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Issues and Problems in Human Resource Development in the NER

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1. Introduction: Population, its composition and structure, its quality and interrelationship among its constituent individuals and communities are perhaps the most important determinants of development of a region. The composition and structure of population has several dimensions – distribution of the total between male and female, among different age groups, among different religious and ethnic groups, among different classes, occupations, skill categories, abilities and so on. Similarly, quality of population, illiterate, literate and educated, unskilled and skilled, pre-modernized and modernized in their attitudes, behaviour and action, is very important. Interrelationship among different individuals at family, class, ethnicity and region levels also are equally important. And this importance is not mainly for sake of classification and presentation in tabular form, but for the fact that it impinges on the contribution of population towards making themselves, the region and the nation progressively better.

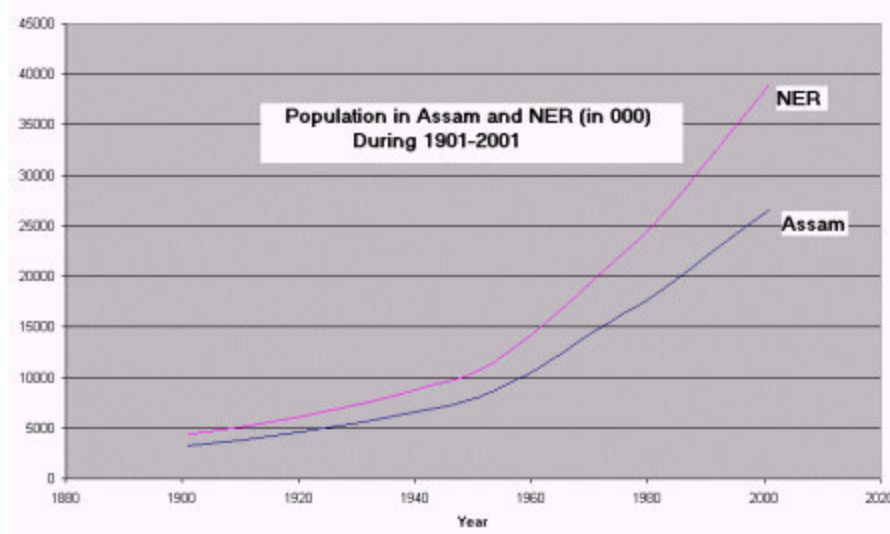
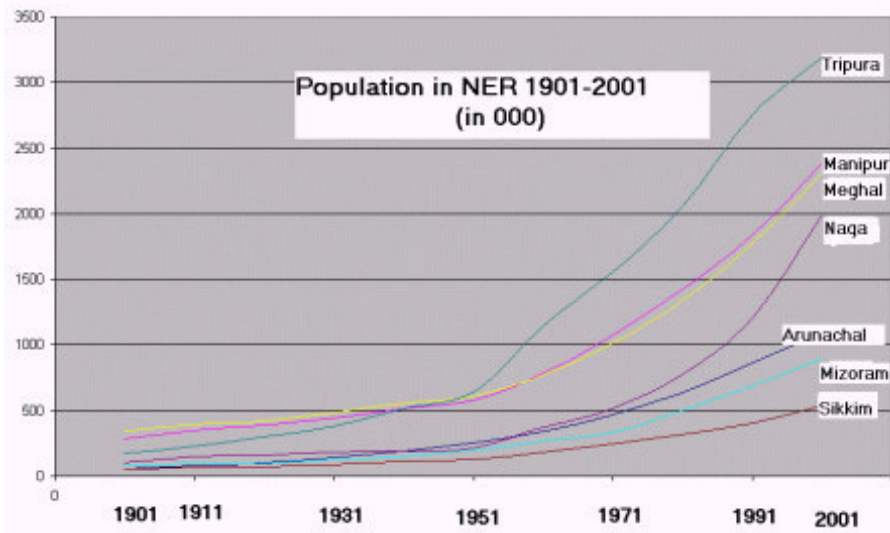
2. A Profile of Human Resources in NER: The demographic canvas of the North Eastern Region of India (NER) is perhaps the most colourful and enchanting in the whole nation. We do not find in any other part of the country such a variety – anthropologically, socially, linguistically, culturally, economically, politically and historically diversified stock of mankind. If the biologists are correct to correlate diversity with survival, sustenance, development and growth, the NER possesses the most potent prospects for the same.

The NER comprises eight socio-political units : Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. Over the years the population in these socio-political units (States) have shown interesting trends.

Table 1 : Trends in Growth of Population in NER (1901-2001)

Year	Arunachal Pradesh *	Assam	Manipur	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Nagaland	Sikkim*	Tripura	NER * (Million)	India (Million)
1901	58	3290	284	341	82	102	53	173	4.38	238
1911	78	3849	346	394	91	149	63	230	5.20	252
1921	104	4637	384	422	98	159	75	304	6.18	251
1931	139	5560	446	481	124	179	90	382	7.40	279
1941	187	6695	512	556	153	190	108	513	8.91	319
1951	251	8029	578	606	196	213	129	639	10.64	361
1961	337	10837	780	769	266	369	183	1142	14.68	439
1971	468	14625	1073	1012	332	516	247	1556	19.83	548
1981	632	18041	1421	1336	494	775	316	2053	25.07	683
1991	865	22414	1837	1775	690	1210	406	2757	31.95	846
2001	1091	26638	2389	2306	891	1989	540	3191	39.04	1027

