

TABLE OF CONTENTS

table of contents	1
Introduction: the Vision, Goals & the Strategies	2
Affordable & accessible Healthcare	9
potable Water & Management of Water Resources	10
Developing Urban areas	11
Improving Conditions in Rural Areas	12
Women and Child Development	13
Employment & Poverty Alleviation	14
Agriculture & Agro Industries	17
Horticulture and Floriculture	18
Animal Husbandry and Poultry Development	19
Pisciculture	20
Tourism and Hospitality Sector	21
Mineral Wealth	22
Industries	23
Expansion & Reorganisation of formal Education	26
Skill Development	27
Promotion of Sports and Games	28
Youth Activities	29
Art and Culture	29
Energy and Renewable Energy	32
Improving connectivity	32
Making Governance Efficient, Transparent and Accountable	35
Management and Development of Border Areas	36
Law and Maintenance of Public Order	37
Protecting the Environment and Forests	38
Disaster Management	39

INTRODUCTION: THE VISION, GOALS & THE STRATEGIES

Meghalaya as a full-fledged Indian state came into existence in January 1972. Four decades on, it is unfortunate that the state has not joined the ranks of the foremost states in the country. The state has miserably failed to provide the people the basic amenities of a civilized existence - healthcare, a dependable and safe water supply, uninterrupted power, sanitation, education for all, etc. The much needed infrastructure, primarily surface connectivity and power generation, to enable the state to take advantage of the opportunities offered by national and global economic changes, has not moved beyond pious pronouncements. The state failed to formulate suitable policies and programmes for achievement on agriculture, cattle development and pisciculture, forest and environment, mineral exploitation, family welfare, socio-cultural promotion; on trade and commerce including markets establishment; transportations; employment avenues; and service recruitment; on infiltration and also on the entire administration.

Today, the dependence has increased not only on import of regular food items from outside the state but also on a wider gamut of commodities and above all on generation of resources for development; what today many refer to as the 'dependency syndrome' of the state.

The people of Meghalaya aspire to see their state emerge peaceful, strong, confident, and ready to engage with the global economy. They would like to march on the path of economic, social and cultural progress towards prosperity and well-being, to participate in governance and determine the allocation of public resources and public services they receive. Political empowerment in evolving responsive governance would help to achieve social and economic empowerment as well. They want to banish poverty and illiteracy and ensure that every family in the region has the opportunity to live a healthy and secure life with dignity and self-respect. Moving away from the dependency syndrome, people in the region would like to acquire the capability and self-confidence to shape their own destinies. They would like to enjoy peace and achieve substantial progress and prosperity.

The Meghalaya Vision 2025 seeks to achieve, in some substantial measure, the hopes and aspirations of the people. The policies enumerated in this document will, it is hoped, carry the state towards its cherished goals. These, it needs to be emphasized, is not considered as an end in itself, but rather as a basis for continued growth of the state's prosperity for the remaining decades of the twenty first century. The Meghalaya envisaged in this document is:

“A state where hunger and poverty is eliminated and peace; prosperity and security of life and property of every citizen is assured; a state committed to the welfare of its people, where they can access the benefits of housing, power, drinking water, sanitation and healthcare, especially for the aged, women and children; a state with an educational system that will equip its youth morally and intellectually to find a vocation and a livelihood of their choice, provide the state with trained manpower; a state that will enable the social and cultural life, and traditions of the people to prosper; a state where there will be an equitable distribution of wealth generated by sound economic policies and agricultural and industrial development; a state where the growth of every village, town or urban settlement will be planned, and each connected by a dependable network of surface roads and alternate modes; a state linked to bordering states and neighbouring countries to ensure social mobility and promotion of trade and tourism; a state whose government is responsive and accountable; and a state where the people, especially its women are empowered as participants at every level of the decision making process.”

The goals thus set out consists of three basic aims - (1) To improve the quality of life by providing the basic amenities (2) the economic development of the state and the equitable distribution of wealth, and (3) the transformation of the population into an asset through appropriate means of human resource development. The success of its implementation will depend on two factors: (1) the level of investment in various sectors and the infrastructure so created, and (2) the effectiveness of governance and the extent of people's participation or involvement. Both these two sets of factors need to be briefly noticed before going into the details of the various plans and policies. Hence, this document has been divided into these five sections.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE

North East India is still regarded as one of the most backward regions in the country where income and livelihood is concerned. The gap between the region and the rest of the country in terms of various developmental outcomes, productivity, institutions and capacities of the people is large and needs to be bridged. Even within the region, there are vast differences; particularly between populations living in the hills and in the plains and between those living in the towns and villages. Negligence and underdevelopment has resulted into poor quality of life in this region. This state of affairs is all the more glaring in the case of Meghalaya. In Meghalaya, affordable and quality healthcare, sanitation, safe drinking water, and electric supply are luxuries to the average citizens, strangely, both urban and rural. That the benefits of the state's healthcare system have not reached a considerable portion of the population is now fairly well established.

This is largely due to the structure of the administration of health services and its delivery mechanism. In the state capital and the district headquarters private enterprise has supplemented the system provided by the government, inadequate though. The picture in the rural areas, however, remains dismal. The indifference of medical professionals, especially those belonging to the government's Health Department to postings outside urban centres and the ill-maintained health centres is indicative of the current rural health scene. The high cost of medicine and treatment, generally, makes access to the existing healthcare system a well-nigh distant dream.

Undoubtedly, nutrition and hygiene must be associated with healthcare. In the rural areas, the implementation of the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) has been uneven and is behind its target of a hundred percent coverage of rural households. Out of over 6000 villages, many villages are not yet free from open defecation.

The success of any water-borne sanitation system will naturally depend on the efficiency of the water supply system. The problem of water relates not only to safe drinking water but also to regular supply for cleaning and washing purposes. The experience of citizens, that too in the state capital, has been distressing in this regard. This is equally true for the district and sub-divisional headquarters. The claims that over 90 percent of the villages have been provided adequate water hide the fact that much of the cleaning and washing is done in or near adjoining streams and rivers resulting in their pollution. And where these water bodies are also the catchment areas and sources of supply of drinking water, there is the danger of it leading to epidemics; and West Garo Hills has gone through it in the recent past.

The quality of life of the people would depend basically upon the construction of their dwellings, the sanitary conditions in which they live, availability of a safe and adequate water supply, their easy access to the state's healthcare system and the availability of affordable healthy food – in

urban as well as rural areas. To this must be added electricity and the condition of roads, within settlements and as part of the State's communications, both of which will be dealt with under infrastructure development. But quality of life must be understood in terms of the wider question of prosperity, and therefore of the economic growth.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY

A number of factors have combined to inhibit the economic development of Meghalaya. In neither of the two prime movers of growth, agriculture and industry, has there been any significant progress so far. Wealth has not been generated nor have new avenues for employment created. There has been little technological input, and the inadequacy of the infrastructure and communications system have been allowed to remain a major constraint to economic development.

Meghalaya's economy has been primarily agricultural. Yet, given the state's peculiar problems including the nature of land holding, the area under cultivation has not kept pace correspondingly with the steady increase of its population and its demands. Where *jhum* cultivation is still practiced, problems of a different character arise. Reference has already been made to policies which have led to the import of food grains instead of providing incentives for local production. To an extent, the limitations to agricultural production will make such imports from other states, especially the staple rice, necessary for some time to come. Nevertheless, the crop area will need to be extended, even assuming that *jhum* cultivation will be gradually replaced by rain-fed or irrigated and settled agriculture, multi-cropping made popular, new technologies and improved varieties of rice introduced so that yield per hectare is substantially augmented.

