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SOCIOLOGY OF NORTHEAST INDIA

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Author:

Dr. Padi Hana
Assistant Professor
Department of Sociology
Rajiv Gandhi University
Rono Hills, Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh

SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

SOCIOLOGY OF NORTHEAST INDIA

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Unit I: Northeast as a Reality and Construct Physical and ecological settings; Historical accounts of the Societies of Northeast India, Pre-colonial, Colonial and Post-Colonial Periods; Northeast as a Concept and Perspectives; Institutional Frame-NEC and DONER	Unit I: Northeast as a reality and construct
Unit II: Demographic features Population Distribution of Hills and Plains- Demographic Patterns, Sex Ratio, Density of Population, Linguistic and Religious Groups, Castes-Tribes Interaction.	Unit II: Demographic Features
Unit III: Traditional Socio-Political Institution Social: Kingship, Family, Marriage; Political-Traditional and Modern Institution.	Unit III: Traditional socio-political institution
Unit IV: Socio-Cultural Dimensions and Economic Development Agricultural Practices in Hills and Plain; Land Relation; Industries and Industrialization-Historical Background of Industrialization in Region, Types of Industry- Tea Industry, Bamboo Industry, Oil Industry and Handloom Industry, Problems and Prospects.	Unit IV: Socio-Cultural Dimensions and Economic Development
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INTRODUCTION

Northeast Sociology is one of the important papers of Sociology where it deals with various issues related to different tribes inhabiting the region. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim are eight states located in the North East of the country and command special importance in India, not only because of their location but also their cultural and historical uniqueness. The landscape, the range of communities and geographical and ecological diversity make these states quite different from other parts of the country. The states have distinct cultures and multiple ethnic groups and are a fine example of unity in diversity. The variety of ethnic groups, languages and religions reflect the multi-cultural character of the states. States like, Assam, Manipur, Tripura and Sikkim are inhabited by people of various religious denominations like, Hindus, Christians and Muslims and a combination of local tribes and communities.

The book is divided into following five units:

Unit I: Northeast as a Reality and Construct

Unit II: Demographic Features

Unit III: Traditional Socio-Political Institutions

Unit IV: Socio-Cultural Dimensions and Economic Development

Unit V: Issues and Problems

The learning material designed in a structural format so that it is easily understandable. Each unit begins with an introduction followed with unit objectives. The detailed content is then presented in a simple language, interspersed with check your progress questions to enable the student to test his/her understanding as and when they go through each unit. Summary and key terms are provided at the end of each unit which help in quick recollection. Questions and Exercises are also provided for further practice.

UNIT I: NORTHEAST AS A REALITY AND CONSTRUCT

1.0 Introduction

1.1. Unit Objectives

1.2 Physical and Ecological Setting

1.3 Historical account of the societies of northeast India

1.3.1 Pre-Colonial

1.3.2 Colonial

1.3.3 Post-Colonial

1.4 Northeast as a concept and perspective

1.5 Institutional framework

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

The Northeast region in India comprises of seven states later Sikkim was added as the eight states. The region is a part of India which is situated in the northern most corner of the country. It is linked with the mainland of India on its western side through a small land strip which is generally called chicken neck corridor in popular parlance. Northeast region is connected with four foreign neighbouring countries; Bhutan, China, Myanmar, and Bangladesh.

Northeast and its geographical location

Northeast India is a frontier region of India. It is located between 21.57N –29.30N latitude and 89.46E—97.30E longitude and it covers for 7.5% of the country's total land area. There are eight states in the region viz., Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland Tripura, and Sikkim, the region is having considerably long international boundaries bordering with China in the north, Bangladesh in the south and southwest, Bhutan in the northwest and Myanmar in the east. The Mac Mohan line separates the region from Tibet. The region is linked with rest of the country through a narrow corridor commonly known as chicken neck corridor in North Bengal (northern part of the state west Bengal) and which is approximately 33km wide in the east and 22km in the west.

The importance to study this northeast as a frontier region of India is really very important because as stated earlier this region is having considerably long international boundaries bordering with China in the north and northeast Bangladesh in the south and southwest, Bhutan in the northwest and Myanmar in the east and the small portion of the southeast. Though politically the boundaries are defined, the inhabitants of this region continued to immigrate from different directions at different periods of time; mainly from Hukong valley of China, Myanmar, from the mainland of India, and also by taking upstream of the river Brahmaputra where the Dravidians entered Assam.

The Northeast region is considered as the melting pot of diverse ethnic, races and cultures as different people of different races entered into this region and assimilated with each other over different historical periods. In this is a region we find Indo- Mongoloids, Austriacs, Dravidians, and Aryan, who migrated from different sources and origin and entered at different places of the regions and developed their assimilation cultures and adapted with the environment and have created their new way of life. Therefore, it is a land of diversity and unique country.

Due to its culture and ethnic verities this region is considered to be important to study the different aspects of the cultures, customs, and traditions of the different people living in this region.

In other words, this region is inhabited by the different ethnic and their respective sub-ethnic groups with their distinct cultures and traditions. That is why to understand and to do an in-depth study of the people, different micro studies are extremely needed for micro generalization and finally to macro generalization covering northeast India as a whole.

From the sociological point of view , the sociologist those who studying this region specially in the fringe areas of internationally remarketed borders find that though politically Northeast India has a political boundary with its international neighbours, most surprisingly the cultural boundaries of this region is very porous as the people of same customs, traditions and belonging to the same tribe or even caste groups are living on both sides of the politically identified international boundaries in which the inner areas of the boundary belongs to India and outer one belongs to the neighbouring foreign countries.

The case of cultural commonality may be cited in various cases of the tribes of fringe areas of Northeast India, in the case of the name and style as village Ho-Ho is there and the same Ho-Ho (i.e. village council) is available among the Naga's of Kachin areas of the international border with earlier Burma now Myanmar in particular.

Seeing the importance of such social and cultural groups/ tribes who are no longer living isolated; rather they are linked with so many other groups of outside the national boundary through roads, communication , traditional political system, traditional economic system and more importantly the cultural system that is why the importance to study this region as a frontier region is of utmost importance as in the anterior paragraphs containing valuable information and the same are considered as good scopes for making study in different areas relating to northeast India.

The importance for frontier sociology was put forward by Prof.Ramakrishna Mukharjee well back in the year 1926 by providing views the frontier of the country which is of great sociological importance and these should be studied in detail. In this case, it can again be pointed out that ethnically and culturally porous internationally boundary which provides fertile ground to study the importance of this region separately.

Check your progress-1

1. Why it is significant to study the frontier of Northeast India?
2. Name the Indian Sociologist who has prioritised frontier study.

1.1. UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the physical and ecological setting of the region
- Illustrate the historical account of the societies into several stages
- Developed the framework of Northeast as a concept
- Explained the development of Institutional role

1.2. PHYSICAL SETTINGS OF NORTH-EAST REGION OF INDIA

Geologically, North-East India presents a stratigraphic sequence which ranges from pre-Cambrian to Quaternary with huge hiatuses in between. The oldest geological formation

of the region is represented by the pre-Cambrian gneissic complex of Meghalaya plateau, a craton, and the Karbi-Anglong plateau, both of which are parts of the old Gondwanaland. The Himalayas, occupying the northern border of the region, ranging in height from 1,500 to 7,000m consist of formations ranging in age from Protozoic to early Palaeozoic in age. These consist of low-grade metamorphic in the southern section to high-grade schists towards the crest of the mountains. The foot zone of the Himalayas is formed by the Tertiary rocks, largely Mio-Pliocene deposits of post-organic phase. The rest of the region is formed by Tertiary rocks with different marine facies, ranging in age from Eocene to Pliocene. The movement of the Indian plate to the north as well as to the north-east and east has caused a number of thrusts. The Himalayan Main Boundary Thrust (MBT) and the Naga–Disang thrust separate the Himalayas and the eastern hilly region from Brahmaputra valley. The most notable fault of the region is the Dauki fault, running west-east and separating the Meghalaya plateau from Bangladesh, by a vertical displacement of over 1,000 m. This fault, with a few patches of Cretaceous deposits, at 1,200 m ASL, suggests a post-Cretaceous uplift of the plateau. The north-south ridges and valleys of Mizoram, formed in the Neogene sediments, represent the anticlines and synclines following a balancing compression movement from the east. The Indo-Myanmar plate boundary is characterized by hills resulting from the under thrusting of the Indian plate and the appearance of ophiolite in the region.

The North-Eastern part of India, usually known as the North-East and comprising seven states, is tectonically similar to the rest of India, except for the fact that 70 % of its area is built of Tertiary rocks, folded and fractured subsequently, to fashion the present relief of the region. The Archaean crystalline basement, in the region, is exposed in only three plateau-like ancient blocks, viz. the Meghalaya plateau, the Karbi-Anglong plateau (Mikir Hills) and the Mishmi Hills area. The rest of the region has been a scene of prolonged sedimentation, largely during the Tertiary period, experiencing at the same time movement of the plates,

their collision, resulting in orogeny, many folded structures, faults, thrusts, and many fault scarps and a very complex relief.

The ecology of the northeast region of India refers to not only the geographical location but also, more importantly, the physiographical settings and their characteristics in the region and also other important factors like climate, rainfall, river system and also the human habitation in the region covering both plains and hills.

This is a region which is a frontier region of India lies between 21.57 N -29.30 N latitude and 89.46 E- 97.30 E longitudes. The whole region covers a geographical area of 2,55,036sq.kms. And it accounts for 7.5% of the country's land area.

Now, within the broad framework of ecology now the discussion is to be made out about the physiographical settings and their characteristics in the region. From the physiographical point of view this region can be divided into certain units namely the hilly region, the plateau region, the alluvial plains region, and the piedmont zone i.e. coarse grain sand deposit zone in the immediate foothills especially on the northern side. The hilly terrain covers most of the areas towards north, south, north-east, and southeast. The Arunachal Himalaya which forms a part of the greater alpine- Himalaya belt as stated earlier runs almost east-west and this belt consists of four different parts viz., the sub- Himalaya (1000m.), the middle Himalaya (4000m.), greater Himalaya (6000m.) and the trans- Himalaya (4500m.). Towards extreme south, there is Mizo-Lushai range of hills, while in Meghalaya the Khasi-Jaintia, and Garo-hills cover almost 80% of the hilly state.

In between the hill ranges and particularly the Brahmaputra valley and the Barak valley are the alluvial plains regions containing the most fertile loose sediments.

The plateau region, covering most of the state of Meghalaya and a part of Karbi-Anglong district of Assam has the average height of 600-1000 m. The plateau area consists of a diverse range of rock types belonging to pre-Cambrian age (750ma-4,600ma).

The piedmont zone is found along the foothills of the Himalayan range towards the north and the Naga-Pataki range towards the south and along the flanks of the sporadic hill ranges. These areas are framed by coarse grain sand and loose sediments.

From the domain of geology, it is opined that the entire north-eastern region contains rock types belonging from pre-Cambrian (750.ma) to recent. The whole region of northeast India forms a part of large Techno-sedimentary province. The most ancient pre-Cambrian high-grade rocks comprising Neisse's, Schist's, Quartzite's as well as basic rocks and igneous Plutons (Sporadic granite body found at Nongpoh and at Myllieum of Meghalaya plateau, in the parts of Karbi-Anglong district and in the sporadic hills around Guwahati). The Naga- Pataki range consists of mostly tertiary sedimentary rocks while the Arunachal Himalaya consists of both sedimentary and igneous rocks.

The alluvial plain in Assam and parts of the other states consists of newer alluvium of clay, sand, and pebbles having a thickness of 200- 300 meter. This however at places becomes more than 1000 meter. Thick. It is very important to know that northeast India is a seismically very active zone and as per earthquakes and it was the seat of two major earthquakes during 19th and 20th century viz., great Assam earthquake of 1897 (8.7 magnitudes in Richter scale) and Assam earthquake of 1950 (8.5 magnitudes in Richter scale).

The region is resolved into the following litho-structural units:

1. The Archaean gneissic landmass of Meghalaya, corresponding in age to Deccan Shield and its outlier in Karbi-Anglong plateau.
2. The Tertiary landmass of eastern, south and southeastern part of the region. Tertiaries also occur in the Siwaliks of the Himalayas, but they are discussed in the context of the Himalayan range.
3. Brahmaputra and Barak river valleys.

4. The Himalayas and their foothills, the Siwaliks of Tertiary origin and volcanic (Abor volcanic) of the North-Eastern extremity.
5. The Eastern Mountain belt, though largely composed of Tertiaries, characterized by an ophiolite-Cretaceous melange zone, the Indo-Burmese plate boundary, the subduction zone, and the suture.

Climate

As far as the climate of N.E. India is concerned one can find that compared to other parts of India, the climate of this region is famous for its relative coolness and extreme humidity. The heavy and long-continued rains keep the temperature of the one session not going above 45 C., especially in the plains area of as far as the climate of N.E. India is one can find that compared to other parts of India, the climate of this region is famous for its relative coolness and extreme humidity. The heavy and long-continued rains keep the temperature of the one session not going above forty-five degree Celsius, especially in the plains area of Brahmaputra and Barak Valley. Earlier the N.E. India enjoyed unusually long and bracing cool weather, especially in Brahmaputra and Barak Valley. However, due to damage caused by human beings mainly in helping the Denudations of forest covered the above-stated areas unusually long and bracing cool weather in the valleys are gradually shortened.

The north-east region of India experiences somewhat hot weather between the end of the cold weather and the onset of monsoon in June. But gradually the hot weather is experiencing in the north-east region of India up to September.

So, it is a region which from the climatic point of view experience variations, because in the hills of the north-east region of India temperatures are not similar to that of the plains. For example in Shillong area of the state of Meghalaya, the mean July temperature is 21 C. and in January. Interestingly, in the upper Himalaya of Arunachal Pradesh always experience 0 C in most part of the year.

