

STATE EDUCATION POLICY FOR MEGHALAYA

The State of Meghalaya came into existence on 21st January 1972. However, although a White Paper was brought out by the Education Department in 1988, there has been no attempt to frame a clear cut State Policy on Education.

The Constitutional Amendment of 1976 placed Education in the Concurrent list of the Constitution of India. This has brought about a sharing of responsibilities between the Central and the State Governments. More importantly, for a resource poor State like Meghalaya this has meant a welcome infusion of funds from the Central Government. The State will therefore, frame its policy within the broad parameters of the National Policy on Education 1986(NPE1986) and share the responsibilities and functions as partners with the Central Government in the implementation of the objectives of the NPE 1986.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) was adopted by Parliament in May 1986. It was modified in 1992 based on the recommendations of a Committee set up at the request of the Central Advisory Board of Education. The framework of the NPE 1986 was retained and only a few modifications were incorporated in what is now called the “National Policy on Education 1986 – Revised Policy Formulations”.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Formal Education in the State has had a very short history commencing only from the year 1842 when the Khasi Alphabet was developed by the Welsh Presbyterian Missionaries. In the Garo Hills, the Garo Alphabet using the Roman script was developed in the year 1902 by American Baptist Missionaries. Thereafter, for nearly a century there were only primary and Middle Schools with a few High Schools in what is now Meghalaya. The first College was established in the year 1934 in Shillong by the Christian Brothers, a society of Catholic Brothers from Ireland. There was no specific policy and the formal system of Education followed was what was prevalent in the then State of Assam of which Meghalaya previously formed a part. In fact the lack of emphasis on Education is clearly reflected in the literacy percentage of the area, which now constitutes the State of Meghalaya. As per Census of India, the literacy rate in the State was 26.92% in 1961, 29.49% in 1971, 42.05% in 1981, 49.10% in 1991 and 63.31% in 2001. It is only after the attainment of

Statehood that Education began to receive its due attention as reflected in the quantum jump in literacy percentage from 1971 onwards.

STATE CONCERNS

Urban- Rural Disparity:

The State has a predominantly rural population. However, even after 35 years of Statehood, the rural areas continue to suffer from under development especially in the field of Education. The State capital of Shillong continues to enjoy the status of an educational hub, as many elite colleges are located here. However, the distribution of all institutions of Secondary, Higher Secondary and College Education across the board is highly skewed in favour of Shillong and to a certain extent, Tura. This aspect has to be addressed and the urban-rural disparity should be progressively reduced especially in the Higher Education sub-sector. It is essential that young people get higher education close to their hearths and homes so as to discourage them from migrating to the urban centres. This will help them to integrate with and develop rural society and economy.

High Drop Out Rate

The high drop out rate in the State has been a major cause of concern to the State Government as well as the Central Government. The reasons are varied and are accountable for the phenomenon in varying degrees. The North Eastern Hill University is currently engaged in a Research study on the problem. However it is well recognized that a nonconductive school environment and untrained teachers are to a large extent, responsible.

The Government of India has introduced the Midday Meal Programme in the Primary Schools of the country in the year 1995 and has extended its coverage to Upper Primary School in the Educationally Backward Blocks with effect from 1st October 2007. The programme is being implemented in the State and although there have been many problems of logistics etc, a recent Evaluation carried out by NEHU has found that enrolment and retention has improved as a result of the Midday Meal Programme. The State will therefore implement the Programme vigorously.

The Problem of Untrained Teachers

As regards the untrained teachers, more detailed description and remedies may be seen under the heading The Teacher.

Access to Elementary Education:

The problem of access to Elementary Education has been largely addressed through the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). However, quality remains a serious concern which has to be addressed on priority as it has a direct bearing on the quality of the subsequent stages of Education. Moreover, as Government of India funding tapers off the financial burden of teachers' salary will fall on the State Government.

