

PRESS RELEASE



Meghalaya concludes District Nutrition Leadership Workshop; Chief Minister announces convergent action plan through Human Development Council (HDC)

Parallel Nutrition Models, SHG Involvement, and ₹10 Cr Infrastructure Plan on Cards:

CM Announces Roadmap at Nutrition Leadership Workshop

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The Government of Meghalaya, in collaboration with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), successfully concluded the two-day *District Nutrition Leadership Workshop* at Courtyard by Marriott, Shillong on June 12–13, 2025. The workshop convened Ministers, senior officials, Deputy Commissioners, Block Development Officers, District Officials representing Health, Social Welfare, C&RD (MSRLS) Education and allied Departments under the Human Development Council (HDC) from across all 12 districts to strengthen leadership, data-based planning, and decentralised actions to tackle malnutrition in Meghalaya.

In his keynote address, Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Conrad K. Sangma **emphasized the importance of having a shared purpose and collective vision across departments** when addressing human development challenges in Meghalaya.



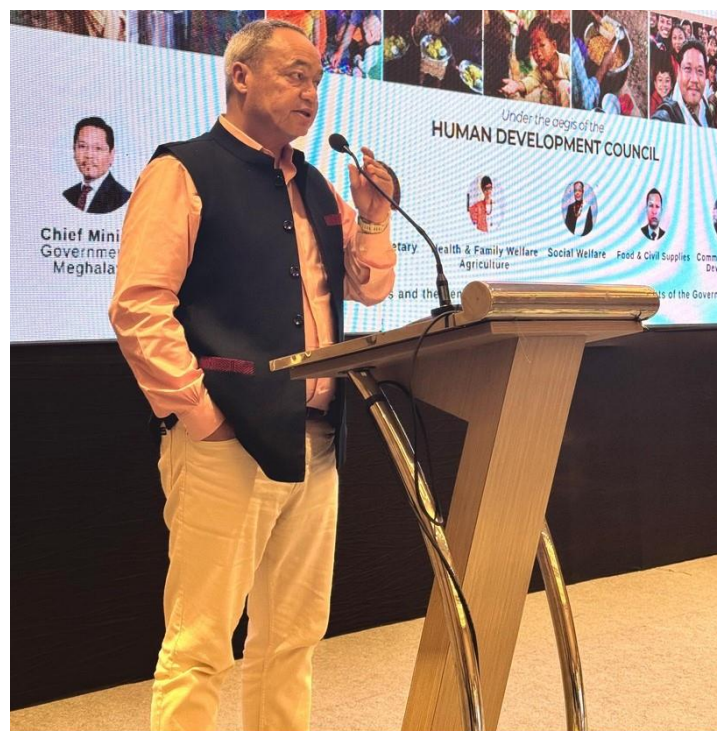
The Chief Minister outlined **three critical areas of action moving forward**. *First, he stressed the need to increase state-side budgetary allocations to improve both the quantity and taste of existing nutrition supplements. Second, he proposed a parallel implementation model. Without disrupting the current systems, the state could pilot nutrition interventions in two or three blocks by incorporating local foods and involving Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and VHCs in preparation and distribution. Third, he reaffirmed the government's commitment to infrastructure development through convergence. He announced financial clearance for an estimated ₹9–10 crore annual requirement to start Mini Anganwadi Centres for providing nutritional and ECD services in a total of 1,400 uncovered villages under ICDS through state funding.*



“We will work with the Social Welfare Department to ensure these centres are completed by combining MGNREGS, state funds, and externally aided projects,” he said.

He also shared that the **state will soon launch a focused nutrition and millets mission** under the leadership of the Hon’ble Minister for Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare, who has been closely working on addressing regional nutrition challenges. “This mission will align perfectly with the goals of the Human Development Council,” the Chief Minister concluded.

Reflecting on the discussions over the last two days, Chief Secretary Shri D. P. Wahlang, IAS noted that most of Meghalaya’s nutrition-related challenges are already well understood by those working on the ground. Among the key issues, the Chief Secretary underlined the high rate of **stunting** and the **persistently high prevalence of anaemia among women**, especially pregnant women. He also highlighted an important point raised by one of the Deputy Commissioners—that of **nutrition gardens in schools and Anganwadi Centres**.



“We are doing this already, but it hasn't been given enough attention. Every DC and BDO must ensure that these gardens are functional, especially in primary schools. These are low-cost, high-impact interventions,” he said.

Development Commissioner & Principal Secretary, Government of Meghalaya, Dr. Sampath Kumar, IAS, emphasized the urgency of addressing high stunting rates, **currently at 46.5%**, and the importance of cultural and structural shifts to tackle deep-rooted issues like early pregnancy, poor maternal nutrition, and low awareness. Citing evidence-based research, he underscored that investments in **early childhood development (ECD)** can yield up to 23 times the return in long-term economic outcomes.



He also highlighted the evolution of Meghalaya's *State Human Development Architecture*, noting the operationalisation of **District and Block Human Development Teams**, the **Human Development Leadership Programme**, and **rescue missions** as powerful tools driving convergence across departments. He added, "Malnutrition is not just a health problem—it's about poverty, education, water, sanitation, food systems, and societal mind-sets. This is why a multi-sectoral, community-first approach is vital."

As part of this approach, the *state aims to operationalise village-level Nutrition Committees while piloting community-based models that engage SHGs, clan leaders, and traditional institutions in nutrition education and service delivery*. These initiatives will be complemented by focused campaigns to improve nutritional literacy and household behaviours, especially around local foods.

The District Nutrition Leadership Program will serve as the backbone for monitoring progress, with Deputy Commissioners leading implementation and external experts supporting design and technical oversight to achieve visible improvements within the next one to two years.



Smti Rasmi Avula and Dr. Purnima Menon International experts from IFPRI, offered their reflections on the workshop, underscoring the importance of human-centric design, local food systems, and empowering frontline workers to drive behavioural change. A short video by the SCEP-GIL was also showcased at the workshop, highlighting the impact of the Human Development Leadership Programme on vulnerable communities through convergence and field-level leadership.

A key element of the workshop was the focused group sessions, where district teams finalised their nutrition action plans. District presentations reflected both shared challenges and unique local insights. Eastern West Khasi Hills identified health and nutrition as cross-cutting concerns, citing deeply rooted dietary habits, poor diversity, and limited community awareness as key barriers. East Khasi Hills advocated for increased father involvement, the use of local role models, and mobilising community volunteers to strengthen awareness and service uptake. South Garo Hills reported mixed progress, with maternal anaemia rates improving but stunting increasing significantly. South West Khasi Hills emphasized the revival of traditional, nutrient-rich diets such as millets to combat anaemia. Many of the remaining districts echoed similar sentiments, emphasising the need for greater convergence, culturally relevant interventions, improved data fidelity, and stronger frontline engagement to accelerate nutrition outcomes across Meghalaya.



The second day of the workshop was attended by Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Conrad K. Sangma; Health & Family Welfare Minister Dr. M. Ampareen Lyngdoh; Minister for Sports & Youth Affairs, Labour and Employment Shri Shakliar Warjri; Minister for Arts & Culture, Social Welfare and Tourism Bah Paul Lyngdoh; Chief Secretary, Shri. D. P. Wahlang, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, Dr. Shakil P. Ahammed, IAS along with Deputy Commissioners, Block Development Officers, District Programme Officers, and officials from the departments of Health, Social Welfare, Community & Rural Development, Education, Agriculture, and Public Health Engineering (PHE). Also in attendance were functionaries from the State Capability Enhancement Project (SCEP)- Government Innovation Lab (GIL), Meghalaya State Rural Livelihoods Society (MSRLS), Meghalaya ECD Mission, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), and technical experts from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) among others.



The event concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Smti. C. D. Lyngwa, MCS, Director of Social Welfare, who extended gratitude to all stakeholders and district officials for their dedication and collaborative spirit in achieving the State's human development goals in a collaborative spirit.