

Chapter - 1

Introduction

1.1 District map of Meghalaya



(Fig. 1. – District map of Meghalaya)

1.2 Meghalaya at a glance

- Formed on - 21st January, 1972
- Capital - Shillong
- Area - 22,429 Sq. Km.
- Forest Area - 8,510 Sq. Km.
- Location - 89.46 degree to 94.36 degree East longitude
- 25.05 degree to 26.41 degree North latitude.
- Principal language - Khasi, Pnar, Garo and English
- No. of Districts - 7
- No. of Sub division - 8

- No. of Blocks - 39
- No. of Major town - 7
- No. of Villages - 6026
- Population (2001) - 23,18,822
 - Male - 11,76,087
 - Female - 11,42,735
- Female-Male Ratio - 972
- Population Density - 103 per Sq. Km.
- Decadal Growth Rate - 30.65%
- Literacy (2001) - 63.31%
 - Male - 65.43%
 - Female - 59.61%
- Major Town - Shillong, Jowai, Nongpoh, Tura, Willam Nagar, Baghmara, Nongstoin
- Major Crops - Rice, Maize, Jute, Rape Seed, Mustard
- Average Rain fall - 1200 Cm. per annum

- Main Festivals - **Garro Hills**
Wangala, Daregata dance, Chambil Mesara dance or Pumelo dance

- Khasi Hills
Nongkrem dance, Shad Shuk Mynsiem

- Jaintia Hills
Bahdienkhlam, Lahoo dance

Meghalaya was created as an autonomous state within the state of Assam on 2 April 1970 and was declared a state of the Indian Union on 21 January 1972. Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya, is located at an altitude of 1496 metres above sea level. Meghalaya or the abode of the clouds is situated between 89.46 degree to 94.36 degree East longitude and 25.05 degree to 26.41 degree North latitude.

It is bounded on the north by Goalpara, Kamrup and Nagaon districts, on the east by Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills districts, all of Assam, and on the south and west by Bangladesh. It shares a 443 kilometre-long international border with Bangladesh. Spread over a geographical area of 22,429 square kilometres, Meghalaya comprises 0.68 per cent of India's landmass and 8.55 per cent of that of the Northeast. It is currently divided into seven districts. The districts are further divided into eight sub-divisions and 39 Blocks. The Blocks are further subdivided into 15 Gram Sevak Circles. The local administration of the State is run through the Autonomous District Councils, set up under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. There are three such councils: the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council at Tura, the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council at Shillong and the Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council at Jowai.

Meghalaya is home to two main tribal formations: Hynniewtreps and the Achiks. The Khasi, Jaintia, Bhoi, and War tribes, belonging to the Proto-Austroloid Monkhmer race, are collectively known as the Hynniewtrep people, who predominantly inhabit the East Meghalaya districts. The Garos, who prefer to call themselves as Achiks, predominantly inhabit the Garo Hills. They belong to the Tibeto-Burman race and are said to have migrated from Tibet. The people are predominantly Christians.

Due to its rugged terrains, the State of Meghalaya is sparsely populated. According to Census 2001, Meghalaya has a total population of 23, 18,822 thus, constituting 0.22 per cent of the population of India and 5.91 per cent of the Northeast. It has a density of 103 persons per square kilometer. AS against decadal growth rate of 21.54% of the national level, the population of state has grown by 30.65% over the period 1991 -2001. The sex ratio of Meghalaya at 972 female to 1000 males is higher than the national average of 933. The literacy rate of Meghalaya is 63.61%. The male literacy rate is 65.43% and the female literacy rate is 59.61%.

Agriculture is one of the basic means of subsistence in this tribal State. This sector provides employment to about 65.89 per cent of the total working population. The State has a vast potential for developing horticulture due to agro-climatic variations, which offer much scope for cultivation of temperate, sub-tropical and tropical fruits and vegetables. Meghalaya ranks 24th in the human resource development index and 28th in the poverty index in India, according to the Human Development Report, 2001.

1.3 Employment status of Meghalaya's population

Total/ Rural/ Urban	Person/ Male/ Female	Total Population	Main workers			
			Cultivators	Agriculture Labourers	Workers in household	Other workers
Total	Person	2318822	380321	94938	13917	267835
	Male	1176087	224551	60188	7476	193479
	Female	1142735	155770	34750	6441	74356
Rural	Person	1864711	376107	91644	12035	146752
	Male	946999	221967	58144	6151	107102
	Female	917712	154140	33500	5884	39650
Urban	Person	454111	4214	3294	1882	121083
	Male	229088	2584	2044	1325	86377
	Female	225023	1630	1250	557	34706

(Source: Planning commission of India)

