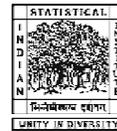




National Seminar on
**“POVERTY, INEQUALITY AND
HEALTH IN INDIA WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO NORTH-EAST INDIA”**
(8-10 October, 2015)



Organised by

**NORTH-EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS SHILLONG, INDIA, 793022**

in collaboration with

INDIAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE, KOLKATA

(Call for Papers)

[Please see details at http://nehu-economics.info/National_Seminar.html]

BACKGROUND

In the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000, eight goals were set. Amelioration of extreme poverty comes in the forefront of this declaration. The other goals range from promoting gender equality and empowerment of women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, halting the spread of HIV/AIDS to ensuring environmental sustainability. In these UN Millennium Development Goals, targets were set to achieve each of these goals by 2015.

So far as amelioration of poverty is concerned, a significant reduction in the percentage of population living under poverty has already been achieved in India. The incidence of poverty in India came down from about 51% in 1990-91 to 37% in 2004-05 and thereafter to an overall figure of 22% in 2011-12. The head count ratio of rural and urban poverty percentages were about 26 and 14 respectively. Though a remarkable progress in this respect has been achieved so far, there are about 250 million people living below the poverty line of which more than 200 million are in rural areas. Still now about 1 in every 5 persons in India is below the national poverty line.

In the world scenario also, the progress is commendable. According to the most recent estimates, in 2011, about 17 per cent of the people in the developing world live below \$1.25 a day. That's significantly lower than 43 per cent figure of 1990. This means that, in 2011, just over one billion people lived on less than \$1.25 a day, as compared with 1.91 billion in 1990 in this world. Despite significant progress, we observe hunger, malnutrition and starvation death in many parts of the world particularly in a number of countries in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. This is associated with the disturbances in social order including terrorism in West Asia and parts of Africa rendering many people homeless and also suffering from the lack of adequate survival materials and opportunities. This phenomenon is also observed, though in smaller scale, in many parts of India. One may recall the recent past incidences of rampant terrorism in Kokrajhar district of Assam in 2012 and 2014.

Though there is significant improvement in the poverty reduction in both rural and urban areas, there is significant rural-urban variation in the achievement across the states. The rural urban gap in the poverty ratio varied from 1 per cent in UP to 29 per cent in Mizoram during 2011-12. Also, there is significant variation in male female poverty ratio. We have to search for ways and means to tackle the issues of inequality to improve the welfare across all sections of the society. Lack of entrepreneurship, sluggish manufacturing growth are some of the important obstacles of generating employment and that in many ways lead to social disorder and sectarian movements, which further impedes development activities.

Problems are there with the method of identifying the target population. Several methods applied in the estimation of the extent of poverty and its gravity make the authorities confused on the process of eradication mechanism. Defining poverty measure as the percentage of people with income less than US\$ 1.25 a day represents an example of income-focused approach to poverty. In recent past fixing of 32 INR per capita daily in India as poverty line ushered huge debate, which is about half of a USD. The poverty line defined by the Tendulkar Committee did not reflect the changing times and aspirations of the people. Under the growing income, expenditure and the economic structure of the country in the previous decade with consequent changes in people's perspective led to the setting up of the Expert Group headed by Dr Rangarajan. The committee has re-computed the average requirements of calories, fats and proteins on the basis of the 2010 ICMR norms, rural-urban gender distribution of population as per 2011 Census and employment distribution status. People's capability to save is also considered. The new poverty lines were worked out as the monthly per capita consumption expenditure of Rs 972 in rural areas and Rs 1407 in urban areas. Estimation of poverty line by Rangarajan Committee is based on an independent survey of households by CMIE. As per their method, a household is considered to be poor if it is unable to save and this yields results that are remarkably close to those derived using the NSSO data. This provides additional evidence in support of the poverty line derived by them.

Health still remains a critical issue. Proportion of underweight children in India has come down from 43% in 1998-99 to only 40% in 2005-06. This proportion, for the children below 3 years, is expected to reach about 33% by 2015. In this respect, discrimination between men and women is also prevalent in India. Moreover, there is also spatial variation in the achievement of nutritional intake. Some states have prevalence of underweight children above the national average. These states are namely Madhya Pradesh (57.9%), Bihar (54.9%), Jharkhand (54.6%), Chhattisgarh (47.8%), Meghalaya (42.9%), UP (41.6%) and Gujarat (41.1%). Thus, it remains a challenge to achieve the target. The trend shows that MMR may come down to 140 per lakh population, which is above 31 points of the targeted figure of 2015. Also, in terms of infant mortality rate, India may be behind the target by 27 points in 2015. Several cases of malaria, incidences of malnutrition and work related hazards have been observed in North-East India.