Apart from agriculture, floriculture, horticulture, pisciculture and animal husbandry has to be brought within the scope of any plans for the state's economic development. The climate, soil and the species found in Meghalaya is particularly well adapted with the first two.

Thus agro-climatic zone planning, an appropriate land use policy, training of local youths, the use of extension services, making available cold storage facilities and creating markets would receive the priority. The aim here is to ensure self-sufficiency in food production; cultivation of fruits and vegetables; development of fisheries; and livestock rearing for domestic consumption as well as for markets outside Meghalaya. It is intended to promote entrepreneurship and create new avenues for employment and finally the generation of revenue for the state. The same principles also guide the industrial development in Meghalaya.

Three factors of prime importance have to be kept in mind in planning industrial growth of Meghalaya. The first is the scale and choice of industries must be appropriate to the state's human and physical environment; secondly, these must be based on a judicious utilisation of and supported by the available local material – such as its mineral wealth, and finally there has to be a balance between agriculture and industry.

While agriculture and industry are important in themselves, their potential to generate resources for the state, create jobs and entrepreneurship in small and medium enterprises is fully recognised. They are therefore made an integral element in the overall strategy for economic development of the state. The concept and scope of an industry, and therefore of industrialisation, must be sufficiently broad-based to include existing and emerging professions in an effort towards widening Meghalaya's resource base.

In this regard, the Tourism and hospitality sector calls for special treatment. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council an investment of Rs. 10 lakhs can generate approximately 50 Jobs as against 13 in manufacturing. In Meghalaya the development of tourism as an industry could lead to a tremendous increase in income and employment, the “ripple effect” as it has been called that spread far beyond the actual tourism activity. Meghalaya’s great advantage and indeed its strength, lies in its climate and the beauty of the hills and dales, and its rich flora and fauna. The state has a rich variety of megalithic culture and this combined with vibrant ethnic festivals can offer attractive tourism prospects. However, it needs to be stressed here that Meghalaya’s development strategies must take into account its traditions and natural resources.

Three perquisites will have to be attended to if what has been envisioned is to be achieved. The first is to create the human resources with the requisite skills, education and motivation to carry the schemes through to fruition; the second relates to investments into and the creation of the required infrastructure; and the third is good governance.

MAKING HUMAN RESOURCE PRODUCTIVE

If human resources are to play any role in the economic regeneration of Meghalaya a higher priority has to be accorded to education than it currently enjoys. Reforms, touching both ideas and structure of the system will need to be carried out.

Occasional strikes by school and college teachers in recent years suggest that all is not well with education in Meghalaya. The disruptions in the academic life of the state have been largely due to existing service or working conditions, pay scales or as it so often happens emerge out of dissatisfaction over recruitment policies. Its cumulative effect has been to erode the credibility and public confidence in the entire educational system. Today, rural Meghalaya is experiencing scarcity of adequate educational facilities.

A frequently heard complaint is about the curriculum content of the courses at the various levels of school and college education. These are said to have little relevance in the needs of the state and that the student is neither employable nor with any skills for self employment. The present system also suffers from the fact it does not offer a sufficiently wide field of study and therefore the range of the career options open to graduates is greatly limited. There is an urgent need of reorientation of the education policies and programmes.

There is no institutional link between collegiate education and the University, except that representatives of the Government and the Colleges in the various authorities and bodies of the latter. Had a State Education Council, the setting up of which had been recommended by the central government years ago, had been in place the variety of courses and updated curriculum would have been possible. This apart, such a Council is desirable for an integrated approach through interaction between the University and the State Government for the development and constant monitoring of the educational needs of the state, resulting into capacity building of the state. The diversification of courses of study with a view to its vocationalising can still be carried through without structural changes in the existing system.

The prevailing educational scenario in the state is unable to create a pool of skilled workers to fulfill the needs of various state enterprises and at the same time to enable a large many to pursue entrepreneurship.

Apart from formal education, the local talents can also be nurtured for visual and performing arts thereby promoting local traditions and professionalism in arts. Also, the intrinsic value of sports and games, especially in the schools and colleges, for building the virtues of character and leadership qualities in the youth cannot any longer be ignored.

The reform and regeneration of education in Meghalaya cannot be achieved without corresponding reforms carried out in the structure and organization of the department or agencies responsible for carrying out the policies thus laid down.

FOUNDATIONS OF GROWTH: THE INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure development is critical for sustained economic growth, poverty reduction and job operation. For the economic development of the mountainous north eastern region, connectivity, infrastructure and investment are the basic needs and the government needs to accord the highest priority to these issues.

In Meghalaya, the two areas that cry for massive inputs are connectivity and power supply. Connectivity as it concerns the state consists of three distinct linkage systems: (1) roadways connectivity, (2) air and rail links, and (3) to a lesser degree inland waterways.

The state's road coverage is certainly most unimpressive. Although over a thousand kilometers of State highways exist in the state, none of the district headquarters in the Garo Hills are directly connected by all-weather well-built roads with the State Capital, Shillong. Their route lies through the state of Assam. Meghalaya's roads, including those in the urban areas, are in poor state of maintenance. Air links are in infancy and the rail links are in the exploratory stage.

The State's connectivity problem has been admittedly aggravated by geographical factors, that is, its location at one corner of the country and its generally difficult hilly terrain. But more importantly in the past adequate attention, and therefore of investment, has not given to this important basis for development. Rather wrong policies have been persisted upon.

The road connectivity in the state should be improved to such an extent that no town or village is isolated from the rest of the country. A dependable transportation system should be put in place.

Despite the abundant rainfall it enjoys, Meghalaya has today been described as a power-starved state. Once a power-surplus state, it is ironically unable to meet its normal power requirements. At current consumption levels Meghalaya's peak requirements is a minimum 630 MW. Of this 420 MW or two third, is industrial demand and the remainder is for domestic and commercial use. The state produces 186 MW (the greater amount being the Umiam Hydel Project, and 42 MW generated from the Myntdu-Leshka Hydel Project in the Jaintia Hills. The total power available including from the national grid is 397 MW. 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. Many of the villages, especially in Garo Hills, are not yet electrified.

Unless Meghalaya becomes self-sufficient in power and 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 renewable energy sources like thermal, geo-thermal, solar and wind will have to be explored for domestic, commercial and industrial application.

Apart from road network and power generation, it is necessary to understand the importance of the broader concept of what constitutes infrastructure. The feasibility of developing waterways for navigation should be explored. Meghalaya needs to go beyond the physical foundations and create facilities for institutional support for growth.

GOVERNANCE

Good governance is an essential prerequisite for the moral and material progress of Meghalaya, as for any other Indian state. 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. In recent years, these have received considerable attention through dissent and protests. The peace and prosperity of the state and the success of the various schemes for its economic and social transformation depends on the resolution of this important issue of law and order. Equal and 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. This is of particular importance where social and economic policies that directly impinge on the lives of the people are concerned. This calls for awareness and knowledge of the ongoing process of planning and the execution of policies and plans at every level of government and administration. Thus transparency, accountability and responsiveness in government have to be ensured.

The more specific functions of the Government is, of course, to provide for primary and higher education, public health, water and power supply, public works and so on. The government should also take necessary steps to look after the forest and environment and its natural resources. The efficient discharge of such responsibilities makes the raising of finances a primary objective of government.

The co-existence of traditional institutions with a modern political system makes governance in Meghalaya unique, or rather complicated. Along with an executive, a judiciary and a legislature and the District Councils with administrative and legislative functions established under the Sixth schedule of the Constitution, are the village authorities in the Khasi, Jaintia and the Garo Hills.

