

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MEGHALAYA STATE PLANNING
BOARD HELD ON 25TH AUGUST,2008 IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM,
MEGHALAYA SECRETARIAT MAIN BUILDING.**

List of attendance at Annexure-I

This meeting was specifically convened for the purpose of discussions only between the Chairman/Vice-Chairman/Deputy Chairmen and Non-Official/Official Members of the Board including the special invitees viz., Chief Executive Members of 3(three) Autonomous District Councils/ Members of Parliament, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on the approach of the present Meghalaya State Planning Board as notified vide No.PLA.16/2008/99 dt.7th July,2008.

The meeting began with an inaugural address by Shri P.A.Sangma, Hon'ble Chairman, Meghalaya State Planning Board. A copy of the same is attached herewith.

In the process of his address, the Chairman impressed upon the Members to visit the Dhirubhai Ambani knowledge city at Navi Mumbai. He also informed that Malaysia and Phillipines have made a law in infrastructure development and this is borrowed from Switzerland. This note will be circulated to the Members.

The Chairman remarked that it is fortunate to have Mr. Phrang Roy as a Member of the Board on basis of his international experience for the purpose of resources mobilisation

The Chairman called upon the Members to give their suggestions etc on his opening remark especially in the context of Capacity Building, utilizing existing institutions, Research and Development. Prior to participating in the discussions, the Chairman requested the Members to introduce themselves.

1. **Mr.Phrang Roy** :- He made a mention that his willingness to be a Member is in the context that the Board being under the dynamic leadership of Shri P.A.Sangma. He stated that the opening remark summarises the thoughts of the State Planning Board.

He was of the opinion that any issue of development should include the welfare of farmers and poorest of the poor. They are to have a rallying point if State Planning Board is to have a dent from advice of the people.

On Capacity Building, he felt the need of a change of mindset and to do something very Indian/very tribal. He stated that a lot of local knowledge among the indigenous people is not looked into and sometimes totally unknown to scientists.

He laid stress on social security where an individual can walk freely unbothered by the shadow of threat to life. Though easier said then done, this should be pursued.

2. **Prof. Glen Kharkongor** :- He stated that as an academician, he would first refer to the materials before participating in any platform. In this case, he stated that he had availed the Internet facility and obtained certain informations on State Planning Board of other states but for the State Planning Board of Meghalaya, nothing much is available.

He stated that the opening remark is looking at the comprehensive work of the State Planning Board and is very encouraging and to make it significant.

He stated that he had attended the recent NE Education Ministers meet and was disappointed that Meghalaya is very far behind.

He was of the opinion that when a scheme is thought of, it should be borne in mind as to whether such scheme is to benefit the poorest man in the state or to marginalize him otherwise.

3. **Rev.P.B.M.Basaiawmoit** :- He expressed his thankfulness for having nominated him as a Member of the State Planning Board and accepted it as an honour.

He suggested that the 11th Plan of the Govt.of India and NE Vision Document 2020 may be referred when thinking of a policy for functioning of the Board.

He made a critical observation as to whether this present State Planning Board should continue and complete its term or simply an adhoc body and ends with Shri P.A.Sangma, Chairman, Meghalaya State Planning Board assuming the office of Chief Minister.

He stated that the opening remark is a very good objective for the state of Meghalaya.

He expressed the need of having Working Groups of the State Planning Board to go into details of specific/relevant issues.

He was of the opinion that rural people should form part of the growth of Meghalaya and as such, the programmes/schemes are to be rural oriented. He raised a point as to how to bring in the voluntary sector.

On road connectivity – he suggested the urgency to create a road network and road infrastructure for market.

Shri P.A.Sangma, Chairman quoted John F. Kennedy's, President of USA, reaction that when people said that America has good roads because it is rich, he said “ America is rich because of good roads”

4. **Mr.Kajol K.Das Roy** :- On road construction, he pointed out that the methods used by PWD, Meghalaya are till date traditional and conventional unlike in other states where latest techniques are in use.