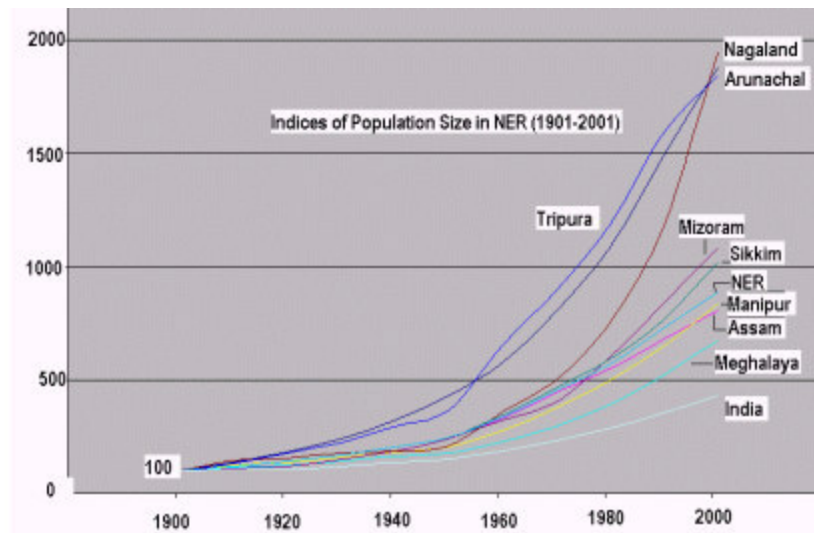
Source: *Basic Statistics of NER 2000*. Note:* Population figures for Arunachal Pradesh (1901-51) and Sikkim (1901-71) estimated by the author. Population figures of the constituent States are in thousands. Population figures for NER are rounded off (and may not accurately sum up to total).



These figures suggest that first during 1901-1951 the growth of population in almost all states of NER exhibited a linear growth. It may be noted that 1941 Census reported pre-Independence (pre-Partition) population while 1951 Census reported post-Independence (post-Partition) population. Since then, growth rate of population in almost all states of NER exhibited a consistent acceleration.

It would be more comprehensive to compare the index values of population in different states of NER vis-à-vis India, assuming population in 1901 as 100. The index values are presented in table 2. It may be noted that during the century 1901-2001, the population of India multiplied by a factor of 4.32 while that of NER multiplied by a factor of 8.91. Within NER, the population in Assam, Manipur and Meghalaya increased by a factor of 7 to 8 or so. However, Arunachal, Nagaland and Tripura population increased by a factor of 18 to 20 or so. Sikkim and Mizoram population increased by a factor of 10 to 11 only, slightly higher than in the NER, overall.

Table 2 : Index of Growth of Population in NER (1901-2001)										
Year	Arunachal Pradesh	Assam	Manipur	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Nagaland	Sikkim	Tripura	NER (Million)	India (Million)
1901	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
1911	134.48	116.99	121.83	115.54	110.98	146.08	118.87	132.95	118.72	105.88
1921	179.31	140.94	135.21	123.75	119.51	155.88	141.51	175.72	141.10	105.46
1931	239.66	169.00	157.04	141.06	151.22	175.49	169.81	220.81	168.95	117.23
1941	322.41	203.50	180.28	163.05	186.59	186.27	203.77	296.53	203.42	134.03
1951	432.76	244.04	203.52	177.71	239.02	208.82	243.40	369.36	242.92	151.68
1961	581.03	329.39	274.65	225.51	324.39	361.76	345.28	660.12	335.16	184.45
1971	806.90	444.53	377.82	296.77	404.88	505.88	466.04	899.42	452.74	230.25
1981	1089.66	548.36	500.35	391.79	602.44	759.80	596.23	1186.71	572.37	286.97
1991	1491.38	681.28	646.83	520.53	841.46	1186.27	766.04	1593.64	729.45	355.46
2001	1881.03	809.67	841.20	676.25	1086.59	1950.00	1018.87	1844.51	891.32	431.51



3. Occupational Distribution of Population in the NER: Population is perhaps the only socio-economic category that has dual importance, both as an end and as a means to all individual and social endeavours. The society and economy is in fact *of the people, for the people and by the people*. Other things, whether material or mental, real or ideological, tangible or intangible, are meant for the people, and not for themselves. Material resources – the air with its birds, the waters with their vast wealth and fish, the territory with its fields and forests, the various substrata underground with all their mineral wealth, are meant for and worked upon by the people. Similarly, the soft resources, institutions (meaning the collection of settled habits of thought and action at the community level), mores, traditions, customs, beliefs, and all moral sentiments are continuously shaped and used by the people for making their lives better (or worse, for that matter). In this framework, the interest of the mankind is the sole parameter – the rest others are variables - to plan, change, modify and shape up, by the human efforts.

Of late, people have become conscious of over-using, misusing and disusing the material resources leading to the so-called environmental problems. However, this concern does not change the parameter, only the denotation of 'people' has changed. Now 'people' means the present and the future generations; earlier it meant only the 'contemporary' generation. That does not imply, however, that the stress on 'resources for the people' has increased. To care for the resources to bequeath to our grand children needs much to be done by the people of the present generation.