Need for Vocational Education:

The Government, Quasi Government and local bodies remain the largest employers with the number of white-collar workers being of the order of 72,808 in 2001-02 (Statistical Handbook of Meghalaya 2005). An overwhelming majority of these workers are bureaucratic and clerical staff. The employment capacity of this sector has reached and exceeded saturation point. Meanwhile, the number of educated unemployed is swelling and is of the order of 37,359 as of 2004 (Statistical Handbook of Meghalaya 2005). The need of the hour is obviously vocational oriented education.

The Vocational Education Scheme of the Central Government at 10+2 level has proved to be unsuccessful throughout the country. The State also has been implementing the scheme in two Higher Secondary Schools without much success. Fortunately the Ministry of Human Resource Development is presently undertaking a thorough overhaul of the scheme and it will be substantially revised. As vocational education is highly capital intensive and requires investment in up-to-date machinery and expertise, the State Government shall necessarily have to implement the Centrally- funded scheme.

While selecting the vocational courses to be introduced, we shall keep in view the economic and industrial scenario of the state and the areas which offer scope for wage as well as self employment. These may include fishery, tourism etc. If necessary a survey may be commissioned to be conducted by a competent agency to identify such areas and to estimate the potential for employment. A lesson from our past experience is that special attention should be paid to the development of entrepreneurial and business management skills

The necessity to set up a State Council of Vocational Education, a State Institute of Vocational Education and a separate cell in the Directorate of Higher Education will be examined.

In order to match the changing demands of the job market, teachers may have to be taken on contract basis. This will give the necessary flexibility to the system enabling us to hire qualified teachers without violating the State Reservation Policy for employment.

Apprenticeship training under the Apprenticeship Act is an important catalyst for promoting vocational education. The training would strengthen the skills of the Vocational students by placing them in real work situation in industries/farms and thereby establishing their worthiness in the area of vocational training obtained.

Operation Sustainability

A beginning has been made in this area by the introduction of an approach called “Operation Sustainability” by the State Government in selected Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools whereby income generating schemes of the line Departments like Industry, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary, Soil Conservation will be implemented by these institutions within their premises. The initiative is aimed at the twin objectives of helping the institutions to reduce dependence on Government aid and also to inculcate work culture and the dignity of labour in the students.

Job-oriented courses in Colleges:

The more progressive Colleges especially in Shillong have diversified into job-oriented courses with the help of UGC, MHRD and NEC. The other Colleges in other parts of the State need to be encouraged to do likewise.

Need for Technical Education:

One glaring gap in the profile of educational institutions in the State is the almost total absence of institutions imparting technical education including medical sciences, agricultural sciences, veterinary sciences etc. There is a need to have self-sustaining institutes of Technical Education the State.

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is to develop human resources according to the needs and demands of the society by improving the quality of education in the state so as to make

Meghalaya a place of educational excellence. Our endeavour is to generate manpower which is needed for all round socio-economic and techno-economic development of the state. We aim at achieving quality not only in academic but also in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To assess the need for human resources in the State and to generate the same accordingly.
2. To develop human resources and bring about overall improvement in the quality of life.
3. To create a conducive environment for the students to learn more and more and rise to a greater heights of knowledge.
4. To encourage Public Private Partnership in setting up different educational institutions.
5. To encourage need base development in the field of technical, vocational and professional education through intensive motivation.
6. To provide guidance and counseling to the students who want to pursue different branches of knowledge in their career.

ACCESS AND EQUALITY

In accordance with Article 45 of the Constitution of India the State shall endeavour to provide Free and Compulsory Education to all children until they complete the age of 14 years. It shall also be the policy of the State Government that up to a given level all students irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex shall have access to education of a comparable quality. In order to achieve this, the Government shall implement appropriate programmes including those funded by the Central Government. The State Government shall also continue to nurture and maintain its tradition and good performance in the education of the girl child and women.

