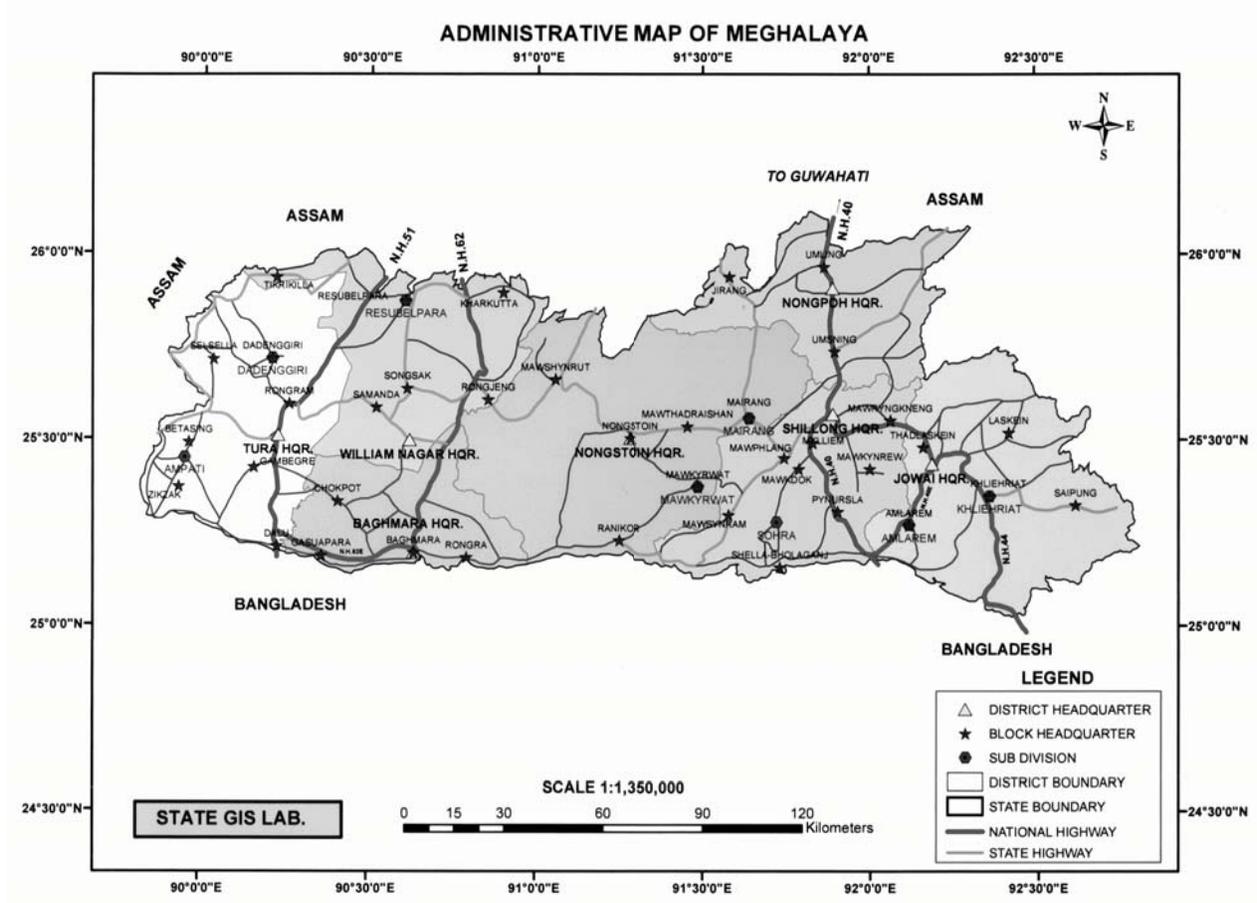


# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

## CHAPTER – I

### INTRODUCTION



### Meghalaya: A Profile<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.1 GENERAL INFORMATION ON LOCATION, POPULATION, POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION AND ECONOMY

Meghalaya emerged as a full-fledged State within the Union of India on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1972. ‘Meghalaya’ (not an indigenous name) meaning ‘abode of clouds’ reflects the salubrity of its climate. The wettest places in the world are also located here. The state has an area of 22429 sq. km. and is located between 24<sup>o</sup>57’ North latitudes and 26<sup>o</sup>10’ North latitudes and 89<sup>o</sup>46’ and 92<sup>o</sup>53’ East longitudes. The temperature varies from 2 degrees Celsius to 35 degrees Celsius depending upon the altitude which varies in hills from 300 metres to 2000 metres above mean sea level. It has predominantly hilly terrain with foothills as plains and flood-prone areas.