From the above description it can very well be pointed out that the northeast region of India experiences a peculiar pattern of climate with substantial variations from humid alluvial valleys through an evergreen forest that is available in sub-Himalayas (1000m - 4000m) to the snow-clad of other Himalayan ranges that produce Varieties of flora and fauna.

Rainfall

The north-east region of India generally experiences rainy season from the month of March and lasts till the middle of October. In the north-east region of India, the monsoon season has a greater role to play because this region is essentially depend on agricultural activities done by the region of both plains and the hill; though cultivation procedures may be different between hills and the plains. Contrary to the plains people- who practice settled farming, the people of the hills practice shifting cultivation which is popularly known as “Jhum cultivation” in the northeast region of India. The monsoon season of the northeast region of India through relatively cool is a trying period owing to the hothouse Atmosphere caused by the very high degree of saturation. It may be pointed out here that above 2/3 of the total rainfall occurs during the period of June- September. No doubt, the rainfall of north-east region of India is always abundant but is rather unevenly distributed. For example the amount of total highest annual rainfall reaches in place like ‘Mawsynrum’ of the state of Meghalaya and the lowest in Nagaon district of Assam, especially its southern tip of land including northern portion of Karbi- Anglong district of Assam- Howraghat and its adjacent areas. Likewise in Bomdila area of Arunachal Pradesh, the rainfall reaches Up to 499 cm. per annum and in Mizoram it reaches Up to 200cm.

These localized variations of annual rainfall affect the economic and socio-cultural life of the different parts of the region. This is one of the people of the north-east region of India.

River Systems

The northeast region of India is always ravaged by floods and erosions of the rivers viz., Brahmaputra and Barak. Every year the state of Assam suffers badly due to the floods because of the above stated mighty rivers- Brahmaputra and also Barak flow through two valleys respectively. The river Brahmaputra has its source in a glacier mass in the northernmost chain of the Himalaya, in the southwest of Tibet- about 80 east longitude called Kubir – Ganga and then joins Manasorovar and from there it flows through Tibet and Arunachal Pradesh and then following through alluvial plains of Assam stretching from Sadiya to Dhuburi covering more than 700 km. And then ends with the Bay of Bengal.

The river Barak originates from the mount of Japhu of Nagaland and reaches on the southern slopes of the hill ranges of the north of Manipur and flows towards the south and ultimately it reaches Cachar and ends in Bay of Bengal by joining the Brahmaputra.

Apart from these two big rivers number of tributaries pouring their torrents into the mighty Brahmaputra River and also to the Barak River originating from different hills and mountains. These big and small rivers make the entire region fertile and thereby it is rich in flora and fauna, for which this northeast region of India is well known in other regions of India and even in different parts of the world.

Check your progress

3. Write down the physical aspects of the Northeast region.
4. Write any two points regarding litho-structural units of northeast India.

1.3. HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE SOCIETIES OF NORTHEAST INDIA

The evolution of North East India as a region and development of its community-based societies has a long history. There is hardly any literature that could explain and describe the type of societies that had existed due to absence of written records by the hill

tribes and their rich oral tales and archaeological tools are the only source of their early life. There were other civilized communities found in the present Assam that had the written record of their dynasties, ways of administration, religion, language, culture, etc like that of, Kamarupa, Ahom, and Buddhist community which had helped to explain the situation and condition of that period. Its existence was mentioned in the Ideological textbooks. It was ruled by different rulers in the past however in a fragmented way. Ahom ruled this region for long six hundred years especially the Brahmaputra valley and developed friendship with tribal states of the hill areas and some states were the subjects of Ahom rulers. With the signing of the treaty of Yandaboo with the company officials of the East India Company, the Ahom Kingdom along with three provinces of Burma was annexed to the company rulers. Thenceforth, the Britishers started expansion and annexation policy and with a span of approximately forty years they brought various parts of the north east region under their control and annexed these areas subsequently in the northeast region.

1.3.1. Pre-colonial

For long, North-East India was a terra incognita firstly because of its physical isolation but no less because of its being in a remote corner of India far away from the early ruling dynasties which were confined largely to the Ganga plain. The earliest known kingdom in the region, known as Pragjyotish/Kamarupa, was established by the Varman dynasty in the third century AD. The most illustrious ruler of Assam in the pre-Ahom period was Bhaskarvarman (AD 594–650). Through a succession of dynasties, viz. Varman, Salastambha, Pala and Vaidyadeva, all of which have left their imprint on the region, the region passed in the hands of Ahoms who came to Assam in the early thirteenth century, from the Shan region of Myanmar, settled in the eastern part of Brahmaputra valley, and ruled over Assam for 600 years. During the medieval period, Assam developed as a distinct politico-cultural unit. The region suffered repeated invasions from the Nawabs of Bengal, but

none of the invaders could establish a permanent foothold in the region. Some of them even suffered defeat and had to retreat. Besides, the Ahoms who ruled over much of the Brahmaputra valley, there were other dynasties who ruled in other parts of the region. The Koches ruled over western Assam during the sixteenth century.

During the first millennium of the Christian era, the region, not as fully explored as the present one, and confined largely to the lower region of what is present-day Assam, was ruled by a succession of dynasties of mixed descent who had adopted the Indo-Aryan cultural ethos and traditions and followed the religious practices and rituals enjoined by the Vedic tradition and emulated the royalty in the Gangetic plain. This was a period before the arrival of Islamic order in India and the establishment of Muslim rule. A broad genealogy of the ruling dynasties and the rulers of Kamarupa are traced by historians, starting from the seventh century AD till the arrival of the British, yet the history of Assam till the twelfth century is known only in broad outlines as gleaned from copper plates and inscriptions, as will be briefly discussed in the sequel.

North-East India, till the Sixth Century AD

There was hardly anything known about the North-East of India, or even present Assam, till about the beginning of the seventh century, a period marked by flourishing kingdoms in other parts of the Indian subcontinent. It is mainly because of the geographical isolation of the region, but in no small measure also the result of a slow spatial progression of the Indo-Aryan culture that moved gradually from the mid-Gangetic plain eastward. The movement of the Indo-Aryan people eastward, marked by the emergence of several kingdoms even before Christ was slow to reach the Brahmaputra valley. They, as a rule, followed the Gangetic axial route and several of their kingdoms, strung along the river, included the fertile alluvial plain of Ganga and its tributaries. The easternmost extension of these kingdoms

terminated in Gauda kingdom corresponding with the northern and western part of the present-day Bengal as well as part of eastern Bengal.

The earliest history of Assam based on epics and scriptures starts with Narakasura, the king of Pragjyotish whose descendent Bhagdatta participated in the Mahabharat war. The political history of ancient Assam, however, begins with the foundation of the Varman line of kings, in which Pusyavarman was the first historical ruler. The reconstituted genealogies of different dynasties, however, don't throw any light on the social structure and economy of early times. The history of ruling dynasties and a glimpse of their administration are better anchored in reality and in some cases rest on the unassailable ground, when seen in the light of several inscriptions that have been discovered in several parts of western Assam and Bengal. Over a thousand years of unrecorded history of Kamarupa suggests a quiet period. Kamarupa may have been a kingdom with limited governance, existing on the margin of the Gangetic plain. The tribal population appears to have followed their own age-long ritual practices without any interference. As is evident from the names and the epigraphs, the kings of all the dynasties appear to be following Vedic religion. The capitals of Kamarupa may have shifted from Pragjyotish to Haruppeswara at the beginning of the ninth century or to Devjaya around 1,000 A.D. for strategic reasons but 'Pragjyotishpur' ever remained the focal point of the state.

A brief account of Hiuen Tsang turns some light on Bhaskarvarman the king of Kamarupa in the early seventh century as well as the character of the land. His account of Guwahati, the capital, as a city lying at a lower level with several water bodies and abounding in fruit trees speaks of his observations. His description of people, their language, temperament and their belief in 'devas' (as opposed to Buddhism) and their love of learning, all points to Brahmanical culture among the educated. His observation of about a large number of temples and the absence of any '*Sangharama*' shows his dismay over the poor

health of his own faith, i.e. Buddhism in the region. His conclusion that Bhaskarvarman, the king, was a Brahman may not be correct, but it does suggest the royal predilection for Vedic rituals. This is confirmed from the fact that language of the inscriptions of his times, and even later dates, is written in Sanskrit and major beneficiaries of royal charity appear to be Brahmins. He talks of tribal population in the eastern hills on his way to southwest China and calls them 'barbarians'. What is certain is that the hilly region between China and India was colonized by tribal folks even 1,500 years ago. The capital town as described by him was about 5 miles circumference, which does not appear outlandish and benefits the size of an early Kamarupa.

Before the close of the first millennia A.D., the ruling dynasties of Kamarupa had not only adopted Hinduism as their religious faith but even actively promoted it. The two kings of Salastambha dynasty, Harjaravarman, the king of kings, and Vanmalavermadeva, the empire builder of Assam, not only extended the physical limits of their kingdom but actively encouraged the growth of literature, art, and culture. Harjaravarman, who ruled over Kamarupa in the ninth century and built a new capital at Haruppeswara, was a devout Saivite, a follower of Saivism sect of Hinduism. He had his coronation performed in conformity with the Vedic tradition and built lofty Siva temples and rows of stately buildings in the capital city Haruppeswara. The ruins of the temples and the buildings can still be seen around Tezpur town. This was the period when Assamese, as a modern Indo-Aryan language, was gradually taking shape and making its appearance besides the regional tribal dialects and Sanskrit, the last confined to the priestly class. The development of unwritten poetry, exemplified in pastoral ballads, like *Bihu Geet* or wise sayings like seen in *Dakabanita* of the eighth or ninth century was very common. 'By A.D. 1000, judging by the specimens of Bengali, Assamese, and Oriya that we have, at about this date and a little later, these languages had been fully established. Thus, 1000 AD may be roughly taken as a convenient date for the development

of the new Indo-Aryan stage in the history of the Aryan speech (Chatterjee 1955). A couple of centuries later, Assamese crystallised as a regional language. This was a nascent phase in the evolution of a society bonded together by Assamese as a common language, Hinduism as a common religion and a royalty that promoted language and literature and spread Hinduism among its subjects, largely the members of the local tribal community. This brought about some measure of socio-cultural unity among the people. The kings of Kamta, as Kamarupa was known for some time in the late thirteenth century, encouraged the growth of Assamese language and invited poets and literary figures in their court. A few names that appear as the vanguards of Assamese literature like Hema Saraswati, Harihara Vipra and Kaviratna Saraswati enjoyed the patronage of Kamateswar kings having their capital at Kamta. These literature rendered many episodes from Purana or Mahabharata, originally in Sanskrit, into Assamese. Great strides were made in architecture as can be seen from the ruins of temples, especially at Dah Parbatia and Bamuni Pahar in the vicinity of modern town Tezpur, on the northern bank of Brahmaputra.

The dominance of Indo-Aryan culture, the emergence of Assamese as a language of communication besides developing the literature of its own and the rise of Hinduism combined to mold Kamarupa into a political and socio-cultural entity which the ruling dynasties and the people defended against the onslaught of Nawabs and their generals from the neighboring Bengal.

The Rule of Ahoms and the Society

For 600 years (1228–1828/1838), they were the masters of the Assamese territory east of Guwahati, the western part being ruled by a succession of dynasties, ending with the rule of the Koches. Locating their capital at Ghargaon, near Sibsagar, in the extreme eastern part of Assam, secure from the invading foes of Bengal, they enjoyed an uninterrupted reign over Assam with a couple of reverses when they had to concede defeat and accept humiliating

terms of treaty as it happened in 1663 when they had to submit to the Moghul general Mir Jumla. The Ahoms remained unchallenged for the major part of their rule. For a region that was split into chiefdoms and shaky monarchies, the Ahoms were a unifying force, bringing under them a large territory and imparting a measure of political and administrative stability. There was, however, not much to commend in their administration.

Ruling through a hierarchy of functionaries, some of them holding hereditary offices, the Ahoms were ruthless in the preservation of their kingdom, expecting fierce loyalty from all, but, with a complete disregard for the welfare of their subjects. The entire society was divided into two groups, the privileged nobility and the rest known as *paik*. The privileged class consisted of the functionaries of the state, starting from the three Gohains, Bar Gohain, Bura Gohain, and Barpatra Gohain, that formed the apex ministerial council of the monarch, right down to the level of Voras who was perhaps the least privileged. Added to this group were the priestly class, the religious *gurus* and *mahantas*, and local chieftains. The hierarchy of functionaries included the Gohains, as mentioned above, followed by Bar Phukan, Bar Barua, Hazarikas, Saikia and Voras, and many other Baruas in charge of different aspects of administration. The economy was not monetized, and the state granted land worked by the *paiks* instead of money. The higher the position of a functionary in the chain of command, the more gracious was the grant of land and the higher the number of *paiks* assigned to that functionary. The country ruled by the Ahoms was managed through the *paik* system under which, the whole male population, with the exception of nobles, priests and the persons of high caste and their slaves, between the ages of 15 and 50 were liable to render service to the state' (Gait 1906/reprint 2005) as decided by the administration, for a period of 3–4 months every year.

The most credible aspect of Ahoms' rule was their sense of history and record keeping. The *Buranjis*, the books containing the record of events of the entire period of the

Ahom rule in Assam, are unparalleled in the history of the world. Some of these, written in Assamese, add to the corpus of the Assamese literature. Till the close of the seventeenth century, the Ahoms had no pretensions, whatsoever, to any promotion of art and culture. In contrast, the neighbouring kingdom of Kacharis with their capital at Dimapur had encouraged the growth of literature and adopted building practices and architectural style from Bengal. The ruins of Dimapur speak of the glory of Kachari kings.

The development of the Assamese language was perceived as a unifying force among the autochthonous rulers of Assam. The poet laureate Madhab Kandali produced an Assamese version of Ramayan, the ancient epic dating to first century A.D. Craftsmen and masons were imported from Bengal to introduce a new style of housing and architecture.