In so far as the handicapped is concerned, the National Policy of inclusive education will be followed.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION

Despite the head start provided by the setting up of the headquarters of the erstwhile State of Assam in Shillong, the State is now lagging behind many States in the country in so far as Education is concerned. The reasons are many but the primary

one is the shortage of resources. As a result, the salary of teachers in Meghalaya compares unfavourably with that of many other States in the country. If Meghalaya is to keep pace with the rest of the country, Education should be made a priority sector in the State for which adequate resources should be allotted in the State Plan to maintain and foster growth both in terms coverage and in quality. The Government therefore subscribes to the National Policy Formulation which states that Education will be treated as a crucial area of investment for national development and survival.

As part of its Constitutional obligation, the Central Government has been paying more attention to Elementary Education. Secondary Education however, has not received similar attention so far and has therefore, languished. College Education has been especially neglected in terms of financial support. The situation in the State is no different. Not a single college has been brought under the deficit system of grant-in-aid since 1995. The State cannot afford to neglect its important sub-sector indefinitely and shall have to give it due attention sooner or later.

On the other hand, almost total dependence on the State Government for financial support on the part of the aided educational institutions is not sustainable. Therefore, Higher Secondary Schools and Colleges may be given more freedom to achieve financial independence from Government by gradually raising their fees as far as possible keeping in mind the fact that the bulk of the population of the state is poor.

NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

The National System of Education which envisages a common educational structure of 10+2+3 has been and will continue in the state of Meghalaya.

This system is based on the National Curriculum Framework, which contains the history of India's Freedom Movement, the constitutional obligations and other contents essential to nurture national identity. These elements will cut across subject areas and will be designed to promote values such as India's common cultural heritage, egalitarianism, democracy and secularism, equality of the sexes, protection of the environment, removal of social barriers, observance of the small family norm and inculcation of the scientific temper. All educational programmes will be carried out in strict conformity with secular values.

ADULT EDUCATION

The State stands committed to the eradication of illiteracy particularly in 15-35 age group through Literacy Campaigns in consonance with National Policy which will also be geared to meet National goals like alleviation of poverty, national integration and the promotion of national values as mentioned in the paragraph immediately preceding this. It will also facilitate energisation of the cultural creativity of the people and their active participation in development processes.

Comprehensive programmes of post literacy and continuing education will be provided for neo-literates and youth who have received primary education with a view to enabling them to retain and upgrade their literacy skills, and to harness it for the improvement of their living and working condition. Special emphasis will be laid on organization of employment/ self-employment oriented, and need and interest based vocational and skill training programmes.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

In consonance with the National Policy in Education, the State recognizes the holistic nature of child development namely, nutrition, health, social, mental, physical, moral and emotional development. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) will receive high priority and attempts will continue for suitably integrating this programme with the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS).

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

In consonance with the NPE the new thrust of Elementary Education will emphasize three aspects namely, (i) Universal access and enrolment (ii) Universal retention of children upto 14 years of age and (iii) Substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve the essential levels of learning.

The policy of non-detention at the Primary Stage will be preferred and continuous and comprehensive evaluation will be aimed at. Corporal punishment will be firmly excluded from the educational system and school timings as well as vacations will be adjusted to the convenience of children.

Essential facilities including weatherproof school buildings, learning aids like blackboards, maps, charts, toys, books will be provided. The State shall endeavour to appoint at least 3 teachers in every Primary School with the number increasing as early as possible to one teacher per class. Women teachers will be preferred.

HIGHER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Secondary Education:

Access to Secondary education will be widened to cover un-served and viable areas. Quality of education will be improved and education activities diversified and made flexible to accommodate high achievers and to prevent dropout of students up to the age of sixteen.

Higher Secondary School Education:

Higher Education will be made increasingly accessible to the vast hinterland of rural Meghalaya, in order to provide equal opportunity to all.

The National Policy on Education envisages that the +2 stage of education should be attached to the school. In pursuance thereof, the Education Department will progressively upgrade Secondary Schools to the Higher Secondary Level within the next 10 years to facilitate the de-linking process and to accommodate the growing number of students.