Total/ Rural/ Urban	Person/ Male/ Female	Marginal workers				Total workers	Non- workers
		Cultivators	Agriculture Labourers	Workers in household industries	Other workers		
Total	Person	86689	76756	7308	42382	970146	1348676
	Male	30467	30700	1882	19748	568491	607596
	Female	56222	46056	5426	22634	401655	741080
Rural	Person	84419	72974	6691	31909	822531	1042180
	Male	29643	29029	1655	14404	468095	478904
	Female	54776	43945	5036	17505	354436	563276
Urban	Person	2270	3782	617	10473	147615	306496
	Male	824	1671	227	5344	100396	128692
	Female	1446	2111	390	5129	47219	177804

(Source: Planning commission of India)

1.4 Profile of the Districts

Ribhoi District

Physiography

Ri Bhoi District is one of the Seven Districts of Meghalaya, carved out from the erstwhile East Khasi Hills District on 4th June 1992. It is bounded in the North by the Kamrup District of Assam, East by the Karbi Anglong District of Assam, South by the East Khasi Hills and West by the West Khasi Hills District. The Headquarter of the District is at Nongpoh located at 53 km away from the state capital Shillong and 50 km from Guwahati.

Ri Bhoi district, carved out from the erstwhile East Khasi Hills District on the 4th June, 1992 consists of three Community & Rural Development Blocks, namely

Umling Community Development Block

Umsning Community Development Block

Jirang Community Development Block

Demographic Features

Name of District	Total Population	Area (in square Km.)	Density (per square Km.)	Sex Ratio	Literacy rate (in %)
Ri Bhoi	1, 92, 790	2448	79	941	65.7

(Source: Census of India 2001)

The district has a concentrate of 8.4% schedule tribe's population compared to the state as a whole. The percentage of schedule tribe's total population of the district is 87. The percentage of literacy by sex 2001 of male and female is 68.8 and 62.4 respectively.

Occupational Structure

Percentage distribution of total workers (Main & Marginal)

Sl. No	Occupation	Total	Male	Female
1	Cultivators	56.6	53.3	61.0
2	Agricultural Labourers	18.4	17.1	20.4
3	Workers in HH Industry	2.0	1.6	2.0
4	Other Workers	23.0	28.0	16.6

(Source: Census of India 2001)

In Ri Bhoi district around (56.6%) of workers are cultivators. A small segment of workers (2%) are engaged in household industry. Around (23%) of the workers are working in various sectors like trade and transport, service, manufacturing, livestock and forestry, coal and mining.

East Khasi Hills District

Physiography

The Khasi Hills District was divided into two districts, viz the East Khasi Hills District and the West Khasi Hills District on 28th October 1976. On June 4th, 1992, East Khasi Hills District was further divided into two administrative districts of East Khasi Hills District and Ri-Bhoi District. The northern portion of the district is bounded by the plain of Ri-Bhoi District gradually rising to the rolling grasslands of the Shillong plateau interspersed with river valleys, then falls sharply in the Southern portion forming a deep gorges and ravines in Mawsynram and Shella-Bholaganj, community and rural development block, bordering Bangladesh. The district is bounded by the Jaintia Hills District to the east and the West Khasi Hills District to the west.

Shillong is the District Headquarter of East Khasi Hills District and also the State capital. The district consists of Eight Community and Rural Development blocks:

- Mawkynrew Community Development Block
- Mawphlang Community Development Block
- Mawryngkneng Community Development Block
- Mawsynram Community Development Block
- Mylliem Community Development Block
- Pynursla Community Development Block
- Shella Bholaganj Community Development Block
- Khatarshnong - Laitkroh Community Development Block

Demographic Features

Name of District	Total Population	Area (in square Km.)	Density (per square Km.)	Sex Ratio	Literacy rate (in %)
East Khasi Hills	6,609,23	2748	241	981	76.1

(Source: Census of India 2001)

The district has a concentrate of 14.4% schedule tribe’s population compared to the state as a whole. The percentage of schedule tribe’s total population of the district is 77.5. The percentage of literacy by sex 2001 of male and female is 77.3 and 74.8 respectively.

Occupational Structure

Percentage distribution of total workers (Main & Marginal)

Sl. No	Occupation	Total	Male	Female
1	Cultivators	23.5	20.4	29.0
2	Agricultural Labourers	13.6	12.4	15.7
3	Workers in HH Industry	1.6	1.3	2.2
4	Other Workers	61.3	65.9	53.1

(Source: Census of India 2001)

In East Khasi Hills district around (23.5%) of workers are cultivators. A small segment of workers (1.6%) are engaged in household industry. Around (61.3%) of the workers are working in various sectors like trade and transport, service, manufacturing, livestock and forestry, coal and mining.