<sup>1</sup> This section is adapted from Shreeranjana (2006), Chapter 2

It is bounded by the Brahmaputra valley of Assam in the North and Northwest and Cachar area of Assam in the East; the Surma valley (Bangladesh) borders it in the South and partly in the Southwest. Meghalaya has about 443 Kms. of international border with Bangladesh. The capital of Meghalaya, Shillong was also undivided Assam's capital from 1874 till January 1972. Shillong is located at an altitude of 1496 metres above mean sea level.

The State has a population of 2318822 as per the 2001 census of which 80.4 percent live in the rural areas. The overall population density of 103 (324 all India) per sq. km. has shown increase as against 15 per sq. km. in 1901. The sex ratio continuously declined from 1036 in 1901 to 937 in 1961. Since then it shows an upward trend and stands at 972 in 2001.

**Table 1.1 Administrative Districts in Meghalaya**

| Name of the District | Head quarters   | Area (sq. km.) | Population (2001 census) | Density of population per sq. km. | Sex ratio  |
|----------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Jaintia Hills        | Jowai           | 3819           | 299108                   | 78                                | 996        |
| East Khasi Hills     | Shillong        | 2820           | 660923                   | 241                               | 981        |
| Ri Bhoi              | Nongpoh         | 2376           | 192790                   | 79                                | 941        |
| West Khasi Hills     | Nongstoin       | 5247           | 296049                   | 56                                | 968        |
| East Garo Hills      | Williamnagar    | 2603           | 250582                   | 96                                | 966        |
| West Garo Hills      | Tura            | 3715           | 518390                   | 141                               | 968        |
| South Garo Hills     | Baghmara        | 1849           | 100980                   | 54                                | 942        |
| <b>Meghalaya</b>     | <b>Shillong</b> | <b>22429</b>   | <b>2318822</b>           | <b>103</b>                        | <b>972</b> |

Source: Census of India, 2001.

Principal languages are Khasi and Garo, with English as official language in the State. With originally two districts and three subdivisions only, the State has now 7 administrative districts (Table 1.1). Besides these, in order to bring administration closer to the people, it has now 8 Subdivisions and 39 Blocks (7 new Blocks have been created in 2002, one in each district).

The State has a unicameral legislature, consisting of 60 members (29 Khasi Hills, 7 Jaintia Hills and 24 Garo Hills). In addition, there are three Autonomous District Councils in the state, namely, Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council, Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council and Garo Hills Autonomous District Council. These councils function in accordance with the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. These councils have executive, legislative and judiciary wings and are under the control of the Governor of the State. The Autonomous District Councils are democratic institutions which have powers to make laws mainly in respect of 1. land, other than reserved forests; 2. forests, other than reserved forests; 3. use of any land or water resources for agricultural purposes; 4. regulation

of Jhum or shifting cultivation; 5. town or village administration including village or town police, public health and sanitation; 6. appointment and succession of chiefs and their powers; 7. laws relating to inheritance of properties and their regulation; 8. marriage; 9. social customs, traditional practices and customary laws.

There has been a growing debate over the relevance of Autonomous District Councils, which were created as an institution to allow management of natural resources and to protect, reform and pursue customary practices, when there was no separate state for hill regions of Assam. Even with the creation of a full-fledged State, the district council continues to function as a constitutional entity and, for quite some time, has been treated as a State within the State. Though it might have served the initial purpose, in respect of management of resources and codifying the customary laws, particularly in the wake of fast changes society is encountering, its record of accomplishment has given rise to certain misgivings in most quarters. However, it does provide a platform of political training in the State. With the Panchayati Raj Act brought in as another constitutional safeguard, and with devolution of power to the grassroots, an opportunity awaits to evolve a mechanism for correcting the imbalances in the power structure by incorporating mechanisms for more effective decentralization of duties and responsibilities as also for participation in policies and programmes.