Nevertheless, when we look at the stock of people, with all its ability to transform material and non-material resources at the disposal of the society, we consider the said stock as the resources – the human resources – parallel to non-human resources, minerals, machines, animals, fish, forests, etc. The human ability to transform non-human resources into desired forms and impregnating them with desired attributes gives rise to various types of occupations. When by a concerted effort man brings forth such transformation through the biological processes mostly occurring in nature, the occupations of agriculture, animal husbandry and forestry develop. On the other hand, when such transformation is brought forth by means of mechanical, chemical and electro-magnetic processes, the occupations relating to mining and manufacturing develop. However, when services of a section of people are rendered to others of the same kind, the tertiary sector or 'services' as an occupation grows. Of late, information has become a very important resource for development. Generation, gathering, storing and supply of information is soon going to be the fourth sector of the economy since many people are joining these activities for earning their livelihood.

The economic landscape is a portrait of different occupations, which consistently changes with development. As per the Census, 2001, about 28.66 percent of the total population in the region are classified as main workers, the rest of the population largely dependent on these workers. The dependents are in a way the resources in making, the manpower of the future, in which the present generation invests. The dependency ratio in the region is 2.49 against 2.27 in India. Dependency ratio is the lowest in Mizoram (Arunachal Pradesh in 1991) and the highest in Assam (Tripura in 1991). It is generally observed that when a region is underdeveloped, dependency ratio is low because most of the adult population including women and adolescent do some work in the primary sector. It is required since due to low productivity of labour there is not much surplus that can sustain dependents. However, as the region develops economically, gainful employment of the adult, mostly men, can sustain larger number of dependents, mostly women, minors and the adolescent. As a result, dependency ratio increases. Further economic development leads to reduction in birth rate and the proportion of young population to the total population decreases. Female participation in gainful employment increases. Consequently, dependency ratio decreases. It seems that the NER is passing through the second stage.

Of the workers (main and marginal), about 42 percent are cultivators and 13 percent agricultural labourers, thus showing that in the region about 55 percent of the workers are engaged in agricultural activities. These figures for India are about 32 percent and 27 percent for cultivators and agricultural labourers respectively, summing

up to 58.4 percent. State-wise figures are presented in Table below. It has been noticed that while the percentage of main workers engaged in agriculture (cultivators and labourers) in NER is decreasing, it is on increase at the national level. The 1981, 1991 and 2001 census figures for the percentage of main workers engaged in agriculture in NER are 74.44, 65.03 and 73.06 respectively, these figures for India are 58.80, 57.96 and 75.08 respectively.

Table 3 : Dependency Ratio in NER 1981-2001

State/Unit	1981	1991	2001	State/Unit	1981	1991	2001
Arunachal	1.016	1.203	1.652	Nagaland	1.104	1.406	1.807
Assam	1.941	2.155	2.761	Sikkim	-	-	1.544
Manipur	1.478	1.677	2.157	Tripura	2.374	2.459	2.521
Meghalaya	1.299	1.448	2.105	NER	1.818	2.004	2.489
Mizoram	1.396	1.365	1.449	India	1.725	1.654	2.274

Dependency ratio = Non-Workers/Main Workers in the Population

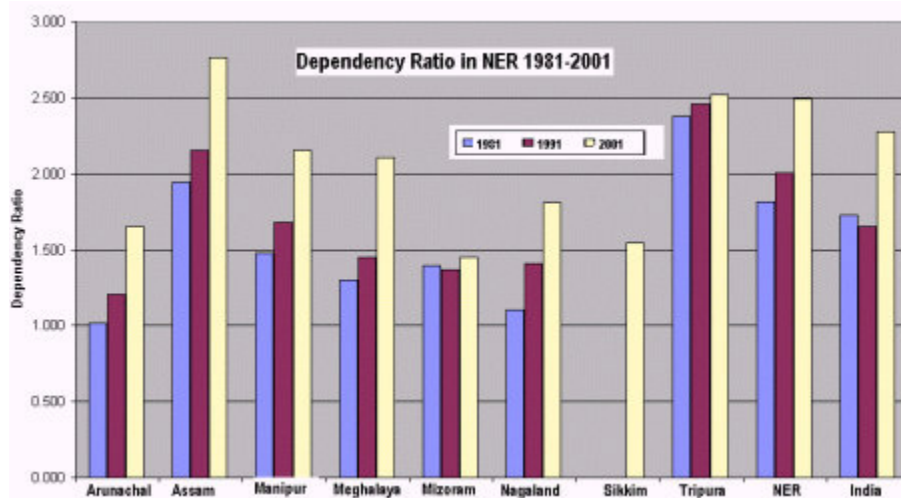


Table 4 : Percentage of Total Population by Economic Classification - 2001

States	W/P	MW/W	C/W	AL/W	AW/W	HHW/W	OW/W	NW/W
Arunachal	43.97	85.76	58.44	3.85	62.30	0.86	36.85	56.03
Assam	35.88	74.11	39.15	13.50	52.65	3.44	43.91	64.12
Manipur	44.79	70.73	46.06	11.31	57.38	9.16	33.47	55.21
Meghalaya	41.47	77.66	47.80	18.09	65.89	1.88	32.23	58.53
Mizoram	52.70	77.48	53.91	5.85	59.77	1.40	38.83	47.30
Nagaland	42.74	83.35	64.05	3.98	68.03	2.13	29.84	57.26
Sikkim	48.72	80.69	49.91	6.43	56.34	1.23	42.42	51.28
Tripura	36.29	78.27	26.88	24.03	50.92	2.90	46.19	63.71
NER	37.93	75.56	41.97	13.23	55.20	3.44	41.36	62.07
INDIA	39.26	77.80	31.71	26.69	58.40	4.07	37.52	60.74

