

BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY
Meghalaya

Manifesto, 2013

**TOWARDS A PROGRESSIVE, PROSPEROUS
AND PEACEFUL STATE**

NO ONE WILL BE LEFT BEHIND

**BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY
MEGHALAYA STATE**

ELECTION MANIFESTO 2013

Meghalaya was created as a full-fledged state of the Indian Union in January 1972, amidst great hopes of its people that an era of peace and prosperity was being ushered in, that their distinct culture, tradition and languages will find scope for their fullest expression, that there would be opportunities for its vibrant youth and that the state will soon join the ranks of the foremost states in the country. Four decades later these fond hopes have been replaced by despair as successive governments have failed to provide the people with the basic amenities of a modern civilised existence: an affordable health care system, a dependable and safe water supply, uninterrupted electricity, sanitation, education for all, economic development and security of life and property, all have remained a distant dream. The much needed infrastructure, such as surface connectivity and power generation to enable the people to take advantage of opportunities offered by national and global economic changes is yet to take off. By every parameter of growth Meghalaya lags dismally behind other states in the country. Recent surveys have shown that poverty has actually been on the increase.

For the past five years or so people have been hard hit by the rising cost of food and other essential commodities, which the Congress led governments at the centre and the state have failed to control. The high cost of living which is bringing ruin to the people is the result of wrong economic policies and priorities, but surprisingly these governments insist on continuing their anti-people policies. Worse still is the rampant corruption at every level of governance and the brazen efforts to shield the corrupt. This is no baseless criticism, for the whole country is witness to these wrong doings; in Meghalaya the scams are in public knowledge.

What Meghalaya needs at this hour are men and women of character, ability, dedication and vision to take the state out of this terrible mess and place it on the road to development, peace and prosperity. This is what the Bharatiya Janata Party (the BJP) wishes to offer to the much deprived people of Meghalaya by sending in motivated representatives of the people to the State legislature. What the Party is looking forward to provide is:

- (1) an efficient government that is committed to the development and welfare of the state and is accountable to its people.
- (2) a government that is free from every trace of corruption, at every level of the administration, and whose policies and plans for the state are, in formulation and execution, transparent and where no one will be discriminated against in matters of employment or in the development process.
- (3) that the voice of the people will be heard and honoured at every level of decision making and their execution.
- (4) A government that will carry Meghalaya forward to become one of the leading states in the country.

The BJP is particularly concerned about ensuring that all schemes, policies and programmes touch each and every citizen. Meghalaya consists of the rich and the poor, the urban dweller and the rural folk, those engaged in agriculture and those in industry, of children the youth, men and women and the aged; those in employment and without any means of livelihood, the educated and the illiterate those with a say in government and those hundreds of thousands whose voice is never heard. In making Meghalaya a progressive, prosperous and peaceful state everyone will be taken on board:

No one will be left behind

Can the party and party leaders as representatives of the people in the government deliver? The track record of the Party should answer that question: as a party leading the NDA government at the Centre it had brought international prestige to the country, improved relations with neighbours, kept prices in control and set the country on the path towards economic, social and intellectual progress; initiated policies to connect the country through a network of world-class roads, the four or six lane highways; created the DoNER to accelerate the pace of development of the neglected north-eastern region; centrally sponsored schemes such as the PradhanMantri Gram SevakYojana (PMGSY). The list is endless, and how well these have continued can be seen in the peace and progress of the BJP ruled states.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Health Care, Sanitation

The first priority of the BJP is to improve the quality of life of the people. The Party therefore attaches great importance to extending affordable and quality health care for all, for the vast number of those not entitled to the medical benefits available to government employees or are not covered by any health insurance scheme, and those in the rural areas. To achieve this, the following steps will be taken:

- To increase the number of hospitals, Community and Primary Health Centres, dispensaries across the state, especially in the rural areas; upgrade district civil hospitals into multi-speciality centres with increased capacity; at the Block level health centres to be made self-sufficient with OPDs, OTs and dental, ophthalmology, pathology and radiology departments.
- Assign adequate number of doctors and medical staff to all hospitals health centres etc, with viable incentives and accommodation in their respective work places; to achieve the desired proportion of 5 doctors to every thousand people.
- To decentralise purchase of medicine and equipment upto a certain sanctioned amount so that no hospital or health centre is without them even for a short period / or create Block level pool for distribution of medicine.