Shillong has a bench of the High Court. The North Eastern Council (NEC) serving under the Union Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DONER), Government of India coordinates and accommodates infrastructure and production based schemes of intra-regional and inter-state interests. There is an earmarking of 10 percent of the budgetary allocation of sectors in GOI for expenditure in NER. Shortfall on this count forms the Non Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) for high value projects of infrastructure and social development for the states in the region. NLCPR is coordinated by the ministry of DONER. Several Central Government, Military, Para-Military establishments are also located in the State.

The population of Meghalaya is predominantly tribal. The main tribes are Khasis, Jaintias and Garos, besides other plain tribes such as Koch, Rabhas, and Bodos, etc. The Khasis, (the Khyntiams, Jaintias, the Bhois, the Wars sometimes are called the Hynniewtrep as a group) predominantly inhabit the districts towards Eastern part of Meghalaya, belong to the Proto Austroloid Monkhmer race and have been indigenous in these hills for a long time. The western part of the State, the Garo Hills, is predominantly inhabited by the Garos. The Garos belong to the Bodo family of the Tibeto-Burman race. They are also an indigenous population, said to have migrated from Tibet in its racial dispersal. The Garos are also called 'A-chiks'. Garo and Khasi societies have a matrilineal system prevailing.

81 percent of the population of the State live in rural areas and are largely dependent on agriculture for livelihood. The State has a total of 5782 inhabited villages (2001 census). Its population growth during the last decade (1981-1991) showed an increase of 31.80 percent. During 1991-2001 the annual growth of population is 2.29 percent against national rate of 2.14 percent. However, decadal variation in population of the State reveals an increase in the post-independence era which could be owing to a multiplicity of factors including influx, better health facility and reduction in mortality, etc.

The state has rich natural resources including diverse, dense, endemic, and cultivated exotic flora, ranging from tropical and sub-tropical to temperate or near-temperate kind, sustained by heavy and long rains. Dense Forest cover is about 42 percent of the total area; however, much of it is private forest managed and controlled by the District Council. The State Government controls only the area under the reserved forest, which is about 4 percent of the forest areas. There have been reports of large felling of trees in the 80s and 90s leading to consequential problems of livelihood and environmental degradation with consequential fall out on natural conservation. Currently, under the directions of the Supreme Court of India, felling and movement of timber is restricted to the extent of fulfillment of certain conditions. The State also has rich mineral resources; much of it is exploited unscientifically as most of it is under private ownership.

The State receives the heaviest rainfall (varies from 2300mm to more than 14000mm; average annual rainfall is 12000mm) and has vast potential for exploiting water resources for irrigation, hydropower and fisheries; but its efforts in this direction have been inadequate and at best, can be regarded as moderate. Scientific exploitation of natural resources will require detailed resource inventory and heavy initial investments. Responses in this direction from Government have not been adequate to provide stimulus for the growth and development of the State. The State could not attract investment from outside as there is lack of conducive environment and a balanced approach towards the investment from outside the region, due to the historical and perceived reasons of fear, exploitation. Besides rational protectionism mixed with in various potential areas of development are needed.

Though there has been some improvement over the years, the State has a long way to go in respect of basic services to improve health, education and economy, when judged by the parameters of the Human Development Index and other socio-economic indicators. Among the States and UTs in the country, Meghalaya ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> in Human Development Index (HDI) in 2001, 21<sup>st</sup> in Index of social and economic infrastructure, 16<sup>th</sup> in per capita consumption of electricity, 25<sup>th</sup> in road density, 30<sup>th</sup> in per capita utilization of credit, 19<sup>th</sup> in per capita income, 13<sup>th</sup> in Infant Mortality Rate and 24<sup>th</sup> in Literacy Rate.

As such, the State has to take appropriate steps to improve its position in all sectors. It is also ironical that motor vehicles per thousand population in the state is 40, whereas primary school per thousand is only 3 and hospital beds per lakh population is 137. Besides, there is astonishing disparity in rural and urban area parameters.

### **1.2 SOME UNIQUE SOCIO ECONOMIC FEATURES OF THE NORTH EASTERN REGION AND OF MEGHALAYA**

In a region so diverse, yet interrelated in its characteristics, it will be dangerous to make generalizations. However, basic features of the region can be briefly mentioned as below to get some perspectives on issues that apply to the region in general, and Meghalaya in particular.