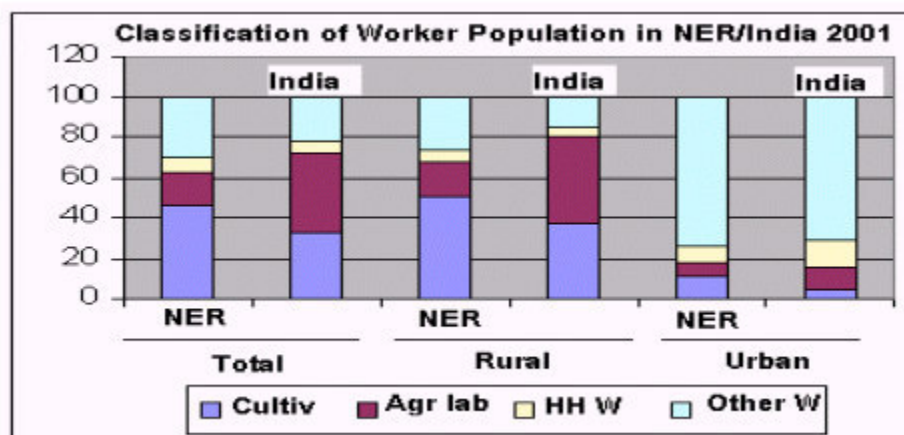
W = Total Workers; P = Total Population; MW = Main Workers; C = Cultivators; AL = Agricultural Labourers; AW = (C + AL) = Agricultural Workers; HHW = Household Workers; OW = Other Workers; NW = Non-Workers.

Economic Categories	Main Workers as % to Population			Cultivators as % to Population			Agricultural Labourers as % to Population		
	1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001
State/Year									
Arunachal	49.61	45.39	37.71	35.35	27.72	25.70	1.23	2.22	1.69
Assam	34.00	31.70	26.59	20.00	16.25	14.05	5.85	4.12	4.84
Manipur	40.35	37.36	31.68	25.66	21.33	20.63	2.01	3.47	5.07
Meghalaya	43.50	40.85	32.21	27.21	22.98	19.82	4.34	5.45	7.50
Mizoram	41.73	42.29	40.83	29.48	25.75	28.41	1.04	1.58	3.08
Nagaland	47.53	41.56	35.62	34.36	28.35	27.37	0.38	1.97	1.70
Sikkim	-	-	39.31	-	-	24.32	-	-	3.13
Tripura	29.64	28.91	28.40	12.83	11.00	9.75	7.12	6.80	8.72
NER	35.49	33.29	28.66	21.15	17.45	15.92	5.27	4.20	5.02
India	36.70	37.68	30.54	13.49	13.00	12.45	8.09	8.84	10.48

Year	Arunachal Pradesh	Assam	Manipur	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Nagaland	Sikkim	Tripura	NER	India
1991	12.80	11.10	27.52	18.60	46.10	17.21	10.01	15.30	13.78	26.13
2001	20.34	12.72	24.12	19.63	49.50	17.74	11.10	17.02	15.47	27.80

States		W/P	MW/W	C/W	AL/W	AW/W	HHW/W	OW/W	NW/W
Arunachal	R	46.47	84.53	68.26	4.27	72.53	0.72	26.75	53.53
	U	34.16	92.30	6.13	1.62	7.75	1.59	90.66	65.84
Assam	R	36.45	71.74	43.93	15.12	59.04	3.54	37.41	63.55
	U	31.98	92.64	1.82	0.84	2.66	2.63	94.71	68.02
Manipur	R	46.72	69.97	53.49	11.76	65.25	8.17	26.58	53.28
	U	38.71	73.61	17.87	9.62	27.49	12.90	59.61	61.29
Meghalaya	R	44.58	76.17	54.47	20.16	74.63	1.95	23.42	55.42
	U	28.74	87.14	5.46	4.92	10.38	1.40	88.22	71.26
Mizoram	R	57.22	78.55	77.80	3.92	81.71	0.84	17.45	42.78
	U	48.09	76.19	24.92	8.21	33.12	2.08	64.80	51.91
Nagaland	R	45.08	82.26	72.94	4.45	77.40	1.99	20.61	54.92
	U	31.91	90.46	5.84	0.90	6.73	2.99	90.27	68.09
Sikkim	R	49.75	79.55	54.97	7.08	62.05	1.28	36.67	50.25
	U	40.49	91.90	0.09	0.10	0.19	0.79	99.01	59.51
Tripura	R	37.11	75.66	31.41	27.97	59.38	3.10	37.52	62.89
	U	32.32	92.87	1.58	1.97	3.55	1.77	94.68	67.68
NER	R	38.69	73.51	47.62	14.87	62.49	3.44	34.07	61.31
	U	33.75	88.37	6.55	2.95	9.50	3.50	86.99	66.25
INDIA	R	41.97	73.93	40.14	33.20	73.33	3.77	22.90	58.03
	U	32.23	90.90	3.21	4.71	7.92	5.10	86.98	67.77

W = Total Workers; P = Total Population; MW = Main Workers; C = Cultivators; AL = Agricultural Labourers; AW = (C + AL) = Agricultural Workers; HHW = Household Workers; OW = Other Workers; NW = Non-Workers; R = Rural; U = Urban.