West Khasi Hills District

Physiography

West Khasi Hills, presently the largest district of Meghalaya, was carved out of the erstwhile Khasi Hills District on the 28th October 1976. In the same year, on 10th Nov, the Mairang Administrative Unit was upgraded into a full-fledged Sub-Division and Mawkyrwat was created as an Administrative Unit. With the upgradation of Mawkyrwat into a full-fledged Sub-Division on June 26th 1982, the District now comprises of (three) Sub-Divisions (including the Sadar Sub-Division), one Administrative Unit viz., Mawshynrut which came into being on the 9th February, 1996 and 6 (six) Community and Rural Development blocks.

At present the district consists of six Community and Rural Development blocks namely:

- Mairang Community Development Block
- Mawkyrwat Community Development Block
- Nongstoin Community Development Block
- Mawshynrut Community Development Block
- Ranikor Community Development Block
- Mawthadraishan Community Development Block

Demographic Features

Name of District	Total Population	Area (in square Km.)	Density (per square Km.)	Sex Ratio	Literacy rate (in %)
West Khasi Hills	2, 96, 049	5247	56	968	65.1

(Source: Census of India 2001)

The district has a concentrate of 14.6% schedule tribe’s population compared to the state as a whole. The percentage of schedule tribe’s total population of the district is 98. The percentage of literacy by sex 2001 of male and female is 66.5 and 63.7 respectively.

Occupational Structure

Percentage distribution of total workers (Main & Marginal)

Sl. No	Occupation	Total	Male	Female
1	Cultivators	60.2	57.4	63.5
2	Agricultural Labourers	23.3	22.8	24.0
3	Workers in HH Industry	1.5	1.5	1.5
4	Other Workers	15.0	18.3	11.0

(Source: Census of India 2001)

In West Khasi Hills district around (60.2%) of workers are cultivators. A small segment of workers (1.5%) are engaged in household industry. Around (15%) of the workers are working in various sectors like trade and transport, service, manufacturing, livestock and forestry, coal and mining.

West Garo Hills District

Physiography

West Garo Hills is one of the largest district of Meghalaya located in the western part of the State. The Garo Hills district was divided into two districts, viz. the West Garo Hills district and the East Garo Hills district in October 1976. The erstwhile West Garo Hills district was further divided into two administrative districts of West and South Garo Hills on June 1992. The district headquarters of West Garo Hills is Tura, which is the second largest town in the State after Shillong.

The West Garo Hills district lies on the western part of the state of Meghalaya bounded by the East Garo Hills district on the east, the South Garo Hills on the south-east, the Goalpara district of Assam on the north and north-west and Bangladesh on the south.

The district consists of eight C & RD Blocks at present namely:

Dadengiri Community Development Block
Selsella Community Development Block
Rongram Community Development Block
Betasing Community Development Block
Zikzak Community Development Block
Dalu Community Development Block
Tikrikilla Community Development Block
Gambegre Community Development Block

Demographic Features

Name of District	Total Population	Area (in square Km.)	Density (per square Km.)	Sex Ratio	Literacy rate (in %)
West Garo Hills	5, 18, 390	3677	141	968	50.7

(Source: Census of India 2001)

The district has a concentrate of 19.9% schedule tribe's population compared to the state as a whole. The percentage of schedule tribe's total population of the district is 76.6. The percentage of literacy by sex 2001 of male and female is 57.0 and 44.1 respectively.

Occupational Structure**Percentage distribution of total workers (Main & Marginal)**

Sl. No	Occupation	Total	Male	Female
1	Cultivators	54.4	51.0	60.0
2	Agricultural Labourers	17.0	15.0	19.0
3	Workers in HH Industry	3.2	2.0	5.0
4	Other Workers	25.4	32.0	16.0

(Source: Census of India 2001)

In West Garo Hills district around (54.4%) of workers are cultivators. A small segment of workers (3.2%) are engaged in household industry. Around (25.4%) of the workers are working in various sectors like trade and transport, service, manufacturing, livestock and forestry, coal and mining.

East Garo Hills District

Physiography

East Garo Hills District was upgraded from a sub-division to a full fledged district in 1976, after the erstwhile Garo Hills District was reorganised as two different districts viz. East Garo Hills and West Garo Hills with a view to bring the administration closer to the people. East Garo Hills district lies on the western part of the State.

The district consists of five C & RD Blocks at present namely:

Resubelpara Community Development Block

Dambo Rongjeng Community Development Block

Songsak Community Development Block

Samanda Community Development Block

Kharkutta Community Development Block

Demographic Features

Name of District	Total Population	Area (in square Km.)	Density (per square Km.)	Sex Ratio	Literacy rate (in %)
East Garo Hills	2, 50, 582	2603	96	966	60.6

(Source: Census of India 2001)

The district has a concentrate of 12.1% schedule tribe's population compared to the state as a whole. The percentage of schedule tribe's total population of the district is 96.5. The percentage of literacy by sex 2001 of male and female is 66.1 and 54.9 respectively.