The scope of advanced trainings to PWD officers is never there for reasons of funds position and Meghalaya PWD has been rolling on for 34(thirtyfour) years as such.

He also stated that even in this age of Computer skills, no one is trained on Designs etc. He, however pointed out that as far as road connectivity is concerned, the achievement is quite impressive where from inheriting a road length of only 2800 Km, the road length at present is about 9000 Km or so but maintenance is a big problem because of paucity of funds.

He felt that priority should be on capacity building of officers.

In view of above, the Chairman queried as to whether there is a policy document for roads. He cited an example in the case of Chokpot where there is tremendous scope for tourism, but there are no roads. He also cited an example of the rich growth of oranges along the route from Mawkyrwat to Nongnah and from Nongnah to Ranikor.

He felt the need and urgency of a policy for road connectivity.

5. **Mr.Toki Blah** :- He stated that the opening remark provides a platform for further discussions.

He felt that for good governance, there should be effective use of the population etc. He expressed his happiness of the participating paradigm thought of. And for what is comprehensive for development of the state-policy needed. He pointed out of the need to identify core issues say, basic health care and primary education. He spoke on improving institutional infrastructure. He felt the need of capacity building of those at the helm of affairs of traditional institutions.

He referred to minutes of the Interaction meeting held on 17.6.2008 and agreed of the need to bring in Panchayati Raj Administration, also that vis-à-vis the guidelines of the Centre, local conditions need to be looked into.

He raised issues as to whether pesticides etc is good for the hilly areas and Jhum or shifting cultivation which is continuing till date perhaps must be good.

The Chairman agreed that capacity building in respect of traditional institutions is a must. He informed that in this regard, the matter was tied up with NEHU for imparting trainings to the Nokmas in Garo Hills. He also was of the opinion that research works should be initiated on indigenous knowledge of agriculture. He proposed an idea of declaring the year 2009 – a year of vegetables i.e., massive exploitation of favourable soil conditions in respective regions of the State for growing vegetables.

6. **Prof.E.D.Thomas** :- In his past experience as a Member of the State Planning Board, he was of the personal opinion that the Board had failed to address issues that need to be addressed.

He stated that the Board needs to think in terms of 5(five) Year Plans and perspective Plans. He desired that copies of NE Vision Document 2020 be made available to the Members.

He pointed out that Capacity Building is often thought of only in terms of Human Resources Development; actually, HRD are the tools. Capacity building is to sit together between the teacher and the taught.

On organizational structure, he felt the need of a look for a change with certain departments where bifurcations etc take place though with the similar nature of works.

He said yes to Research and Development.

He emphasized on strengthening of existing institutions particularly in the education sphere. He cited an example of Mendipathar College which is one of the oldest Colleges and its development is very phenomenal but the 12(twelve) sanctioned posts which were there for a number of years still remains the same till date.

The Chairman expressed his disappointment that there are no science stream colleges in Garo Hills except in Tura.

7. **Shri Alphonse A.Sangma, Chief Executive Member, Garo Hills Autonomous District Council** :- He stated that the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council is doing a lot for development for Garo Hills and as such suggested that sufficient funds must be made available to the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council.

The Chairman strongly felt that priority needs to be given to schemes of autonomous district councils in the state.

8. **Shri Hambertus Nongtdu Chief Executive Member, Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council** :- He briefed on the schemes taken up by the Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council. He made a reference to a particular scheme of 2004 where works to be in agreement with NBCC.

He informed of a major scheme viz., the construction of Iew Musiang at Jowai.

He requested the State Planning Board to intervene on the schemes of Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council meant for improvement of development in Jaintia Hills.

On share of Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council, he stated that the due share of Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council is not consistent.

9. **Dr.W.R.Kharlukhi** :- He stated that it is a privilege to be associated with members of the Board who possess wide and varied knowledge.