1) **Diversity in geological, physiographic, agro-ecological and climatic variations:** The region has six agro-climatic sub-zones (5 sub-zones in Meghalaya). Contrasting variations exist, for example in Khasi and Jaintia hills on one hand and Garo hills areas on the other in most of these respects.

2) **Abundant water resources:** The region has abundance of water resources, the potential is not fully harnessed for hydro-power, fishery, ecotourism, adventure tourism and cave tourism. In Meghalaya, heaviest rainfall needs to be utilized for harvesting and recharging its aquifers. Its perennial streams and swollen rivers are strong water resources begging for potential tapping. Its total ground water potential of 1226.44 million cubic meter (MCM) provide only 1041.99MCM as utilizable for irrigation and at around 3000 MW of which only 185.2 MW has been tapped so far.

3) **Abode of Bio-Diversity:** The NE region contains about 20-25 percent of the forest cover of the country; and is the richest for bio-diversity. It is an ecological 'hot spot'-with 51 types of forest, 35 endemic plant genera, 2500 flowering plant species, 600 varieties of orchids out of 1500 present in India; also, out of the 500 different species of mammals known in India at least 160 are from the region while around 65 percent of mammalian genera recorded in India, are found in the region (IFAD, 1995). The State of Meghalaya is home to nearly 300 orchid varieties. The State also boasts of 450 species of birds and 110 species of mammals. The State also claims to be the abode of 700 odd varieties of medicinal plants. In Meghalaya, 40 endemic species out of 115 plant species from 67 families are threatened with extinction; and 6 species are endangered; 30 types of orchids are currently threatened with extinction; and 6 species are endangered; 30 types of orchids are currently threatened (IFAD, 1995).The State is home to some of the rare varieties of paddy, banana, and citrus plants, and is a storehouse of diverse germ-plasm reserve.

4) **A predominantly agricultural economy with 80 percent population dependent on it and only about 11 percent of the land area being under cultivation.** The broad pattern of rainfall varies from 2200 mm-14500 mm with varied temperature range of 2°C to 38°C.The low consumption of fertilizer (NPK 27:12:1 as against 4:2:1) could become its strength by promoting organic and natural farming if well packaged and practiced. Besides agriculture, the allied activities of fishery, livestock, piggery, poultry, and sericulture has immense potential strength. The region has good tradition of handicrafts and weaving.

5) **Rich in mineral resources:** The State is rich in coal, limestone, clay and kaolin, uranium and silimanite, besides phospherite, glass sand, granite, quartz and feldspar. The estimated reserve of coal and limestone is 640 million tones and 5000 million tones respectively. The production of coal in 2003-04 was about 5.4 million tones of which 0.88 million tones were exported to Bangladesh; production of limestone in the same year was 0.72 million tones of which 0.18 million tones were exported to Bangladesh. These figures may be a conservative estimate (at least by 50 percent) owing to revenue leakages/implications and underhand play in the sector including the transport business involved in the sector.

6) The region has 98 percent of its borders as international boundaries with China, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar (IFAD, 1995). Hence, its sensitivities and vulnerability to external forces for the security and integrity of the country is understandable. Meghalaya has a long and extremely porous borders with Bangladesh and is used by forces inimical to the country and region as transit routes.

7) A mosaic of ethnic and cultural diversity presents a social landscape of Aryans, Dravidians, Indo-Burmese, Indo-Tibetan, Proto-Austroloid and other stocks. In NEER, there are 217 recognizable tribes, more than 100 with significant population (IFAD, 1995). There are more than 75 major population groups and subgroups speaking approximately 400 language and dialects (Madhav, 1998). Meghalaya has small percentages of about 5% of other tribes and communities such as Koch, Rabhas, Hajong, Baites, Lalungs, etc.

8) A high population growth mainly due to influx across the southern boundaries (also natural) straining demographic and social texture, and causing 'fear of losing identity' (Madhav, 1998) and livelihood among a considerable section of the indigenous/local populace.

9) Traditional trade linkage in the pre-independence era with East (Myanmar) and South (present day Bangladesh) and its severance subsequently has generated a demand and need to have access through Bangladesh to Calcutta and other ports and the opening of border trade with neighboring countries.