In the strategy to achieve the vision targets, considerable emphasis should be on a well-structured and purposeful administrative system at all levels of governance to ensure that this support shall be forthcoming in the ongoing process of the development of the State.

SECTION I

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE

AFFORDABLE & ACCESSIBLE HEALTHCARE

Public health is fundamental. Reducing premature death and minimizing the effects of disease, disability, and injury is a must to improve the quality of life. After all, the main intent of public health is to promote a healthier population. This is quintessential to a sustainable, affordable and accessible healthcare system, and also provides economic and social benefits for the state, due in part to increased productivity.

The reach of the existing infrastructure in Meghalaya - the Government hospitals, dispensaries and primary healthcare – is uneven. In rural and remote areas it is too thinly spread. The extent and quality of the service provided in terms of availability of specialists, doctors, staff and equipment for diagnostic and therapeutic procedures is equally very poor. At most places maternity and child welfare facilities are absent. Worse still, the cost of medicine and treatment is beyond the capacity of the average citizen, not to speak of the economically weaker sections, to meet. Also, the recent census revealed that only 60% of the population in the state is aware of HIV infection (AIDS).

OBJECTIVES

- To provide a disease-free living by improving the health & nutritional status of the population
- To increase the density of medical facilities across the state – cities, towns and villages
- To establish adequate number of medical, paramedical and nursing colleges
- To promote and accomplish systematic child immunisation programmes
- To promote preventive medicine, nutrition and hygiene
- To professionally study and promote indigenous healthcare systems like herbal
- To spread medical awareness through various initiatives

WAY FORWARD

- Upgrading the district civil hospitals into high-tech 200-bed hospitals, may be through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.
- Ensuring every block has a well-equipped PHC having multi-specialty facilities like maternity, dental, ophthalmology, pathology, and out-patient department (OPD) and operation theatres for at least minor surgical procedures.
- Ensuring at least 5 doctors per thousand population, with viable incentives and accommodation facilities at the respective places.
- Reducing IMR (Infant Mortality Ratio) and MMR (Maternal Mortality Ratio) drastically by carrying out awareness campaigns on pregnancy, promoting institutional deliveries and providing adequate medical facilities at village-level.
- Making available mobile dispensaries (for specialised cases) and '24 x 7' ambulance services for rural areas.
- Decentralising purchase of medicines and equipments with a budget cap, to ensure Block-level pool.
- Instituting at least one modern medical college, one paramedical college, one nursing college and one professional institute for medical technicians in every district.

- Emphasising the importance of preventive medicine; and conducting camps to create awareness about nutrition, personal and environmental hygiene.
- Establishing a R&D institute in Tura to study and promote indigenous / herbal medical systems.
- Strengthening the remote diagnostic services through telemedicine, to increase the penetration of healthcare in rural areas.
- Reorganize and upgrade the state department of Health Services in to a Directorate General.
- Providing health insurance to economically weaker sections.
- Setting up a strong network of blood banks across the state.
- Publicising the importance organ and body donation.
- Conducting HIV / AIDS awareness programmes in every village.
- Introducing special incentives for setting up private hospitals and healthcare centres.
- Maintaining hygiene and cleanliness throughout the state.

POTABLE WATER & MANAGEMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

The state of Meghalaya records highest rainfall in the world. Its water resources consist of the rivers and streams; the natural and man-made water bodies; and the natural springs. However, the majority population of the state does not have access to potable water. The difficulties experienced in the towns and villages during the winter or dry months are indications of the mismanagement of the water resources of the state and the absence of any water policy.

Meghalaya's water sources have been affected by negligence and some have become unusable. Owing to the indifference of the Government and the municipal organisations, pollution and degradation of these water bodies is overwhelming. The problem therefore is not merely of water supply to the population but also of the management and regeneration of the water resources of the state.

OBJECTIVES

- To take stringent steps for rain water harvesting and for conservation of the state's water resources
- To provide safe and potable drinking water all around the year
- To expand urban water supply facilities to round-the-clock
- To ensure tap water to every rural household

WAY FORWARD

- Introducing a policy for the protection and management of the state's water resources with modern technologies; making their pollution and degradation a punishable offence.
- Constituting a special commission for regular environmental study of major rivers, lakes and other water bodies in the state.

- Linking rivers wherever possible and feasible, raising bunds or dams, and constructing canals and dams for improved utilisation of the water resources.
- Adopting high-tech irrigation methods, bringing most of the cultivable land under irrigation.
- Implementing a time-bound plan to clean up and restore the rivers, streams and dredging water bodies like Umiam lake; and to prevent further pollution.
- Regenerating and controlling the ground water level and rejuvenating rivers, streams and water bodies like Umiam lake (Bara Pani).
- Ensuring a supply of about 50 litres of safe and potable water per individual per day.
- Strengthening and enhancing the Greater Shillong Water Supply Scheme for effective 24x7 water supply and also introducing such schemes in other cities and towns.
- Encouraging and assisting the population in rainwater harvesting, especially in urban areas
- Regulating the bore-wells and tube-wells to maintain the underground water table.
- Introducing a special scheme to conserve water from mountain top till the bed of the river.
- Drawing up a special scheme to provide tap water supply in rural areas.
- Restoring the aqueduct in Shillong to provide for regular feeding of the Ward's Lake and public parks.

DEVELOPING URBAN AREAS

Far too many years had been allowed to pass before the state's problem of urban growth was even recognized. During these years of neglect, there has been a haphazard growth of towns as urban population began to grow by leaps and bounds.

The state capital, Shillong, once described as one of the prettiest hill stations in the country and well known for its civic management, has today become crowded and polluted. The inevitable influx due to the proliferation of Government departments, state & central, is augmented with the rural-urban migration as a result of unpromising life in rural Meghalaya. The capital city also lacks in minimum amenities that are necessary for a modern urban lifestyle.

Fundamental to the orderly growth of urban centres is the question of housing. In Meghalaya, there is a growing population of landless tribals who migrate in search of livelihood. The cost of land and construction of houses have become almost prohibitive to them. The absence of any housing scheme, slums are cropping up. Adoption of a new housing policy covering low-cost housing has become indispensable.

Tura, Jowai and Nongpoh, the three other leading towns suffer from the same maladies. These three along with other fast developing towns and townships have been allowed to grow without any plan or foresight and lack in basic amenities for a well-ordered civic life.

There is an immediate need to lay down a policy to provide adequate infrastructure facilities to support the rapid urban growth as well as enhance the economic potential of Shillong and the other urban centers in Meghalaya.

OBJECTIVES

- To provide housing, sanitation, water supply, uninterrupted electricity and sewage disposal facilities to the urban population
- To develop Shillong, Tura, Jowai and Nongpoh into 'Class One' cities
- To develop well-planned townships with modern amenities
- To introduce efficient public transport system

WAY FORWARD

- Reorganising and strengthening the Meghalaya Urban Development Authority.
- Demarcating the functions between MUDA and the Municipalities.
- Preparing and implementing City Development Plans for Shillong, Tura, Jowai and Nongpoh, with involvement of experienced and professional town planning consultants.
- Ensuring availability of basic amenities such as food, water, shelter, transportation, communication and healthcare up to grass-root level.
- Introducing legislation on a fresh long-term housing policy.
- Rejuvenating the State Housing Board.
- Building affordable housing complexes on the lands belonging to the state or urban local bodies; and introducing housing microfinance products for economically backward people.
- Controlling development activities and guiding the urban local bodies by introducing new byelaws for construction of buildings and reservations for public amenities like roads, schools, hospitals, markets, gardens and playgrounds.
- Planning and developing satellite townships equipped with all modern facilities like rainwater harvesting, adequate parking and sewage systems.
- Preventing further rising of slums and introducing schemes for elimination of the existing slums
- Designing and implementing ambitious plan for solid waste management and applying practices like vermiculture, pelletisation, aerobic composting, mechanical composting as well as energy generation.
- Providing public transportation system comprising buses, mini-buses, maxi-cabs, taxis and auto-rickshaws at an affordable price in all cities and smaller towns across the state.
- Implementing effective traffic control system with modern technologies like GPS and vehicle tracking system in urban areas.
- Connecting Shillong, Tura and Jowai with well-built roads.