- Introduce a scheme for the free treatment and distribution of medicine for those not entitled to reimbursement of cost of hospitalisation or belonging to BPL or poor families; introduce health insurance schemes.
- Establish more medical colleges and increase number of seats for applicants from Meghalaya in MBBS/MS/MD/other specialised programmes in and outside the state; an Institution for Nursing and a State Nursing Service; broaden the base for para-medics and technical staff; encourage with incentives private health care providers, charitable institutions to open hospitals, nursing homes and dispensaries.
- Give due importance to preventive medicine; conduct camps to create awareness about nutrition, personal and environmental hygiene; promote indigenous / herbal medical systems; establish an institute for research and development.
- Take steps to improve the sanitary condition of the State, by intensifying the Total Sanitation Campaign, achieve 100% coverage of rural households and shift the focus of the campaign to the rural areas

Water Supply and Electricity

Water supply for domestic use in urban areas has not kept pace with the demands of a growing population. Not only is the supply erratic but is untreated and drawn from contaminated sources. In the rural areas there is no worthwhile organised water supply system. The Party therefore proposes:

- That as a policy every individual in a household, whether urban or rural shall have access to 40 litres of treated water per day.
- The Greater Shillong Water Supply Scheme will be strengthened or revamped: and similar schemes shall be introduced in all urban centres or towns.
- Appropriate schemes will be drawn for the rural areas so that every household has piped water supply and the dependence on open rivers/streams for drinking water is brought to an end.
- Rainwater harvesting will be encouraged and assisted.
- The Party will introduce suitable legislation for the protection and management of the State's water resources, the rivers, streams, water bodies (natural and man-made lakes) springs, the catchment areas, waterfalls etc. making their pollution and degradation a punishable offence; shall begin the process of cleaning the rivers and dredging the Umiam Lake.
- About electricity, which is the other indicator of efficient civic management, it should be noted it is a part of the States need to generate power and therefore is a part of the infrastructure development; however, for both urban and rural requirements, small hydel or thermal projects will be considered, and the people will be encouraged and assisted to go infor non-conventional energy systems such as solar and wind power.

Improving Life in Urban and Rural Areas

The Party hopes to prevent the further haphazard growth of urban centres and towns in Meghalaya. The State capital Shillong, for instance, once described as one of the prettiest hill stations in the country and well known for its civic management, is today an overgrown and overcrowded city with no less than 22 slum areas, where traffic congestion is a daily occurrence, and uncollected garbage at every street corner is a common sight, where roads, pavements and street lights are in a poor state of maintenance. This is the situation in all towns of Meghalaya – a sad commentary on the State's current

political leadership, the bureaucracy, the Urban Development Authority, and municipalities where they exist and are functioning, charged with the responsibility of maintaining a proper urban environment for its citizens.

Efforts shall accordingly be directed towards:

- Reorganising or revamping the Urban Development Authority and involve professional or personnel trained in town planning and architecture; create an interface between the Authority and the public to ensure transparency in its functioning.
- Steps for the maintenance of roads pavements public places, street lights; prevention of pollution, collection and disposal of solid waste material, and establish plants for this purpose.
- Steps for ensuring traffic congestion, and long term solutions through alternative transportation systems, like monorail, which could be inter-city or for connecting rural areas.
- Prepare master plans for growth of all towns, including Shillong.
- Preserving Shillong's green belt and open spaces / forest areas; similar steps for other towns.

In the past rural Meghalaya has not received the attention it deserves. There is no perceptible development and the lack of surface connectivity has kept the villages in relative isolation. Literacy is far below the urban level and the number of primary and secondary schools, colleges is inadequate. The Party shall make every effort to give a new concept to rural life, thereby breaking the old idea that rural areas are only peripheral to the urban mainstream and therefore less deserving of a higher priority in the administrative, planning and development process. To overcome this the Party will:

- Bring the isolation of the villages to an end through a better road communication network.
- All branches of learning and skill development will be introduced.
- Basic amenities such as health care, sanitation, water supply and electricity will be extended, and everything that go to make life comfortable and productive in towns and cities will be extended to the villages.
- Open schools and colleges in every village / village cluster, and in addition academic centres appropriate to the rural situation.
- Build town halls / community centres and libraries with where possible internet connectivity.
- Ensure banking and credit facilities are available in all rural areas.
- Back the traditional system of governance as a major instrument of rural transformation.
- Support enrolment of home guards and the creation of Village Defence Organisation for rural policing.

Housing Policy

Fundamental to the growth of urban centres and villages is the question of housing. Various factors make the need for a housing policy and assistance in construction of houses for a wide range of low income groups a desirable and urgent necessity. The cost of land in villages and more so in urban areas and the cost of construction of houses are becoming prohibitive day by day, and is beyond the capacity of an average citizen to meet.

The BJP would therefore like to see a housing policy put into place. This would primarily aim at low-cost housing projects to meet the requirements of landless tribals, the poor or BPL families, workers and the low income groups. Housing schemes for the middle class, both upper and lower, will also be taken up as part of the policy of orderly urban and rural growth.

Women and Child Welfare

One of the unique features of the state is the matrilineal system. The women of the state are very enterprising and occupy a prominent position in the society. However, their representation in politics and traditional institutions has not been achieved. The state sex ratio of 986 is far higher than the national average of 940. Also, Meghalaya, with fertility rate over 3.8 stands 15th in the country. Hardly 20% of women give birth in hospitals. According to recent reports state that Meghalaya stands second among the states where there is a high level of child malnutrition.

