterns as well as the Objectives, Policies and Projects of these Enterprises. The present textile scenario in Assam as well as in the country has been analysed. Moreover, the study reviews the performance of these Enterprises in the areas of Personnel Management, Marketing Management, Financial Management and Production Management with the aim of identifying the managerial problems and constraints faced by these Enterprises in the textile sector.

Public Enterprises are ultimately accountable to the general public and one of their prime duties is to cater to the basic
needs of the poorer sections of the Society. Clothing, being one of the basic necessities of man, next only to food, an average human being spends a substantial part of his disposable income on clothing. Hence the State Public Enterprises in the textile sector has an enormous responsibility towards the common man of the state. It is thus, to start a process of critical inspection and introspection of the Public Enterprises in the Textile Sector and to analyse their managerial problems that this study was being taken up. Notwithstanding the constraints faced by these Enterprises, it is expected that with a greater degree of attention paid to their problems and the needs of their management, a better situation for the Public Enterprises in the textile sector would emerge and their performance would considerably improve.

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(Rituparna Chowdhary)