IMPROVING CONDITIONS IN RURAL AREAS

Meghalaya has over six thousand villages of various sizes and complexity against sixteen towns, with a rural population that constitutes over eighty percent of the state's total. In the past, rural Meghalaya has not received the attention it deserves. Lack of perceptible development and surface connectivity has kept these villages in relative isolation. Inadequate healthcare facilities, effective educational facilities and poor electrification have resulted into a steady rural-urban migration.

A new concept of rural life in Meghalaya needs to be envisaged, thereby breaking the old complex 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.

The isolation of the villages will have to be brought to an end through a better road and communication network; education in all branches of learning and skill development will need to be introduced; and the basic amenities (such as sanitation, water supply, power and healthcare) that make life comfortable and productive in the towns and cities should be extended to the villages.

OBJECTIVES

- To effectively implement PURA (Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas)
- To create substantial infrastructure for development of rural Meghalaya.
- To ensure availability of gainful employment opportunities to the rural population.

WAY FORWARD

- Instituting Meghalaya Rural Development Authority for developmental activities in rural areas of the state.
- Creating a Rural Infrastructure Fund for providing basic infrastructure like power, education, healthcare, housing, water supply and other necessary facilities.
- Strengthening the State Institute of Rural Development for effective training pertaining to rural development.
- Strengthening and modernising educational and healthcare facilities.
- Ensuring uninterrupted electric supply and safe drinking water to every rural household.
- Reinforcing and modernising PHCs with adequate staff and equipments.
- Facilitating effective marketing of products made by rural population.
- Attempting to make every rural household self-reliant by promoting bio-gas and supplementary agricultural businesses.
- Designing and implementing a time-bound plan for building all-weather roads and setting up public transport system to connect villages and district headquarters.
- Establishing robust telecommunication network between the villages and urban centres, with satellite, optical fibre cables and wireless technologies, especially in hilly terrains.
- Strengthening women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) by introducing various schemes for them.
- Implementing an ECOSAN system with membrane technology to encourage production of fertilizers using sewage water, bio-medical waste and sanitary waste.
- Introducing a scheme to build houses that can sustain floods and earthquake.
- Facilitating the availability of microfinance to the rural entrepreneurs.
- Enhancing the traditional system of village governance.
- Installing surveillance system to prevent infiltration.

WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

One of the unique features of the state is that a majority of the tribal population follows a matrilineal system. The women of the state are very enterprising and occupy a prominent position in the society. However, representation in politics and traditional institutions for them is been miles away. 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. The recent reports state that Meghalaya is the second state in the country in child malnutrition.

OBJECTIVES

- To elevate the status of women in every aspect – political, social and economical
- To transform the role of women from supportive to protagonist performer
- To provide adequate healthcare facilities to women and children
- To encourage organised women entrepreneurship and leadership
- To create a conducive atmosphere for the multifaceted development of children

WAY FORWARD

- Constituting an independent Directorate for women and child development.
- Making State Commission for Women more effective and opening up its centres in every district.
- Conducting a campaign to encourage self-employment amongst women from all strata and providing with robust organisational support with necessary infrastructure.
- 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, to understand women's experiences and accordingly attempt to change their condition, through transformation of consciousness, social forms and modes of action.
- Encouraging women's Self-Help Groups (SHG) and implement an effective policy to provide financial assistance to them.
- Introducing a scheme to facilitate women's associations to manage agricultural, livestock and micro-enterprise activities indulging in local development.
- Conducting awareness programmes about illegal human trafficking and introducing a strict law to punish the traffickers.
- Implementing a scheme wherein women can take individual or collective action to improve various aspects of their lives like domestic violence and alcohol abuse.
- Propagating and conducting frequent child immunization programmes across the state.
- Reviving the existing government-sponsored child-care/mother-care centres (Anganwadi) and setting up such new centres across the state.
- Preventing malnutrition by implementing a scheme to provide nutritious food to the children of economically backward families.
- Taking rigorous steps to prevent child labour in the state.

EMPLOYMENT & POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Today, employment generation which is an important aspect of the state's economic development is stuck into clumsy policies and shoddy implementation of the poverty alleviation programmes. 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 or outside the state. Despite all tall talks of development, level of poverty in Meghalaya has been increasing even though the same has declined in the rest of the country.

OBJECTIVES

- To chalk out and implement a time-bound, result-oriented poverty alleviation programme
- To uplift all BPL families to the APL level by all means
- To carry out employment enhancement programmes, especially in rural areas

WAY FORWARD

- 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 like Gujarat's Garib Kalyan Mela .
- Offering scholarship and freeship schemes 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.
- Exploring the potential of tourism in the state, and setting up a training institute to complement the needs.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND
RESOURCE GENERATION

AGRICULTURE & AGRO INDUSTRIES

Meghalaya is not only richly endowed with rainfall but also has a diverse plant and animal genetic base. It is basically an agrarian society with about 80% of its population depending entirely on agriculture for their livelihood. The food grain production sector covers an area of over 60% of the total crop area. The quality of potatoes and arecanuts of the Khasi hills, turmeric in the Jaintia Hills and pineapples in the Garo hills has been well-known outside the state.

Limited use of modern techniques, almost negligible in hill areas, results into poor yields. A substantial portion of the cultivated area is under the traditional shifting, known as “Jhum”, cultivation. Widespread traditional farming practices, correspondingly low usage of farm inputs, prevalence of subsistence cultivation, lack of necessary infrastructure and negligence has caused a low contribution of agricultural production to the state’s GDP; and most of the population engaged in agriculture remain poor. As a consequence, despite the vast majority of the population being engaged in agriculture, the state is not even able to meet its own requirements in many commodities.

Though the total crop area has been on the increase in the past few years, the state also has a lot more potential for developing horticulture due to agro-climatic variations, which offer much scope for cultivation of temperate, sub-tropical and tropical fruits and vegetables. However, industries based on agriculture or those complementing agriculture were hardly encouraged in Meghalaya.

In India, the Public Distribution System (PDS) is a major instrument for ensuring availability of food to every household at affordable prices. However, this system also has failed miserably in Meghalaya, especially in the rural areas.

OBJECTIVES

- To give industry status to agriculture and animal farming; and to promote it as an attractive career option
- To adapt advanced techniques and technologies for improvisation of agricultural productivity
- To encourage sustainable and environment-friendly agricultural practices
- To provide professional agricultural training
- To bring additional land mass under cultivation
- To give impetus to a range of agro industries with an emphasis on food processing
- To ensure regular supply of nutritious food through an effective food security regime under PDS

WAY FORWARD

- Making agriculture a more organised sector
- Encouraging and accelerating modern irrigation facilities with active community and state participation
- Establishing an agricultural university for undergraduate and graduate studies in agriculture.
- Enhancing the R&D facilities at ICAR complex to explore potential of local crops.