States		W/P	MW/W	C/W	AL/W	AW/W	HHW/W	OW/W	NW/W
Arunachal	T	36.45	77.71	76.61	4.49	81.10	1.05	17.85	63.55
	R	41.33	77.12	82.70	4.65	87.35	0.93	11.72	58.67
	U	16.69	83.60	15.44	2.93	18.37	2.26	79.37	83.31
Assam	T	20.80	46.55	40.42	16.48	56.90	7.89	35.21	79.20
	R	22.28	44.26	42.90	17.44	60.34	7.94	31.72	77.72
	U	10.29	81.65	2.25	1.74	3.99	7.16	88.85	89.71
Manipur	T	40.51	57.33	45.29	14.27	59.56	16.50	23.94	59.49
	R	43.20	57.27	53.02	14.64	67.66	14.64	17.71	56.80
	U	32.28	57.55	13.62	12.74	26.36	24.13	49.51	67.72
Meghalaya	T	35.02	67.97	51.88	20.66	72.54	2.50	24.96	64.98
	R	38.92	66.61	57.20	22.23	79.43	2.60	17.97	61.08
	U	19.15	79.17	7.91	7.70	15.61	1.69	82.70	80.85
Mizoram	T	47.63	66.80	60.52	7.05	67.57	1.66	30.77	52.37
	R	54.73	68.71	83.40	4.47	87.87	0.91	11.23	45.27
	U	40.50	64.19	29.42	10.56	39.97	2.68	57.34	59.50
Nagaland	T	38.25	78.47	75.32	4.34	79.66	3.19	17.15	61.75
	R	42.92	78.32	79.51	4.48	83.98	2.89	13.13	57.08
	U	14.87	80.60	14.93	2.31	17.24	7.52	75.24	85.13
Sikkim	T	38.59	67.59	62.93	8.55	71.48	0.99	27.53	61.41
	R	40.67	66.12	66.92	9.09	76.01	1.00	22.99	59.33
	U	21.42	90.72	0.09	0.05	0.14	0.81	99.05	78.58
Tripura	T	21.02	50.89	27.58	35.00	62.59	6.11	31.31	78.98
	R	22.86	47.08	30.55	38.64	69.19	6.26	24.55	77.14
	U	12.09	85.73	0.48	1.66	2.15	4.74	93.12	87.91
NER	T	25.06	54.74	46.45	15.91	62.35	7.13	30.51	74.94
	R	26.64	52.67	50.30	16.97	67.27	6.95	25.78	73.36
	U	16.22	73.74	11.11	6.19	17.31	8.81	73.89	83.78
INDIA	T	25.68	57.19	32.51	39.43	71.94	6.36	21.70	74.32
	R	30.98	54.14	36.46	43.40	79.86	5.44	14.70	69.02
	U	11.55	78.97	4.26	11.03	15.30	12.93	71.77	88.45

W = Total Workers; P = Total Population; MW = Main Workers; C = Cultivators; AL = Agricultural Labourers; AW = (C + AL) = Agricultural Workers; HHW = Household Workers; OW = Other Workers; NW = Non-Workers; T = Total; R = Rural; U = Urban.

Occupational distribution of working population has interesting relationship with development. Initially, primary sector, comprising agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing, etc. developed. With development of civilization, some little manufacturing and services also developed. For those times, often referred to as the feudal period, the occupational

distribution was somewhat pyramidal. Urban centers developed at the seat of power and supported most of the secondary and tertiary sectors. The primary sector, however, was the most dominant source of surplus to support the towns. Most of the secondary and tertiary sectors directly contributed to consumption, mainly by the power class.

Industrial revolution brought forth a great change in the occupational distribution, aggressively snatching the resources, human and non-human, for manufacturing and trade. The occupation of manufacturing for capital formation rather than direct consumption prospered significantly. That led to the replacement of feudalism by capitalism. Towns developed around the seat of manufacturing and trade. The base of the pyramid depicting occupational distribution became much narrower. In due course, when further technological development followed, the said base grew narrower while the contribution of secondary and tertiary sectors became dominant. Manufacturing created so much of surplus – value added – that it could support a large tertiary sector and the pyramid got inverted.

The less developed regions at present, without the NER being an exception, have advantages as well as disadvantages of being the latecomers in the process of development. The technological development of these regions has been squarely based on adoption and imitation rather than innovation. They have additionally adopted the norms of civic life also from the developed nations. It is to be noted that adoption is much easier than adaptation. Adoption without adaptation is often reflected in pathological alterations in the pyramid of occupational structure. Tertiary sector swells without the surplus base created by the secondary sector. It feeds on the surplus, which in a healthy economic system could have gone into the development of the secondary sector. Bypassing of the secondary sector triggers off the processes that weaken and arrest development of the primary as well as the tertiary sector. This situation leads to urban accretion, gross unemployment, under-employment and disguised unemployment. Little has been done to highlight the extent of under-employment and disguised unemployment in the tertiary sector of the developing regions, the NER in particular. However, it is such a commonplace that it is not difficult to see and experience. An analysis of human development index vis-à-vis economic development index in the NER suggests that human potentialities are grossly under-translated into their potential/optimal economic performance. Economies thriving on low GDP (Gross domestic product – due to low level of industrialisation) and grant sponsored large disposable income may exhibit a modified relationship between the said two indices.

