



North Eastern Economic Association

[Founded in 1997]

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The 19th Annual Conference of NEEA will be organised under the auspices of the Department of Economics, North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong, Meghalaya during 23-24 March, 2018. Two themes have been considered for the conference as below –

1. Structural Transformation and Economic Development in North East India

Prelude

The manifestation of the current state of economic development of any economy is essentially a tale of processes of structural transformation in the spheres of income and employment. A temporal and spatial analytical study of the nature of such evolutionary processes in any given developing economy, can provide important broad insights to chart the future course of economic and developmental policies for this economy. Noted economists such as Fisher (1939), Clark (1940), Nurkse (1953), Lewis (1954), Myrdal (1957), and Hirschman (1958), Chenery(1960) and Kuznets (1966) have tried to explain the development process of the economies of developing countries in the framework of structural transformation. Structural transformation primarily implies a continuous reallocation of labour (can be also other resources including capital) as an important factor of production from low productivity sectors to high productivity sectors. In the initial works of Lewis and Ranis & Fei, it was implicit that traditional-modern and rural –urban dualisms were synonymous. However, with the coming up of formal and informal dualism and emergence of unemployment and underemployment in urban space and consequent revision of the dualism framework by Ranis and Fei(1997), Ranis(2004); this dualism gets more familiar with farm and non-farm in the rural set up and formal and informal in the urban set up. Initially, a situation and a process of

emerging employment and income diversification within the rural space in the form of increased non-farm activities was being dubbed as 'transitory' (Hymer and Resnick 1969). The same was postulated to wither away with the consolidation of the forces of growth and development. Actual practice of development in the rural sector of the developing countries of the world during the last seven decades and currently have not and don't exhibit such trends. On the contrary, the non-farm sector in these economies is fast growing and has started to provide jobs to all most 45 per cent of the rural workforce (Dirven 2010).

Structural Transformation and the Economy of North Eastern Region (NER)

The economy of the North Eastern Region even today is predominantly rural. However, it is undergoing significant transformations in many of its economic dimensions. Since, the North East was and still continues to be a predominantly agrarian rural economy with approximately 60 percent of its workforce engaged in the farm sector, with improvements in education and other dimensions of human development, increase in agricultural productivity because of modernisation / mechanisation of agriculture and across the board expansion in physical infrastructure through Government initiative, it was presumed that the Lewis and Ranis-Fei type structural transformation would happen in the region. It is time to question if such a transformation has happened for the region? Studies undertaken bring out the fact that considerable employment diversification has happened in the region post economic reforms. However, can this diversification process be called a structural transformation of the type postulated by Lewis (1954), Chenery(1960), Ranis & Fei(1961) and Kuznets (1966)? Does it confirm to the agricultural productivity-led growth of rural non-farm sector thesis propounded by John W. Mellor (1976). Has this diversification process strengthened and increased the efficiency of the rural labour market in the region? Similarly, the difference between the share of agricultural employment and agricultural output is

higher for the region compared to the country as a whole and has been consistently increasing (D'souza and Ray, 2014). What are the implications of such widening gap for economic development of this region? How can this gap be reduced? As the North East happens to be one of the most institutionalized regions of the country, what is the role of institutional factors in reducing this gap? These are some of the valid issues and questions that the conference wants to address through a wide range of participation of scholars and practitioners as well.

The possible sub-themes are:-

- a) *Structural transformation Theory and the Economy of NER*
- b) *Income Diversification and Economic Growth in NER*
- c) *Employment Diversification and Implications for Economic Development in NER*
- d) *Agricultural Growth and Income & Employment Diversification in NER*
- e) *Institutions, Structural Transformation and Economic Development in NER*
- f) *Structural Transformation and Development Policies in NER.*

2. Entrepreneurship and Campaigns of Skill India, Make in India, Stand up India and Start-up India in NER

The evolution of the economy of the North Eastern Region (NER) is a journey from agro climatic hilly subsistence mono-cropping agriculture to a one of a relatively open economy with elements of diversification in its activity and income space. With the partition of the country, the economy of the region virtually became a closed entity with much of the economic activities except agriculture being undertaken by the government. With the recent proclamation of the Act East Policy(AEP), the central government wants to dovetail this policy as the core development strategy for the development of this region. However, making the AEP as the core development policy requires that people in general and youths in particular are convinced about the expansion in livelihood and employment

opportunities in the region through the operationalisation of the AEP. This depends on the emergence of a strong regional and local economic base led by networked industry and high end services sector. This further requires the emergence of a dedicated class of entrepreneurs. However, as it stands today, the region suffers from a deficit of such entrepreneurs. There could be manifold reasons for such a situation and the factors responsible for such a situation may be a combination of economic and non-economic variables. Some economists opine the prevalence of high transaction costs being an important reason for the non emergence of genuine entrepreneurship in the region. To what extent these opinions and postulations hold ground? Further, to boost entrepreneurship in the country and specially in the North East, the central Government has recently rolled out a number of campaigns like Skill India, Make in India, Stand-Up India and Start-up India. For example, the objective of Stand-Up India scheme (launched by the PM in August 2015) is to facilitate bank loans between ₹ 10 lakh and ₹ 1 crore to Scheduled Caste (SC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST) borrower and Woman borrower for setting up a greenfield enterprise (first time venture), in manufacturing, services or trading sector. Similarly Skill India is an initiative of the Government of India (launched through Skill Mission in July 2015) to empower the youth of the country with skill sets which can make them more employable and more productive in their work environment. Through the Mudra Bank arrangement, the Government wants to provide credit to the informal sector for starting enterprises. Numbers of years have gone by from the time of launching of these campaigns and schemes. It is time to start critically evaluating the idea and practice of these schemes in the region. It is against this backdrop, our conference aims at taking up some of these vital issues for discussion and deliberation in the form of presentation of research papers and invited lectures. Papers and presentations can be made on any aspect of the following sub-themes- .

- a) *Entrepreneurship and Economic Development of NER*
- b) *Social Entrepreneurship and Economic Development in NER.*
- c) *Theory of Economic Development and the role of Campaigns of Skill India, Make in India, Stand Up India and Start-up India in NER.*
- d) *Problems, Prospects, Achievements and Deficiencies of Campaigns of Skill India, Make in India, Stand- up India and Start-up India in NER*

The sub-themes under both the broad themes are only indicative of probable areas in which researchers can contribute papers and are not necessarily exhaustive. However, for the sake of more meaningful and in-depth analysis of issues, a single paper should ideally focus on a specific issue rather attempting wider coverage.

Researchers' Forum

This category welcomes papers based on on-going or completed M Phil, PhD work, Post Doctoral work or research projects. The scholars submitting papers for this segment should specify the basis of the paper and in case of being part of funded projects should acknowledge the sponsoring agency.

Dates & Guidelines:

Participants are requested to follow the guidelines mentioned below-

- I. Abstracts of papers (300 words) should be sent to secretaryneea@gmail.com with a copy to the organizers e-mail: neea2018@gmail.com as a document file on or before 15th February, 2018 with the subject: 'abstract for 19th Annual Conference'.
- II. Acceptance of papers will be confirmed by 25th February, 2018
- III. Full paper not exceeding 3000 words is to be submitted in soft copies (e-mail attachment/CD) on or before 15th March, 2018