- Fortifying the core strength of agricultural crops as well as facilitating multiple crop cultivation.
- Ensuring more Krishi Vigyan Kendras equipped with modern technologies to train and educate farmers and rural youth.
- Using expertise of ICAR and Krishi Vigyan Kendras for periodic soil testing and to issue annual Soil Health Card to the farmers.
- Ensuring the farmers a minimum support price for their yield.
- Promoting and encouraging organic farming.
- Establishing efficient marketing chain of farm produce; may be through cooperative movement.
- Educating farmers in scientific cropping patterns and modern farming techniques like agricultural biotechnology.
- Establishing district-level market yards with adequate affordable warehousing facilities and cold storages services.
- Launching a scheme to facilitate easy and immediate agricultural loans by mortgaging food stock with the government.
- Encouraging farmers to implement modern technologies by making loans at 3 percent interest rate available to them.
- Establishing a venture capital fund to boost modern industries that are either agro-based or complement agriculture.
- Introducing greater element of accountability and effectiveness with computerization and high-tech vehicle tracking system to restructure and enhance PDS.
- Promoting horticulture and floriculture with demands of national and international market in the mind.
- Promoting and encouraging high-tech food processing and packaging industries with a special impetus to processing of pineapple, oranges, gooseberry, etc.

HORTICULTURE AND FLORICULTURE

Meghalaya offers an excellent scope for growing of different types of horticultural crops including fruits, vegetables, spices, plantation crops, medicinal plants and aromatic plants of high economic value. A wide range of tropical, sub-tropical and temperate fruits are grown all over the State. The higher altitude provides conducive environment to grow traditional vegetables like potato and cole crops during the rainy season. Tuber and root crops such as sweet potato and tapioca, spices such as turmeric, ginger, chilly and black pepper also grow abundantly. Plantation crops such as tea, cashewnut, coconut, arecanut also have been performing well and offer good scope for area expansion. In the long run, these crops can change the entire economic condition of the people of 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 and the varied range of agro-climatic conditions. 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.

Ironically, Meghalaya is far from realising the potential of this sector due to lack of necessary professional training, technologies and adequate infrastructure. Despite having the huge

potential for augmenting productive income and employment, horticulture and floriculture in the state is in nascent stage.

OBJECTIVES

- To make horticulture and floriculture a vibrant export-oriented sector of economy
- To expand the horizon of employment and livelihood through horticulture and floriculture
- To establish stronger linkages with other sectors like agro-based industry, agro-marketing and healthcare

WAY FORWARD

- Increasing investment in horticulture and floriculture through a special financial package and fund.
- Supporting a large number of agro-based industries, may be through public-private partnership, so that large surplus of horticulture and floriculture produce finds its proper place.
- Promoting and encouraging high-tech food processing and packaging industries with a special impetus to processing of fruits like pineapple, oranges, cashewnuts, and roseberry.
- Building the necessary infrastructure including storage chains, warehousing services and marketing channels at district headquarters.
- Establishing a separate Directorate of horticulture and floriculture.
- Setting up an Export Processing Zone for horticulture and floriculture at Tura.
- Strengthening the State Medicinal Plants Board to ascertain R&D activities in exploring the medicinal values of the untapped flora resources.
- Establishing a Medicinal Plant Processing Zone and Ayush industry cluster at Jowai.
- Providing with credit facility and insurance scheme to horticulture and floriculture farmers.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND POULTRY DEVELOPMENT

The tribals in Meghalaya are by and large non-vegetarian in food habits. However, the bulk of the State's requirements are met by imports. This is curious as Meghalaya has large swathes of territory spread over the state ideal for cattle and sheep (and goat) rearing. Animal husbandry is not yet taken as a viable source of employment and income.

The meat business is carried on under primitive conditions. Organized abattoirs are absent, even in the state capital of Shillong, and the method of slaughter and marketing of meat - pork, beef or goat - is not done under proper hygienic conditions. Unlike the supply of meat, poultry business is beginning to attract entrepreneurs, especially in the east Khasi Hills. However, animal husbandry and poultry farming needs to be encouraged in the areas of the Garo and Jaintia hills. Professional piggery in Meghalaya is almost absent despite large consumption.

OBJECTIVES

- To make Meghalaya self-sufficient in livestock production
- To increase the milk and dairy production in the state
- To elevate animal husbandry, and dairy to a status of distinct industries

WAY FORWARD

- Strengthening and modernising the Tura and Shillong centres of College of Veterinary Sciences & Animal Husbandry.
- Setting up a modern R&D centre to produce better breeds using existing and selective foreign gene pools.
- Introducing a policy for organised slaughtering.
- Developing a gene bank facility for each potential species, to avoid genetic degradation.
- Encouraging implementation of modern technologies available in the sector.
- Implementing standardised technological advancements of new species combination, nutritional aspects and disease management.
- Promoting the cooperative movement and women's SHG in this sector; and also exploring the Public Private Partnership model.
- Establishing the necessary infrastructure for cold storage, marketing and packaging of the produce of animal husbandry and dairy to facilitate domestic as well as exports market.

PISCICULTURE

Despite the higher potential consumer base in the state, fish, like meat, is also largely imported from outside the state, from as far afield as South India. Much of this comes in frozen form, though small quantities of fresh fish from Assam and Bangladesh are also seen in the local markets. Traditionally, sun-dried fish forms an imported item of trade with the plains.

Consumption of fish as an important part of the daily diet has, of late, perceptively increased among the tribal people and there is a growing preference for fresh fish over the frozen variety. However, poor communication / transportation network and consequent higher costs are their biggest concerns.

The demand for fresh fish is therefore bound to increase in the future and this demand must be met by increased local production rather than by a larger volume of import. This can be achieved by increasing the number of fisheries and utilizing the existing rivers and water bodies. These fisheries will require careful consideration and assistance of the expertise available with Government. Pisciculture should be looked at as an industry and an emphasis should be given on modern technologies, professional ethics and academics.

OBJECTIVES

- To make Meghalaya self-sufficient in fish production.
- To earn foreign revenue by exporting edible as well as ornamental fish
- To generate employment by improving fish farming

WAY FORWARD

- Encouraging technology-based fish farming
- Setting up 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 to 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 the 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.

TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY SECTOR

Any worthwhile increase in the tourist inflow into Meghalaya would in the first instance depend on a correct appraisal of the state's tourism potential and the type of tourist it intends to attract. The tourist, domestic and foreign, that the north-eastern states generally look at is not the conventional kind, but comes with various interests - heritage buildings, tribal culture and festivals, ancient megalithic sites. Meghalaya can satisfy fairly diverse tourist profile. Of late, there has been a growing appreciation of other emerging areas – ecotourism or adventure tourism - such as hand gliding, angling and water sports. Meghalaya offers a unique opportunity in these areas as well.

With this kind of diversity, the state's efforts cannot be confined to identifying and developing only a few isolated tourist spots. These apart, Meghalaya as a whole has to be geared up as tourist destination with government and the private sector working in tandem. Such integrated efforts will be necessary to ensure that tourism becomes a major resource and employment generating industry. To this end, several steps would have to be taken. The state needs to build adequate infrastructure and resources to make Meghalaya as an ideal tourist destination, with great profit to the people and the state.