The need is to elevate the status of women in every aspect – political, social and economical; transform their role from supportive to protagonist performer; provide adequate healthcare facilities to women and children; encourage organised women entrepreneurship and leadership; create a conducive atmosphere for the multifaceted development of children and promote greater enrolment of girls to schools protagonist.

The BJP will accordingly take steps to:

- Constitute a separate Directorate for women and child development
- Conduct a campaign to encourage self-employment amongst women from all strata and providing them with robust organisational support with necessary infrastructure.
- Make State Commission for Women more effective and opening up its centres in every district.
- Establish an institute to conduct regular training programmes for developing public leadership amongst women.
- Establish a department for Women's Studies and Development under NEHU,
- Encourage women's Self-Help Groups (SHG) and implement an effective policy to provide financial assistance to them.
- Introduce a scheme to facilitate women's associations to manage agricultural, livestock and micro-enterprise activities indulging in local development.
- Conduct awareness programmes about illegal human trafficking and introducing a stricter laws to punish the traffickers.
- Implement a scheme wherein women can take individual or collective action to improve various aspects of their lives like domestic violence and alcohol abuse.
- Propagate and conduct frequent child immunization programmes across the state.
- Revive the existing government-sponsored child-care/mother-care centres (Anganwadi) and set up such new centres across the state.
- Prevent malnutrition by implementing a scheme to provide nutritious food to the children of economically backward families.
- Prevent child labour and their abuse in the state.

Policy on Employment and Poverty Alleviation

Today, employment generation and poverty alleviation programmes are in a shambles. Meghalaya today witnesses extreme inequality in terms of employment. The situation is worst in the rural areas and people are compelled to migrate to urban areas. Despite all tall talk of development, level of poverty in Meghalaya as has already been pointed out has been increasing even though the same has declined in the rest of the country.

It is an urgent necessity to chalk out and implement a time-bound, result-oriented poverty alleviation programme, uplift all BPL families to the APL level and carry out employment enhancement programmes, especially in rural areas.

The Policy that the BJP will put in play shall consist of the following:

- Implementing urgent, time-bound direct action plan for employment generation.
- Providing the unemployed youth, both rural and urban, with vocational training and also giving them financial assistance for taking up various government assignments.
- Streamlining all employment schemes and setting up an independent commission for preparing region-specific programmes.
- Introducing Skills Pool project to generate seasonal or temporary employment for people without permanent employment.
- Providing direct benefits to the underprivileged through individual benefit schemes on the lines of Gujarat's Garib Kalyan Mela .
- Offering scholarship and freeship through direct cash transfer into the bank account of the beneficiary student or his/her parents.
- Introducing a scheme to provide interest-free short term loans to Self Help Groups of women under BPL.
- Ensuring judicious implementation of Central and State-sponsored employment programmes.

ENSURING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCE GENERATION

Agricultural Production and Agro-Industries

If the quality of life of the people is to be improved and their prosperity assured the States resources will have to be increase through accelerated growth. This will be done through careful planning and through inputs and investments in critical areas of production. Both agriculture and industry will be given focussed attention, their development being aimed at domestic consumption and utility as well as generators of wealth to the people and revenue to the state.

The Party's first concern in the agriculture sector is to provide for self-sufficiency in food grains, their equitable distribution and reduce dependence on large scale import of rice and other food grains. If this is to be achieved agricultural production per hectare will have to be accelerated. The BJP will therefore encourage and assist in extending the crop area, in the introduction of the system of multi-cropping and the use of high-yielding variety of seeds. Production and marketing of crops such as potatoes, turmeric, ginger will be given a boost. In agriculture and agro-industries farmers will be encouraged to go in for organic farming, particularly in vegetable production. The following steps will be taken:

- To give industry status to agriculture and make farming as attractive career option.
- To streamline the Public Distribution System, making it effective through computerisation and high-tech tracking system.
- To establish market and market links through improved and dependable surface connectivity.
- Create storage and food processing and packing facilities in appropriate places.
- Explore the possibility of establishing an Agricultural University for graduate / post graduate studies, R & D and Extension work.

Animal Husbandry and Poultry Development

Production of meat as an item of consumption has not taken off in any significant manner even though the people of the state are by and large non-vegetarian in food habits. Much of the State's requirements are imported. The BJP will take necessary steps to extend production, whether pork, beef and goat meat, and the use of scientific methods of slaughter and marketing.

Poultry farming on the other hand is attracting local entrepreneurs and this the Party will encourage. Both animal husbandry and poultry farming are of particular importance to the Garo and Jaintia hills. In great measure these will generate wealth and employment at the local level, and once developed will form an important item for markets outside the state. For this to happen the infrastructure, especially connectivity and power, will be given due priority.

Pisciculture

Fish, like meat and food grains is also largely imported from outside the State as far afield as the states in South India. All this comes in a frozen form. Consumption of fish as an important part of the daily diet is increasing among the tribal people and there is a growing preference for fresh fish over the frozen variety. The demand for fresh fish is therefore bound to increase in future and this demand must be met by increased local production instead of large volume import. This will not only meet the State's requirements, but generate wealth at the local level or rural areas.