1.3.2. Colonial period

The first arrival of the British in Assam was marked by the arrival of an expeditionary force in 1792 to assist the Ahom king Gaurinath, in uprooting the revolt of some nobles and restoring the authority of the king. This was not an incursion of foreign troops but the initiative of a peacekeeping force in response to the appeal of the king to the British authorities for help. After restoring order, putting Gaurinath, the Ahom king, on the throne at Rangpur and punishing the rebellious Moamarias, the expedition was withdrawn. It was a short engagement of the British troops with forces of insurrection, and there was no indication of any intention on the part of the British to occupy any territory. The occasion to interfere and enter into Assam presented itself once again, after some three decades when the Burmese occupied Assam and even raided the British territory.

Following intrigues in the royal camp, some disgruntled nobles approached the Burmese king for restoring their authority. The Burmese grabbed this opportunity and arrived in Assam in 1819. During the years that followed, they not only made the Ahom kings dance to their tunes, installed or deposed any noble or ruler at will but ransacked the entire

Brahmaputra valley. They robbed the peasantry, plundered and burnt villages and even tortured the hapless villagers. Even bands of native marauders wandered in the countryside disguised as Assamese and persecuted the peasantry for petty gains. They did not remain confined to the valley but even intruded in the bordering Bengal territory, Cachar, and incurred the wrath of the British. An all-out war followed. After several battles in the Barak as well as in the Brahmaputra valley, the Burmese were not only defeated but thrown out of the Brahmaputra and Barak valleys and forced to leave Manipur, which they had occupied.

After a series of a debacle, the king of Burma sued for peace and accepted the terms offered to him. In consequence, the famous treaty of Yandabo was signed on 24 February 1826. Thereafter, all hostilities ceased under the terms of the treaty; the Burmese were required among other things to abstain from all interference in the affairs of Assam and recognize Gambhir Singh as the Raja of Manipur.

The annexation of Assam in the British Territory

Following the eviction of the Burmese and a formal signing of the treaty, the rajas of Cachar and Jaintia were again installed as rulers in their territories on the condition of allegiance to the British and the payment of an annual tribute to the company. The Brahmaputra valley, unlike Cachar and Jaintia, was ceded into the British province of Bengal and David Scott, the agent of the governor-general of the East India Company, was appointed to administer the newly acquired area. Only the eastern extremity of the valley was left under the charge of Purandar Singh, a nominal king, on the condition of his paying an annual tribute of Rs. 50,000/-. The last king of the Ahom dynasty, however, did not continue long as he could not pay the annual tribute and was dethroned. The default, an easy excuse, led to the annexation of the last bit of the territorial possession of the Ahom kings into the British province of Assam in 1838, signaling an end of the 600 years of Ahom rule in Assam. The other smaller areas of Assam that were not immediately occupied after 1826 treaty of

Yandabo, besides the tract left under the rule of Purandar Singh, were the Sadiya region and the Matak country, the former under the care of Sadiya Gosain and the latter under the protection of Bar Senapati. Following frequent conflicts with the Khamptis and apparent administrative infirmity, the tracts were also merged into the British territory by a proclamation in 1842, merging these areas into Lakhimpur district.

The Expansion of the British Territory

While talking of the annexation of Assam into British territory, the note has to be taken of the fact that Goalpara and Sylhet districts including a part of Garo Hills, which formed part of the province of Bengal, were transferred to the East India Company in 1765, under the order of the Mughal emperor. Thus, part of late eighteenth century Assam was already under British possession before the annexation of the Ahoms' kingdom. After the occupation of the Brahmaputra valley, the British turned their attention to linking the two valleys, viz. Brahmaputra and Surma (Barak), by an all-weather road. The construction of the road, through the Khasi territory (now Meghalaya), created friction with the local chiefs. Hostilities broke out, the Khasis who offered fierce resistance under their leader Tirot Singh had to concede defeat and accepted the authority of the British (1833). And, though they managed to retain their chieftainships, they were treated as vassals to the British.

The government had to live under the general control of the political agent of the British. In the process, the most notable chief of the Khasis, Tirot Singh, was incarcerated and exiled to Dacca. The Cachar kingdom was annexed into the British territory (1832) after the death of its ruler Raja Gobind Chandra, the latter having died without any descendant. It was not that a legal heir could not have been found, but it was a pre-planned strategy of the British. Cachar, after its annexation, remained for several years a part of Dacca division and thus a district of Bengal.

The northern part of Cachar under the control of Tularam Senapati was also subsequently annexed. In 1835, the Jaintia territory was annexed into the British territory by a simple proclamation, under the pretext that the Raja failed to return the fugitives who had committed crimes in the British territory. The Raja was retired on a measly pension of Rs. 500/- per month. The 'Duar' region of Assam, bordering Bhutan and lying in Kamrup and Darrang districts, was freed from the control of the Bhutias in 1872, and fresh arrangements were made after demarcating the boundary line between Bhutan and British territory, from Manas River on the west up to Deosham River in the east.

The Annexation of the Naga Hills Area

The first contact with the Naga Hills was established in 1832 when Capt. Jenkins, Capt. Pemberton and Capt. Gordon was deputed to explore a route through their country with a view to opening out a direct communication between Assam and Manipur. The expedition by Capt. Pemberton and Capt. Jenkins was opposed with the most determined resistance at every village they passed through, and so bitter was the opposition that in many instances the villagers set their own villages on fire in order to destroy the provisions (Butler 1875: 310). During the 45 years, the political history of Naga Hills was one of the long sickening stories of open insults and defiance, bold outrages and cold-blooded murders on one side, and long-suffering forbearance, forgiveness'. The main opposition to any British advance in the Naga territory came initially from the Angamis who inhabit the southern part of Naga Hills around Kohima. After several encounters between the forces of the East India Company and the Angamis, the latter finally accepted the authority of the British in 1880. The final decision to make Naga Hills a British district was taken in 1881 (Reid 1942:99) and Naga Hills was made a district of Assam, with an area of 6,400 sq.miles and a population of 94,380.

The annexation of the Lushai Hills

Whatever information one has about the expansion of the British territory in North-East India comes from the British sources – the writings of Mackenzie, Shakespear, and Reid. The expeditions of the East India Company are always shown retaliatory, in response to unwarranted raid of the hilly tribes. In one such raid by the Lushais in Cachar and even Chittagong Hills, in 1888, Lt. J. F. Stewart, leading a survey party, was killed. This prompted retaliation and the British mounted a number of expeditions in 1889 and 1890 and established a permanent post on Aijal range. Following a number of operations, 'Lushai Hills' was captured and occupied by the company in 1890. The administration of the area started with the creation of two districts, North Lushai Hills and South Lushai Hills, with headquarters at Aijal (Aizawl) and Lunglei, respectively. While North Lushai Hills became part of Assam, South Lushai district was attached to Bengal. Even after setting up of administration, there were revolts but these were suppressed. The Census of Assam 1891 mentions North Lushai Hills as a district of the state. Before long, however, both the districts were united to form Lushai Hills district as the new district of Assam.

Grappling with the Northern Frontiers

Early in their occupation of Assam, the British had no idea of controlling and administering the area now known as Arunachal Pradesh. The territory, north of Assam, was a vast expanse of a hilly area, inhabited by tribes who occasionally raided the villages down south in the Brahmaputra plain, ransacked them, looted property and abducted a few persons to work as slaves for them. The tribal communities inhabiting the forested and badly dissected terrain, varied in their language, customs, and social behavior, though they were all Mongoloid in their ethnic make-up. A difficult terrain, which was divided into blocks by deeply entrenched valleys, made intergroup communication difficult, giving rise to independent tribes. The principal groups, which were a perpetual headache to the Ahoms and

subsequently to the British administration, were the Akas, Daft as and Apatanangon the west and Abors, Mishmis, Khamptis and Singphos on the east.

The Establishment of the Inner Line

In 1873, the Inner Line Regulations were extended to Assam and accordingly the Lt. Governor prescribed an Inner Line, delineating the limit beyond which 'no British subject of certain classes or foreign residents can pass without a license'. The pass or license was subject to certain conditions. 'Rules were also laid down regarding trade, the possession of land beyond the line, and other matters, which gave the Executive Government an effective control' (Mackenzie *ibid*:55). In case of the Northern frontiers, the British had fixed another line, known as the 'Outer Line'. In one of the dispatches addressed to the Viceroy in 1910, the following clarification is offered about the significance of the 'Inner' and 'Outer Line': 'We have an inner and an outer line, up to the inner line we administer in an ordinary way. Between the inner and the outer line, we only administer politically. That is, our political officer exercises a very loose jurisdiction, and to prevent trouble with frontier tribes, passes are required for our subjects who want to cross the inner line. The country between the two lines is very sparsely inhabited and is mostly dense jungle' (Reid 1942: 221).

Indeed, the British exercised only a loose jurisdiction on the Frontier Areas meant to prevent the aggressive incursion of the warring tribes. For exercising control, the entire northern frontier was divided into two divisions in 1912, initially known as 'Central and Eastern Section, North-East Frontier' in the eastern and 'Western Section, North-East Frontier' in the western part of what is Arunachal Pradesh today. These were later changed to Sadiya Frontier Tract with headquarters at Sadiya and Balipara Frontier Tract having its headquarters at Balipara. For each of these frontier tracts, an assistant political officer was appointed to manage the affairs of the frontier areas, under the overall control of the Deputy Commissioner of the respective district. The main function of these frontier

headquarters was to prevent the wild tribes from any unauthorized entry or attack on the British territory and to retaliate and punish them in case of any attempt at thieving or kidnapping people from the plains. Thus, both in the Balipara as well as Sadiya frontiers, a number of expeditions were undertaken in different segments to punish the offending individuals and the tribes. In Balipara segment, the Akas, Dafla as and Apa Tanangs (Apatanis) were the main tribes that required occasional retribution, while on the eastern sector Abors, Mishmis, Singphos and Khamtis were the main tribes. Of these, Abors and Mishmis were most troublesome. The Aka Expedition of 1883–1884, the Apa Tanang Expedition of 1897, the Miri Mission of 1911 and the visit to Tawang of 1914 are the principal expeditions in the western sector. Some of these expeditions, besides being punitive were also exploratory with survey parties. The last of these was led by Capt. Neville who traveled to Tawang in April 1914 and submitted a very authentic account of this region to the government.

As far as the evolution of the North East India as a frontier region it was a legacy of the British not only in the post-independent India but also in the pre-independent India. The present Northeast India which covers 2, 55,036 sq.kms was not included in the pre-independence period, immediately after the signing of the treaty of Yandaboo in the year 1826, 24 February that was signed between administrators of British East India Company and the king of Ava (Burma, now Myanmar). As a result of the treaty, the Burmese king handed over the then Assam to East British India Company which covered only vast tract of plains land of Brahmaputra valley extending from Sadiya to Dhubri along with three provinces of Burma- Arakan, Martaban And Tenasserim. So, from the above, we have seen that the British East India Company annexed only the Brahmaputra valley which was earlier Ahom kingdom and was popularly known as Bor- Axom excluding the other contiguous hill region of present North-East India.

During Ahom rule also Assam was meant only that Bor-Axom as stated earlier and there were many small kingdoms, some of them were subjected to Ahom rulers and some, mainly the hills people of the then Ahom era specially the Nagas, the Miris (now known as Mishings), the Daflas, the Abors, (now known as etc.,) were having friendly relations with the then Ahom Kingdom which ruled this Bor-Axom for long six hundred years from 1228 A.D. to 1826 A.D. during Ahom rule for the hill people like the Nagas and their sub-groups were coming through certain known Asduars in Ahom chronicles viz., Makum Duar, Namchang Door, Bor-Duar, Dhupabor Duar, Galeky Duar, Dopdoor Duar, Lahing Duar, Tortali Duar, Dhanshiri Duar and Samoguri Duar. In the immediate foothills of these identified Duars (routes) village hats (bazaars) were established by the Ahom Kings and barter was the main mode of trading between Nagas and the plains people. Similarly, on the northern side, certain identified routes were there for the hills people like presently known as the Adis and their subgroups.

Generally three identified routes (duars) were there on the northern side of the then Ahom kingdom viz., Kharghariya duar (stretching from present Jonai to Sisimukh), Borborua Duar (stretching from west bank of the river *sisi* to river *gai*), and finally Kathborua duar (stretching from western bank of the river *Gai* to river Subansiri). That way, during Ahom rule the hills people were having relationship with the plains people and some small kingdoms like- Kachari, Gova, on the southern side who were subjects to Ahom kingdoms, the Khasi, the Jaintiya's and the Manipuri's were friendly neighbours to the then Ahom kingdom and they established marital relationships with the royals.

When the British annexed the territory of Assam along with three provinces of Burma they first tried to exploit the available natural resources of this region and in that process, the Britishers had discovered Assam tea which was given to them by the then Singpho raja named Bisa Gam. After proper identification that Assam tea is an indigenous variety,

systematic tea plantation industry had grown in Assam. This process was started in 1831 with one tea garden and first 25 boxes of Assam Tea were sent to England in the year 1839 which fetched a good price. Thenceforth, from 1840 to 1870, tea plantations popularly known as a tea garden in the year 1970. The Britishers besides taking Interest in tea plantations started gradually annexing the adjacent in hill areas by sending military expeditions especially to the hills where Garo's, Khasi's, Jaintia's and Nagas were inhabited. In that process, they have annexed various territories of the hills of the region. Such military expeditions were continued till 1883 and ended with Mishmi Hills expeditions. Thus though treaty of Yandaboo in the year 1826 signed between the British East India Company officials and the king of Burma (now Myanmar) this North East India though initially started to rule by the Britishers it may, however, be pointed out that within this region there were different political entities commonly known as different kingdoms like Koch, Kachari, Ahom, etc. The plains were separated not only from the mainland of India but also from the hill regions surrounding the valleys of this region. Assam which was known by then "Bor-Axom", Manipur, Tripura, Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills, Garo Hills, Mikir Hills, Lushai Hills, And Dimasak kingdom of present North- Cachar hills district of Assam- all were independent states being ruled by the kings of their own.