5. Standard Economic Theories vis-à-vis the Reality in the NER: Much harm has been done by an indiscriminate practice of applying economic categories of standard economics (developed in and for the industrialized economies of the West) to understanding and analyzing the economic systems of the less developed regions such as the NER of India. In the 'Standard economics', the idea of labour as a factor of production is based on the assumption that the workers are literate and mobile, mostly in employment. They are highly organized. Racial, religious and linguistic differences are not sufficiently important to break up the labour supply. Furthermore, it is assumed that skilled and professional workers are in substantial quantities. Similarly,

'employment' presupposes a fairly homogenous, mobile labour force, willing and able to work and responsive to incentives. These tacit assumptions of the establishment economics are unrealistic in the case of the NER economy. In a society of isolated communities, the notion of labour force does not make sense. Assimilation and resolute attitude to conservation of ethnic identity can hardly go together. Similarly, 'underemployment' or 'disguised unemployment' presupposes that if only demand and machines were available, men and women would be able and willing to work. In fact, much more would be required: a breakdown of community prejudices, of apathy, of lack of interest in money rewards, of resistance to cooperation, discipline and punctuality, etc. But much of the required actions does not make a part of economic planning and remain the hollow expressions of wishful imperatives.

In the same vein, 'urbanisation' has a definite meaning in the context of economic development. One has to discriminate between 'urban accretion' and 'true urbanisation'. Urban centers are flooded with the casual workers who earn no more than the subsistence wages (Mishra & Lyngskor, 2003). Ever-growing slums in the towns, swelling mass of the displaced and dejected rural population hanging on to the informal tertiary sector in the urban areas, overstressed urban infrastructure and the progressive ruralisation of the urban centers suggest a cautious step to be taken in analysis, diagnosis and treatment of the problems of economic development.

6. Qualitative Aspects of the Human Resources: Economic development depends not only on the supply of the brute muscular power that human beings can apply to transformation of the non-human resources to more useful forms, but also on the skill embodied in the manpower applied to the production processes. Skill formation among the illiterate, though very important for economic development, has quite limited scope. Therefore, literacy and some extent of educational proficiency are of fundamental importance. Literacy among the females is of great importance, not only for participation in productive and civic activities, but also for rearing children for a better future. In this respect NER performs better than India as a whole.

Table 9 : Literacy Rate in NER (1991 & 2001)											
Year	Category	Arunachal Pradesh	Assam	Manipur	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Nagaland	Sikkim	Tripura	NER	India
1991	Total	41.59	52.89	59.89	49.10	82.27	61.65	60.10	60.44	54.49	52.21
	Male	51.45	61.87	71.63	53.12	85.61	67.62	70.00	70.58	63.24	64.13
	Female	29.69	43.03	47.60	44.85	78.60	54.75	49.10	49.65	44.91	39.29
2001	Total	54.74	64.28	68.87	63.31	88.49	67.11	69.68	73.66	65.78	65.38
	Male	64.07	71.93	77.87	66.14	90.69	71.77	76.73	81.47	72.99	75.85
	Female	44.24	56.03	59.70	60.41	86.13	61.92	61.46	65.41	58.03	54.16

However, literacy is not sufficient to ensure a sustained development. When we consider education in relation to development, we must visualize what it may signify. The objectives of education are twofold: (i) to rationalize and modernize the attitudes of those who receive education and in turn, to inculcate and nurture such attitudes among the rest of the society through the "educated" ones, and (ii) to impart to the recipients of education the knowledge and skill together with the ability to acquire further knowledge

and still better skill by their own efforts. The touchstone of the worth of an education system is in meeting these objectives.

The modernized attitudes relate to efficiency, diligence, orderliness, punctuality, frugality, scrupulous honesty, rationality in decisions on actions, analytical rather than dogmatic view to understanding the world, preparedness for change, alertness to opportunities, energetic enterprise, integrity and self-reliance, cooperativeness, acceptance of responsibility for the welfare of the community and the nation, willingness to take the long view and so on. The skills relate to knowing and the application of knowledge to changing things that may be more useful after such a transformation.

Table 10 : Enrolment by Educational Stages in NER - 1996								
Ed Stage	Arunachal	Assam	Manipur	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Nagaland	Tripura	NER
MPhil/PhD	5	298	90	276	0	0	3	672
MA	323	5654	642	748	36	84	645	8132
MSc	0	3321	451	213	0	10	190	4185
MCom	50	813	62	30	0	16	127	1098
BA	2929	120796	18493	8509	7586	4958	8689	171960
BSc	205	26181	8980	1593	510	339	2330	40138
BCom	196	13830	617	733	292	463	1878	18009
Total Academic	3708	170893	29335	12102	8424	5870	13862	244194
BE/BArch	291	3323	0	0	0	0	479	4093
MBBS	0	2356	441	0	0	0	0	2797
Polytech	0	4424	309	221	179	343	171	5647
ITI	221	4389	301	278	165	278	268	5900
Total Technical	512	14492	1051	499	344	621	918	18437
Bed/BT	42	2575	279	468	162	82	247	3855
TTS	0	89	0	829	92	23	305	1338
Pre-Univ	0	168432	12690	0	4574	10353	0	196049
XI-XII	7676	125290	8160	13618	2312	363	22795	180214
IX-X	17275	539132	5600	30603	20828	24184	59478	697100
VI-VIII	42197	1304504	106000	78858	44186	63437	126219	1765401
I-V	147676	3816603	230230	299961	123662	271932	434143	5324207
Pre-Prim	29796	23240	77650	139958	0	75197	171221	517062
Selected Educational Statistics, 1996-97, MHRDGOI. TTS = Teachers' Training School								