10) The way of life and society is rooted in a traditional and customary approach in the hills. Traditional land tenure systems prevail without elaborate documentation and survey in hills and in Meghalaya. System of Matrilineal society is prevalent among the Meghalaya's chief tribes.

11) Feeling of isolation and alienation has persuaded the psyche owing to the British policies and subsequent political interests and owing to slow pace of developmental efforts.

12) Sparse population in hills and poor basic infrastructure, hill area specificities of isolation, marginality, ecological and ethnological vulnerability, and heterogeneity of socio-economic factors becomes ground realities.

13) A rapid spread of Christianity, particularly among tribal communities in the hills.

14) Active youth movement; and a disturbed law and order situation. Mizoram and Meghalaya, however, are relatively peaceful.

### **1.3. PERCEIVED PROBLEMS BY PEOPLE IN THE REGION/STATE**

It may be desirable to appreciate and enlist what people, mostly educated and opinion makers articulate as the difficulties and problems faced by the populace in the region.

- Psychological (perhaps real) fear of losing identity due to influx and immigration;
- Disruption of law and order; insurgency, vicious circle of economic stagnation and breeding of violence; realization of futility of an armed terrorist struggle and necessity of

- stable and secured environment is gaining ground to some extent and in some areas;
- Lack of an integrated vision for progress and development;
  - Severance of its natural markets across eastern and southern, and to some extent, northern borders; the region was uniquely disadvantaged by partition;
  - Necessity to restructure the institutional arrangements and infrastructures associated with the policy-making decisions in the NER;
  - Primitive agricultural economy, shifting cultivation in hills, low productivity and lack of market linkages. 'The productive sectors like agriculture is showing a negative trend' (Madhav, 1998) in the region;
  - Absence of genuine and fruitful productive exercise – a condition of inaction or slow action or absence or work culture;
  - Development agenda not in terms of social structure; lack of genuine participation in planning, policy and decision making; the linkages of people's institutions with governance has been weak to adversarial, lack of meaningful relationships;
  - Lack of proper understanding of the society, culture and polity, and within that structure the problem of evolving location specific responses; and
  - Absence of resources-management perspective for ecological security and sustainable development.
  - Absence or dysfunction of tertiary level institutions such as district councils, panchayats, village council and reluctance of states to share resources and functions has created disillusionment in the NER (Madhav, 1998).
  - Faulty formulation and implementation of plans and programmes; sick public sector undertakings owing to mismanagement; absence of basic requirements, despite heavy assistance from the center, including justice; and 'pervasive corruption' (Madhav, 1998) are problems frequently mentioned seeking redressal.

### 1.4 PROBLEMS: OTHER ADDED DIMENSIONS IN MEGHALAYA

- ❖ The issues and the process of accommodation and consensus of diverse interest groups: such as absence of consensus on resource management and required approach towards land, forest and water management including desirable reforms in these areas for people centered and progress oriented policies.
- ❖ An environment of cautious approach of governance which may mean inaction, or slow-action; or weighed action, sometimes vested or interested action or even inaction.
- ❖ Non-institutional consultations, mainly personality-based consultations resulting in mushrooming of floating organisations and assertions, each trying to outdo or overdo others; alienation of traditional systems from decision making and governance.
- ❖ Inadequate focus on development and poor community participation.
- ❖ Barring a few recently evolved NGOs there is a dearth of experienced and capable developmental NGO in the state. Poor organizational capacities of NGO sector including traditional organizations.
- ❖ Absence of effective programmes to channel the energies of youth, towards adventuresome but socially fruitful political, academic and economic pursuits.