The region became an integral part of the British East India Company after signing of the above-stated treaty with the king of Burma (now Myanmar) and followed by annexation of hill areas through sending several military expeditions. Before the establishment of the Ahom rule the plains of Assam were divided into a number of kingdoms like- Chutia, Kachari, Koch, etc. The Ahom annexed these kingdoms to their own kingdom and built a new state. Later on through military expeditions the Britishers annexed Garo Hills, Khasi-Jaintia Hills, Lushai Hills, Naga Hills and on the northern side the different hills with their inhabitants were divided into five frontier tracts and commonly named as North-East Frontier

Agency (NEFA) and started administering the same area from Assam at that time and that was the British North-East- India. Manipur and Tripura were the princely states; they became the subjects of British East India Company.

Thus, in pre-independent India as far the evolution of the N.E. India is concerned, it can be stated that the then state of Assam was comprising present Assam with Garo Hills districts, Khasi-Jaintiahills districts, Naga Hills Districts, Lushai HillsDistricts, NEFA and finally the princely states- Manipur and Tripura. it may be seen in the present as it covered a vast territory which included certain hills districts along with a big centrally administered area viz., NEFA.

It may be noted that certain British officers shouldered the responsibility of administering the then Assam which was only the Brahmaputra valley. In this connection, mention may be made of the effort of DavidScott- an agent of the governor-general. The governor-general was based at Calcutta (now it is known as Kolkata). David Scott started administering Assam and to help him captain Neufville was appointed as assistant agent to administered upper Assam. In 1828 DavidScott became the commissioner of lower Assam who administered Assam in a very efficient way by respecting the sentiments of the then Assamese gentries and by bringing Bengali babus (who were all versed with the British administration) as Bengal was under British for many years before annexation of the Assam province. However,DavidScott died in the 1st of the month of august of 1831.

The other British officers like Robertson, Major Jenkins, Lord Oakland, the governor-general, captain lister, Lt. Rutherford, Captain Brodie, Captain Hannay, Captain P.R.T. Gordon, Mr. Bigge, Captain Vetch, John Stewart,etc. Pursued the policy of annexation and later administered the entire geographical area of presently known as north-east India (Borpujari, vol-1 1970, 2-191 & vol-2 1970- 156).

Check your progress-2

5. Why Inner Line Regulation was adopted?
6. When did the British set their first foot in northeast India and why?

1.3.3. Post-Independence Scenerio of the Northeastern Region of India

Needless to say that present northeast India was the legacy of the British rule in India and the annexation of the region through the treaty of Yandaboo in the year 1826 as stated in the anterior paragraph between the company officials and the king of Burma (now it is known as Myanmar). This North-East India though initially was started to rule by the Britishers, it may, however, be pointed out within this region there were different political entities commonly known as different kingdoms like Chutia, Koch, Kachari, Ahom, etc. The plains were separated not only from the mainland of India but also from the hill regions surrounding the valleys of this region. Assam which was known by them as “Bar- Axom”, Manipur, Tripura, Khasi Hills, Garo Hills, Mikir Hills, Lushai Hills And Dimasa kingdom of present north- Cachher Hills district of Assam all were independent states being ruled by the kings of their own.

In the hill areas of this region, various tribal people having different ethnic elements had their own habitation and as such, each area was independent and ruled by them. It was the British administration which included the entire region including present Arunachal Pradesh (earlier known as NEFA during the time of BritishEast IndiaCompany rule) separating it (whole region) from Tibet, Bhutan, China, and Burma (now Myanmar). Similarly, there were no states called Nagaland and Mizoram in the pre-independent era in this region. The region also inhabited by numerous tribes and their subgroups and they were all politically independent.

In the post-independent periods, Assam became the state of the Northeast region of India. The word Assam as contended by the ideologists and other scholars as something unparalleled. This was a land in which Ahom ruled for six hundred (600) years prior to its annexation by the BritishEast IndiaCompany.

This state is the sentinel of northeast India and gateway to north-eastern states. Then as far as a further evolution of the states in the region is concerned Manipur was merged in the Indian union as part- 'C' state on 15th October 1949 as the then maharaja of Manipur signed the 'instrumentation treaty' with the government of India and merged with the union. As far as the history of Manipur is concerned not much of earlier recorded history is available though it has existed since time immemorial. According to the historians, Pakhangba ascended the throne of one of the seven main principalities in 33A.D. and founded a long dynastic rule which ruled Manipur till 1891. However, Manipur came under British rule in 1891 and later on it was merged in the Indian union as stated above. This was replaced by territorial council of 30 elected and two nominated members. Later on in 1963, a legislative assembly under raised from the chief commissioner to the status of the lieutenant governor with effect from 18 December 1969. Manipur attained fully-fledged statehood on 21st January 1972.

Like Manipur, Tripura merged with Indian union on 15th October 1949, initially as a part 'C' state and with the reorganization of states in 1956 it became a centrally administered territory. In 1972, this territory attained the status of a full-fledged state.

As far as the history of the Tripura state is concerned it has been pointed out by the historians that the state has a very long history and it has unique tribal culture and fascinating folklore. It has been pointed out again that the history of Tripura can be understood from 'Rajmala' chronicles of Tripura king and writings of other Muslim Historians. There is a reference of Tripura even in Mahabharata, and Purana. Further, there is a reference to rulers

of Bengal helping Tripura kings in the 14th century, as the kings of Tripura had to face frequent Mughal invasion with varying success. The kings of Tripura defeated the Mohammedan sultans of Bengal in several battles. From 19th century onward modern era had begun in Tripura when king maharaja Bir Chandra Kishore Manikya Bahadur modeled his administrative setup on British India pattern and brought in various reforms till it merged with independent India on 15th October 1949.

After Tripura, as regards to the present state of Nagaland was originally a district of Assam under British India and also after independence. However, in 1957 this Naga Hills district of Assam was made the centrally administered area by the then governor of Assam after getting a raised voice for independent Nagaland and started revolting by the Nagas themselves for achieving this objective immediately after independence. Seeing the popular aspiration and unrest the aforesaid centrally administered status was given to Naga Hills district. But that did not help unrest and rebellion continued for cessation of Naga Hills district from Assam and to make it an independent country. Seeing the adverse situation in 1961 the Naga Hills district was renamed as Nagaland and given the status of the state of the Indian union which was formally inaugurated on 1st December 1963. Thenceforth, Nagaland attained the statehood and became one of the states of the east region of India.

As far as the people of Nagaland which was formerly known as people of Naga Hills district of Assam, the Nagas too share their legend and folklores regarding their origin and evolution through the ages. Nagas are basically tribal people and every tribe has its own effective system of self-government from time immemorial. In the twelfth and thirteen centuries, the Nagas developed gradual contact with the then Ahom kingdom which ruled Assam (Bor-Axom) for almost 600 years, but such contract/ relationship did not have any significant impact on the traditional Nagas in their way of life. However, in 19th century by sending several military expeditions the Britishers ultimately brought the whole Naga

inhabited areas under the administration of British East India Company and that way Naga hills remained as a district of the then Assam and finally as stated earlier because of the popular uprising, Nagaland became a state as stated above.

As far as the evolution of Meghalaya as a state of the northeast region of India, Meghalaya was treated as an autonomous state within the state of Assam on 2nd April 1970 and it finally attained full-fledged statehood on 2nd January 1972.

The state of present Meghalaya state earlier was under Assam during company rule had two districts viz.-KhasiJaintia district and Garo Hill district. These two districts have remained as districts within Assam till autonomous states within the state of Assam by taking these districts were formed. Interestingly, during British India and till the attainment of full-fledged state by the three districts as Jaintia hills was declared as districts of Meghalaya on 2nd January 1972, the capital of Assam Was at Shillong right from 1874 to till the capital of Assam was shifted to Guwahati in the year 1972 Shillong was a beautiful capital city and was named as Scotland of the east which is also the present capital of Meghalaya. Meghalaya literally means the abode of clouds is essentially a hilly state with two great rivers of divide viz., Umkhrah and Umshning. Living aside Garo hills it is predominantly inhabited by the Khasi, the Jaintia and the Garo tribal communities. The KhasiHills and Jaintia hills which form the central and eastern parts of Meghalaya is an imposing plateau with rolling grassland, hills, and river valleys. The southern face of the plateau is marked by deep Georges and abrupt slopes, at the foothills of which a narrow strips of plains land along the international border with Bangladesh is available.

In the case of Mizoram, it is the last state got the statehood among the different states of Northeast India. As well back in the later part of the 20th century only i.e. on 1987(20thFeb.).Got the statehood. However, till 1972, it was a district of the then Assam and in that year (1972) it became a union territory. Till then, Mizoram was known as Lusai hills

district of Assam and during the British administration it was annexed in 1891 and for administrative purpose at least for few years northern part of Lushai hills was remaining under Assam administration and the southern part/half was remaining under Bengal administration. Later on both these parts were amalgamated in 1898 into one District called Lusai hills district and it was administrated by the then chief commissioner of Assam. India got independence and after independence, while in the early part of the 60s Lushai hills District Faced severe famine, as a result of the flowering of bamboos. This incident was called Mautom (famine in Mizo language) and that was a period when rodent population devastated all the foodstuffs by eating the same and the effort of the Assam government to mitigate the famine condition in Lushai hills district at that time was not up to the level the way it was expected. This led to a rebellion, first union territory status was given to Mizoram. This was done with the implementation of north-eastern reorganization act of 1972. Finally, a historic memorandum of settlement between the government of India and the Mizo national front headed by Mr. Laldenga was signed in 1986 and thenceforth Mizoram was granted statehood i.e., from 20th February, 1987.

Lastly, as far as the evolution of the states, that is Arunachal Pradesh is concerned, till 1962 and also through the British administration, this Pradesh was known as the north-east Frontier Agency (NEFA) and it was constitutionally a part of Assam. The whole area was divided into five frontier tracts viz.,- Kameng Frontier Tract, Subansiri frontier tract, Siyang frontier tract, Lohit frontier tract, and Tirap Frontier tract, though constitutionally it was a part of Assam during the British rule, these tracts of NEFA were considered as frontier outposts and the whole area of NEFA was under excluded area with only Inner line permit regulation.

There are practically no records relating to this area except some oral literature and the number of historic ruins found mainly in the foothills. Subsequent explorations and

excavations have identified the ruins as dating approximately from the early Christian era. The historical evidence pointed out that this area was well known not only by the people living here but it had close relationships with the rest of the country.

Check up your progress

7. Which was the last state to get statehood?

Mark the correct answer-

- Lushai Hills district
- Khasi&JaintiaHills district
- Naga hills district
- Mikir &North CacherHills district.

1.4. NORTHEAST AS A CONCEPT AND PERSPECTIVE

There is frequent generalization of the north-eastern region in terms of race, topography and as a troubled periphery with multifarious law and order problems. In terms of race the region is identified as the home of Mongoloid people who are often invectively referred to as "chinky". These groups of people are mostly categorized as scheduled tribes (STs) by the Constitution. As per the Census of 2001 the sts constitute 26.9% of the total population of the north-east. Thus, even though the region is conceived as tribal, taking it as a whole the non-tribal population is more than the tribals. In terms of topography the often described hilly northeast is not devoid of misconception. The Brahmaputra, Cachar, Imphal and Agartala plains constitute a large chunk of land mass of the region. Similarly, in terms of the generally conceived "troubled region", except for Manipur, Assam and Nagaland, the other five states, namely, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Mizoram and Sikkim, are relatively peaceful. Nevertheless, most of the problems are seen through the lens of security.

The tendency of scholars and policymakers to club the whole north-eastern state together as “north-east” and use the term as an analytical category for the whole region is always questioned in terms of practical relevance. Udayon Misra pointed out that the use of the term ‘north-east’ is itself problematic as the region represents a varied cultural mosaic and has never considered itself to be one compact unit. To him, New Delhi suffers from a strong misconception and has failed to appreciate the complex nature of the problem.

Historian Manorama Sharma also observes that, "The north-eastern states of India may be looked upon as a political unit for purposes of administrative convenience by the Government of India today, but historically at no point of time has it ever been a political unit, either culturally, economically or politically" (Sharma 2004: 1). Harping on the region as a political unit of the British and post-Independence Indian government, she rhetorically insinuates that "even a term like pre-colonial creates problems because there is no uniformity even in that phase of development".

Analytical Tools

Most economic analysis of India's northeast in relation to the "mainland" has been done on the center/core-periphery, development-underdevelopment paradigm. This core-periphery relation created northeast India as an internal periphery. The north-eastern region is converted from a frontier region during the British rule to an internal periphery in the post-independence period. This development in the region can be termed as "internal colonialism". According to this approach the geopolitical integration of north-east India into the Indian state is considered as unequal. When political integration was compounded by economic exploitation, the north-eastern region was converted into India's "internal colony". This condition emerged with the spread of industrialization from Indian mainland to the peripheries. Capitalist industrialism created a new economic dependence of the periphery on the core. Trade and commerce in the north-east are monopolized by members of the core and

economic development in the region is designed to complement and promote economic development of the core. There is a relative lack of services, lower standard of living and a higher level of frustration among the members of these peripheral groups. There is national discrimination on the basis of language, religion or other cultural forms. Thus, the aggregate economic differences between core and periphery are causally linked to cultural differences (Hechter 1975).

While mainland Indian states were reorganized along linguistic lines based the report of the States Reorganisation Commission constituted in 1953, northeast India was reorganized on ethnic lines. Thus, it is a general notion that Mizoram state belongs to the Mizos, Nagaland to the Nagas, Manipur to the Meiteis and Meghalaya to the Khasi, Jaintia and Garos. These ethnic states were created after decades of struggle for political autonomy and the creation of such ethnic states have sharpened the divisions.

The joining hands in protest against racial discrimination and violence may look as if identities are ‘reconfigured’ in Delhi and seemingly indicate emergent pan-north-east solidarity. However, showcasing ethnic solidarity and protest against oppression or state policy is more frequently observed than protest against racial discrimination and violence.