The responsibility of education, beyond and above literacy and some minimal level of efficiency, lies on the system of higher education, imparted specially after the school level. Unfortunately, this has not been done at the national level too; the NER not to mention. At the national level, the enrolment figures in educational institutions suggest that in 1998, primary and middle schools enrolled 151.1 million pupils, while secondary/higher secondary schools enrolled 27.2 million of them. The enrolment in tertiary schools (imparting general education -graduation and above) was 5.7 million students. In the institutions of professional education, the enrolment figures were: engineering (degree) - 1.39 lakh; engineering (diploma) – 1.86 lakh; medical (allopathic) – 18 thousand; dental – 3 thousand; paramedical – 26 thousand; agriculture – 10 thousand; veterinary – 2000; natural sciences - about 2 lakhs. These figures suggest too dominant preference for the general education and too little for the professional and

technical education (Mishra, 2003-a). During 1976, 2.44 lakh students were enrolled in academic disciplines of higher education, while only 6.8 thousand were enrolled in the professional higher education and some 11.5 thousand were being trained in technical trades (see table 10). The NER has almost a dozen of universities, mostly turning out graduates in liberal arts and academic sciences.

A continued turning out of graduates and master degree holders in academic disciplines has flooded the market of 'educated' manpower. The industrial sector has not expanded. The swelling number of so-called "educated" youth aspiring for jobs is in fact that of the '*unemployable ones*' - partly because they have not acquired any skill that may be useful for the industry or even commerce, and partly because they have an apathetic attitude to manual work. Therefore they often seek jobs in the government, which suits most to their temperament and ability. The making of such unemployable educated youths is attributable to the higher education system. There is a need to revolutionise the educational system – general education through skill-generating curricula, skill to participate in productive and industrial activities, has to be given.

7. Human Resources and the Social Capital: There is another aspect of the quality of manpower that relates to the social capital – attitudes and institutions (the settled habits of thought and action at the community level) – that grossly determine how people live, earn their livelihood, use or misuse resources to meet their ends and generate, preserve, and economize the resources, innovate or imitate, take risks or be risk-averse, and so on. And this is more of a concern to the people of affairs, the people busy in the ordinary business of life, since it interferes with and speaks on the individual and social interest closely connected to the attainment of material requisites of their well being. In manpower planning this aspect is grossly neglected. We have often forgotten the imports of the famous '*Leontief paradox*' that arises by counting labourers disregarding their quality. We have overemphasized **multitude** of workers and underplayed the role of their **fortitude**, **aptitude** and **attitude**.

The gross negligence of qualitative aspect of population is determined by the habits of thought of that section of the society, which directly or indirectly determines the means, objectives, methodology and content of social action, planning in particular. The organizations that collect information about population (or any other aspect of the economy and the society for that matter) seek directives from those who are recognized for thinking and acting on behalf of the society and matter when they are right as well as when they are wrong. Evidently, such representatives of the society, even when they are genuinely interested in development, are guided by the one of the two philosophies of planning for development, Standard (meaning largely Anglo-American economics popularly taught in the universities, sometimes referred to as the establishment economics) or the Marxist, or an illegitimate patchwork of the two. In any case, planning for a reform of attitudes and institutions, even collecting information regarding them, is completely out of consideration. The conservative (Standard) judgment that a reform of attitudes and institutions is largely irrelevant or undesirable, and the Marxist judgment that it is either impossible or inevitable, lead to the one and the same conclusion - undermining the need for a conscious policy directed at a radical reform of the so-called

non-economic factors in economic development. Textbooks, articles and plans do pay lip service to the need to reform the social framework before economic planning begins. However, these declarations are no sooner forgotten than when the discussion on the conventional concepts of income, employment, savings, investment, etc. begins. The reasons are obvious though unsaid. Reforms of institutions and human attitudes, more painful to implement than financial expenditure programmes, violate vested interests of the power class (and the so-called public representatives are often led to think and act in the interest of this class, whether knowingly or unknowingly, by volition or by compulsion).

A rather long excerpt from Streeten (1966) will be illuminating. "... attitudes and valuation and social institutions are normally assumed to be given and adapted. We assume that there is a legal framework, that contracts are enforced, that an efficient civil service carries out government orders and an honest judiciary adjudicates; that people are able and willing to work if opportunities arise; that they are literate, skilled and able to cooperate with discipline, appearing on time and carrying out orders; that money spent is efficiently spent and not diverted into the pockets of corrupt officials; that alternatives are considered largely on their pecuniary merits, etc. It follows that none of these matters is considered a suitable area for planning." Alternatively, in the Marxist scheme "what are parameters become dependent variables. Cultural, political and social institutions are the superstructure, which is determined by the methods of production. It reflects these conditions and gives rise to tensions and contradictions in due course. These tensions between the degree of development of the forces of production and the prevailing relations of production (the institutions and attitudes) in turn give rise to revolution. After the revolution the attitudes and institutions reflect the new conditions of production. Hence social, cultural and political attitudes and institutions, the so-called relations of production, though dependent variables, are, after a time-lag, adjusted to the extent required by the dynamic productive forces. Once again, though for fundamentally different reasons, planning the superstructure is not in question. It would be futile before the revolution and unnecessary after it. It was indeed for their attempts to speculate on how social attitudes and institutions could and should be reformed that Marx and Engels ridiculed the Utopian thinkers." Streeten (1966)