The BJP hopes to achieve this by increasing the number of fisheries and utilising the existing rivers and water bodies, the last especially to promote angling as a part of eco-tourism. The following will receive emphasis:

- Encouraging technology-based fish farming
- The construction of fisheries in every village or village clusters, maybe on cooperative basis, in consultation with landowners or with village authorities where land is held on community basis
- Revamping and strengthening of the Fisheries Department of Meghalaya to provide technical assistance and oversee the construction and maintenance of fisheries.
- Enhancing and strengthening the fish sanctuary network in the state.
- Developing a gene bank facility for each potential species, to avoid genetic degradation.
- Facilitating habitat improvement, fish management and harvest technology of open water systems with latest technologies.
- Establishing a high-tech R&D centre to mitigate the aspects involving research and educational institutes.
- Encouraging community partnership as well as PPP (Public Private Partnership) model to develop aquaculture as a grown-up industry.
- Introducing a policy to protect aqua-farming from impact of global warming, unprecedented calamities and open market economy.
- Establishing district-level fishery markets and linking these markets with urban centres.
- Creating adequate cold storage chain and suitable transportation facilities.
- Promoting farming of ornamental fish as a lucrative business sector.

Horticulture and Floriculture

Meghalaya offers an excellent scope for growing of different types of horticultural crops including fruits, vegetables, spices, plantation crops, medicinal and aromatic plants of high economic value. A wide range of tropical, sub-tropical and temperate fruits are grown all over the State.

Floriculture had been a hobby practiced by flower lovers and enthusiasts in Meghalaya. There is high potential for cultivation of all types of flowers, considering the natural advantages that the State is endowed with the varied range of agro-climatic conditions. The rich flora and the many species of orchids growing wild in the State is the highest ever recorded in a single concentrated area. Meghalaya also has a very high potential for commercial floriculture considering its favourable climate, diverse agro-climatic situations suitable for tropical and temperate flowers and proximity to Guwahati and Kolkata Airport.

The BJP will ensure that horticulture and floriculture becomes a vibrant export-oriented sector of economy and expands the horizon of employment and livelihood of the people. The following steps shall be taken towards this end:

- Increase investment in horticulture and floriculture through a special financial package and fund.
- Support a large number of agro-based industries through public-private partnership so that large surplus of horticulture and floriculture produce finds its proper place.
- Promote and encourage high-tech food processing and packaging industries with a special impetus to processing of fruits like pineapple, oranges, cashewnuts, and gooseberry.
- Build the necessary infrastructure such as cold storage chains, warehousing services and marketing channels at district headquarters.
- Establish a separate Directorate of Floriculture.
- Create and set up an Export Processing Zone for horticulture produce at Tura.
- Strengthen the State Medicinal Plants Board to ascertain R&D activities in exploring the medicinal values of the untapped flora resources.
- Establish a Medicinal Plant Processing Zone and Ayush industry cluster at Jowai.
- Provide with credit facility and insurance scheme to horticulture and floriculture farmers.

Tourism and Hospitality Sector

That Meghalaya has great potential as a tourist destination is now being increasingly realised. Apart from the more conventional form of tourism there is a growing appreciation of other emerging areas – eco-tourism or adventure tourism, such as angling and water sports, hang gliding, golf, trekking and so on for which Meghalaya offers unique opportunity. Steps will have to be taken to develop Meghalaya as a whole into one of the top tourist destinations in the country. Schemes will be worked out where government and the private sector will work together to ensure that tourism becomes a major resource and employment generating industry.

In particular it will:

- To give the utmost priority to the development of world class tourism infrastructure – expanding the hospitality sector; connectivity – maintaining roads giving easy access to the state and to areas within it, airports, helipads; ensuring continuous water and power supply to hotels, restaurants etc.

- Assist local entrepreneurs to create wide ranging options for hotel accommodation, from bed and breakfast / budget / yatri niwas to high end starred category to suit every tourist, Indian and foreign. Extend the infrastructure to the rural areas; create model villages on the lines of Mawlynnong village; built cottages (with modern amenities) whose design and construction reflect local traditions and are in harmony with the unique rural landscape.
- Special incentives to women entrepreneurs, particularly in the restaurant business.
- Put in place a well organized and efficient transportation system as a public-private enterprise;
- Establish more institutes for tourism and hotel management, introduce the subject in the school curricula.
- Take steps to train the youth in the management of hotel (especially the low budget category); as tourist guides and transport operators.
- Special efforts will be made in marketing Meghalaya tourism, through festivals, golf tournaments, issue brochures and making use of the electronic and print media; remove restrictions on travel of foreign tourists. The Meghalaya Bhavans located in New Delhi and Kolkata will be made to play a vital role in this regard.
- As Tourism is essentially a public-private enterprise ensure adequate representation of non-government players will be made in the Tourism Development Corporation.
- Adopting a tourism policy that covers government initiative and regulations, extensive involvement of private sector and active participation of people.
- Setting up information kiosks and tourist service centers at prominent places in Meghalaya as well as other states.
- Creating a special Tourism Security Force at the disposal of the tourists.
- Conducting special training programmes for local youth to work as Tourist Guides and as transport operators.
- Strengthening the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology & Applied Nutrition, Shillong to develop sufficient skill pool in the hospitality sector complementing tourism.
- Establishing better coordination with tourism departments of other NE states to evolve various tourist circuits.