North-East India in the Cultural Imaginations

Since the colonial period, the concept of North East India historically emerged in the global imagination primarily as a strategic notion and a cultural category – not a geographical location. North East India is still subjected to multiple imaginations in terms of its history, land, and people. Earlier, during the colonial period, the region was projected as a troubled region inhabited by half-naked savage and head hunter tribes a contraflow against the progress of civilization. In the current perception, this region is viewed as a backward region in terms of socio-economic and human development index, a source of threat against national security and integration, the corridor to India’s South and South-Eastern neighbours, a vibrant

source of water, energy, oil, natural gas, mineral, plantation crops, horticultural products, medicinal plants, and an exotic tourist destination. Simultaneously, a strong cultural imagination emerged in North East India about self (in plural) among the indigenous people which poignantly addresses the deeply rooted notions about the culture and people and intersects to produce indigenous views. This discussion proposes to revisit North East India in order to understand how this defined political and economic space is primarily a product of several cultural imaginations with reference to time-knots.

As is discussed in several studies, the cultural and economic activities in the region had been quite vibrant since the pre-colonial times and maintained close links with neighboring countries. Extant studies have shown that the history of human movement and trading activities across the border could be traced back to a remote past – back to centuries and millennia. This region had a long history of trading and cultural linkage with the neighboring regions in China, Tibet, Bhutan, Myanmar, and beyond. Allchin, Bridget and Raymond point out that this frontier region is often regarded as a colorful corridor between South and South East Asia“ because it has been receiving various races, languages, cultures, and religions from South East Asia and China making the region culturally and racially diverse.” With the commodities, border markets were also sites of cultural exchanges – the confluence of different languages, religious faith, and aesthetic practices. Inter and intra-border trading also shoved human movements, migration and settlement patterns.

A fundamental change occurred in the colonial era in the perceived images of North Eastern borders. As is evident in the extant literature, the region had been viewed as a strategic boundary, rich source of energy (oil, gas, and coal), commercial crops such as tea, mineral, and other resources. It also emerged as a cultural category – a primitive space inhabited by savage and barbaric people, the land of head hunters and the dark cultural space challenging modernity and civilization. The colonial state adopted number of policies to

civilize the people and modernize the economy by excluding the areas from rest of India. There was also a hidden agenda to expropriate natural resources and to protect and expand the territory beyond the region. In the current perception, a backward region, as it is, in terms of human development, North East is perceived as a source of threat against national security and integration North East India - a conglomeration of eight states (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim), is enclosed by Bangladesh, Bhutan, China and Myanmar with 99% international borders. Keeping in view of the strategic importance of this region, the British rulers were engaged in ensuring their hold over this region since 1835 and the rest is history. After a century of hostile encounters, the colonial rulers formed NEFT (North-East Frontier Tract) in 1914 with the objective of bringing the region under centralized authority. By the beginning of the 20th century, India's North-Eastern part captured popular imagination as a backward region with inaccessible terrain and land of the tribes. NEFT was restructured and renamed as NEFA (North-East Frontier Agency) by the independent Indian state in the year 1954.

Like some other critical problems, the post-colonial Indian state inherited the legacy of integrating, administering and developing the Northeastern Region (NER). By then the segregation between North-Eastern region and the rest of India was pronounced within a dichotomous paradigms of fierce, violent and savage tribesmen and gentle, unwarlike and inoffensive plainsmen. The segregated other image is quite evident in the apologetic statement of Verrier Elwin, the Adviser for Tribal Affairs under Jawaharlal Nehru's regime. In the introduction of his celebrated book entitled *A Philosophy for NEFA*, he stated: "The tribal folk are not specimens, types of cases; they are *people*; they are human beings exactly like ourselves in all fundamental ways. We are part of them and they are part of us; there is no difference."

For the Indian Government, the most challenging task was to accomplish the integration of the different under the state-building process – different in terms of landscape, ecology, economy, and culture. The large stretch of the border along this region was equally a pressing concern. Despite several experimentations with government policies, liberal gestures, friendly negotiations, and hostile encounters, the challenge in the North East still remains.

In this background, the region could be explored and understood from the following aspects:

- a. The portrayal of the region currently defined as North East India in the pre-colonial literature;
- b. The process under which North East India appeared in the colonial imagination conditioned by territorial ambition, strategic priorities, economic advantages, apprehension to confront intractable land and people and finally self-styled civilizing mission;
- c. Current challenges of the Indian state to deal with the history, land, and people of North East India
- d. The indigenous“ consciousness about the self and the tradition.
- e. The discussion seeks to address multiple strands in the cultural, economic and political imagination about North East India – past and present.

1.5.INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

1.5.1. NORTH EAST COUNCIL (NEC)

North Eastern Council (NEC) was constituted as a statutory advisory body under the NEC Act 1971 and came into being on the 7th November 1972 at Shillong. Sikkim was added to the council in the year 2002. The headquarters of the council is situated in Shillong and functions under the ministry of home affairs of the Government of India.

The NEC was established with an act to provide for the setting up of a council for the North-eastern areas of India to be called the North Eastern Council Act of 1971.

Composition of the NEC:

1. The person or persons for the time being holding the office of the governor of states or office of administrator of the union territory in the northeastern areas;
2. The chief ministers of the states and of the union territory and ;
3. One of the counselors to the administrator of the union territory of Arunachal Pradesh appointed under section 18 of the North East agency (Administration) Supplementary Regulation, 1971 to be nominated by the administration.

Provided that if there is no council of ministers in any state referred to in clause or in the union territory referred to in that clause; the president may nominate not more than one person to represent such state or union territory.

- ii. The President may nominate a union Minister to be a member of the council if deem necessary.
- iii. One of the members of the council nominated by President shall be the chairman of the council
- iv. The President may if it is necessary to nominate another member of the council to act as Vice Chairman of the council.

The council shall:

- A review from time to time the implementation of the projects and schemes included in the regional plan and recommended measures for effecting coordination among the government of the states concerned in the matter of implementation of such projects and schemes.
- Project and schemes should be executed if it is benefitting and shared among the states.

- The expenditure thereon may be incurred.

On a review of the progress of the expenditure, recommend to the central government the quantum of financial assistance

Functions of the Council

- i. The council shall be an advisory board and may discuss any matter in which some or all of the state represented in the council of the union and one or more of the states represented in that council, having common interest and advise the central government and government of the state concerned as to be taken on any such matter, and in particular may discuss and make recommendation on:

- Any matter of common interest in the field of economic and social planning
- Any matter concerning interstate transport and communication;
- Any matter relating to power or flood control projects of common interest.

For securing the balanced development of the northeastern areas, the council shall forward proposal:

- Formulating for the state represented in the council a unified and coordinate regional plan in regard to matters of common importance in those areas.
- Regarding the priorities of the project and schemes included in the regional plan and the stages in which the regional plan may be implemented; and
- Regarding the location of the projects and schemes included in the regional plan, to the Central government for its consideration.

Meeting of the council:

- The council of meeting shall be appoint by the chairman on behalf from time to time.
- The chairman or vice chairman shall preside at the meeting of the council.
- The proceeding of the every meeting shall be forwarded to the central government and also the government of each state epresent on the council.

Officer and staff of the council:

- The council shall have a Secretariat staff consisting of a secretary, planning advisor, a financial advisor and a security advisor and such other officers and employees as the central government may by order determine.
- The secretariat staff of the council shall function under the direction, supervision and control of the chairman of the council.
- The administrative expenses of the said office, including the salaries and allowance payable to, or in respect of members of the secretariat staff of the council, shall be borne by the central government out of the money provided by the Parliament for the purpose.

Role

The Council was initially set up as an advisory body but now sanctioned as Regional planning bodies since 2002. They now discuss any matter in which the North Eastern States have a common interest and decide the action to be taken on any such matter. This was done so as to take care of the economic and social planning of these states, as well as to provide mediation in the event of inter-State disputes.

With the objective of the all-round development and progress of the North Eastern Region, the North Eastern Council has been striving for implementing the on-going projects as well as taking new initiatives in a cohesive, concerted and holistic manner. NEC has been supporting various developmental works thereby accelerating the pace of progress in the Region, especially in the fields of Surface and Air connectivity, Health, Power, Horticulture, Science & Technology, IT, Manpower, Industries, Tourism, etc over the years.

Check your progress

8. State the purpose of NEC?
9. When was Sikkim inducted into the northeast region?

1.5.2. MDONER

The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region is a Government of India ministry, established in September 2001, which functions as the nodal Department of the Central Government to deal with matters related to the socio-economic development of the eight states of Northeast India, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. It acts as a facilitator between the Central Ministries/Departments and the State Governments of the North Eastern Region in the economic development including removal of infrastructural bottlenecks, provision of basic minimum services, creating an environment for private investment and to remove impediments to lasting peace and security in the North Eastern Region.

Functions and Responsibilities:

The Department of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) was created in 2001 and was accorded the status of a full-fledged ministry in May 2004. The ministry is mainly concerned with the creation of infrastructure for the economic development of North-Eastern region.

Orientation

Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR)

North Eastern Council (NEC)

Coordination with the Central Ministries and the State Governments of the NE states.

Capacity Building

Advocacy and Publicity

International Cooperation

Enterprises of the Department

Organization

The ministry has the following organizations functioning under it:

North Eastern Council (NEC)

North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd.(NEDFi)

North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Limited (NERAMAC)

The Sikkim Mining Corporation Limited. (SMC)

North Eastern Handlooms and Handicrafts Development Corporation (NEHHDC)

Major initiatives covered by MDONER

Transport between India and Bangladesh, Bangladesh–India border, India-Myanmar barrier, Bhutan–India border, McMahon Line.

International roads

NE has 5,000km border with Nepal, Bhutan, China, Bangladesh and Myanmar while being isolated and connected to rest of India by 20km narrow chicken-neck Siliguri

Corridor: Asian Highway Network ASEAN and Look East connectivity Strategic National Highways (NH) 13,500 km were NH out of total 3,76,819 km of road length in NE (March 2012).

Schemes:

- Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) plan for NE and Look East connectivity.
- Special Accelerated Road Development Programme in North East (SARDP-NE) plan for the China border roads.

Check your progress

10. What is the purpose of having MDONER?

1.6. SUMMARY

After reading this unit the student could have already Grasped the location of north-east region of India is a frontier region of India with the people having different cultures, customs and more importantly has a culturally Porus borders to which the student now could understand easily. Moreover evolution of the region during pre-independent and post-independent periods – the factors which were at play the student could fathom now and also came to know that it was the legacy of the British administration for which the present physical north-east region of India came into being.

The student could come to know also the ecology of the region from the description given in this unit along with the habitation of the people in different states of the region.

Most importantly, the student became aware of the urgency of making a sociological study of the North-East Region of India.

1.7. KEY TERMS

Duars: A gate/door/passage between two separate groups.

Paik system: An occupation-based social group

Council: A committee that leads or governs.

1.8. ANSWER TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

1. Due to its culture and ethnic verities this region is considered to be important to study the different aspects of the cultures, customs and traditions of the different people living in this region.
2. Prof. Ramakrishna Mukharjee well back in the year 1926
3. The physical aspects: geographical region; landscape, climate, rainfall, river system,
4. A) The Archaean gneissic landmass of Meghalaya, corresponding in age to Deccanshield, and its outlier in Karbi-Anglong plateau.
B) The Tertiary landmass of eastern, south and southeastern part of the region.
Tertiaries also occur in the Siwaliks of the Himalayas, but they are discussed in the context of the Himalayan range.
5. In 1873, the Inner Line Regulations were extended to Assam and accordingly the Lt. governor prescribed an Inner Line, delineating the limit beyond which 'no British subject of certain classes or foreign residents can pass without a license'. The pass or licence was subject to certain conditions. 'Rules were also laid down regarding trade, the possession of land beyond the line, and other matters, which gave the Executive Government an effective control.
6. The first arrival of the British in Assam was marked by the arrival of an expeditionary force in 1792 to assist the Ahom king Gaurinath, in uprooting the revolt of some nobles and restoring the authority of the king. This was not an incursion of foreign troops but the initiative of a peacekeeping force in response to the appeal of the king to the British authorities for help. After restoring order, putting Gaurinath, the Ahom king, on the throne at Rangpur and punishing the rebellious Moamarias, the expedition was withdrawn.
7. Lushai hills district

8. This was done so as to take care of the economic and social planning of these states, as well as to provide mediation in the event of inter-State disputes.

9. 2002

10. It acts as a facilitator between the Central Ministries/Departments and the State Governments of the North Eastern Region in the economic development including removal of infrastructural bottlenecks, provision of basic minimum services, creating an environment for private investment and to remove impediments to lasting peace and security in the North Eastern Region.

1.9. QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Describe the location of northeast region of India and find out why this region is to be studied as a frontier region.
2. “Northeast India is called a miniature India” discuss critically the above statement.
3. Discuss the cultural commonality and cultural porosity status of the fringe areas of north-east India.
4. Discuss the evolution of north-east region of India during the pre-independent period.
5. Discuss the evolution of north-east India.
6. Discuss the physiographical setting of north-east India.
7. “Variegated hills, undulating hilly terrains, turbulent rivers and climate differences are the main features of ecology of the northeast region of India”. Discuss critically the above statement.