Occupational Structure

Percentage distribution of total workers (Main & Marginal)

Sl. No	Occupation	Total	Male	Female
1	Cultivators	68.0	66.0	70.6
2	Agricultural Labourers	12.0	11.3	13.0
3	Workers in HH Industry	3.0	3.7	4.4
4	Other Workers	17.0	19.0	12.0

(Source: Census of India 2001)

In East Garo Hills district around (68) of workers are cultivators. A small segment of workers (3%) are engaged in household industry. Around (12%) of the workers are agricultural labourers.

South Garo Hills District

Physiography

The South Garo Hills district of Meghalaya covers an area of 1887 sq. Kms. The district is located in the southern part of the state and bounded by West Garo Hills district in the west, East Garo Hills in the north, West Khasi Hills in the east and Bangladesh in the South. The date of inception of South Garo Hills sub-division is 22-11-1976. It has come up as a separate district on 18th of June 1992 before which it was a part of West Garo Hills district. The district headquarter is **Baghmara**.

The district consists of four Community & Rural Development Blocks, namely:

- Chokpot Community Development Block
- Baghmara Community Development Block
- Ronggara Community Development Block
- Gasuapara Community Development Block

Demographic Features

Name of District	Total Population	Area (in square Km.)	Density (per square Km.)	Sex Ratio	Literacy rate (in %)
South Garo Hills	1, 00, 980	1887	54	942	55

(Source: Census of India 2001)

The district has a concentrate of mere 4.8% schedule tribe's population compared to the state as a whole. The percentage of schedule tribe's total population of the district is 95.7. The percentage of literacy by sex 2001 of male and female is 61.5 and 48.0 respectively.

Occupational Structure**Percentage distribution of total workers (Main & Marginal)**

Sl. No	Occupation	Total	Male	Female
1	Cultivators	61.2	55.0	69.0
2	Agricultural Labourers	12.6	11.5	14.0
3	Workers in HH Industry	2.0	2.0	2.0
4	Other Workers	24.2	31.5	15.0

(Source: Census of India 2001)

In South Garo Hills district around (61.2%) of workers are cultivators, amongst those the percentage of female is more than the male. A small segment of workers (2%) are engaged in household industry. Around (24.2%) of the workers are working in various sectors like trade and transport, service, manufacturing, livestock and forestry, coal and mining.

Jaintia Hills District

Physiography

Jaintia Hills District is a part of the erstwhile Jaintia Kingdom which is also known as Sutnga Kingdom prior to the dawn of legends and chronicles in the annals of history. At present Jaintia is the name of the district which was created on the 22nd February 1972, a month after the State of Meghalaya was accorded the status of statehood, carved out from the existing state of Assam in the North Eastern part of India.

Jaintia Hills District, created on February 22, 1972. It is predominantly inhabited by the Jaintias. This tribal community is the descendant of a very ancient people having distinctive tribal and ethnic origin. **Jowai** town is the District Headquarter of Jaintia Hills. The District is now divided into five Community Development Blocks. They are:-

Thadlaskein Community Development Block
 Laskein Community Development Block
 Khliehriat Community Development Block
 Amlarem Community Development Block
 Saipung Community Development Block

Demographic Features

Name of District	Total Population	Area (in square Km.)	Density (per square Km.)	Sex Ratio	Literacy rate (in %)
Jaintia Hills	2, 99, 108	3819	78	996	51.9

(Source: Census of India 2001)

The district has a concentrate of 14.4% schedule tribe's population compared to the state as a whole. The percentage of schedule tribe's total population of the

district is 96. The percentage of literacy by sex 2001 of male and female is 50.1 and 53.7 respectively.