Industrial and Mining Policy

Setting up of industries in Meghalaya cannot be planned on the scale of the industrially developed states in the country. Several factors rule out heavy industries. The state is endowed with large deposits of a number of valuable minerals such as coal, limestone, kaolin, clay, granite, glass-sand and uranium. Exports of these minerals form a substantial part of the state's economy. However, the state has failed to regulate the mining activities. Rampant unscientific rat-hole mining has been causing deforestation, river pollution, degradation of the lands. Above all it is injurious to the mining labour. The mineral wealth has to be utilised for socio-economic development of the state and in an eco-friendly and regulated manner and mining needs to be regulated

Meghalaya is not entirely devoid of traditional handicraft industries. Iron implements have in the past found a market in Assam and what is now Bangladesh. Pynursla and Cherrapunjee's honey is highly prized outside the state. An Industrial policy for Meghalaya will be put in place which will develop and support those industries appropriate to the wants and expertise of the local people. Industries will be based on a proper utilization of resources, mineral or agriculture based, with a view to ensuring wealth to the people, employment to the youth and revenue to the State, and development of the area where these are located.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Education

The BJP gives considerable importance to creating a knowledge based society and of turning Meghalaya's human resources into a dynamic agent for the moral, intellectual and material transformation of the state. It also recognizes at the same time the fundamental importance of education as a means of alleviating poverty and as a vital pre-requisite for the informed participation of the people on the ongoing regional and national political process.

The policy the party will adopt is intended to modernise the school and college curriculum and courses of study that will introduce, pupils and students at an early age to information technology, health and environmental issues, inculcate gender sensitivity and secular ideals. The scope of undergraduate study will be broadened by incorporating courses relevant to the needs of society and state; and through re-structuring existing technical institute or establishing new ones providing professional and skill developing courses with wider career options will be made available. Finally, the Department of Education will be reformed and reorganized to bring about the desired changes.

The Party's plans are to:

- Introduce of a Right to Education (RTE) Bill for Meghalaya relevant to the conditions and requirements of the state.
- Establish more schools, primary, secondary and higher, and colleges, especially in rural areas with proper buildings, playgrounds and other infrastructure, including provision for hostels where desirable; improvement of the conditions in existing schools and colleges; encouragement to private enterprise in the education sector.
- Create a state authority (or within the existing Department) to oversee periodic changes in curriculum and coordinate efforts with NCERT, NEHU and such other bodies so that Meghalaya's resources, mineral or natural, people and their culture, history, especially their struggle against British rule, find adequate space in textbooks etc.
- Diversify of education to offer a wide range of options for professions and entrepreneurs through more appropriate courses at the college level; introductions and making compulsory information Technology from the higher secondary level onwards.
- Modernise, diversify and expand technical institutions and polytechnics, incorporating the latest scientific and technological developments, and (ii) establishment of new institutes for vocational / professional diplomas between graduate and master's degrees.
- Upgrading of select colleges into autonomous colleges.
- Establishment of colleges of Fine Arts at Shillong, Tura or Jowai to regenerate performing and visual arts and buildings Centres of Performing Arts and Art galleries, a Music College; (ii) Institutes of Tourism and Hotel management, of Information technology etc.
- To introduce the system of counselling in schools and colleges, and the appointment of qualified / trained counsellors.
- Enhance the number of seats for students of Meghalaya in various national institutes of medical, engineering, management etc.
- Elevate the State Directorate of Education into a Directorate General and restructuring the existing Directorate upgrading the inspectorate into a Directorate.
- Create a Meghalaya Education Service, in two categories: I – for College or Higher Education and II – For school Education, who will be teachers in the colleges and schools run by Government, and to fill the posts in the Directorates/ Directorate-General; teachers in established

private institutions may be inducted on deputation, and entry into the Meghalaya Education Service I & II shall be through the State Public Services Commission.

Skill Development

There is sufficient evidence to suggest the drop out rate in schools and colleges is still fairly high in the state. It is important to ensure that such youth, who do not or cannot avail the benefits of distance education are not without the means, in terms of training and expertise, to earn a livelihood. Equally it is also necessary to see that those without any employment, or are victims of accidents or natural disasters or suffer disabilities, are able to earn a livelihood. The BJP therefore considers it necessary to introduce skill development as an essential feature of the overall education system.

skill development will be imparted in those areas which grow out of global and national economic policies; putting into place a mechanism that will keep abreast of the requirements as they develop in the future. This will help give direction to the youth and those who cannot find employment to earn their livelihood through development of skills in vocations for which they have talents, aptitude and interest. It will at the same time reduce dependency on government and other white collar jobs whose number cannot keep pace with the growth of population. Importance will be to make skill development extensive in rural areas which will not only provide the means of a livelihood, but in case of skills in handicrafts and management of eateries promote tourism.