1.10. FUTURE READING

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UNIT II: DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES

- 2.0. Introduction**
- 2.1. Unit objectives**
- 2.2. Population distribution of hills and plains**
- 2.3. Demographic pattern**
- 2.4. Sex ratio**
- 2.5. Density of population**
- 2.6. Linguistic groups of the people of northeast India**
- 2.7. Religious groups of northeast India**
- 2.8. Caste and tribe interaction**
- 2.9. Summary**
- 2.10. Key terms**
- 2.11. Answer to check you progress**
- 2.12. Questions and exercise**
- 2.13. Further reading**

2.0. INTRODUCTION

It became apparently clear that physiographical condition of this region is of extreme unevenness and that could be observed in the region ranging from very high or low hills, undulating low and medium hilly terrains with some plateau regions. 70% of the total land area of the region is hilly and mountainous and only 30% of the area is plains land. The physiographical settings greatly affect the human habitation in different states of the region, because in the hills and due to its hostile climate, steep gradients are not helpful for proper human habitation. As a result the states wise habitation of the people is rather uneven. In this connection we see uneven population distribution in the states of northeast region of India. The following table shows how unevenly the population of the region is distributed in different states-

2.1. UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the population distribution of hills and plains
- Explain the development of demographic pattern
- Explain the distribution of sex ratio and difference in density
- Understand the different linguistic and religious groups
- Discuss the historical development of caste and tribe interaction

2.2. POPULATION DISTRIBUTION OF HILLS AND PLAINS

From the table No. 1, we find that Assam is very thickly populated and followed by Tripura. On the Other hand, Arunachal Pradesh which is the largest state in terms of physical area coverage, the population is very less in comparison to other states of the region. The uneven distribution of population in the region is evident from the census report. There are many factors like – geographical settings, types of occupation, food availability, conducive of climate; agriculture practices, etc. in the recent period growth of urbanization, modernization

and scientific attitude of the technology and mindset of the people also assist in the growing population

Table No.1. Population distribution of the states of N.E. India (as per 2011 census)

Sl.No.	States	Area in sq. Km.	Population(in person)
1	Arunachal Pradesh	83,743	1382611
2	Assam	78,438	3,11,69,272
3	Manipur	22,327	2721756
4	Meghalaya	22,429	2964007
5	Mizoram	22,081	1091014
6	Nagaland	16,579	1980602
7	Tripura	10,486	3671032
8	Sikkim	7096	610,577

Hills and plains- wise distribution of population in northeast India

The northeast region of India which covers a geographical area of 2, 55,038 sq.kms, and physiographically contains almost 70% hill areas and rest 30% is only the plains. As a result the population distribution in the region is uneven. Now as far as hills and plain wise distribution of population are concerned it is to be noted that except the states of Assam and Tripura the plains areas for human habitation are not available in other states. Even in the state of Assam there are also two hills district viz., Karbi Anglong and North Cachar hills. In Tripura except west Tripura which covers a valley of 90 km in length and 25- 30 kms in breadth the other districts viz., north Tripura and south Tripura are having undulating hilly terrains. In case of Manipur except for Imphal East and Imphal West district other areas are hilly areas.

The following table shows the hills and plains wise distribution of the population of the various states of the region as per 2001 census.

Table 2.0. Distribution of hills and plains population

State	Plains population	Hills population
Arunachal Pradesh	-	10,96,702
Assam	2,56,39,898	9,98,509
Manipur	8,33,312	15,55,322
Meghalaya	-	23,06,069
Mizoram	-	8,91,058
Nagaland	-	19,88,636
Tripura	15,30,531	16,60,637

From the above table it could be seen that in the state of Assam the plains population are much more in comparison to the other two states viz., Manipur and Tripura. In terms of ranking after Assam, Tripura occupies the second place regarding the availability of plains population and the state of Manipur occupies the third place. So far as the hills population is concerned Meghalaya comes first followed by Nagaland as are evident from the table stated above.

Table No. 3. Density of the population of the states of (as per 2011 census)

Sl. No	State	Density of population
1	Arunachal	17
2	Assam	397
3	Manipur	122
4	Meghalaya	132
5	Mizoram	52
6	Nagaland	119
7	Tripura	350
8	Sikkim	86

From the above table no-2 it is very clear that as far as hills and plains wise distribution of the population is concerned, it is to be noted that except the state of Assam and Tripura, the plains areas for human habitation are not available in other states. Even in the state of Assam, there are two hills districts viz. - Karbi- Anglong and North- Cachar hills. In Tripura- except west Tripura which covers a length of 90km. In length and 20-30 in kms breadth the other districts viz.,- north Tripura and south Tripura are having undulating hilly terrains. In case of Manipur except Imphal east and west districts, the other areas are hilly areas.

The following table shows the hills and Plain wise distribution of Population of the states of the region as per 2001 census.

So, from the table, it could be seen that in the state Assam the plains population are much more in comparison to the other two states viz., Manipur and Tripura. In terms of ranking of the plains population after Assam, Tripura occupies the second position and the state of Manipur occupies the third place. As far as the hills populations are concerned Meghalaya occupies the highest place, followed by the Nagaland as shown in the table.

Table No. 4. Population (persons) inhabiting in the states of N.E. India (as per 2001 census)

Sl.No	States	Plains population	Hills population
1	2	3	4
1	Arunachal	-	10,96,702
2	Assam	2,55,39,898	9,98,509
3	Manipur	8,33,312	15,55,322
4	Meghalaya	-	23,06,069
5	Mizoram	-	8,91,058
6	Nagaland	-	19,88,636
7	Tripura	15,30,531	16,60,637

In the anterior paragraphs description of the population distribution in the plains and the hill areas of the different states, density of population per sq.km. And total number of population in each state was given in tabular form and conclusion were drawn thereof.

2.3. DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS

Population growth in North East Region experienced very uneven population growth. The general population trend, the decadal variation, birth rate and death rate are already discussed in the anterior paragraphs. Now the attempt is made to identify the factors of growing demographic pattern in North East India

Generally many factors are involved in growth of population in any state. Some of the factors may be categorized as biological as well as human events. The biological factors refer to birth and death rates difference. If birth rate remains high and death rate declines, population increases in the community or state. Social factors refer to social customs, religious beliefs and practices. In matters of marriage factors like age, types of marriage- monogamy, polygamy, polygyny, widow marriage are taken into consideration. Economic factors are related to occupation, natures of work, availability of economic resources etc. Political factors refer to state policy to control population, improvement of health care services; education, etc. and the natural and human events are the events like flood, earthquake, war, etc. Which had caused huge destruction of life and property? These factors are of course interrelated. In the case of North East India mention may be made of the following as important factors of demographic dynamism.

1. Birth and Death Ratio

Since independence the various state governments are taking active steps to improve standard of living, public health facilities and also the health is care services through the establishment of hospitals, state dispensaries, sub-divisional and village level primary health

center. As a result of the foreside Government effort the infant mortality rate in various states of the region has declined considerably and the life expectancy has also increased. In other words, the longevity of persons in the state of the region is gradually increased due to the availability of the network of health care and public health facilities.

2. Immigration

This is a very important factor for the growth of population in northeast India and more especially in case of Assam Tripura as these two states of the region are worst sufferers. The census figures covering 10 (ten) decades i.e. from 1901 to 2001 showed the increase of population in these two states in certain decades. The reason was migration when the whole North East India was a part of British India. It had been reported in various reports prepared by the British administration in the early part of 20th century which showed that the people of the earlier East Bengal especially from the district of Mymensing the land hungry peasants started coming in large numbers right from 1901. The situation rose to such an alarming proportion that the land hungry Mymensingias already occupied the low lying, swampy and dales of the river Brahmaputra falling under the then Goalpara, Kamrup Census Commissioner C.S. Mullan in 1931 commend that the land hungry Mymensing already occupied vast portion of land area of the above stated three districts and if such situation would continue for long then after some years the Assamese speaking people would be found only in the then undivided Sibsagar districts.

The census figures available for the states of Tripura and Assam are showing abrupt increase of population from 1921. Till 1921 the population of Tripura was 3.04 lakhs but it increases to 3.82 lakhs in 1931. Almost 80,000 population was added during a decade. But in 1941 Tripura's population increased to 5.13 lakhs i.e., about 2 lakhs of additional population were added in the population tally of Tripura and this mainly due to migration from other parts of East Bengal to this princely state. In the next decade more particularly after 1947

when India got independence and East Bengal became a part of Pakistan under new name i.e., East Pakistan many people immigrated to Tripura and the population figured soared upto 6.39 lakh. The situation became worse in the consecutive decades i.e., in 1961 the population of Tripura increased exponentially; as from 6.39 lakh in 1961 it increased to 11.42 lakh in 1971. In the later decades, in 1981, 1991 and 2001, Tripura registered a population growth of 15.56 lakh, 20.53 lakh, 27.57 lakh and 31.91 lakh respectively.

Similarly, in 1931, Assam's population was around 55.6 lakhs only and the same increased i.e., in 1951 it had increased to a whopping number i.e. 80.29 lakhs. Henceforth, Assam is experiencing situation of rapid increase population growth till 2001. The census figures confirm the exponential growth of population not only in the case of Assam but also in Tripura. Thus it could be pointed out that in the two states- Assam and Tripura a marked increase of population was observed from 1951 onwards. Partition of India into Hindustan and Pakistan under the principle of two nation's theory had forced hundreds and thousands of Hindus from erstwhile East Pakistan to cross over Tripura and Assam and settle in these states. Even when Bangladesh came into being the flow of immigrants not only Hindus but the majority of Muslims were continuing unabated and the process of illegal immigration is still continuing. Thus these immigrants have inflated the population of Assam and Tripura over decades after independence.

Causes of immigration to northeast India are manifolds and they are interrelated. The following causes may, however, be considered as most important.

3. Political causes

The political situation has always been a factor of immigration in northeast India. Before the advent of the British the region had completely a different political entity. Therefore migration to this region from the mainland of India was practically nil except to Assam. When British rule began in this region, migration of the people from different parts of India

started as there was no bar against migration. The only exception was that inner areas of northeast India from the plains. So many people from different parts of India in search of better life changes came to Assam and Tripura in particular and to other parts of the region in general for living. The British administration itself brought from the neighbouring of the then provinces for its own purpose, when tea plantation started in Assam, Hundred of labourers were brought from Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Orissa etc.

When Britisher's were leaving and India was partitioned into Hindustan and Pakistan, hundreds of Hindu refugees from East Pakistan now Bangladesh crosses over to Tripura and Assam adding to the population of these two States. After this event when East Pakistan was recreated as Bangladesh through which involve India some more people migrated this times both Hindus and majority of the portion of Muslims and these immigrants started spreading to different states of the region. Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram may be cited as example of this phenomenon. Thus changing political situations of the region played a significant role in the immigration of people in North East India.

4. Economic causes

Until the middle part of the 20th century Assam had plenty of uncultivated fertile land covered by green grass and Forest. Further low-lying areas and swamps were also evidently available. This attracted landless peasants from the neighbouring available province of erstwhile East Bengal, peasants from Mymensingh, Pabna, Bagur and Rangpur, of East Bengal migrated to Assam and settled in the char area of the then Goalpara District(census 1950). However the process of migration of peasant began from the early part of 20th century as reported in census of 1911. The populations of Goalpara rose in the decade 1901- 11 by 30% against 2% rise in the previous decades. This sudden rise was due to the inflow of the migrants. After 1911 these migrants spread to other two districts viz, Kamrup and Nagaon also and their populations also started increasing as a result of high birth rate.

The flow of migrant continued to be unabated in the pre-independence. The then Assam government under the leadership of Muslim League initiative plans like grow more food and encouraged the Muslim peasant of East Bengal to migrate to Assam and to occupy the vacant land. According to 1951 census the total number of migrants from East Bengal and later immigrants from East Pakistan rose to 4.5 lakhs approximately during two decades i.e. between 1931 and 1951 but the process of illegal immigration to Assam is still continuing unabated from Bangladesh and it is creating tension in the society at large which is described in posterior paragraphs.

Apart from the immigration many people also came in connection trade and Commerce for Employment and other means of living. Assam suffered from dearth of Manpower in various industrial sectors, modern occupation, and administration during the pre-independence period. As such professionals, technicians and others came to work in Assam in other states of North East India.

Immigrants also came from Nepal as graziers, manual labourers and cultivators in large-scale. Now most of the Nepalese are found in different states of the region. However their numbers are pretty large in Assam than in other states of the regions.

In Tripura immigration began from around 1931 and their number increased very fast from 1941 to 51 census period. These immigrants were mostly cultivators. Tripura was earlier a tribal-dominated state and Tripura tribals were traditionally Hill dwellers. So they were accustomed to shifting cultivation in the hilly areas. Only few of them began to settle in the plains from the first part of the 20th century. As such the vacant land of the plains attracted the landless peasants from the neighboring erstwhile East Pakistan now Bangladesh and consequently flow of illegal immigrants started infatuating the size of population in Tripura. In the same way for seeking Employment and business opportunities hundreds of

people from different parts of India started coming to the other state of North East India in the post-independent period.

Consequences of immigration are more complex and difficult to classify them clearly into certain categories. However, it can broadly be discussed under headings of economic political and social effects.

Economics effects: Because of immigration population of Assam and Tripura in particular and of North East India, in general, have become inflated. More population means more pressure on land Employment and other economic resources. In Assam and Tripura substantial portion of land is under possession of immigrants. Now cultivable land has become the scariest thing in all the state of the region. Numbers of landless families are increasing day by day. Unemployment scenario is grim in the states of northeast India and it is now leading to various social problems. In Tripura, not only land but also Industries, trade and Commerce have passed into the hands of immigrants. The Indian indigenous people have been deprived of employment opportunities. Economic development has become a distant dream for the tribals in the estate.

Political effects: Inelectoral politics number of heads plays a deciding role. The immigrants have there for a vital role to play in the Politics of a state. In Assam the immigrants are considered as vote bank and to get support from the different political parties adopt policy of appeasement to the immigrants. This had resulted in the offing of a moment for expulsions of foreigners in Assam from 1979 to 1985 similarly political movements have emerged in Tripura, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh on the questions of the influx of immigrants. Expulsion of Chakma and Hajongs immigrants from Arunachal Pradesh has become a critical political issue. In Meghalaya Voice has been raised for reservation of all MLA seats for the tribals and other indigenous people of the state so as to keep the immigrants out of getting

political power in the state. Thus political problems have developed in North East India because of immigrants.

Social tension: Social tension erupted from time to time because of immigrants. Sporadic violence between Assamese and immigrants militant activities of tribals of Tripura movement for expulsion of Chakma and Hajong refugees from Arunachal Pradesh, Mizo movement against Chakmas, recent militant activities of different insurgent groups of Assam are noteworthy to mention in this context. In reality, the social tensions are going on in North East India due to illegal immigration of people from neighbouring foreign countries mainly from Bangladesh.