8. Mass Poverty and efficiency of Human Resources: From the viewpoint of quality of human resources, poverty of the mass is very important. Mass poverty is important from many angles. Poverty is an issue of distribution of the regional wealth and closely relates to social welfare. It is a political issue also. But when poverty leads to poor health and low efficiency it has a direct bearing on production, the generation of social wealth. In the rural areas poverty is acute. A fair majority of the people in urban areas also is ill fed, ill clad and ill housed.

Unfortunately our development models are unwittingly caught in the dichotomy of 'consumption' and 'investment'. Investment is considered productive while consumption is considered not so. Our models have wrongly identified investment with financial outlay and expenditure. As a matter of fact, the distinction between consumption and investment can have various justifications. In the context of development, it is based

upon the assumption that investment enables us to produce more later than we would otherwise have done, while consumption is current enjoyment. This notion of investment (or consumption) does not suit the poor economies. The distinction between consumption and investment – if investment is defined as “abstaining for the sake of higher consumption later”, the distinction that suits the rich economies of the West – is applied to the poor economy of the NER, we commit a mistake of applying a category to a field of experience to which it is inappropriate. However, if investment is defined as any input which yields higher output later, irrespective of whether it involves “abstaining” or not, we fail to group certain activities under investment which should be classified as consumption. In the case of India in general and NER too, more food and better health now would reduce apathy and raise ability to work – they share in the characteristics of investment - consumption, too, is productive of more output. From this viewpoint expenditure on poverty removal is not in fact a welfare measure, but ‘investment’ in the human capital.

Year	Arunachal	Assam	Manipur	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Nagaland	Sikkim	Tripura
1983	40.38	40.47	37.02	38.81	36.00	39.25	39.71	40.03
1993-94	39.35	40.86	33.78	37.92	25.66	37.92	41.43	39.01
1999-2K	33.47	36.09	28.54	33.87	19.47	32.67	36.5	34.44

9. Concluding Remarks: In preceding sections we have touched upon several aspects of human resource development issues and problems. First, the growth of population, very fast in the region demands immediate attention. It is not because growth of population by itself is undesirable. But when economic growth of a region does not lend support to growth of population, resources are spent on maintaining the life than enriching it. Secondly, we have noted the features of occupational distribution. Proportion of workers in the primary and the tertiary sectors are overwhelmingly large, while the secondary sector, most important for material prosperity, employs very small proportion of workers. If human resources are to be better utilized, industrialization of the NER economy is the first prerogative of planning for development. In the same tune, the region produces ‘educated’ manpower that suits the swelling tertiary sector at most and is possibly unemployable in the secondary sector. Once industrialization takes place, the demand for skilled manpower will increase. The existing educational institutions will have to start technical and professional education programmes. Several new educational institutions will have to be started especially for technical and professional courses suiting to the need of the growing economy.

Urbanisation in the region is on an increase. But it appears that it is largely due to urban accretion, peopled by the migrant rural inhabitants in search for some remunerative occupation. It is partly because there are no significant openings and opportunities in the rural areas and partly because the urban pull forces attract them from the rural areas. The educated youth from the rural areas seldom go back to their places of origin and stick on to the urban centers in search of some opportunities. Such urbanization overloads the urban infrastructure.

It is estimated that about 35% of the total population is below poverty line in the NER. Poverty is related to efficiency of the human resources and expenditure on removal of poverty is an investment. Industrialization of the regional economy will go far to remove poverty of the people in the region.

In short, human resources in any region have three aspects increasingly more important in the sequel: (1) **physical fitness** – relating to physical effort, easily captured by the number of workers, their general health (corporal), number of man-hours devoted to work, etc, (2) **dexterity** – agility, skill, expertise, ability, proficiency – inculcated by training, and (3) **attitude**, outlook and mindset – imbued modernization ideals (in the sense of Gunnar Myrdal, pp. 38-40) and their practice at a mass level. This third aspect makes ‘*soft resources*’ or the ‘social capital.’ The first two aspects of human resources are generally considered in planning for development. However, there is a need to devise suitable and practical programs for preserving and generating social capital. It is a difficult area often bypassed by the economic planners under the umbrella of non-economic factors. But this neglect is anti-productive. We should note what Myrdal said once – there are no economic problems, social problems, political problems and so on. There are problems, and their economic, social and political aspects.

A general feeling of skepticism has been observed in talking of and far more in an attempt to including attitudinal variables and the modernization ideals in economic analysis, which centers on their amenability to quantification. Nevertheless, we should note that the classical methods of collecting data and measurement of so-called ‘economic variables’ may well be enriched and extended to use the methods of experimental economics on which Kahneman and Smith have done serious works. Experimental methods devised by them will come handy to measure and incorporate attitudinal variables in economic planning (Mishra, 2003-b).

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