College Education:

Consolidation of the existing facilities, selective expansion with diversification of courses, improvement of quality education with emphasis on courses which are relevant to the agro-rural background of the people and those which will generate self employment will be undertaken. In order to facilitate diversified and quality education, strategies are to be adopted to speed up the process of de-linking of +2 from colleges.

University Education:

The State has one Central University namely the North Eastern Hill University. The Government will encourage Private-Public Partnership by establishing a limited number of Private Universities to cater to the specific needs of professional, technical and vocational education as has been done in the case of the three private universities which have been recently established through Acts passed by the State Legislature. It is expected that, apart from general education, the North Eastern Hill University will increasingly provide leadership in the field of professional, technical and vocational education also.

Vocational Education:

Enhancement of individual employability and training of skilled manpower with flexible vocational courses and institutes to cover certain percentage of students at the school level. Public Private Participation in vocational education will be encouraged.

Technical Education:

Keeping in view the trend of industrial development of the state the requirement of technical and management manpower will be assessed while considering opening of Engineering Colleges and Polytechnics as well as introduction of new courses in the existing Polytechnics. The development of entrepreneurial culture and skills among the local youth will be important. Private initiative as well as Public Private Partnership wherever feasible will encouraged.

Strategies for further development in the field of Technical Education will include:

1. Consolidation and expansion of facilities at the Diploma level.
2. Assessment of Technical manpower needs.
3. Creation of appropriate infrastructure.
4. Quality enhancement such as modernizing laboratories and workshop, development and revision of curriculum to meet labour market needs, improved staffing and staff training, increasing utilization of learning resources & media, promoting interaction with industry/community and networking activities.
5. To make effort to improve quality, increase effectiveness and continuously strive for excellence to manage competitive environment by establishing total quality management culture in the institutions.
6. To establish new polytechnics in the other districts of the State.
7. To encourage private organizations to establish technical institutions.
8. To upgrade the existing Shillong Polytechnic to the level of Degree Engineering College with lateral entry provision.
9. To promote Apprenticeship training under the Apprenticeship Act. The training would strengthen the skills of technical students by placing them in real work situation in industries/farms and thereby establishing their worthiness in the area of training obtained.
10. Strengthening of Meghalaya State Council for Technical Education.
11. To introduce new courses like Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Water Resource Management and Rural Technology, Agriculture Engineering,

Construction Technology, Mining Technology, Printing Technology, Communication Engineering & Information Technology after socio-economic diagnostic analysis in a phase manner.

It short internal and external efficiency of the technical education system is expected to improve considerably and it is also expected that State will open a new horizon in imparting technical education to students who will find employment in the state of Meghalaya as well as outside the state either in public sector or private sector.

Accreditation of Colleges:

The importance and necessity of accreditation has been emphasized at several high level talks and this must be translated into reality.

Grant-in-aids:

The present multi- layered system of grants-in-aid is highly undesirable and should be progressively abolished by reducing the various categories of grants-in-aid. The ultimate goal in this area is to have only one system for grants-in-aid.

Management of Non-Government educational institutions:

The present policy of the Government to encourage NGOs to set up and run educational institutions will continue as the Government does not have the resources to meet the growing need. However, the sponsoring bodies should be responsible not only for starting the institution but also for ensuring quality education through adequate physical infrastructure and adequate salaries and post-retirement benefits for the teachers by implementation the Employees Provident Fund Act.

Governing bodies and Managing Committees of aided institutions should be responsible for timely payment of salary of their staff for a period of not less than three months in case of delay in the release of Government assistance. They should also maintain discipline among staff. These will be a requirement for eligibility for any Government **grant-in-aid**.