The BJP will therefore:

- Work out schemes in collaboration with such organisations as the National Skill Development Corporation, and through their partners in corporate houses for skill development especially in retail and hospitality sector.
- In addition provide skill development in agriculture, pisciculture, horticulture and food processing.
- Establish a Skill development academy which will provide skill training and assist in placements.
- Promote a Skill Development for the youths from the school level.
- Skill development will not be focused only on income generating activities but will be an all inclusive skill for which a student may have particular talent, while he pursue his chosen vocation.

Youth Activities

The BJP recognizes the need for a carefully thought out policy for socially productive activities for the youth. Strengthening the existing organisations where they exist, with incentives and assistance to build their infrastructure for effective implementation of youth related schemes, and the establishment of youth centres capable of diverse activities, will be promoted. Representative of youth/youth organisations in various Government and traditional institutions where youth welfare and youth activities are concerned will be a necessary step in this direction.

The Party has therefore considered taking up the following:

- Engaging advantageously the existing traditional institutions for youth activities, such as the Seng Samla in the Khasi & Jaintia areas; extend and reorient the activities of the Nehru Yuvak Kendras, especially in rural areas.
- Build Youth Kendras in towns and villages; as a measure of economy combining town or community halls/stadia so as to create multi-functional complexes for the purpose; within every such youth centre/multi-functional complex establish well-appointed gyms.
- Engaging the Departments concerned to assist in organizing sports and games, music competitions on a regular basis; such activities being taken especially to the rural areas.
- The Department of Sports to undertake coaching programmes, for boys and girls, in selected disciplines.
- Establishing youth clubs such as an Adventure Club and funding their activities such as trekking, bicycle expeditions, mountain expeditions and so on.
- Organising inter-state visits by youths on all-India excursions on the lines of the Bharat Darshan Tours.
- Appointing counselors in Youth Kendras or Centres.

Promotion of Sports and Games

Generally, the only idea that most governments, and knowledgeable people entertain on the promotion of games is the building stadia and rewarding (in cash, but after mistakenly called incentives) to sportsmen and women achieving success in regional, national and international events. While adequate physical infrastructure is undoubtedly of the first importance, the BJP considers it necessary to build a wide sports and games base in the youth and inculcate a sports culture starting from the school level.

The Party will therefore take steps to:

- Make Sports and games obligatory and a part of the curricula in schools and colleges so that the right spirit is inculcated in the youth at an early age.
- Ensure a minimum sports/games infrastructure in all educational institutions, such as playing fields, running tracks, indoor stadia and gyms.
- Appoint qualified teachers / masters for physical education and sports and coaches in selected discipline in schools.
- Organise inter-school tournaments, starting with district level or zonal tournaments.
- Institute sports scholarships and create quotas for sportsmen /women in Government jobs.
- Build and maintain standard stadia (track and field events), indoor stadia in every district sub-division and in carefully chosen rural areas.
- Construct hostels for sportsmen /women in appropriate places.
- Establish Institutes of physical Education, Sports and Games at Shillong, Tura and Jowai; and employ their products as games masters in schools and colleges, and in private situations (such as Youth Clubs); or attach them as coaches and technical staff in the sports facilities to be created by the state.
- Create a graded service for coaches, such as State Coach, Grade I, II, III with scales of pay and other benefits on par with corresponding members in the education sector, with assured promotion / induction into the sports Department at the district or state level.
- Give special incentives for promotion of sports among women.
- Take steps to promote local / indigenous games, in particular archery in the Khasi and Jaintia hills.

- Introduce schemes for water sports such as rowing, canoeing etc, for which Meghalaya's water bodies and rivers provide ample scope; establish Adventure Clubs.
- Appoint qualified teachers / masters in physical education and sport and games in schools and colleges.

Meghalaya has today been described as “power starved”. What was once a power surplus state is ironically unable to meet its normal power requirements. There is therefore a shortfall of 230MW at current requirements.

This energy deficit has resulted in frequent power cuts to both domestic and commercial consumers. Educational institutions and the student community have been affected; it has created social problems; and has led to disruptions in industrial production. The situation in the rural areas is infinitely worse. Unless Meghalaya becomes self-sufficient in power and is energy efficient it will not be an attractive destination for investment; industry and agriculture will not take off, and tourism can never flourish. What is required for the state is a power (or energy) policy. Not only has the capacity of the existing hydel projects to be enhanced but attractive systems like thermal, geo-thermal, solar and wind will have to be explored for domestic, commercial and industrial application. Ideally the aim is to be able to generate 800 – 1000 MW of power, for the State's own consumption, as well as to earn revenue by sale to neighbouring states and Bangladesh.

CREATING THE FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH: THE INFRASTRUCTURE

If economic and small growth and prosperity is to be achieved high priority has to be accorded to infrastructure development and the creation of an enabling environment. These must be considered as the very foundation for growth. The two most important aspects of the infrastructure are (i) connectivity and (ii) energy.