He stressed on the need of a systematic change and perhaps to start with the State Planning Board itself. He expressed his disappointment that he was not aware of the composition of officers and staff of the Board.

He advocated on investigation for research and development and especially in those areas which have not been pursued for the last 30 years.

He welcomed the formation of Working Groups and such Groups to be allotted the respective departments. He remarked that some departments have policies but why government is not acting itself on those policies.

He referred to development taking place in Border Areas where tea plantation is taken up. The economy of the people has improved considerably and prominently, their lifestyle changed and abstaining liquor habits etc. Eventually, employment takes place. He therefore urged the government to explore such activities in other villages as well.

GENERAL DISCUSSIONS :-

The need of a proper office of the Board was discussed. The Chairman informed that he had taken it up with SAD and a floor in Yojana Building has been allotted to State Planning Board. The matter of a library of the State Planning Board is also being looked into. Strengthening of manpower had already been taken up.

He further informed that the Research Officers of State Planning Board will be sent for training shortly.

Mr. Phrang Roy felt that the State Planning Board provides a platform to be able to invite people of different backgrounds to contribute towards the welfare of the state. On research, he felt the need of promoting core learning. The Chairman intervened and said that we may make the State Planning Board a State Knowledge Board also.

Mr. Toki Blah raised a point as to whether because of Science and Maths that the state has a large number of schools dropouts.

The Board felt that the research officers, State Planning Board be directed for documentation of data.

Principal Secretary, Planning Department :- On farmers and poorest of the poor, he stated that it is a matter of sensitivity and that government should be sensitive.

He felt the need of a change in the mindset-talking about the scientist but not the farmer talking about urban but not the rural. There is a need to look beyond our nose, he asserted.

He made a point that efforts is needed from all concerned to acquire data and then to identify.

He endorsed capacity building and involvement of grassroots.

He stated that the delivery system is not upto the mark and there is a problem of bureaucracy due to layers of redtapism. He cited an example of the delay of funds under NLCPR which is of a fact that not being able to submit utilization certificates in time and this again is due to redtapism.

On roads, he was of the opinion that in hills areas – the drainage system needs to be good and consequently, the road condition will be good.

He advocated professionalism of development and refresher courses in imperative as such.

The Chairman expressed his disappointment that even in matter of preparation of a project report (forget DPR), the district officials are very poor in this respect. He directed the Commissioner & Secretary, Planning to organise such trainings.

Prof.Glen Kharkongor while participating in the general discussions, he expressed his disappointment that there is too much dependence from outside for consultancy etc. and this reflect badly for the state. In effect, outsourcing reflects loss of confidence in ourselves.

He was of the view that perhaps a research is necessary as to why tribal students are poor in Maths and Science.

Mr.Phrang Roy stressed on capacity building of indigenous people.

Commissioner & Secretary, Planning Department :- He stated that the Plan materials of 11th Plan and Annual Plan 2008-2009 of Meghalaya can be made available to Members of State Planning Board and the Vision Document 2020 for North East can be downloaded from Internet.

He brought to the attention of the Board on preparation of Draft Annual Plan 2009-2010 and that the deliberations of the State Planning Board on the same is necessary for its recommendations before submission to Planning Commission by the State Government.

Principal Secretary, Finance :- He stressed on the need of good data and districtwise data. The need to look at productivity, connectivity and health as indicators to relate as to how money is spent and also to be able to plan

For departments, he felt that, if not necessarily, a definite policy but a perspective plan would be essential.

The role of village committees to be part in rural development.

The Chairman stated that a booklet on statistics is not very factual. He cited an example of limestone mining in Garo Hills but no figures are available – Commissioner & Secretary, Planning to take action.

Rev.P.B.M.Basaiawmoit stated that statistical data from Manipur is very detailed but the same from Meghalaya is not very good.

The Chairman stated that he desires a Full-Fledged Board meeting sometime in September.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks from the Chair.

(Shri. P.A.Sangma)
Chairman,
State Planning Board.