In Tripura immigrants from its neighbouring areas have dominated the entire economic, political and cultural life. The tribals who are living in the state from long past have been reduced to minority now .this has become the main source of conflict between the tribals and non- tribals in the state. The Tripura situation has created fear psychosis in Assam Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Mizoram. It is feared that the same fate may come to this States also because of increasing immigrant population India respective areas. Thus, immigration has become a major source of social tension in the region of northeast India.

Apart from illegal immigration, migration of people from one state to another is a normal phenomenon in the country. It has been on throughout the ages. But the rate and volume of migration are not same everywhere. People migrate to some states or regions more than to some other states or regions. Northeastern India is one of the regions which have been attracting migrants to the region. A good number of people from different parts of the country came to the region and settled particularly in Assam and Tripura. But at the same time very few have gone out of the region even up to the present times for settlement elsewhere in the country.

From the above discussion it becomes clear that immigration has played important role in the growth of population in northeast India. Other factors may be referred to lack of family planning among the common masses, decline in infant mortality due to the improvement of wealth care and prenatal and postnatal care of mothers and general health awareness. As such morality rate in the region is declining against continuity of high birth rate in the population of all the states of the region. This has resulted in the high growth of population in northeast India. However of late, slight declining sign of population growth rate has been observed in some states like Assam, Tripura, Manipur and Meghalaya. The decline in the population growth becomes gradually possible as because family planning has become a common practice among the educated section of the people or the new elites of the region. More ever literacy rate is also increasing in recent decades in all the states of the region which is creating an impact on the checking of population growth and if this trend would continue, it is expected that high population growth rate would gradually come down in the decades to come.

2.4. SEX RATION

The states of the northeast region give a high ratio male is to female in comparison to other regions of the Indian states. The women are equally treated and enjoy liberty of their life, unlike mainland women. In the state of northeast region of India the sex ratio (females per 1000 males) are also uneven because of female infant mortality is high in the states as following table shows the picture.

The table No. 5. shows that ratio of females per thousand males is low in case of Sikkim, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and high in Manipur. The ratio status needs to intervene and explained since the northeast tribal women enjoy their equal status with men folk, freedom and liberty and there is no such serious incidence of dowry cases as found in those caste-ridden society.

Table No. 5. Table 2.1 Sex ratio of the population of northeast states of India (as per 2011 census)

Sl. No	State	Sex ratio (female per 1000 males)
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	938
2.	Assam	958
3.	Manipur	987
4.	Meghalaya	989
5.	Mizoram	976
6.	Nagaland	931
7.	Tripura	960
8.	Sikkim	890

Meghalaya represents the highest number of female ratios in comparison to neighboring states. There is a socio-cultural element behind the high number of female count in Meghalaya. The state is matrilineal society in which the descendant is traced from the female lineage and it is certain that priority of female child is their culture. Assam also has got good number of female count it is due to a large number of populations comprising of native/indigenous, migrated from the other states of Indian states and illegal migrants from the neighboring countries.

2.5. DENSITY OF POPULATIONS

The density of population per square kilometers in the states of the region is also uneven or varying in nature. This may be accounted for the fact that the topographic features of the different states are not equally suitable for human habitation. In this context mention may be made about the river valleys of Assam, the valley of Tripura and Imphal valley of Manipur in which higher concentration of population is generally noticed as these areas are conducive for human habitation. On the other hand large areas of the hill states are totally unsuitable for human settlement due to the steep gradients of hills and mountains covered by evergreen deep jungles, rainy moist deciduous forest, etc.

Due to the physiographic variations the density of population in the states are also not equal. The following table shows the density of population per sq.km in the various states of northeast India.

2.6. LINGUISTICS GROUPS OF THE PEOPLE OF NORTHEAST INDIA

In the northeast region of India various groups of people are living and racially they are identified as Indo- Mongoloids, Austrics, Indo- Aryans and Negritos. However, linguistically a major chunk of the population speaks Tibeto- Burman languages of the great Sino- Tibetan family language group. A small section of the people of the region speaks a language of Mon-Khmer origin and the rests are mainly speaking languages of Indo-Aryan origin.

Now from the standpoint of languages whose origins are depicted above, here in these various languages and in many cases different dialects are spoken by the different ethnic groups. There are almost 357 groups of people belonging to tribes including their sun groups of the region apart from the caste groups that are available in Assam plains and Tripura. All these groups speak different languages. In fact the whole northeast India is a multi-language region where the ethnic groups speak languages and dialects. Interestingly in case of the region certain major languages are there which are having official recognition of the respective state governments apart from the languages that are used in government Offices of the respective states. Moreover to have interaction among the tribal groups certain common spoken languages are used. The state wise distribution of the principal languages is given in the table below:

So far as the languages that are in use in the government offices indifferent states of the region; English, Hindi, Assamese, Bengali, Manipuri and Mizo are used the principal or official languages.

Table No. 6. Languages of different states of northeast India

State	Principal languages
Arunachal Pradesh	Monpa, Aka, Miji, Sharduken,,Nishi,, Apatani, TaGin, Hill Miri, Adi, Khampti, Singpho, Tangsa, Nocte, Wancho, Idu-Mishmi, Miju Mishimi and Dugaru Mishimi.
Assam	Assamese, Bodo, Bengali, Nepali, Adibasi, Mishing
Manipur	Manipuri, Thangkhul,
Meghalaya	Khasi, Garo, Jantia, Bengali, Nepali and English
Mizoram	Mizo and English
Nagaland	English, Ao Konyak, Angami Chang, Lotha, Santam, sema and chakhesang
Tripura	Bengali and Kokborok

Apart from the languages states above that are found in different states of the region, in the states like Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland there are no dominant native languages. As such Hindi in Arunachal Pradesh and Nagamese in Nagaland are widely used as lingua-franca among the different tribal groups of the respective states.

In different states of northeast India, language has become an important issue for creating social tension. Over the years several movements took place in the region on language question. At the beginning of their administration the Britishers introduce Bengali language as a medium of instruction in Assam and it was widely used as lingua franca between Assamese and others mainly Bengalis. So a movement developed for replacing Bengali by Assamese as medium of instruction at lower level of education. The movement created conflict between Bengali and Assamese speaking people of the state. After independence the state of Assam experienced critical problems on language question. Assamese was declared as the only official language in Assam in 1960-61. This was resented

by the hill tribes of erstwhile Khasia and Jantia hills district and Garo hills districts and the Bengalis of Barak valley i.e. earlier Cachher district. The Khasis, Jantias and the Garos refused to accept Assamese as official language and due to this they demanded separation from Assam and eventually Meghalaya comprising Khasi, Jantia hills district and Garo hills districts were created. Similarly as stated earlier Bengali speaking people of Barak valley expressed strong resentment against introduction of Assamese as medium of instruction at post-metric level and launched movement for separation from Assam. However that is contained now and the Bengali language is widely used in Barak valley consisting of Cachher, Karimganj and Hailakandi districts of Assam.

Language Issue has fuelled the Bodo movement also. In 1960's the Bodo's adopted roman script for their language but that was opposed by the then Assam government. This finally resulted in the bitter conflict between Bodo's and the Assamese speaking people. The conflict was technically resolved by accepting Devnagari script for Bodo language but the deep burning remained unhealed in the heart of the Bodo people created by script question.

Like the Bodo's other tribes of Assam are also trying to develop their own languages by introducing these as subjects to be taught at school levels and this has become an issue for the tribal's and the government of Assam.

In Tripura conflict over language has already developed. The tribals want their language called Kokborok to be declared as one of the principal languages of the state. Finally the government of Tripura has reorganized the same a few years back as an official language.

In Meghalaya the Jantia's had to launch movement for introducing their language up to secondary level as medium of instruction. A bitter controversy is still going on between Meitei Manipuri and Bishnupriya Manipuri languages. The Meitei speaking Manipuri's are not prepared to accept Bishnupriya as a distinctive language of its own origin and structure.

Thus language has become an important issue in northeast India, particularly in the post-independent period. The main reason is that every ethnic group, which has its own language, tries to develop its language the ethnic groups of the northeastern region of India want to maintain their own identities as distinct as distinct cultural groups in the midst of in poly- cultural northeast India

2.7. RELIGIOUS GROUPS OF NORTHEAST INDIA

Like any part of India, northeast is also a multi-religious region. Here one could find numerous groups of people having various types of religious beliefs and practices. However Hindus, Christians and Muslims are the major religious groups in different states of northeast India as per 1981 census is given in the table below.

Table No. 7. Distribution of religious groups in the states of Northeast India

State	Religious group						
	Hindu	Islam	Christian	Sikh	Buddhist	Janis	Others
Arunachal Pradesh	29.23	4.32	4.32	0.20	16.68	-	51.77
Assam	64.37	31.36	6.37	0.12	0.93	0.12	0.03
Manipur	60.045	6.67	0.06	0.03	0.06	0.06	3.15
Meghalaya	18.02	3.10	52.61	0.12	0.20	0.04	25.76
Mizoram	7.14	0.45	83.81	0.08	8.19	-	0.23
Nagaland	14.36	1.52	80.90	-	0.07	0.15	3.68
Tripura	89.36	6.47	1.20	6.01	2.69	0.01	0.01
<u>N.E.(total)</u>	40.35	7.73	32.75	8.65	3.68	0.35	12.09

From the table it is clear that the Hindus are highly concentrated in Assam, Tripura and Manipur, Christian in Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland and Muslims are more in Assam than in the other states. In other states of the region, Muslim religious groups contain

a very negligible population. The other religious groups namely Sikhs, Buddhist and Janis are very few in all the Arunachal Pradesh (16.68%) and Sikhs in Tripura (6.01%).

Followers of unclassified religious beliefs and practices are found to more than 50 percent in Arunachal Pradesh, which calls for explanation. One of the important reason for such a situation is that almost all the inhabitants of Arunachal Pradesh are tribal's. Each tribal group has its own religious beliefs and practices which do not fall in any organized religious system like Hinduism or Islam or Christianity etc. The religious beliefs and practices preferred by the different tribes are communalized and localized- that is confined to the community itself. There are numerous tribes and their groups in Arunachal Pradesh, each tribe has its own religious

Now coming to the habitation of different ethnic groups in this northeast region is concerned it may be mentioned that here people of Indo-Mongoloid, Aryan, Dravidians , and Austriacs had penetrated at different points of time and established their habitation in different parts of this region. An attempt is made here to show the state wise distribution of the major ethnic groups that are found as inhabited in the respective states.

As far as Arunachal Pradesh is concerned which is the largest state in the northeast region of India, unofficially one hundred eleven ethnic and sub-ethnic groups/ tribes and subgroups are there, for simplicity henceforth we prefer to call the ethnic groups as tribes because still in the different government reports and gazetteers the word tribe is not being replaced by the ethnic group. Now, in Arunachal Pradesh we find major tribes viz., Monpa, Miji, Khawa, Aka, Sherdukpen, Nishi, Bangni, Sulung, Apatani, Hill Miri, Tagin, Adi(Galong, Bori, Minyong, Bokar, Memba, Ashing, Khamba), Idu Mishmi, Padam, Khamti, Digaru, Mishmi, Mijo Mishmi, Singpho, Zakhrings, Tangsa, Yobin, Lisu, Nocte, and Wancho.

From the above, there are as many as twenty six major tribes and sub-group are there which are officially recognized by the government of Arunachal Pradesh. Accordingly a state like Arunachal Pradesh depending on the existence of various tribes, eighteen major languages are being spoken by the tribes and which are reorganized by the government of Arunachal Pradesh.

Coming to Assam, leaving aside the earlier history, as per scheduled caste and scheduled tribes amendment act of 1976 there are nine scheduled tribes (plains) and fourteen scheduled tribes (hills) were finally reorganized. The scheduled tribe's plains are generally found mostly in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam. The plains scheduled tribes are namely Barman's Of Kachari, Bodo-Kachari, Deori, Hojai, Sonowal Kachari, Lalung, Mech, Mishng, and Rabha. The scheduled tribe hills are generally found in the two autonomous districts of Assam viz.,- Karbi-Anglong and north- Kachari hills. As stated earlier there are fourteen scheduled tribes hills that are found in these two hills districts and they are – Kachari, Garo, Hajong, Hmar, Khasi(Jaintia, synteng, panr), any *Kuki* tribes (thirty-seven sub- tribes), lakher, man (tai- speaking), any Mizo- Lushai tribes, Karbi, any Naga tribes, Pawi, Synteng.

In Manipur there are as much as twenty-eight tribes are there, and they are as follows- Aimol, anal, Angami, Chiru, Chote, Gangte, Hmar, Kabui, Kacha Naga, Koira, Koirang, Kom, Lamgang, Mao, Maram, Maring, Any Mizo Tribes (Lushai Tribe), Monsang, Moyan, Paite, Parum, Ralte, Sema, Simte, Tengkhul, Thadou, Vaiphui, Zou.

In Meghalaya, as much as thirteen tribes are recognized- Chakma, Dimasa- Kachari, Garo, Hajong, Hmar, Khasi (Jaintia, Synteng, Pnar, War Khasi, Bhoi, Lingam), Any Kuku Tribes, Lakhe, Man (Tai-Speaking) Any Mizo Tribes(Lushai), Karbi, Any Naga Tribes, Pawi.

In Mizoram, the same groups of tribes of Meghalaya are found to live except synteng which is a sub-tribe of Khasi is being recognised as a separate tribe in Mizoram.

In case of Nagaland, the major sixteen tribes are- Ao, Sema, Angami, Sangtam, Chang, Yimchunger, Ragman, Malware, Konyak, Chakesang, Lotha , Phom, Khiemungang Zeliang- Rong , Tikhir, Chirr,

In case of Tripura, there are as many as eighteen tribes are found and they are viz., Tripuri, Riang, Jamatia, Chakma, Halam, Mog, Noatia, *Kuki*, Garo, Munda, Lushai, Orang, Santal, Uchai, Khasia, Bhil, Lepcha (Sub-Group Of Bhatia) And Bhatia.