OBJECTIVES

- To develop Meghalaya into one of the top tourist destinations in the country
- To develop necessary infrastructure and to create a conducive environment to boost tourism in Meghalaya

- To develop professional skill pool required for tourism industry along with allied hospitality sector
- To turn tourism into a major resource generating enterprise for the people and the state

WAY FORWARD

- Adopting a tourism policy that covers government initiative and regulations, extensive involvement of private sector and active participation of people.
- Giving utmost priority to the development of world-class tourism infrastructure including basic amenities, transport and telecommunication connectivity, improved hospitality sector and skilled manpower.
- Putting in place a well organized and efficient transportation network as a public-private enterprise; and ensure the quality of the service, the coaches and the taxis and other forms of transport in operation.
- Bringing the private stakeholders like transport and tour operators, hotels and resorts closer to participate in the state tourism.
- Introducing attractive incentive scheme for private hospitality sector to invest in the state as well as a scheme for the local young entrepreneurs (and NGOs) to develop tourism infrastructure such as buildings cottages, restaurants in the rural areas.
- Introducing special incentives to women entrepreneurs, particularly in the hospitality sector.
- 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 more institutes imparting training in tourism and hospitality and introducing the subject in the school curricula.
- Establishing a better coordination with tourism departments of other NE states to evolve various tourist circuits.
- Taking special efforts in marketing Meghalaya tourism through various media and events all over the world.

MINERAL WEALTH

The State of Meghalaya is gifted 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. Also, rampant unscientific rat-hole mining has been causing deforestation, river pollution, degradation of the lands. While the working and living conditions in the mines are deplorable, a situation where children work in them is a matter of concern.

OBJECTIVE

- To frame a mine and mineral policy and regulate mining to standard scientific methods for socio-economic development of the state; maintaining the environmental and ecological requirements
- To establish suitable regulations for the employment of labour in the mining industry
- To provide a comprehensive insurance cover to mining labour
- To create an appropriate mechanism for survey and utilization of raw materials into finished products within the State

WAY FORWARD

- Formulating and implementing the mines and minerals policy for the state of Meghalaya.
- Implementing an independent mineral-based industrial policy for the state.
- Carrying out regular mineral audits to analyse the state's mineral wealth.
- Preventing rat-hole mining and encouraging scientific systems of mining.
- Ensuring employment opportunities for the local people in the mining projects in their area.
- Forming an independent monitoring committee to observe and maintain ecological balance in mining areas.
- Opening a training institute of international repute for imparting special courses in mining.
- Ensuring security to the mining areas and to the mining labour by introducing health and insurance schemes.

INDUSTRIES

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. More emphasis needs to be given on setting up of small-scale, medium-scale and light engineering industries.

Meghalaya has a rich base of minerals like coal, limestone, silimanite and granite, but the manner in which they have been exploited have neither generated wealth and employment to the people nor appropriate revenue to the state. In the case of limestone can be seen the classic colonial pattern of exploiting raw materials and selling the finished product, cement, to the local consumers at a higher cost. Such practices will have to be reversed by establishing allied industries in close proximity of the raw materials that feed it. The will help the relevant areas develop, markets emerge and wealth generated for the rural population.

Meghalaya is not entirely devoid of traditional handcraft and cottage industries. Iron implements have 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 must therefore develop and support those industries appropriate to the needs and expertise of the local people. Industries must be based on a proper utilisation of resources, mineral or agricultural, with a view to ensure employment and wealth to the people and revenue to the state.

Besides providing the adequate infrastructure, the state also needs to create a complementary work culture. While planning for industrial development sustainability, greater usage of available resources and linkage with the local community need to be taken into consideration.

OBJECTIVES

- To cultivate and facilitate rapid and substantial industrial development with its natural resources in mind
- To ensure investor-friendly environment in terms of infrastructure, proactive and transparent administrative framework and law and order
- To introduce attractive incentive package for industries
- To extend institutional support for technology upgradation
- To encourage entrepreneurial and creative capabilities, especially for SMEs

WAY FORWARD

- Reviving and implementing an effective industrial policy for the state.
- Setting up adequate basic infrastructure of transportation, communication and uninterrupted power supply.
- Introducing financial incentives to attract and encourage industries.
- Setting up Special Economic Zones (SEZ) for different sectors of industries wherever feasible.
- Identifying unique potential of areas and accordingly form industrial hubs that will help those areas develop.
- Leveraging the traditional cottage industries like that of bamboo and cane.
- Establishing 'Single Window Clearance' system at district-level to facilitate potential investors and to eradicate corruption.
- Strengthening the Meghalaya Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) to effectively support, finance and promote SMEs.
- Setting up District Industry Guidance Centres at district-level to provide services and support to small scale industries.
- Encouraging industry-university collaboration to set up incubation centres to ensure requisite exposure to the promising entrepreneurs.
- Encouraging, facilitating and rewarding SMEs having innovative ideas and promoting use of latest technologies to them.
- Forming an authority to compile grass-root innovations from rural area, ensure its public use and pay the innovators royalty as a part of promotion.
- Irradiating social unrest and maintain law and order to attract investors.

MAKING HUMAN RESOURCES
PRODUCTIVE

EXPANSION & REORGANISATION OF FORMAL EDUCATION

The state of Meghalaya, to achieve its developmental goals, should concentrate on creating a knowledge based society and on turning its human resources into a dynamic agent for the moral, intellectual and material transformation of the state. Central to this is the emphasis it places on the expansion of quality education through a network of schools, colleges and professional institutes. By the third decade of this century the majority of the state's population will be in their twenties and thirties. Therefore meaningful avenues need to be created, skills to be imparted or enhanced so that the emerging youth can take the full advantage of the opportunities offered by globalisation and the country's economic growth. At the same time, Meghalaya should recognize the fundamental importance of education as a means of alleviating poverty and as a vital prerequisite for the informed participation of the people on the ongoing regional and national political process.

Meghalaya's policy and plans should envisage modernising the school and college curriculum and courses of study that will introduce, *inter alia*, 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 needs to be broadened by incorporating courses relevant to the needs of society and state; and through restructuring existing technical institutes or establishing new ones providing professional and skill development courses that will provide wider career options.

OBJECTIVES

- To attain the state literacy rate of 100%
- To build a strong pool of professionals, graduates, post-graduates and technicians
- To provide education that not only ensures employability and capacity building but also builds character in a human being
- To develop tailor-made, need-based courses and programmes catering to the regional needs
- To obtain a corruption-free, equitable and affordable education system

WAY FORWARD

- Implementing a policy to ensure education to every child in the state.
- Establishing an independent full-fledged university in Tura.
- Ensuring adequate no. of schools and degree colleges in every district.
- Ensuring adequate no. of engineering colleges and agricultural colleges in the state.
- Instituting world-class management colleges for providing range of management courses in business, marketing, hospitality, tourism, hotel, and other specialised faculties.
- Ensuring that every district has adequate no. of colleges imparting vocational and professional courses in subjects like agriculture, horticulture, floriculture, pisciculture as well as paramedics, naturopathy, Yoga and information technology.
- Setting up institutes that conduct courses in various foreign languages.
- Developing and promote R&D institutes and science parks for biotechnology, food technology, nanotechnology, fisheries science, horticulture, environmental science, etc.

- Embarking upon awareness campaigns and policy initiative to ensure compulsory enrollment and zero drop-outs in schools.
- Improving and maintain hygiene in educational institutions to maintain good health and curtail drop-outs, especially of girl students.
- Establishing a mechanism to recognise traditional skills by awarding a degree and diploma after passing an appropriate evaluation process.
- Ensuring that all educational institutions are equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure, equipments and well-trained staff.
- Introducing the system of counseling in schools and Colleges, and the appointment of qualified / trained counselors.
- Elevating the State Directorate of Education into a Directorate General and restructuring the existing Directorate; upgrading the inspectorate into a Directorate.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

It cannot be assumed that attendance in schools and colleges will remain uniformly or constantly at a high percentage. Rather the available evidence suggests that the current dropout at various levels is still high in the state. In areas where the youth, both male and female, are a vital part of the system of production of a family or community high dropout rates will continue, as during harvest time. For such students access to the formal education system despite all its attractions and the promise of jobs will remain elusive. To some extent this can be overcome by distance education but the study centres will need to be extended to cover greater number of areas.