Improving Connectivity

The Bharatiya Janata party which introduced the concept of linking the country through world class express roadways (witness the Golden Quadrilateral for instance) is committed to the development of such roads throughout the region so that no town or village is isolated from the rest of the country. A dependable transportation system will also be put in place. The Party will therefore:

- Institute an independent Road Development Corporation or Authority to study and implement better road connectivity between villages, towns and cities as well as to carry out maintenance of National Highways in the state.
- Restructure and upgrade Meghalaya Transport Corporation (MTC) to provide effective and secure public transport system.
- Widen all national highways passing through the state upto four lanes.

- Expand and enhance the aviation facilities at Umroi and Baljek airports so as to handle frequent passenger and cargo flights.
- Implementing a PPP model to set up a state-wide helicopter service network, with its fare as low as three times that of railways.
- Examine and implement the use of alternate mode of transport like waterways on rivers like Kyanshi, Simsang and Jingiram.
- Examine the feasibility of aerial tramways in hills and build such tramways that can also attract tourism.

Energy

Power shortage in Meghalaya has become so acute that load-shedding and daily power cuts have become a part and parcel, despite the state's rich resources like coal. The state purchases almost double the energy it generates. Unfortunately, many of its villages are not yet electrified. Meghalaya, due to profuse rainfall, has a huge potential to generate surplus energy using renewable energy technologies. This power shortage has hampered industrialisation, agricultural modernisation, health services and other valuable services resulting in a menace in our day to day life.

The BJP's plans are:

- Preparation of an annual energy budget that would enable the state to analyse the consumption and distribution of power.
- Introduction of a concept of energy audit and implementing it in phases.
- Drawing a time-bound plan for electrification of every household in the state.
- Introducing a policy to convert electric supply to all government departments, PSUs and ULB buildings into renewable energy; and promoting power-saving equipments like LED and CFL.
- Taking necessary steps to conserve Umiam lake to maintain its water level.
- Introducing financial incentives through PPP (Public Private Partnership) model to promote production of ready-to-use fuel from coal gasification and electricity generation from sources like hydropower, wind turbines, solar, CNG-based power generation and micro/mini hydel to increase the percentage of renewable energy in the state's energy mix.

GOVERNANCE

That good governance is an essential pre requisite for the moral and material progress of Meghalaya is today fully and widely appreciated. The degree to which this vital requirement can be achieved and sustained, depends on several key factors. Among these the maintenance of public order and the assurance of security of life and property of citizens, especially of women, children and the aged, are generally considered of prime importance. On this important problem depends the peace and prosperity of the state and the success of the various schemes for its economic and social transformation. Equally the informed participation of the people in the functioning of government and the formulation of policies is essential if democracy is to take deeper and firmer roots. The BJP would like to ensure that corruption in public life and in government functionaries are totally eliminated. Thus transparency, accountability and responsiveness in government has to be ensured.

Making Governance Efficient, Transparent and Accountable

The Party would like to see democratic functioning of the state strengthened and the confidence of the people in the system restored. It would therefore take the following steps:

- Making the Personnel and Administrative Reforms Department more efficient.
- Strengthening the anti-corruption branch of the state police.
- Strengthening the Meghalaya Institute of Governance so as to make it efficient to study governance issues and make requisite recommendations on regular basis.
- Exploring the possibilities of better usage of e-governance that encompasses e-procurement, e-tender, e-remittance, e-certification and e-supervision, to combat corruption and reduce citizen's interface with government offices.
- Introducing 'Single Window Clearance' system for facilitating speedy clearance of documentation and quickness in decision making.
- Formulating effective citizen's charters for every government department.
- Strengthening and modernising the Meghalaya Administrative Training Institute so as to conduct regular induction, motivational and advanced training programmes for government employees.
- Annually conduct comprehensive training programmes for capacity building of local traditional bodies.
- Encouraging greater people's participation to make development plans more need-based.
- Decentralizing the administration so that the planning can be done at village level.
- Putting in place an efficient Lok Ayukta to implement 'zero tolerance' policy against corruption inefficiency in government officials and employees.
- Adopting all new technologies and communication systems for better and effective administration.
- Reviving the system of annual reports of every government department and placing them in the legislature.

Management and Development of Border Areas

One of the major responsibilities of Government is the security of the state and its borders. Meghalaya has a long international border (423 kms) with Bangladesh on the south and west, and an interstate boundary with Assam (566 kms) to the north. The efficient management of these borders and borderlands are a vital importance to the state for two reasons: The first is the infiltration through it of Bangladeshi nationals, which as the situation in adjoining Assam illustrates, has the potential of permanently affecting the demographic structure of Meghalaya and consequent destruction of tribal life and culture. The second relates to the economic development of the border areas where a sizeable population resides isolated from the rest of the state for want of communications. The strategic position they occupy can make them an effective screen against infiltration of all kinds, including cross-border smuggling of contraband. The Party thinks it would be necessary to constitute a strip of territory (of ten kilometres width or so) bordering Bangladesh and Assam into a special area with appropriate laws enacted so as to function as a buffer for the security of the state and for the economic and social development of the people who will be an integral part of the border security system.

