

North Eastern Council Secretariat, Shillong
Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region

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NEC: A Glorious Journey of 50 Years of Development

“If the western region of the country can develop, if other regions of the country can develop, I see no reason why the North East region of the country can’t develop. I am also convinced that India can move forward if all the regions develop including the North East region. The North East region is also very important to us for strategic reasons. And it is my conviction that we have to bring this region at par with the other developed regions of the country.”

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi while addressing the 65th Plenary Council Meeting in May 2016.

As Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi termed the eight States of the region as ‘*Ashta Lakshmi*’ has seen its immense potentialities, cultural uniqueness and strength, full of natural resources etc. which is indeed great inspiration to grow more.

The role of NEC is changing over the decades from Advisory body to Nodal Agency to Regional Planning body etc. But, the primary goals remain the same-to accelerate the pace of socio-economic development of the region so that all the States of Northeast may enjoy growth parity with the rest of the country by focusing on connectivity, capacity building, resource and skill based industry, trade and tourism, harnessing cultural strengths and creativity with massive investments.

History at a Glance

North Eastern Council (NEC) was established by an Act of the Parliament in 1971 (Act no. 84 of 1971) and its formal inauguration on 7th November, 1972 at Shillong, Meghalaya by the then Prime Minister (late) Smt. Indira Gandhi, marked the beginning of a new chapter of concerted and planned endeavor on the part of the North Eastern region consisting of the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. The national leaders in their wisdom, decided to reorganize the North Eastern region, and to constitute a regional body styled as North Eastern Council, to look after the common economic interests of the different States of the region. The constitution of the North Eastern Council in 1972, may, therefore, be described as one of the most significant events in the direction of

planned and co-ordinated development of the north eastern region as a whole. North Eastern Council (Amendment) Act, 2002 (68 of 2002) came into force with effect from 26th June, 2003 and the main features of the Act are:

- i) Sikkim included in NEC
- ii) President of India to nominate Chairman
- iii) Three additional members are to be nominated by the President of India
- iv) NEC to function as the Regional Planning Body for NER instead of Regional Advisory Body.

The first Chairman of NEC was Sh. B.K. Nehru and the first NEC Secretary was Sh. D.K. Bhattacharjee. The first Plenary Meeting of NEC was held on the day of inauguration itself and the second plenary session was held on 22nd July, 1973.

Development across North Eastern region

Since its inception, the council has made significant contributions to the cause of the socio-economic development of the North Eastern region in its capacity as an Advisory body and later as a Planning body. The NEC has always worked in close coordination with the State Governments and other implementing agencies for the success of development efforts undertaken by it. The NEC has worked towards the goal of development not only through State Government and NGOs but also through various Central Government organizations (like the BRO etc.) and its own associate organizations (like the RIPAN, the RIMS, LGBRIMH, NEPA, NEEPCO, NESAC, NERAMAC, the IFAD, NERCRMS and other projects) to cater to the needs of the NER as a whole. Till now, with the funding of NEC more than 11,500 CKMs of Roads have been constructed and supported in the installation of more than 694 MW of power generating capacity and constructed 2540 KMs of transmission and distribution lines. NEC has taken up the improvement of infrastructure of 5 major airports in the region-Guwahati, Dibrugarh and Jorhat in Assam, Imphal in Manipur and Umroi in Meghalaya in collaboration with the Airport Authority of India (AAI). The council has also undertaken and completed 11 Inter-State Bus Terminus (ISBT) projects and Four Inter-State Truck Terminus (ISTT) projects across different States to ease out interstate movement of people.

Over the past five decades, NEC has been instrumental in setting in motion a new economic endeavor aimed at removing the basic handicaps that stood in the way of normal development and ushering in an era of new hope in this part of the country with full of great potentialities. Some of the landmark achievements and developments of NEC across the region during these years listed below:

- 1) Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Imphal, Manipur, 1972
- 2) Dr B Borooah Cancer Institute (BBCI), Guwahati, Assam, 1974
- 3) North Eastern Electrical Power Corporation (NEEPCO), Shillong, Meghalaya, 1976
- 4) Regional College of Nursing, Guwahati, Assam, 1977
- 5) North Eastern Handicraft and Handlooms Development Corporation (NEHHDC), Guwahati, Assam, 1977
- 6) North Eastern Police Academy (NEPA), Shillong, Meghalaya, 1978
- 7) Regional Institute of Pharmaceuticals Science & Technology (RIPSAT), Agartala, Tripura, 1979
- 8) North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation (NERAMAC), Guwahati, Assam, 1982
- 9) Regional Dental College, Guwahati, Assam, 1982
- 10) North Eastern Regional Institute of Science & Technology (NERIST), Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, 1984
- 11) Koliabhomora Bridge, the second bridge over river Brahmaputra connecting Tezpur and Nagaon, 1987
- 12) North Eastern Regional Institute of Water and Land Management (NERIWALM), Tezpur, Assam, 1989
- 13) Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi Regional Institute of Mental Health (LGBRIMH), Tezpur, Assam, 1999
- 14) North Eastern Space Application Centre (NESAC), Umiam, Meghalaya, 2000
- 15) Cane and Bamboo Technology Centre (CBTC) currently known as North Eastern Cane and Bamboo Development Council (NECBDC), Byrnihat, Meghalaya, 2004
- 16) North Eastern Tourism Development Council (NETDC), Shillong, Meghalaya, 2016
- 17) Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Policy Research and Analysis, IIM Shillong, Meghalaya, 2016
- 18) Girl's Hostel for NER Students, Bangalore University, Bangalore, 2019 and the list goes on.

Much has done and Much more to be done

In 2016, during the 65th NEC Plenary Session held at Shillong, Prime Minister of India Sh. Narendra Modi expressed the views regarding north-eastern region of India and termed it as '*Ashta Lakshmi*' and suggested to focus more on the development of the region. The role of NEC in this regard is very significant and can be a unique mechanism in the development of this part of the country. In regard to that recently, Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi also announced a special development scheme named PM-devINE (Prime

Minister's Development Initiative for North East) to expedite the further development progress of the region.

As Vice-Chairman of NEC and Union Minister, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) Shri G. Kishan Reddy said in the 70th Plenary meeting held at Guwahati that 'this is the *Amrit Kaal* of North Eastern Region to grow at par with other parts of the country or even exceed that, but the tasks which still lie ahead continue to be difficult and challenging. Despite all the progress that has been made over the last 50 years, the North Eastern region of India still needs to do more as having such enormous potentiality.' Indeed, a lot has been done but a lot has, still, remains to be done.

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