Occupational Structure

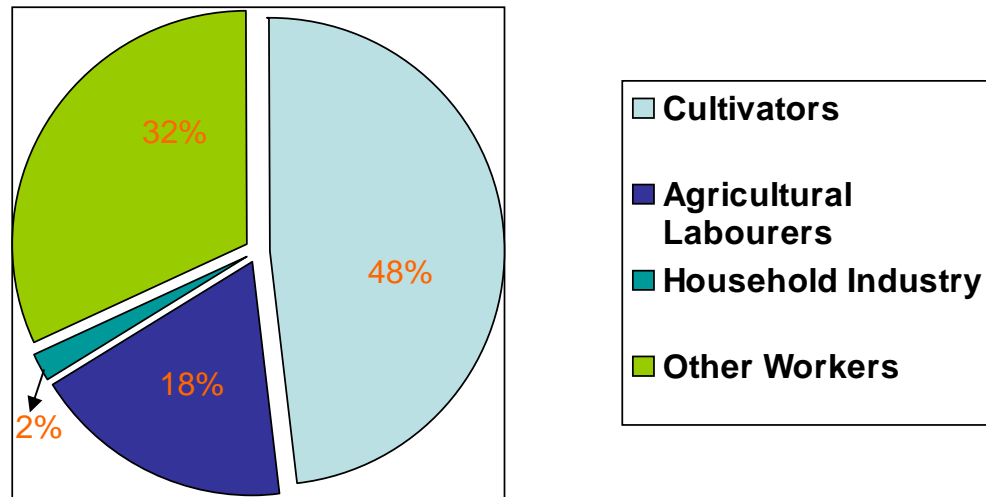
Percentage distribution of total workers (Main & Marginal)

Sl. No	Occupation	Total	Male	Female
1	Cultivators	47.1	50.0	43.5
2	Agricultural Labourers	28.6	24.4	34.0
3	Workers in HH Industry	2.1	1.6	2.5
4	Other Workers	22.2	24.0	20.0

(Source: Census of India 2001)

In Jaintia Hills district around (47.1%) of workers are cultivators. A small segment of workers (2.1%) are engaged in household industry. Around (22.2%) of the workers are working in various sectors like trade and transport, service, manufacturing, livestock and forestry, coal and mining.

Distribution of total workers (main & marginal) state-wise and percentage wise:



(Source – census of India 2001)

The above pie chart shows the percentage wise distribution of total workers (both main and marginal). Around 48% of the workers are cultivators, which is the maximum. The percentage of household industry workers is mere 2%, which is quite low. The other worker category includes people working in various sectors like: - trade and transport, service, manufacturing, livestock and forestry, coal and mining. Around 32% of the workers come under other workers category. The percentage of workers involved in agricultural work is 18.

1.5 Genesis

Growth with social justice and alleviation of poverty has been primary objectives of Indian planning since independence. Several anti-poverty measures focusing on the poor as a target group have been and are being implemented.

These include programmes that address asset creation, capacity building, welfare of weaker sections, women and children and a number of programmes for self and wage employment. In a country with almost three-fourth of population living in the rural areas and more than one-third below poverty line, the anti-poverty and employment generation programmes have tremendous challenges to meet.

The nexus between poverty and employment is a well-known fact and therefore, in the very first phase of the poverty alleviation programmes, employment generation and asset creation were adopted as prime strategies. This was with the intention to economically empower the poor and make them self-dependent. Employment generation programmes are in operation for more than four decades now in the country with a shifting focus on various aspects and specific target groups. There are specific rural based employment creation programmes as well as urban-centred employment generation programmes. Such distinction between rural-urban areas however, withers in the peri-urban regions, and the programme is recorded in the place of sanction of the benefits rather than at the place of actual work. In these programmes, the issue of employment generation is dealt in a variety of ways. It begins from a temporary income assurance by providing minimum wage employment (Employment Assurance Scheme) to a permanent asset creation and skill formation. As the central strategy is employment creation it needs to be reviewed in the context of the programme.

Broadly, the employment generation programmes could be categorised under seven groups. First, the employment was provided by the State under a state-run programme, where, wages operate as the main but temporary income support to the poor. Under these schemes, the income support was expected to help the poor to cross the poverty barrier. The second types of programmes involve providing some productive asset to the poor in order to enhance their earning by utilizing the asset provided. Under these schemes, livestock was provided and the scheme became quite popular due to continuous income generation. Third, it was felt that training the rural youth for different skills

would empower them to earn their livelihood and also improve the quality of rural workforce.

Therefore, training was provided under the designated training institutions and the beneficiaries were induced to take up the vocation. Fourth, after realizing that a good number of rural artisans possess the basic skills but lack in investment required for tools and machines, providing toolkits and machines was taken up to augment the human resources and at the same time impact on poverty among this group. Schemes were designed to achieve this. Fifth, the employment programmes were focused on villages through the schemes like NREGS, SGRY, SGSY etc., and that provided the most needed flexibility in operation. This also helped create the most needed assets at the village level. Gender issue among poor is quite intense than it is generally understood. Females face the brunt of poverty more than the male members of the household. Keeping this in view the sixth typology includes female focused programmes to alleviate poverty through skill development. Lastly and very lately, it was realized that the multiplicity of employment programmes diluted their impact and the same beneficiary would get circulated or the pilferages multiplied. Therefore, a few schemes were merged to sharpen the impact.