Apart from the conventional formal education, there is a need to establish learning centres and institutions for the development of specific skills for those who are unable to pursue complete formal education. The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), a not-for-profit company set up by the Ministry of Finance is a public-private partnership initiative which has already made considerable progress in this regard, particularly in Assam, seeks to impart skills to million youths by in 21 focused sectors. Like the states of Assam and Gujarat, Meghalaya also should take the advantage of such initiatives. While such initiatives would target the youth, not excluding those still in the formal education sector, the skill development activities should also consider unemployed elder citizens and those whose means of livelihood have been adversely affected by natural disasters, accidents or other causes.

OBJECTIVES

- To introduce skill development 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
- To help the youth and unemployed, to earn their livelihood through development of skills in vocations for which they have talents, aptitude and interest
- To reduce dependency on government and other white collar jobs, considering the increasing population
- To make extensive skill development in rural areas.

WAY FORWARD

- Working out schemes in collaboration with the NSDC, and through their partners in corporate houses for skill development that would also benefit the state's economy.
- Providing skill development in the state's core activities like mining, agriculture, pisciculture, horticulture and food processing.
- Establishing a skill development academy which will provide skill training and assist in placements.
- Promoting of skill development for the youth from the school level.

PROMOTION OF SPORTS AND GAMES

Sports and games provide the foundation for the development of character, qualities of leadership and solidarity, apart from their more obvious value for health. The people of Meghalaya, mainly tribals, are traditionally sports persons. Meghalaya has secured a place on the sports map of the country. However, it needs to improve in matters relating to sports and recreation, training facilities, equipments.

While adequate physical infrastructure is undoubtedly of the first importance, these will remain unutilised or under-utilised except for preparations when sports meets are round the corner. One of the reasons why Meghalaya has failed to produce, except the occasional odd case, athletes and sports persons is their exceedingly small base. One must proceed on the analogy of the pyramid; the bigger the base the higher the pyramid. Today, the state of Meghalaya needs to have a separate policy for sports and games.

OBJECTIVES

- To create a broad sports and games base to produce champions of the future
- To create an enabling environment to promote sports and games culture
- To build and plan adequate sports infrastructure and activities

WAY FORWARD

- Making sports and games a part of the curricula in schools and colleges to inculcate the right spirit in the youth at an early age.
- Ensuring a minimum sports/games infrastructure in all educational institutions.
- Appointing qualified teachers / masters for physical education and sports; and coaches in selected discipline in schools.
- Organising inter-school tournaments, starting with district-level or zonal tournaments.
- Instituting sports scholarships and creating quotas for sportsmen /women in Government jobs.
- Building and maintaining standard stadia (track and field events), indoor stadia in every district sub-division and in select rural areas.
- Constructing hostels for aspiring sports persons in appropriate places.
- Establishing institutes of physical Education, sports and games at Shillong, Tura and Jowai.
- Introducing special incentives for promotion of sports among women.
- Promoting local / indigenous games, in particular archery in the Khasi and Jaintia hills.

- Establishing adventure sports clubs and introducing schemes for water sports like rowing and canoeing, for which Meghalaya provides ample scope.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Two major problems that confront the youth outside the formal education sector are the want of opportunities for organized leisure activities and the lack of facilities for development of skills for livelihood. In their absence, there is little to engage the school dropout or even the school and college going youth after class hours, in any useful activity. There are few libraries and well-stocked reading rooms in most towns and none in the villages. There are no centres for girls to learn sewing, knitting or embroidery etc. One of the reasons for the growing incidence of drug addiction and anti-social activities among the youth is the failure of the state and society to provide them with the means of productive occupation for their ample leisure hours.

OBJECTIVES

- To prepare and implement a policy for socially productive activities for the youth
- To provide incentives and assistance to organizations for building infrastructure required to run youth activities
- To establish block-level centres of youth who are capable of diverse activities
- To give appropriate representation to youth in various Government and traditional institutions where youth welfare and youth activities are concerned

WAY FORWARD

- Engaging the existing traditional institutions like Seng Semla for effective youth activities.
- Extending and orienting the activities of the Nehru Yuvak Kendras upto rural areas.
- Establishing multi-activity youth centres, equipped with counselors, in towns and villages.
- Engaging the concerned government departments to organise sports and music competitions at block-level on a regular basis.
- Organising coaching programmes through the Department of Sports, for boys and girls in selected disciplines.
- Establishing youth clubs such as an Adventure Club and introduce incentive schemes for activities such as trekking, bicycle expeditions and mountain expeditions.
- Organising inter-state visits by youth on all-India excursions.

ART AND CULTURE

Meghalaya having about 80% of its population as tribals is a mosaic of traditions and cultural traditions. In the field of art and culture, it is best represented by its classical music and folk-dance forms. The dances are associated with the festivals, seasons and occasions including social, religious, agricultural, funeral and recreational. The state echoes the sound of perfect tempo, beautiful songs and traditional instruments.

OBJECTIVES

- To preserve and glorify Meghalaya's rich art and culture
- To document and showcase the state's rich cultural heritage and history

WAY FORWARD

- Strengthening and reorganising the Department of Art and Culture, Meghalaya
- Establishing Meghalaya State Kala Academy for promoting documentation and research in art and culture of Meghalaya.
- Setting up a University of Art and Culture for imparting professional education in the field of art and culture.
- Establishing colleges of Fine Arts at Shillong, Tura or Jowai to rejuvenate performing and visual arts.
- Building Centres of Performing Arts of Meghalaya and Art Galleries.
- Creating of a state authority under Art & Culture 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 and heritage find adequate space in textbooks across the country.
- Regularly organising Meghalaya festival in various states of India to showcase the state's cultural heritage and art.
- Strengthening the department of Khasi and Garo at NEHU.

FOUNDATION OF GROWTH:
INFRASTRUCTURE

ENERGY AND RENEWABLE 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.

OBJECTIVES

- To provide uninterrupted electricity to every household in the state
- To utilise the state's hydropower potential optimally to generate surplus energy
- To set greater emphasis on generation of renewable energy

WAY FORWARD

- Preparing an annual energy budget that would enable the state to analyse the consumption and distribution of power.
- Introducing a concept of energy audit and implementing it in phases.
- Draw 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 Umiak 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.

IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY

Meghalaya is a landlocked state with a large number of small settlements in remote areas and hills. Road is the main means of transport. While the capital Shillong is relatively well connected, road connectivity in most other parts is relatively poor. A significant portion of the roads in the state are still unpaved. The need for development of transport sector in the state is of vital importance for speedy economic development of the state.

The prevailing road transport facilities in the state are hardly adequate to meet the requirements. Public bus transport service is almost negligible and the taxi service turns out to be expensive for the poor people. Also, the connectivity to neighbouring states is either by long roads or costly aviation service.

There are many rivers in Meghalaya. Some of them are navigable, while some are not. Some of the rivers can be rejuvenated and used for navigation.

OBJECTIVES

- To build and improve a state-wide all-weather roadways network with flyover bridges and tunnels wherever necessary
- To set up effective public transport facilities across the state
- To enhance the aviation facilities in the state
- To analyse the potential waterways in some of the rivers in the state and implement them
- To analyse and implement feasible modern ways of transport

WAY FORWARD

- Instituting 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.
- Devising a road revolution by constructing umbrella network of all-weather secure roads.
- Restructuring and upgrading Meghalaya Transport Corporation (MTC) to provide effective and secure public transport system.
- Widening all national highways passing through the state upto four lanes.
- Drawing a time-bound plan to complete the East-West Corridor under National Highways Development Project (NHDP).
- Expanding and enhancing the aviation facilities at Umori and Baljek airports so as to handle frequent passenger and cargo flights.
- Analysing and implementing a PPP model to set up a state-wide helicopter service network, with its fare as low as three times that of railways.
- Analysing and implementing the use of alternate modes of transport like waterways on rivers like Kyanshi, Simsang and Jingiram.
- Checking the feasibility of Ariel tramways in hills and build such tramways that can also attract tourism.

ENSURING GOOD GOVERNANCE

MAKING GOVERNANCE EFFICIENT, TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE

The obligation of a democratic state and the government towards its citizens is so well defined in the Constitution of India and so well understood that it does not require any elaboration here. But how well these responsibilities are being carried out in Meghalaya and the aberrations that have crept into the administrative machinery are today matters of some serious concern to the people. As a result of widespread corruption, mismanagement of public funds, nepotism, and a certain lack of direction of the government's in power have undermined the basic requirements of security of life and property, economic development and prosperity of the people and resource generation for the state. What is worse, governance, formulation and execution of policies for the development of the State, is being carried out under a veil of secrecy with little scope for people's participation. No attempts have been made to make Meghalaya's traditional and village institutions, the District Councils and the municipal bodies, vibrant systems of governance. What is required therefore is to make governance effective and responsive, transparent in functioning and accountable to the people and their representatives in the Legislature.

OBJECTIVES

- To strengthen the democratic functioning of this state and restore the confidence of the people in the system in which they ought to be primary players
- To make the government functioning in Meghalaya efficient, responsive and transparent so as to eliminate the opportunities for corruption
- To ensure protection of life and property of the people, especially women, children and the aged
- Take steps to ensure accountability to the people at every level of the government
- Make effective use of modern technology to ensure the achievement of the objectives

WAY FORWARD

- 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 corrupt and inefficient ministers, 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 inter-state 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. It would be necessary to therefore 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.

OBJECTIVES

- To safeguard Meghalaya's borders, international and inter-state, to prevent infiltration of foreign nationals and squatters and other settlers in violation of the state's land acts
- To put in place schemes for the economic development of these border areas, especially for an organised and monitored border-trade.
- To extend the benefits of healthcare, primary education, electricity, water supply etc. to all villages located in the area.
- To integrate the border areas with the rest of the state through better surface connectivity.

WAY FORWARD

- Constituting the border areas along Bangladesh and Assam into a special area placing it under an officer of the rank of Deputy Commissioner or above and restructuring the department responsible for border areas.
- Preparing a register of villages in the area with their households and inhabitants.
- Opening out roads in the area with lateral communication upto the border to facilitate trade, and the development process as part of the infrastructure.

- Making budgetary provisions for extension of facilities like healthcare, education in the border areas.
- Establishing / strengthening village councils and make them stakeholders in the security and development of the respective areas; raising homeguards and creating Village Defence Organisations to facilitate the work of the BSF, Border Outposts and the Police Outpost or Beat.
- Preparing and Publishing National Register of Citizens for Meghalaya; facilitating the identification of infiltrators by rationalising, modernising and simplifying the process to make it more effective and establishing a mechanism to review doubtful credentials of voters and introducing a special legislation to withdraw voting rights of identified infiltrators and their deportation.
- Creating a digital database of identified infiltrators using latest technologies like biometrics.
- Revitalising and strengthening of the Infiltration Branch of Meghalaya Police and facilitating its co-ordination with the BSF.
- Introduce a short-term work permit system across the state.
- Enact a law that will make employment of infiltrators in industries, businesses or any other entities a punishable offence.

LAW AND MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC ORDER

The foremost test of good governance is the respect for rule of law. North East in general suffers on account of years of insurgency and the resulting security concerns. It may be however appreciable that Meghalaya is perhaps least affected by insurgency in the region, though there is a rise in crimes, particularly against women. Lack of political will and dynamism is the major cause for the lackluster law and order situation in the state. Meghalaya should uphold its territorial integrity and bring the law and order to such a situation that will facilitate the state's socio-economic development.

Particular attention shall have to be paid to the police department. The number of police circles and the manpower in each police station (thana) or beat office needs to be increased. The number of constables and officers of the state will have to take a quantum leap. All thanas must be linked to one another and with a central office through computers and telecommunication network. The intelligence and investigation wings will also have to be revamped. A system has to be introduced to ensure the cooperation of the public in the maintenance of law and order.

OBJECTIVES

- To uphold the rule of law without any discrimination
- To bring peace and prosperity to the state
- To combat insurgency with 3 Ds – deterrence, dialogue and development
- To foster human rights culture across the state of Meghalaya
- To enhance access to justice to all, especially the poor, marginalised and the underprivileged.

WAY FORWARD

- Forming a Special Action Group for maintaining peace and respectful harmonious relations among the various communities and tribes.
- Establishing a strong state-level Special Task Force to fight against the insurgent groups.
- Increasing the Total strength of Meghalaya police and providing it with the latest technologies and equipments and also improving their housing and service conditions.
- 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

Environment is the major concern in the world today because of two reasons. First is the environmental degradation that has threatened the survival of all life forms on the surface of the earth. Second is the environmental management, which includes successful utilisation of the environmental resources and solution to the environmental problems.

Meghalaya is endowed with rich biodiversity and natural resources. However, environmental degradation and pollution has become a cause of concern for Meghalaya in recent times. During the past few decades, there has been considerable deterioration in the quality of the environment in Meghalaya. 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 industrialisation. The increasing anthropogenic stresses of various kinds are likely to further aggravate the environment in the future.

OBJECTIVES

- 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 prevent and control pollution of water, air and environment
- To implement efficiently managed disposal of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) and Bio-Medical Waste (BMW)

WAY FORWARD

- Setting up a Special Task Force to tackle the concern of global warming.
- Implementing the Biological Diversity Act effectively.
- Taking necessary measures to restore abandoned Jhum lands and encouraging people to renounce Jhum cultivation to prevent further land erosion and ecological imbalance.
- Adopting an efficient mineral policy to regulate the mining in the state and to prevent rat-hole mining.

- Encouraging village councils and Nokmas to educate its villagers on environmental issues and to lay down environmental guidelines for them.
- 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 eco-friendly public transport system that would use compressed natural gas (CNG), bio-diesel or electricity.
- Constituting a law, with high penalties, for urban population and commercial establishments to strictly follow environmental standards and norms.
- Providing necessary support to local self governments for processing, treatment and recycling of Municipal Solid Waste and ensure people's participation in the entire process of MSW management.
- Designing a mechanism to ensure disposal of Bio-Medical Waste that contains germs of highly contagious diseases, infectious waste, pharmaceutical waste, radioactive waste, etc.
- Controlling plastic waste, a threat to the environment, with the involvement of NGOs and general public.
- Carrying out effective awareness and training programmes for the Autonomous District Council on environmental issues.
- Emphasising and maintaining natural status-quo of streams, rivers, hillocks and open spaces in urban areas.
- 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.

OBJECTIVES

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

WAY FORWARD

- Establishing a Natural Disaster Training and Research Institute, and a natural disaster management contingent.

- Carrying out afforestation in massive scale to control landslides and floods.
- Setting up a river research institute to study flood and land erosion and to come up with long-term solutions.
- Encourage construction of earthquake-resistant houses and buildings.
- Setting up and applying the latest technologies like GIS (Global Information System) for warning of any natural disaster in advance.
- Implementing an effective and modern flood forecasting system along with value-added services extended to uncovered areas.
- 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 healthcare in the calamity-prone areas.
- Introducing a comprehensive rehabilitation scheme for the victims of all sorts of natural disasters.