# REPORT OF THE PANEL DISCUSSION

# ON

# Securing the Future of Graduating Students of Meghalaya

06 November 2023



#### **ORGANISED BY**

# Counselling and Placement Cell, St Edmund's College Shillong

In collaboration with

The Department of Commerce, St Edmund's College
Shillong

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#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Counselling and Placement Cell of St. Edmund's College, Shillong, would like to thank the panellists for sharing their unique insights into various career opportunities for St Edmund's students. The Cell would also like to thank the Department of Commerce for supporting its efforts to organise this event.

**Br (Dr) Simon Coelho**, Principal (I/C), Rector and Secretary, Governing Body, **Dr B W Nongbri**, Dean, **Dr (Capt) K P Pallavi Malhan**, Vice Principal (Academics) and **Mr Monotosh Chakravarty**, Vice Principal (Administration) showed their support by gracing the occasion with their presence and encouraging students to move out of their comfort zones and embrace new challenges.

#### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

- a. Category of the event: Panel Discussion
- b. **Topic of the session:** Securing the Future of Graduating Students of Meghalaya
- c. **Total Contact Hours:** 2.5 hours (1000 1230 hours)
- d. **Date of the event:** 06 November 2023
- e. Target audience: Recent graduates and current students of St. Edmund's College, Shillong
- f. Total number of students registered: 462
- g. **Registration Fees:** None
- h. Registration link:

https://forms.gle/aSj7gEDM4DeAxTx2A

- i. Session organisers:
  - i. Counselling and Placement Cell, St Edmund's College, Shillong; and,
  - ii. Department of Commerce, St Edmund's College, Shillong
- j. Composition of the panel:
  - i. Name: Adiel R Kynta

**Designation:** Assistant Commissioner, East Khasi Hills District and Block Development Officer, Mawryngkneng C&RD Block, East Khasi Hills

District

**Organisation:** Meghalaya Civil Service

ii. Name: Dr Binayak Dutta

**Designation:** Associate Professor

**Organisation:** North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU)

iii. **Name:** Samborlang Diengdoh **Designation:** Entrepreneur

Organisation: --

iv. Name: Sumit Das

**Designation:** Chartered Accountant

**Organisation:** --

v. Name: Eric Kevin Dkhar

**Designation:** Assistant Commissioner, Ribhoi District and Block Development Officer, Umling C&RD Block, Ribhoi District

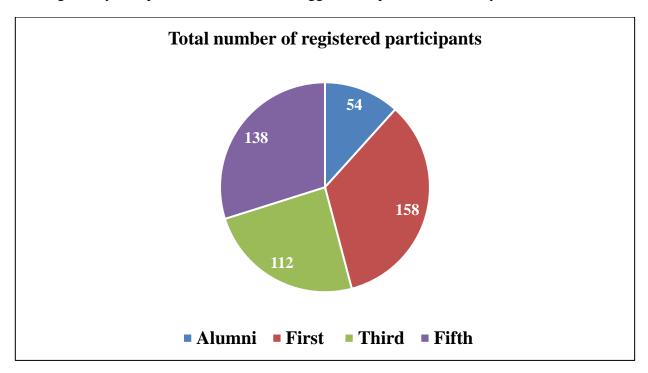
Organisation: Meghalaya Civil Service

#### **REGISTERED PARTICIPANTS**

Registration opened one hour before the event's commencement. Students registered at registration desks operated by student volunteers.

Refer to **Appendix A** for the complete list of registered participants.

**Figure 1** (below) shows the semester-wise breakdown of total registered participants. It shows that 54 alumni of the college attended the event. This could indicate their interest in the advice given by the speakers and an idea of suggested improvements, if any, to their skill sets.



**Figure 1:** Semester-wise breakup of total registered participants

The next section outlines the background of this event and details its proceedings.

#### INTRODUCTION TO THE PANEL DISCUSSION

This event was a collaboration between the Counselling and Placement Cell and the Department of Commerce, St Edmund's College. Since the latter was observing the twenty-fifth year of its establishment, a collaboration with the Counselling and Placement Cell was discussed to organise an event showcasing the success stories of its alumni and other individuals from Meghalaya.

The management's thought-process (focussing on outcomes) was crystallised — through internal discussions among the Counselling and Placement Cell members — into a panel discussion featuring prominent individuals from Meghalaya's education system. Such an event would expose students to several career options and encourage them to explore various courses to upskill themselves.

Panellists were invited based on their academic backgrounds — all three streams of the college were to be represented. Second, the panel would comprise a mix of government servants and those working in the private sector. Further, an entrepreneur was also invited to showcase the diversity of careers (and opportunities). Although it was not stressed, efforts were made to invite graduates of St Edmund's to the panel. Goutam Deb, Head of the Department of Commerce and Coordinator, Counselling and Placement Cell, St. Edmund's College, introduced the session by delivering a 20-minute presentation into the histories of the department and the Counselling and Placement Cell.

#### PROCEEDINGS OF THE PANEL DISCUSSION

Although the event was a collaboration between the Department of Commerce and the Counselling and Placement Cell, the latter executed it due to its focus on career guidance. Moreover, since the Commerce stream is the college's largest, the Department of Commerce organised logistics (seating arrangements, volunteers, registrations, and refreshments).

Annexure B displays the event programme and details the proceedings of the event. College authorities and the faculty interacted with each other during the Inaugural Session, while the Technical Session that followed comprised a panel discussion and a brief question-and-answer (Q&A) session with the audience.

Dr Oliver Nelson Gonsalves, Research Facilitator at St Edmund's College, moderated the discussion. The panellists delivered 15-minute presentations to the students on their journeys to attain their current positions in society. Dr Gonsalves followed each presentation with 1-2 questions (based on the panellists' presentations). These questions ventured into their opinions on the education system (concerning their professions) and courses that students can take to upskill themselves and prepare to meet the job market's needs.

Summaries of each of the panellist's remarks are listed below.

#### Summary of the remarks by the panellists

Adiel R Kynta, Assistant Commissioner, East Khasi Hills District and Block Development Officer, Mawryngkneng C&RD Block, East Khasi Hills District, opined that the "exposure" to practical job aspects of public sector jobs could help students understand what is required of them. Internships at government offices and rigorous time-tables could increase students' chances of passing various competitive exams.

**Dr Binayak Dutta**, an Associate Professor at North-Eastern Hill University in Shillong, argued that students should "develop a passion" for their disciplines to cultivate job-relevant skills.

**Mr Sumit Das**, a Chartered Accountant with an independent practice based in Shillong, advised students to familiarise themselves with modern accounting software such as Tally, Refrens, etc.

**Samborlang Diengdoh**, an entrepreneur, used his family's grain supply business to branch into fuel supply. He opened a fuel pump to diversify the family's income sources. He encouraged the students in attendance to stay committed to a business strategy and find ways to reinvent a sluggish business.

**Mr Eric Kevin Dkhar**, Assistant Commissioner, Ribhoi District and Block Development Officer, Umling C&RD Block, Ribhoi District, Meghalaya, outlined discipline as key to success in competitive exams.

A brief Q&A session was conducted between the panellists and the students. Questions regarding the career prospects of various courses were discussed.

#### **Concluding proceedings**

Michelle Khongwir, Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Studies, delivered the Vote of Thanks and closed the proceedings.

This event was followed by lunch for the visiting party. Strategies to expand student-higher education institution interaction were discussed.

#### **Lessons Learned**

Based on Mr Sumit Das' inputs, the Department of Commerce organised a one-month course on Tally in November and December 2023.

### **APPENDICES**

The following materials were used as supplementary material to enhance the merit of this course:

# Appendix A (List of total registered participants)

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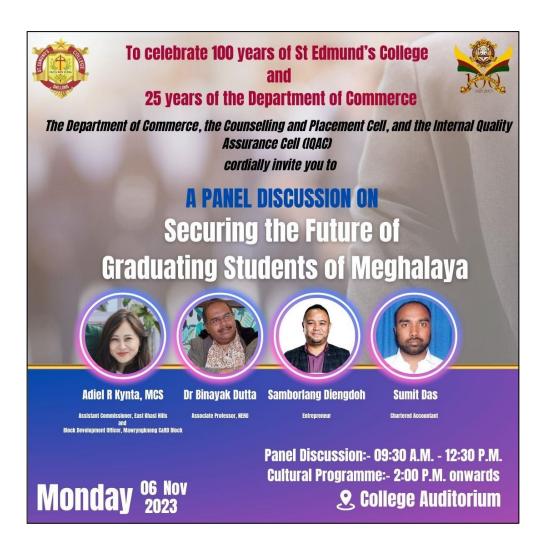
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# **Appendix B (Programme of the event)**

INAUGURAL SESSION (10:00 - 10:30 A.M.)			
<b>09:30-10:00</b> (30 mins)		Registration	
10:00-10:02 (2 mins)	Opening Prayer	<b>Dr</b> ( <b>Mrs</b> ) <b>B W Nongbri</b> , Dean, St. Edmund's College	
<b>10:02-10:12</b> (10 mins)	Welcome Address and Introduction of the theme of the panel discussion	Goutam Deb, Head, Department of Commerce, and Coordinator, Counselling and Placement Cell, St. Edmund's College	
10:12-10:15 (3 mins)	Presei	ntation of mementos	
10:15-10:16 (1 min)	Lighting of the lamp	External Resource Persons and Principal, St Edmund's College	
10:16-10:25 (09 min)	Remarks by the Vice Princi	pal (Administration) and Vice Principal (Academics)	
10:25-10:30 (5 mins)	Remarks by the Chief Guest	Dr. (Br.) Simon Coelho, Principal, St. Edmund's College	
<b>10:30-10:45</b> (15 mins)		Tea Break	
		CAL SESSION I 12:30 P.M.)	
<b>10:45-11:45</b> (1 hour)	Presentations by the Ext	ernal Resource Persons (15 mins each)	
11:45-12:15 (30 mins)	Panel Discussion and Audience Interaction		
<b>12:15-12:25</b> (10 mins)	Concluding Remarks by the Moderator	<b>Dr Oliver Nelson Gonsalves</b> , Research Facilitator, Incubation Centre, St Edmund's College	
12:25-12:28 (3 mins)	Vote of Thanks	Michelle Khongwir, Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Studies	
12:28-12:30 (2 mins)	College Anthem		



### Appendix D (Geo-tagged photographs of the event)



**Image 1:** Members of the Counselling and Placement Cell and the college's administration team with the panellists for the event



**Image 2:** The panellists along with the Principal, Br Simon Coelho (in white robe) and Mr Goutam Deb (in striped sweater), Head, Department of Commerce and Incharge, Counselling and Placement Cell, St Edmund's College, Shillong, light the lamp.



**Image 3:** Ms Adiel R Kynta (standing), Assistant Commissioner, East Khasi Hills District and Block Development Officer, Mawryngkneng C&RD Block, East Khasi, makes Hills District, interacts with the students.



**Image 4:** Dr Oliver Nelson Gonsalves, the Research Facilitator of St Edmund's College, Shillong, moderates the panel discussion.