The wage employment generation programmes provide opportunities for the rural poor to get employment and sustain them while the self-employment programmes focus on providing sustainable employment opportunities by enhancing and encashing upon the development of skill. Apart from providing them with employment, developing the rural infrastructure is also considered.

Literature on rural development in India is replete with detailed history of government efforts at addressing poverty alleviation and as such we do not wish to recount it at present. Since the population in poverty is noted to be increasing, the question of the impact of government interventions arises. We may, however note, that one major underlying intervention introduced in the early nineties is that of decentralisation and people's participation in planning

and programme implementation manifested in the 73rd constitution amendment and articulated through Panchayat at district, Block and village levels.

However, in Meghalaya there is no Panchayati Raj Institutions functioning in the grass root level.

The rural development programmes are meant to support the rural poor to improve their socio-economic condition to a level where they could sustain themselves without depending on government schemes for their livelihood. Based on programme evaluation and experience of implementation there have been continuous changes in the approach to and emphasis of rural development schemes. Although the programmes target the population below poverty line, special emphasis has been on the SC/STs, women and other disadvantaged groups. The rural development programmes in India can be broadly classified as follows:

- ✚ Economic package to promote accelerated growth in agriculture and allied activities through investments in irrigation and other input into agriculture as well as incentives offered to rural industrial projects. By and large, this approach addressed the aspects of productivity and growth.
- ✚ The area approach – locational policies to increase rural access to infrastructure facilities – geared to tackling issues relating to special inequalities in physical access to infrastructure.
- ✚ The target group approach – to directly deal with the problems of poverty and unemployment in order to reduce interpersonal or vertical inequalities.

1.6 Employment as a Fulcrum of Development

Poverty as an outcome of unemployment has been prevailing in the Indian economy since independence and various measures have been undertaken to lessen the problem. It is estimated that 26.10 per cent of the people were under the poverty line in 1999-2000 (source: Planning Commission of India).

One of the ulcerating problems of rural development in India is the dismal growth rate of employment in the farm sector during the recent past, and that is likely to swell the unemployed in rural and urban areas.

The annual growth rate in rural employment was as low as 1.11 per cent during 1983-94, and 1.64 per cent during the period 1994 to 2000. It has accelerated the out-migration towards the cities, converting some of the mega cities into extended slums. It is estimated that in Mumbai about 50 per cent of its population living in the slums. Prevention of migration has to be an essential part of the strategy for balanced development. This necessitates creation of conditions conducive to the generation of gainful employment opportunities in the rural areas. The limited employment opportunities in the organized sector on the one hand and growing urban labour force, on the other, have resulted in increased dependence of a majority of labour force in numerous economic activities based on own account work as well as in micro-enterprises which have come to be recognized as the informal sector.

In a labour surplus economy like India one requires a definite strategy for creating employment opportunities within the rural sector, without mass displacement, and with small investment to create non-land-based self-employment avenues. Unemployment, disguised or seasonal, is a potent factor forcing the helpless households below the poverty line. We have experienced that no single programme can enhance the employment opportunities all over the country and such programmes have to be separate from the 'wage employment' programmes like the Rural Employment Generation Programmes or the 'Food For Work' programmes administered by the state. Programmes like road laying, maintenance of village tanks, land conservation etc., for providing wage employment have a positive effect and need to be continued but larger emphasis is required on self-employment programme. This is required to provide the purchasing power to the rural households, who, in turn, would be generating the demand for the products and services offered by the self-employed persons in the rural sector.

In order to reduce poverty and increase employment opportunities, various measures have been undertaken during different plan periods. Since the IV Five Year Plan, Government of India has been launching different schemes for the unemployed youth in the rural and urban areas of the country.

The VIII Plan also provided for the creation of new employment opportunities with a goal for achieving near full employment opportunities for about 940 lakh persons. The average employment growth during the VIII Plan period was projected to be 85 lakh or 2.6 per cent per annum. Self-employment programmes are meant for the educated or semi-educated youth and others who have the desire to take up trading or service activities in the villages. There are quite a few examples of various initiatives taken both by the Government Sector and NGO Sector in encouraging the self-employment ventures in different parts of the country.

Thus, dealing with the employment situation in an effective way is to provide greater access and sustainable flow of credit to the poor and the unemployed in order to finance economically viable vocations. The poor mainly suffer due to lack of access to loan facilities as they are not in a position to offer collateral security, an usual precondition in the banks. To reach out to the poor, several programmes have been designed right from the early 1970s to provide an easy access to credit. However, with other few problems like increase in population, poverty, market fluctuations etc, the efforts of the government have not been effective and the increase in unemployment still continues.