Quality of environment is directly and indirectly linked with the growth process. Thus, achieving sustainable progress is another target and remains elusive. In terms of reduction in pollution, carbon dioxide emission, deforestation etc India is far behind the expectations. The growth of agricultural production has been decelerated substantially in recent decades and whatever institutional attempts have been undertaken, the benefits did not reach to all sections of the society. Frequent occurrence of extreme weather conditions in the region also led to the loss of property that pushes a section of population towards poverty for some time and the poorer suffer more due the lack of access to technology.

The aforementioned goals are however closely interlinked or interdependent and cannot be tackled only through the development of economic activities. Just addressing issues partially without an integrated approach may lead to imbalances in the development of various dimensions. Simultaneously, the allocation of resources and inclusiveness of all sections of the society and across both the gender are pertinent to the all round progress of the society. Deprivation of people from the growth process, exclusion from the decision making process even in this decentralised institutional set up are found to create several bottlenecks for the progress. Some forces always operate in the society to counter such progress and preserve poverty and inequality. Market mechanism and service delivery systems failed to completely eradicate poverty, reduce inequality even after so many commissions and strategies undertaken by the governments. Various societal and political forces also play important roles in matters of development. For example superstitions, particularly in the rural areas in many cases cause social disorder and take societies backward even today. Lack of education gives more chances to such forces to operate successfully. Despite matrilineal systems in **some** tribal societies of North-East India, women **rarely** participate in the political decision making process. Thus it needed a concerted effort to address the sociological, political, anthropological and economic factors related to those issues. It is also needed to identify the relevant issues, suggest possible measures as well as delivery mechanism etc., by re-examining the earlier measures and delivery systems.

Thus, it is necessary to address these problems in order to arrive at a consensus to each of these problems so far as what needs to be done to go beyond the Millennium Development Goals. Thus the seminar will be of interdisciplinary in nature.

THEMES OF THE SEMINAR: There are some broad themes of the seminar as given below. But the submission is not binding to these sub-themes only. Any relevant and related issues can be considered for the discussion in the seminar.

- The rural and urban poverty and its different dimensions
- Income inequality, Gender inequality and other dimensions of inequality
- **Health, healthcare services and development**
- Empowerment of women
- Growth and sustainable development
- Agriculture and environmental sustainability
- Entrepreneurship, employment and development
- International Institutions, initiatives and poverty eradication mechanism
- Social and political factors behind poverty, inequality and other issues

Abstract:

Abstract should be in a single-spaced format using a 12-pt Times New Roman font saved as a Microsoft Word file. It should not exceed 250 words. Abstract should be accompanied with a title, authors' name and affiliation and keywords (not more than 6).

Submit at: nehuecoseminar@gmail.com

Presentation:

The papers will be reviewed and selected on the basis of relevance to the themes of the seminar and their potential for generating discussions. Papers should be presented in English and through power point mode.

REGISTRATION

The registration fee:

For the Academicians/Faculty members: 1000 INR

Students/Research Scholars: 500 INR (with appropriate proof)

The registration fee is to be paid by DD in favour of **Finance Officer, NEHU, Shillong**, payable at SBI, NEHU Branch, Shillong.

Also, it can be directly transferred by NEFT to the following Bank Account:

BANK NAME: INDIAN OVERSEAS BANK, BRANCH NAME WITH COMPLETE ADDRESS: INDIAN OVERSEAS BANK BRANCH, MORELLOW BUILDING, SHILLONG, 793001, MEGHALAYA, INDIA. ACCOUNT NUMBER – 054101000010709, IFS CODE - IOBA 0000541, MICR CODE – 793020002, SWIFT CODE – OIB AINBBA001 (Mention: for the registration to the National Seminar on Poverty, Inequality and Health in India with special reference to North-East India)

After registration, please send the UTR number for the confirmation.

PROGRAM DETAILS

To be announced, but it will be between 8-10 October, 2015

IMPORTANT DATES

- Abstract due: **30 May 2015**
- Notification of acceptance: **30 June 2015**
- Registration form submission: **30 July 2015**
- Full papers due (to be included in the proceedings): **30 August 2015**

Local Organising Committee:

Patron

Vice Chancellor, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong

Chairperson:

Dean, School of Economics, Management and Information Sciences, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong

Convener:

Prof Utpal Kumar De

Head, Department of Economics, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong

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Prof. Pulakesh Maiti, Member

Dr Bholanath Ghosh, Member

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CONTACT SUPPORT, ACCOMMODATION

Limited support will be provided to the selected presenters in the form of accommodation from those who will present their papers at the conference. The selection will be done on the basis of the merit of the papers by an expert committee. Accompanied person can participate after registration and at their own cost. Also, participants may book well in advance in the hotels in Shillong Town, which is **seven** KM away from Seminar Venue.

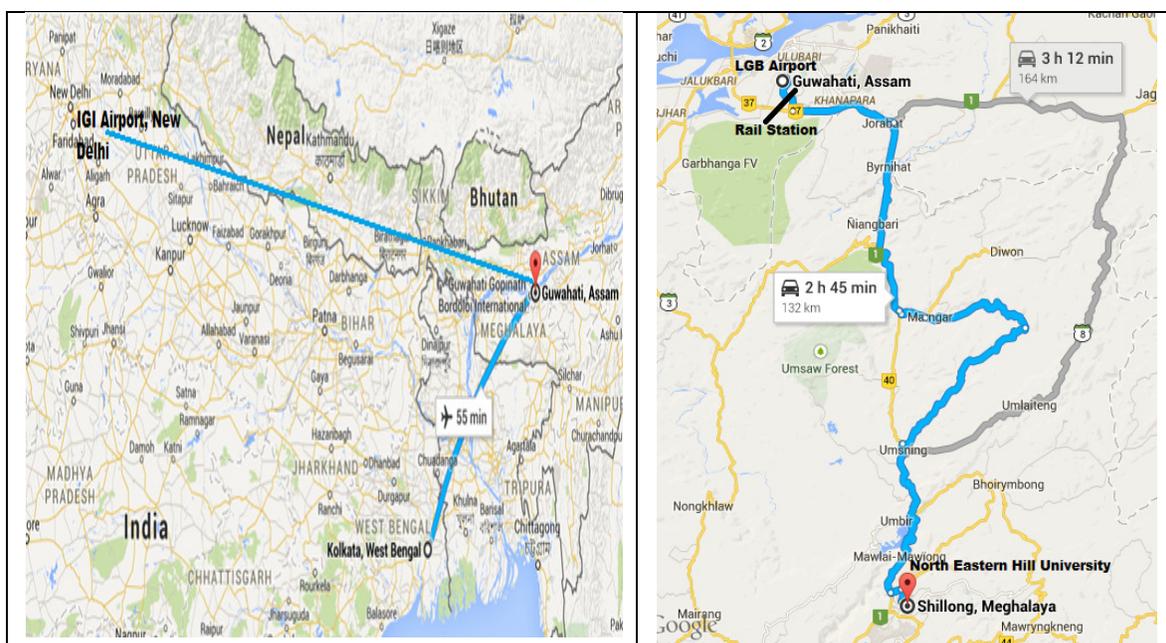
VENUE

The New Guest House, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, 793022, Meghalaya, India
The North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong Meghalaya, India was set up in 1973. The objective of the University, as laid down in the act, are “to disseminate and advance knowledge by providing instructional and research facilities in such branches of learning as it may deem fit; to pay special attention to the improvement of the social and economic conditions and welfare of the people of the areas of the North-Eastern region of India. Department of Economics is one of the oldest Departments of the University produced a large number of academicians, social and political activist. Also there are some renowned bureaucrats and researchers among the alumni of the Departments.

Location and Weather:

Shillong is located 100 KM away from the largest Town Guwahati of Assam, the gateway of North-East India which can be reached by railways form any corner of India. Also it is 125 KM away from the Gopinath Bordoloi Airport, Guwahati. Shillong can be reached by taxi from Gopinath Bordoloi Airport, Guwahati in around three hours. The reserved taxi fare is 2000 India Rupee. However, one can travel by share taxi and the charge is 500 Indian Rupee per head. Also, there is direct Air India service from Kolkata to Shillong (5 days in a week) and from Shillong Airport there is bus or Taxi service to Shillong town (about 45 minutes). The reserve taxi takes about 800 Indian rupees and the Bus fare is 100 Indian Rupee per head up to Shillong town.

The weather in Shillong is pleasant in October. Normally, it is sunny in October and chilled cold in the early morning touching 10-14 deg. Celsius minimum temperature and 25-26 deg. Celsius maximum temperature. Therefore, light winter dress is advisable.



Registration Form
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Participant: (Please write or type in Block Letters)

Title: Prof/Dr./Mr./Ms./Mrs.:

Name (Including middle name): Surname:

Title of the Paper:

Affiliation:

Mailing Address: Street.....

Town/City: District:

State: Postal Code:

Country: Phone:

Fax: Email:

Accompanying person if any (Full expenditure will be borne by the concerned person):

Title: Prof/Dr./Mr./Ms./Mrs.:

Surname: Name:

Willing to go for Local Tour to Cherrapunjee (The wettest place on the Earth): Yes/No ()
(Pay Rs 500/- (Five hundred only) in addition to registration fee for yes)

Signature: Date:

Please mail the complete registration form to:

Prof U. K. De, Convener,
Email: nehuecoseminar@gmail.com