- ❖ Dilemmas of development: ‘assimilation versus assertion’. “The old ways have been smashed; the new ways are not viable. People are caught in the deadlock of development.....they are expatriates in their own country.....forced to get by in the no man’s land between tradition and modernity” (Sachs, 1992).
- ❖ Tokenism in development reflected by
  - o Absence of location specific solutions in view of diversity and lack of involvement of people for mutual learning;
  - o Mostly inappropriate techniques and technology;
  - o Inadequate investment both by government and private organizations or in joint sectors;
  - o Poor extension support and backward and forward linkages in developmental sectors;
  - o Centralized planning; and lack of meaningful experimentation; initiating non adapted programmes, slow to lack lustre implementation, and abandoning programmes without meaningful impact studies (IRDP), pervasive adhocism.
  - o Institutional failures or inadequacy of safeguards for indigenous people.
  - o ‘Blaming attitude’ and ‘lack of commitment’ to serve the people in indigenous middle class and elite.
  - o New economic activities, marginalization of rural populace; spread of more western-consumerist life style and aspirations, increasing competitions and usurpation of resources and opportunities.
  - o Lack of reforms and efforts to revise traditional laws for changing with times. For example, in view of matrilineal system the status of male child and inheritance rights becomes a ticklish issue of identity, etc. in Meghalaya. On the other hand, democratic full participation of women in decision making in family and affairs of village remains a challenging task. Further, land reforms, ceiling, individual and farming rights, etc. have hardly been attended to for a meaningful resolution.
  - o Emergence of an exploitative and pervasive culture; intermediaries in power and market centres; quick money culture and extortion.
  - o Lack of effective decentralization and empowerment efforts.

## **1.5 Trends in Population Growth**

Meghalaya is predominantly a tribal state and a majority of its population resides in villages. Most of these villages are very small and widely scattered. As per 2001 census, the State had a population of 2.31 million, which was about 0.2% of the country’s total population at that time. The population density is 103 persons per square kilometre. Nearly 80.4% of the State’s population is rural whereas the remaining 19.6% is urban. The tribal population of the State is about 85.5%.

An analysis of the population trends in Meghalaya indicates that the decadal growth rate of population has been gradually increasing since 1951. Furthermore, the growth in Meghalaya has been higher the national average since 1961. The highest growth rate (32.86%) was exhibited during 1991. Due to the increase in population, the density of population has gone up in Meghalaya from 15 persons per square kilometre in 1901 to 103 in 2001.

## MEGHALAYA STATE DEVELOPMENT REPORT

| Year | Male      | Female    | Total     |               | Decadal Variation |        |
|------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------|-------------------|--------|
|      |           |           | Meghalaya | India         | Meghalaya         | India  |
| 1901 | 167,256   | 173,268   | 340,524   | 238,396,327   | -                 | -      |
| 1911 | 195,706   | 198,299   | 394,005   | NA            | 15.71%            | -      |
| 1921 | 211,216   | 211,187   | 422,403   | 251,321,213   | 7.21%             | -      |
| 1931 | 243,993   | 236,844   | 480,837   | 278,977,238   | 13.83%            | 11.00% |
| 1941 | 282,666   | 273,154   | 555,820   | 318,660,580   | 15.59%            | 14.22% |
| 1951 | 310,706   | 294,968   | 605,674   | 361,088,090   | 8.97%             | 13.31% |
| 1961 | 397,288   | 372,092   | 769,380   | 439,234,771   | 27.03%            | 21.64% |
| 1971 | 520,967   | 490,732   | 1,011,699 | 548,159,652   | 31.50%            | 24.80% |
| 1981 | 683,710   | 652,109   | 1,335,819 | 683,329,097   | 32.04%            | 24.66% |
| 1991 | 907,687   | 867,091   | 1,774,778 | 846,387,888   | 32.86%            | 23.86% |
| 2001 | 1,176,087 | 1,142,735 | 2,306,069 | 1,028,830,774 | 29.94%            | 21.56% |

Source: Statistical Abstract India 2003

**Table 1.2: Trends in Population Growth in Meghalaya**

### 1.6 DEVELOPMENT STATUS:

**1.6.1. Growth Rate:** Meghalaya's growth rate during the 10th Plan at constant 1993-94 prices has been estimated at 5.86 percent with growth of 3.09 percent, 7.90 percent and 6.15 percent in agriculture, industry and services respectively. The growth target of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) in the case of Meghalaya is projected at 7.3 percent with Agricultural growth rate at 4.7 percent. The growth rate in respect of Industry and Services are projected at 8.00 percent and 7.9 percent respectively for Meghalaya.