Integrated Education for the Handicapped and Challenged Children:

The state stands committed to the implementation of the People With Disability Act and has in that direction. Efforts are being made to include a module of disability and retardation in Teachers Training Institutes of the State. Embracing all institutions

imparting special education to such physically challenged children under the grant-in-aid scheme provided to institutions providing general education.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS (GOVERNMENT PUBLIC SCHOOLS)

The standard of Pine Mount School and the other three Public Schools where the minimum facilities like Hostel accommodation and sport and games/Physical training facilities are lacking will be strengthened and raised to enable them to maintain a standard as required by the Council for Indian School Certificate Examination.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS (CBSE COURSE)

In order to promote mobility of students and encourage integration with the rest of the country, Govt. will prepare plans to set up at least one such school in each District Headquarter where no such courses are taught.

Alternatively the matter may be taken up with the Kendriya Vidyalaya authorities requesting them to set up such schools in the District Headquarters where no such schools are in existence.

NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME

The National Service Scheme jointly sponsored by the Govt. of India and the State Government will be extended to all Higher Secondary Schools and Colleges for the benefit of the students.

BHARAT SCOUTS AND GUIDES

The Bharat Scouts and Guides is an active and vibrant organization in the State will continue to be encouraged by extending the movement to all the Schools in the State.

THE NATIONAL CADET CORPS

NCC activities in the state have acquired good momentum and NCC units now exist in all the Districts in urban as well as rural areas. However, there is plenty of scope to make it more vibrant and extend it to the sub-divisions also. This will canalize youthful energy towards constructive activities fostering much needed discipline. NCC will also help the youth integrate more easily with the mainstream and improve their chances to enter the Defence services, Police service and also the

Central Government departments like the Department of Telephones. The Railways, Public Sector Undertakings where reservations exist for those with NCC qualifications. Even Multinational Companies giants prefer NCC trained persons, as they are highly motivated and disciplined. The Government will therefore encourage NCC by extending the coverage.

COMPUTER EDUCATION

In order to accelerate economic development of the State and maximize the benefit to the people through Information Technology, widespread application of Information Technology and Integrated e-Education System will be undertaken. This will enhance the skills of our manpower resource. The State Government will facilitate and play a pro-active role so that the professionals imparting Information Technology/ Computer Education will be encouraged. Creation of Infrastructure for a Computer Aided Learning process and facilitating the students with the learning component in Information Technology will enhance the performance and effectiveness of teaching in the learning process. The Government will facilitate the entry of private sector in this area and Public Private Participation (PPP) will be encouraged. With the full support from the Government of India through different schemes such as CLASS project, ICT project etc. and in collaboration with the private sector, the investment on quality training and education would be adequate so as to give overriding importance to the Human Resource Development.

The Government will encourage Computer education in all educational institutions and the scheme will be made sustainable where the students who study the computer course will pay additional fees in order to generate revenue and the amount so generated will be used to meet up the recurring expenditure, improvement and up gradation of computer education in the respective institutions.

The curriculum and syllabus will be followed as per the Curriculum Guide and Syllabus for IT in Schools of the NCERT.

STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION

It is desirable that a statutory body of the State Council for Higher Education be established. The Council will oversee the functioning and coordination of higher education in line with NPE and the UGC. The Council will be a regulatory body, the head of which will have regulatory power to prescribe fees and courses. The DHTE will be its member secretary.

The Council would be headed by a distinguished academician (either on payment or on honorary basis) as is done in the case of the UGC. It will have representatives of the Vice-Chancellor of NEHU, academicians, industrialists and senior representatives of the State Govt. dealing with Education, Planning, Finance and Industries. The Council will be engaged in academic planning management of institution of higher education and matter relating to finance. The council will prepare guidelines on various issues and interact with the state Government the UGC and other institutions of higher education. It will liaise between the state Government and NEHU and also other institutions of higher education inside and outside the state.

IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

The standard and performance of most Government educational Institutions has left much to be desired. Considering the fact that the teachers and other staff enjoy all the benefits of Government service including promotion avenues, pension, health care, house building, car purchase allowances and other perquisites, the standard of Government schools and colleges should be of a much higher order than that of private ones. The Government will take appropriate steps to improve the system.