1.7 Rural Employment Generation Scheme in Meghalaya

The mounting population and subsequent higher growth of labour force has led to an increase in the volume of unemployment and under-employment. To make a dent on the prevailing poverty and unemployment, creation of employment opportunities with food security has been one of the important objectives of developmental planning in India.

Larger and efficient use of available human and other resources is the most effective way of alleviating poverty, reducing inequalities and sustaining a

reasonably high pace of economic growth. The Government of India aims at bringing employment through wage and self employment into a larger focus, with the goal of reducing unemployment and under-employment to a negligible level, to providing food security against hunger and to improve nutritional levels. A demand-driven infrastructure at the village level becomes essential to facilitate faster growth in rural areas and also to increase opportunities of employment through access to the market oriented economy.

To increase the employment opportunities in rural areas various rural employment generation programmes are being implemented by Government of Meghalaya through different departments. These are as follows:

Community and Rural Development Department

National Rural Employment Generation Scheme

The Government of India has passed the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), which is also known as National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) in September 2005. It addresses mainly to rural poor and their fundamental right to work with dignity. It also empowers local citizens to play an active role in the implementation of employment guarantee schemes through Gram Sabhas, social audits, participatory planning and other means. The Act came into force initially in 200 districts and during 2007-08, it was extended to 330 districts. It is now covering whole of the country.

In the state of Meghalaya, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) is being implemented through Village Councils (in the absence of Panchayati Raj Institutions) as mandated under the National Rural Employment Generation Act. The NREGS was implemented in three phases in Meghalaya. In the year 2006-07, West Garo Hills and South Garo Hills districts were selected in phase-I. In the year 2007-08, East Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills and Ribhoi districts were selected in phase-II and East Garo Hills and West Khasi Hills were covered in phase-III with effect from 1.4.2008. So far the scheme is being implemented through out the state.

SAMPOORNA GRAMEEN ROZGAR YOJANA (SGRY)

To provide a greater thrust to additional wage employment, infrastructural development and food security in the rural areas, the ambitious new scheme Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana was launched with effect from 25 September, 2001, with an annual outlay of Rs.10,000 crore. The scheme was formulated by merging the earlier Employment Assurance Scheme (the only Additional Wage Employment Scheme for rural areas) and Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (a Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme). It envisages generation of 100 crore mandays of employment every year and gives thrust to additional wage employment, infrastructure development and food security. It is implemented with the primary objective of providing additional wage employment in all rural areas, thus providing food security and improving nutritional level. The secondary objective of the scheme includes creation of durable community, social and economic assets and infrastructure development in rural areas.

The scheme, self-targeting in nature, is open to all rural poor who are in need of wage employment and desire to do manual and unskilled work in and around their village/habitat. For wage employment, preference is given to agricultural wage earners, non-agricultural unskilled wage earners, marginal farmers, women, members of SC/ST families, parents of child labour withdrawn from hazardous occupations, parents of handicapped children, and adult children (above the age of 16 years) of handicapped parents who are desirous of working for wage employment.

SWARNJAYANTI GRAM SWAROZGAR YOJANA (SGSY)

The SGSY scheme is operative from 1st April, 1999 in rural areas of the country. SGSY is a holistic scheme covering all aspects of self-employment such as organization of the poor into Self Help Groups (SHG), training, credit, technology, infrastructure and marketing. The scheme is funded by the financial institutions, District Rural Development Agencies (DRDA), NGOs, technical institutions in the district.

The scheme aims at establishing a large number of micro enterprises in the rural areas for the people living in Below Poverty Line (BPL). The list of Below Poverty Line (BPL) households identified through BPL census duly approved by Gram Sabha will form the basis for identification of families for assistance under SGSY. The objective of SGSY is to bring assisted family above the poverty line by providing them income generation assets through a mix of bank credit and Government subsidy. The rural poor such as those with land, landless labour, educated unemployed, rural artisans and disable people are covered under the scheme.

Directorate of Industries

Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana (PMRY)

Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana (PMRY) focuses on skill based self-employment generation. This was initiated to provide opportunities of self-employment to the educated un-employed youth who lack resources for investment. This was proposed to be achieved through providing easy subsidized financial assistance to the beneficiaries so as to enable them to start their ventures. The programme was launched formally on 2nd October 1993. The target set was to provide opportunities to 10 lakh persons by setting up 7 lakh micro enterprises in various industrial, business and service activities during the last 4 years of the Seventh Plan period. The programme was initially based in the urban areas (1993-94), and after looking into the initial success, it was extended to rural areas after 1994-95. This is now incorporated as a permanent scheme of the Government of India with framed modalities and guidelines for its successful implementation and to fulfill the purpose for which it is designed.