**1.6.2. Socio – economic indicators :** The gross cropped area and the net area sown as in 2004-05 was 2.65 lakh hectares and 2.19 lakh hectares respectively, of which the area sown more than once is only 0.46 lakh hectares. The net irrigated area (2002-03) stands at 59,000 hectares. The total area of wastelands in the State is 3.41 lakh hectares which constitutes 15.21 percent of the total geographical area of the State. The food grain and horticulture productions in the State during 2006-07 were 2.70 lakh M.T. and 3.97 lakh M.T. respectively. The State also produces three varieties of silk – eri, muga and mulberry. The average production over the last five years of cocoons is 260 M.T. of eri and 335 M.T. of muga while the 5-year average of yarn production is 2 M.T. of eri and 90 M.T. of muga. However, between 60 to 70 percent of the cocoons produced are transferred to Assam for conversion. As on 31-03-2008, 3428 villages have been electrified constituting about 60 percent of the total number of villages in the State. The per capita consumption of electricity (2005-06) is 317.77 kwh. The birth rate and death rate in 2005 was 25.1 and 7.5 per thousand respectively while the infant mortality rate was 49 per thousand. The Maternal Mortality Rate is 450 per lakh population and the Total Fertility Rate is 2.1. As in 2005-06, there were 568 doctors, 1232 nurses, 188 pharmacists, 687 ANMs and 172 lab technicians. There were 3166 beds (2004-05) available for medical care and the bed-patient ratio was 1:730. There are 4 primary health care centres per lakh of population. The literacy rate of Meghalaya as per 2001 census was 62.6 percent (male 65.4 percent and female 59.6 percent). The literacy rates for rural and urban areas are 56.3 and 86.3 percent respectively. As of 2005-06, there were 3 primary schools per thousand population, 8 middle schools per ten thousand population and 28 high and higher secondary

schools per lakh of population. The teacher-pupil ratio stands at one teacher for every 34 students at the primary school level, 24 for middle school level and 25 for high/ higher secondary school level. There are 16 urban centres in the State with a population of 4.54 lakhs constituting over 19 percent of the State's population. The decadal growth rate of urban population is 37.59 percent as against the State's decadal population growth of 30.65 percent. Urban poor constitutes about 22 percent of the total urban population. Out of the total habitation of 9236 in the State, 4192 habitations have been fully covered constituting about 45 percent.

**1.6.3. Poverty Scenario:** According to the estimate of Planning Commission, the population Below Poverty Line (BPL) during 2004-05 is 27.80% in the case of India. However, the household survey conducted by the State Government in 2002 finds that 48.9 % of the households in Meghalaya are Below Poverty Line families. Measurement of poverty critically depends on the poverty line and proper survey and there is need for appointing a panel of experts to devise a proper methodology to define and determine the poverty line for Meghalaya. The National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Guwahati has attempted to conduct a study to find out the root cause of poverty and to suggest solutions to this problem.

The major reasons for prevalence of poverty in Meghalaya are :-

(i) The operational land holding in Meghalaya is pre-dominantly small and marginal farmers with an area of below 2 hectares. Stagnation of agricultural production, soil erosion and lack of new economic opportunities are deterrent factors that caused rural poor farmer in the State to languish in poverty.

(ii) Rural areas in Meghalaya are characterized by limited opportunities, low level of skill development, poor infrastructure, etc. There are also wide rural-urban disparities in terms of level of human development opportunities as viewed from access to amenities and other social services.

(iii) Major reasons contributing to poverty in the North East appears to be ignorance, inadequate core infrastructure, inadequate market openings, over dependence on agriculture, lack of skills, etc., which makes them apprehensive to face the challenges that emerge in the new economy.

### 1.7. SUMMING UP

The brief profile of Meghalaya discussed in the foregoing subsections serves as a background against which we evaluate achievements in aspects of development. The subsequent chapters of this Report portray the picture of the level of development in the state. The features and problems outlined above are a snapshot for quest of development. Meghalaya yearns to find a place amongst developed states and achieve its potential. The rich natural resource and human endowment of the state craves for fuller and meaningful expression. Therefore, the challenge ahead is to harness the resources to the full potential and more importantly, to bring the fruits of development to the people, especially the poor and the less privileged.

## A VIEW OF SHILLONG





**LANDSCAPE OF  
CHERRAPUNJEE**



**AQUATIC ART  
ON LIMESTONE**



**TERRAIN OF KHASI HILLS**



**TURA PEAK**



**CANE SUSPENSION BRIDGE OVER SIMSANG RIVER**