THE TEACHER

It is recognized that the teacher is the single most vital factor in the education system. The Government will therefore endeavour to create conditions which will help motivate and inspire teachers along constructive and creative lines. Their pay and service conditions have to be commensurate with their social and professional responsibilities. This will attract better talent to the profession.

Compared to the rest of the country, the average salary of teachers in the State is very low. If we are to get quality we must raise the salary of teachers so that it is roughly equivalent to that of other States.

Teachers serving in Non-Government institutions do not get any Post Retirement benefit except death cum retirement gratuity and C. P. Fund. This issue will have to be addressed. One of the ways in which this issue can be addressed is to insist upon adoption of the Employment Provident Fund by all sponsoring bodies intending to set up schools and colleges.

The recruitment of teachers should be streamlined and guidelines should be formulated to ensure objectivity in their postings and transfers.

The State has raised the minimum educational qualification of an elementary school teacher to the level of Class XII passed. However, there is need to prescribe pre-service training as an essential qualification for appointment of such teachers as per norms prescribed by the National Council of Teacher Education from time to time. Only such a step, complemented by the continuing effort to impart training to untrained teachers will be a permanent solution to the problem of untrained teachers. This will improve the quality of education and reduce the drop out rate.

Similarly, the minimum qualification of an Upper Primary School teacher should be raised and pre-service training should be made an essential entry qualification.

The Secondary and Higher Secondary School Teachers are also largely untrained, the percentage of trained teachers being the order of 30% only as of 2007. B. Ed. shall also be a minimum entry qualification for this category of teachers.

TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTES

With Central assistance, 7 District Institutes and Training have been set up. These institutions will be strengthened and their intake capacity will be increased to help wipe out the backlog of untrained teachers and to facilitate the adoption of a policy of appointment of only pre trained teachers.

In so far as Secondary and Higher Secondary Education is concerned, there are only 4 colleges of teacher education in the State. Their capacity also needs to be increased so as to accommodate not only in-service but also pre-service trainees.

The State Government will also make every effort to access Central assistance to set up more Colleges of Teacher Education and Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education as the latter will serve as a resource base for all the Teacher Education Institutes in the state.

OPERATIONAL VALUES

There is need to transfer the knowledge acquired in the classroom and the laboratory to the daily life of the students outside the school. The State Government intends to launch a programme called Operational Values. This programme will provide students an opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills through a planned and systematic connection between experiences and activities, which are socially and economically advantageous. The educational system will be revolutionized so as to inspire and create an environment for students to remove

economic difficulties, inculcate a sense of responsibility towards society and inspire the youth for social service. Such activities may include adoption of a school, locality, neighborhood and market for providing them with safe drinking water. Students should also be made aware of the need to save scarce water and to bring them into contact with new water harvesting techniques and protection of water catchment areas. Other projects may include saving the environment in the locality for neighborhood/ market/ public place and inculcating healthy civic sense and proper garbage disposal etc. The students may also be engaged in getting out of school children back to school and helping in adult literacy programmes and basic hospitality and tourism activities.

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGES

The State subscribes to the formulations on the development of languages spelt out in the National Policy on Education 1968.

- (a) The State Government will continue to encourage the study of Khasi and Garo languages.
- (b) The three language- formula will also be followed at the Secondary stage.
- (c) Every effort will be made to promote the teaching and learning of Hindi.
- (d) The results of the Secondary School and Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examinations show that the students of the State especially those from the rural areas are weak in English. However, as this language has become the accepted medium of international interactions in all spheres of human activity, especially in Science, Technology and Information Technology, the State must strengthen the study of this language.
- (e) In view of the opening up of the economy and the Look East Policy adopted by the Government of India, there is need for colleges and universities of the State to explore the possibilities of opening courses in other foreign languages especially those spoken in Asia e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean.