Social Audit - Meghalaya Model

What is the issue?

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- Meghalaya is the first state to launch the social audit law.
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- The state’s experience is informative to increase awareness of entitlements.
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What is Meghalaya’s social audit law?

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- In April 2017, Meghalaya became the first State in the country to pass a social audit legislation, the Meghalaya Community Participation and Public Services Social Audit Act.
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- This Act mandated social audits across 21 schemes and 11 departments.
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- Meghalaya audits had been built on traditional tribal institutions, leveraging their inherent strengths and facilitating their engagement with contemporary democratic practices.
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What are the experiences of the Meghalaya from this law?

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- The Meghalaya exercise demonstrated how social audits can be developed as an ongoing process through which citizens participate in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the programme.
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- The audits were deliberately positioned to be a platform for
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1. Sharing information about schemes.
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2. Enhancing awareness amongst people about their entitlements.
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3. Detecting beneficiaries who were eligible
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4. Recording people’s testimonies and registering of grievances
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5. Identifying priorities for inputs for planning.
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- The Meghalaya pilots have also helped formulate a practical framework through which that can be done. Draft rules were prepared on the basis of consultation.
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- Thus these Social audits has helped to identifyand bring evidence-based policy changes.
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What rest of India can learn from Meghalaya’s model?

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- In India there is a growing acknowledgement of social audits as a credible means of institutionalising citizen oversight.
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- There is therefore an urgent need to come up with a working protocol for facilitating social audits across a range of interventions.
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- The experience of Meghalaya has taught how social audit is intrinsically related to processes of community participation and grievance redress.
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- Thus Social audit is a tool of “good governance” and it is likely to spread or become robust with the participation of citizens groups.
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Source: The Hindu

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