To this end the BJP will:

- Constitute the border areas along Bangladesh and Assam into a special area placing it under an officer of the rank of Deputy Commissioner or above; Constitute/strengthen the department for management and development of Border Areas.

- Prepare a register of villages in the area with their households and inhabitants. (much of this information is already available in the Census reports)
- Open out roads in the area with lateral communication upto the border to facilitate trade, and the development process as part of the infrastructure.
- Make budgetary provisions for extension of healthcare, primary education etc.
- Establish / strengthen village councils and make them stakeholders in the security and development of the respective areas.
- Raise home-guards and create Village Defence Organisations to facilitate the work of the Border Security Force, Border Outposts and the Police Outpost or Beat.

Law and Order

North East India in general suffers on account of years of insurgency and the resulting security concerns. It may however be appreciated that Meghalaya today is less affected by insurgency than in the past. There is however a rise in crimes particularly against women. Lack of political will and dynamism is perhaps the major cause for the deterioration of law and order situation in the state. The BJP considers it vital to improve the situation so that the state's economic development can proceed.

Particular attention shall have to be paid to the police department. The number of police circles and the manpower in each thana or beat office will have to be increased. The number of constables and officers of the state will have to take a quantum leap. All thanas or police stations must be linked to one another and with a central office through computer networks. The intelligence and investigation wings will also have to be revamped. Already the Supreme Court has directed the separation of law and order from investigation. This needs to be carried out in full measure. Finally, a system has to be introduced to ensure the co-operation of the public in the maintenance of law and public order

In addition to the above the BJP will seek to:

- Form a Special Action Group for maintaining peace and respectful harmonious relations among the various communities in the valley and hill areas.
- Establish a strong state-level Special Task Force to fight against political violence
- Addressing the aspirations of all ethnic groups and have a peaceful dialogue without compromising the national interest.
- Strengthening the Meghalaya police and providing it with the latest technologies and equipments.
- Taking measures for closer cooperation between state police and traditional institutions.
- Including civic education in school and college curriculum to create awareness about the need to obey laws and respect human rights.
- Introducing a scheme for need-based installation of biometric system in police stations, to prevent crimes like drug-trafficking and human trafficking.

Protecting the Environment and Forests

The BJP feels that good governance must include the protection of the environment and forests. Meghalaya is endowed with rich biodiversity and natural resources. However, environmental degradation and pollution has become a cause of concern in recent times. Life support systems namely air, land, water and vegetation are under considerable strain. The major environmental problems are the result of population pressure, conversion of forest land into agricultural fields, deforestation,

urbanization, mining and industrialization. The increasing anthropogenic stresses of various kinds are likely to further aggravate the environment in the future.

The BJP would like to ensure that the Government take the lead:

- to preserve Meghalaya's natural resources with special emphasis on wetland, forest, biodiversity and protection of wildlife;
- to regulate mining in the state so as to maintain the ecological balance;
- to implement a 'zero tolerance' policy on environmental degradation and pollution;
- to legislate to prevent and control pollution of water, air and environment;
- to implement efficiently managed disposal of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) and Bio-Medical Waste (BMW)
- Promoting joint forest management with the participation of Autonomous District Councils.
- Attempting to conserve endangered species of crops, fruits, medicinal plants and animals through universities and research institutes.
- Encouraging afforestation around cities and towns.

Disaster Management

The impact of natural disasters like floods, earthquake, wildfire, landslide, storms can change the setting of a region and bring miseries to life. But its impact can also be reduced through a competent disaster management system which Meghalaya lacks in. Floods have become a normal phenomenon and the frequent landslides have added more concerns to the landlocked Meghalaya. Though the state lies in seismic zone, it has not yet seen any large-scale devastation by earthquake. However, the state must have its disaster management plan ready.

Here again the Party will design and develop an effective and comprehensive disaster management system, reduce the impact of natural calamities through pre-emptive provisions, create a master plan for forecasting and controlling floods in all flood-prone areas, prevent land erosion caused by floods, implement an effective policy for protection of livelihood of habitations in flood-prone areas

In addition the following specific tasks will be undertaken:

- Establishing a Natural Disaster Training and Research Institute, and a natural disaster management contingent.
- Carrying out afforestation on massive scale to control landslides and floods.
- Setting up of a river research institute to study flood and land erosion and to come up with long-term solutions.
- Encourage construction of earthquake-resistant buildings.
- Setting up and applying the latest technologies like GIS (Global Information System) for early warning of any natural disaster.
- Introducing an insurance scheme to compensate the loss incurred by the natural disaster.
- Setting up a specially trained unit of doctors, nurses, paramedics for management of health care in the calamity-prone areas
- Introducing a comprehensive rehabilitation scheme for the victims of all sorts of natural and man-made disasters.