The extension of the scheme to all the rural areas subsequently was a welcome move and provided succour to a large number of rural youth. It provided opportunities to the rural youth to keep away from swarming the urban employment market and causing social stress. At the apex level, the Ministry of Agro and Rural Industries, Govt. of India, administers the scheme, whereas at

the sub-national level the respective Commissioners/Director of Industries, implement the Scheme.

At the grassroots levels, the District Industries Centres (DICs), in collaboration with the designated banks, manage the implementation of the scheme. The role of Training institutions is quite important as these institutions train the beneficiaries in proficiency development and management skills for business. The DC, Small Scale Industries (SSI) has set up a special PMRY Division at Delhi and formulates the rules, regulations and guideline instructions for the scheme. An efficient feedback mechanism is developed by means of getting monthly, quarterly and annual progress reports from all the participating States. At the state Level, a State Level PMRY Committee monitors the progress of the scheme every quarter. DC, SSI fixes the Yearly Targets for a number of beneficiaries for each state.

Khadi and Village Industries Board

Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP)

The focus of REGP is to provide more and more new avenue of employment for rural unemployed youths. The broad objective of the programme is to generate employment in rural areas to develop entrepreneurial skill among the rural unemployed youth, to achieve the goal of rural industrialization, to facilitate participation of financial institution for higher credit to rural areas.

Up to Rs.10 lakhs, 25% of the project cost will be provided by KVIC as margin money. For projects above Rs. 10 lakhs and up to Rs. 25 lakhs rate of margin money will be 25% of the project cost. In case of weaker section beneficiary viz. SC/ST/OBC/women/Physically Handicapped/Ex-servicemen and Minority Community beneficiary/Institution and for Hill, Border and Tribal Areas, North Eastern Region, Sikkim, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Margin Money grant will be at the rate of 30% of the project cost upto Rs.10.00 lakhs

and above this amount upto 25.00 lakhs, it will be 10% of the remaining cost of the project.

Department of Fisheries

Aquaculture Development for one thousand ponds

This scheme provides a back ended subsidy with 25% loan and 75% subsidy. The minimum eligible water area under the scheme is .20 ha subject to the maximum of 1.00 ha water area. Financial assistance for construction of ponds including inputs will be provided to each beneficiary@ Rs. 3.60 lakhs/ha water area.

Under this scheme financial assistance is extended to the private fish farmers, community village unemployed rural youth etc.

Community Fishery Development Project

The schemes aims at providing financial assistance to interested fishery community/village society etc. for development of fisheries at 50% subsidy of Rs. 3.60 lakhs/ha to extend of 1.00 ha.

Culture and Breeding of Ornamental/Aquarium Fishes

The scheme aims at culture and breeding of ornamental/aquarium fishes in private sector by providing financial assistance to interested fish farmers who are willing to take up the scheme for domestic as well as for export purposes.

Integrated Fishery Development Programme

The scheme aims at integrating fish culture with piggery and poultry etc. to minimize the cost of inputs by utilizing their waste products and obtaining maximum fish production. This programme will help majority of people especially in rural areas in opening fresh avenues in form of self employment opportunities.

Catalytic Development Programme (CDP), Sericulture

The CDP provides greater thrust to bivoltine sericulture and a market orientation to non-mulberry sector. Under this scheme cost is shared by the centre and state in the ratio of 50:50 except the states in North East, J&K, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand and Chattisgarh where the sharing pattern is in the ratio of 90:10.

The major objective of the scheme is:

- Assistance towards construction of rearing houses for the benefit of the village rearers for conducting of rearing in their nearby garden
- Assistance for training of the rearers for their experience in conducting the rearing of silk worm by themselves in their respective village for a period of 25 days from brushing to cocooning
- Assistance for supply of rearing equipments, supply of mulberry saplings, muga saplings and seedlings, disinfectants etc. for smooth conduction of rearing for their benefit.

Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary

Scheme of Vocational Training

Meghalaya being a small state, job opportunities in Government sector are very limited. The tribal population of Meghalaya is traditionally dependent on livestock for their livelihood as an alternative avocation to agricultural operation, as approximately 10% of the land is available for cultivation. The population of the state being mostly non-vegetarian and as there is taboo for consumption of beef, pork, mutton, chicken, egg etc, there is tremendous potentiality for growth in livestock sector.

Considering all the above factors the Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary took up the scheme of vocational training to support the farmers and educated unemployed youth for gaining self employment.

The objective of the scheme is to impart short training to farmers/unemployed youth on proper management, feeding and health care of livestock and poultry.

Under this scheme, different categories of beneficiaries can avail the chance to get himself trained in these centres including the educated unemployed youth. The beneficiaries are generally trained on some theoretical aspect as well as need based practical training in the farms under the department.