Secondly, spread of Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and other world religions were not spreading in Arunachal Pradesh mainly because of its terrains, hostile attitude of the local tribes to outsider's lack of exposure of the inhabitants of the region to other advanced cultural groups of the plains and lack of spatial Communications. Infact, entire Arunachal was kept totally isolated physically and socially from the rest of India by the British administration. As a result, other world religions could not penetrate into the mass people of the State

After independence the people of the hills of North East India could come into contact with the plain people of North East India could come into contact with the Plains people extensively than ever before. This helped the spread of Hinduism to some extent while due to the effort of Christian Missionaries and with the support of the British administration Christianity could spread as organized religion in the hill areas of North East India except in present Arunachal which was earlier known as NorthEast Frontier Agency (NEFA)

Among the seven states of the region Buddhist population is found to be highest (16.68%) in Arunachal Pradesh. A large majority of Buddhist are concentrated in the District of Tawang and West Kameng which are close to Tibet. The Buddhist of Changlang districts of a North Eastern Arunachal Pradesh and of Assam originally belong to the Buddhist Communities of Myanmar and its neighbouring areas. Mizoram is also another state of North

East India wherein two men pockets Buddhist concentrations are found. They are found in Chintuipui and Lungliedistrict. In Chintuipui District more than 28 person of the district population consists of Buddhist while in Lunglei District the Buddhist sale 16% of the total population.

Sikhs and Jains are mostly engaged in trade and commerce and are concentrated in the plains area of Assam, Tripura and Manipur.

Thus the population of North East India comprises a number of religious groups and some of which are however unclassified.

Check your progress

1. Why there is an unequal distribution of population in the Northeastern region of India?

Write in five lines.

2. Which are those states of NER experiencing the highest growth of population?

Check your progress

3. Which one of the states of the region recorded a high rate of urbanization as Per 2001 census (write about five lines)

4. What are the factors responsible for the absence of plains population in Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland? (write about five lines)

Check your progress

5. Sex ratio i.e. female per 1000 males is not even in the states of N.E. India. Comment (give an answer within five lines)

2.8. CASTE - TRIBE INTERACTIONS

In north east there is large number of tribal groups scattered spatially both areas of the entire region. These tribals have their own historical and cultural backgrounds and once upon a time there were social if not politically isolated groups. Economic compulsion, however, brought them to interact with the people belonging to the different caste groups inhabited in the plains. The hills tribal people came down to the plains for trading purpose with the caste infested plains people and in the same way the plains tribals interaction with the people belonging to different castes for the same purpose.

In the plains religion played an important role in the caste-tribe interaction. The introduction of Neo- Vaishnavism paved the way for closer interaction between castes and tribes because many caste and tribes if not all embraced this new cult and have become the disciple of the same religious leaders of the caste groups. In Sankariya Vaisnavism no distinction is maintained between caste and tribe. Devotees of both the groups sit together and offer prayer in the same premise and take *prasads*.

During the period of Ahom rule tribals were also appointed to some posts in its administration. During the British period caste- tribes interaction had become a common feature/ event in social life of northeast India. Although the British administration introduced inner line regulations, yet it did not deter the coming of the people of the hills to plains. As such, hills people came down to the plains and did business with the people of different caste groups.

In the cultural sphere the tribes of the plains have imbedded them some norms and values of the people of different caste groups which reflected in the changing of cultural systems of these tribes. The neighbouring Naga tribes and the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh

especially living in the lower Arunachal Himalaya have learned Assamese as their link language not only among their own groups which are different from each other languages.

In the postindependent period caste- tribe interactions have become more extensive and intensive. Inter- dining and intermarriage between the people of different caste group and tribes have become a common phenomenon in Northeast India. Example of this nature may be cited about the marital relations between different people of present Meghalaya which was earlier K& J hills district of Assam. Casteism is however abhorred by the tribes and tribal liberalism is accepted by the caste. Thus a well blended culture of caste and tribe is gradually offering in Northeast region of India.

Check your progress

6. What are the basis factors for population growth in certain states of northeast India? (write about five lines)
7. What are the causes and effects of population growth in the states of northeast India?
8. Why the people of Assam did oppose the governments?
9. In what way Assam caste system is different from the Hindu society?
10. How did the caste and tribe interaction take place?

2.9. SUMMARY

The different units of this block helped the students to get a scenario of the uneven population distribution of the states of northeast region along with other related factors like rural-urban population, hills, and plains wise distribution, unequal density of Population. These are followed by again uneven sex ratio of the different state of the region. The students could also come to know that in the different tribes and their subgroups.

Further the students came to understand the caste system that emerged in n. India in general and Assam in particular along with changing scenario of caste system in Assam and the interaction that are taking place between castes and tribes.

Further more the students could come to know about the causes of population growth in the states of the region and how in some states this growth on the verge of changing the earlier composition of population along with effects of population growth.

2.10. KEY TERMS

Diverse : Different in nature/type

Scenario : Picture

Boost : Help to rise

Monkhemer : it is a broad group of language form of Austric racial group, e.g Khasis of Meghalaya

2.11. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. The whole north east of India is consisting of 30% plains areas and 70% hill areas. Because of uneven topography in most cases especially in the high mountains human habitation is less. As such only in plains population are found more in numbers than in the hills. That is why population distribution is uneven between hills and plains.
2. Assam and Tripura which are the two constituent states of the region experience high rate population growth. The reasons are (a) Partition of India during independence (b) Indo- Pakistan war in 1956 (c) Creation of Bangladesh in 1971 (d) Illegal immigration which are continuing unabated in these states till now.
3. The states of Mizoram have recorded highest growth of urban population among the states of north east region of India. This became possible because of pursuing the policy of regrouping the villages by the government of Mizoram.

4. High ranges of Arunachal Pradesh Himalaya with variegated heights poses as hindrance for human habitation. Hence the density of population per sq. km. is less in Arunachal Pradesh
5. Sex ratio i.e. females per thousand of males in the states of north east India are not even as in all the states of the region as they are fragile in comparison to male infants. However in this region female foeticide/ infanticide are unknown.
6. Illegal immigration from erstwhile East Pakistan and now Bangladesh and increasing the birth ratio due to better health care facilities are the two major factors of population growth in states like Tripura, Assam and Nagaland.
7. Political and economic are the major causes of population growth in N.E. India. The effects of the population growth are felt again in political and economic spheres and these causes social tension.
8. Assam was affected by the language movement when the state passed state's language Act of 1960. People of Barak valley opposed along with the then the leaders of Kashi, Jaintia and Garo hills districts. Their objection was that Assam was a multilingual state.
9. In Assam unlike Hindu India within the broad framework of caste system Kshatriyas and Vaishyas are inconspicuous by their absence. Brahmins and Sudras are only found. More over due to universalization of education caste barriers are gradually obliterating along with the passage of time.
10. Giving respect to each other by the members of castes and tribes especially in religious spheres during the time of Neo- Vaisnavite movement and presently by showing respect to each other's cultures and cultural assimilation, followed by inter- caste tribal marriage gradually enhanced the caste- tribe interaction process.

2.12. QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Discuss about the population distribution of the states of the north east-region of India and point out the causes for uneven population distribution in the states of the region as per 2001 census
2. Why urban population in the states of the region are uneven? Discuss critically.
3. Give an account of linguistic groups that are available in the region.
4. What are the different religious groups that are found in different states of the region and further given an explanation why in Arunachal Pradesh there are more numbers of people follow unorganized religion?
5. Draw a scenario of caste system that is prevalent in Assam. Do you think that the caste system of Assamese different comparison to the rest of India?
6. Discuss the changing scenario of caste system of Assam at present times
7. “caste-tribe interaction is an interesting aspect to discuss in case of Assam” examine the statement critically.
8. Examine why certain states of the region experience high population growth. Give reason.
9. What are the main causes of population growth in north east India? Do you think that the abnormal population growth in certain states is posing as threat to autochthons?
10. “Population growth is uneven in N.E. India”. Discuss the statements in relation to the effect of population growth in north east region of India.

2.13. FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT-III TRADITIONAL SOCIO-POLITICAL INSTITUTION

3.0. Introduction

3.1. Unit Objectives

3.2. Kinship System

3.3. Institutions of Family

3.4. Marriage System

3.5. Traditional institution

3.6. Modern institution

3.7. Summary

3.8. Key terms

3.9. Answer to check your progress

3.10. Questions and exercises

3.11. Further reading

3.0. INTRODUCTION

In the various states of North East India generally among the tribes and caste groups nuclear, joint and extended types of family are found. As far as family set up are concerned especially among the tribes both patriarchal and matriarchal set up are found. However, the matriarchal system is found available in the midst of Khasi, Garo and Jaintia society of the state of Meghalaya of North east Region. Apart from these tribes the other tribes and cast groups of the region are patriarchal and patrilocal as far as the family system is concerned. In the present discussion about the family in is proposed to discuss about the family types of some of the tribes of North East India more particularly by covering on or two tribes form each of the states of the region.

3.1. UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the pattern of kinship system in the region
- Discuss the types and role of family
- Understand the system of marriage and its traditional structure
- Discuss the development and growth of traditional institution and modern institution

3.2. KINSHIP SYSTEM

Kinship is the network and mapping system of the tribal society. Each person are identified and related in related to its kinship association. The norms and sanctions are rooted strongly with the kinship. An individual is guided and protected with the rules of kinship any violation of the regulation has been sanctioned with community's prohibition and punishment. Generally, kinship are ordained from both consanguine and affinal relations. The degree and intensity of the kinship relation differ from society to society.

Understanding kinship practices through inheritance of property

In all human societies people are grouped together through various kind of bond. The most universal and the most basic of these bonds is that which is based on reproduction is called kinship. The reproduction process give rise to two kind of bonds – first there is bond between spouses and their relatives, this is affinal bond as this arises out of a socially or legally defined marital relationship and hence it is called affinal kinship and the relatives so related are called affinal kins. Secondly there is bond which is related through blood ties is called consanguineous kinship. Kin group are traced both from the affinal and consanguine and they determine the lineage group. There are two types of lineage groups – patrilineage tracing it lineage through male or father line and matrilineage tracing its lineage from the female line or mother side group.

The kinship system plays a significant role in the tribal social life, kinship usage are important as these are required for property inheritance, transfer of authority, to strengthened the group and build the cohesion, to maintain and acknowledge the oneness and integrity of the kin group. Here we shall try to focus and discuss among the few tribe of each state of northeast region.

The Apatani tribe of arunachal Pradesh is patrilineal. Their descendents are traced through male line. As far as the property is concerned all the brothers get due amount of property from their parents. Generally, eldest get the lion share and the ancestral property are only given to eldest son. The ancestral property are not sold or given to anybody as a gift or deed. The distribution of the property to his children is majorly decided by the father and mother. The daughter inherits only those movable properties like, beads, bangles, and valuable ceremonial cloths.

A married man may live separately after his marriage from his parent but he is still under the authority of his father in any major decision process, the authority rest on the son

when his father is dead. This type of kinship system is found and practice by many of the tribes of the Arunachal Pradesh.

The Pangchen Monpa tribe is patrilineal. The descent of these Monpas is traced through male lines only. At the death of the father the son can inherit the father's movable and immovable properties equally among the brothers. The sons take the clan name of the father a title.

The Bodos tribe of Assam is a patrilineal society. Bodo community practice a unique type of property inheritance comparable very different from the Apatani and Monpa tribe of arunachal Pradesh. All the members of the family share or enjoy the co-percenary rights unless one goes out from the family during life time of his father with the intention of living separately from the bond of the joint family. On the death of the father the eldest son takes the responsibility of the household and on the event of the breaking up of the joint family the unmarried brothers get double of the family property than the married brothers. The eldest son however gets a preferential share in view of his assumption of family liability and other social responsibility.

The kinship system of the Mishing community of Assam is by and large known as descriptive one. They are patrilineal and the line of the descent is traced through the male lines only. The property is equally shared among the brothers after the death of his father. The sons can claimed a separate property during the father's alive if he gets married. In such cases father decided to distribute the properties among his married sons and choose to stays with any one of his sons. Daughter has no reference in inheritance of property. But she can share the property if there is no male. If a man has no son but his son-in-law stays lives in the father house till the father in law death he may get the property. In the absence of the children the nearest agnates of the deceased inherits the property.

The Karbi community of Assam follows that if a man dies without any siblings than his nearest relative will inherit the deceased property to maintain the lineage. The property can be within the family without going to nearest relative even after the death by adopting a male child.

The *Kukis* of Manipur are patrilineal society. The sons share equal share of property. There is sub tribe of *Kuki* where the eldest share the largest part of the property because he has to maintain his widowed mother. While it is also been found that some *Kuki* sub tribe the youngest son has to remain with the widowed mother and therefore he received large portion of the property.

A man dies without any son his nearest relative inherit the property even though daughter is still alive. A deceased younger or elder brother looks after the property during the son's minority period till he attained adulthood.

The Khasi of Meghalaya is matrilineal. The line of descent are traced through female; the youngest daughter of the family. The properties are inherited by the female child. The youngest daughter by the virtue becomes the custodian of the family property. She lives in her ancestral house of the family and her brother. The eldest sister after marriage has to live separately with her husband on the land given by her mother. Though youngest daughter holds the property but it is managed and maintain by her brother and maternal uncle. The disposition of the property should be consulted with the maternal uncles.

If the youngest daughter dies without any daughter her next elder sister will take the charge of the ancestral property. If the daughters after her marriage is incapable of producing female child to inherit the ancestral property than the property shall go back to mother's sister, mother's sister youngest daughter shall inherit the property.

Likewise, the Garo community of Meghalaya also follows and practice matrilineal system of kinship by tracing the lineage through female line. All the properties both movable

and immovable are controlled by the mother and at her death the properties are inherited by the youngest daughter. The adopted girl child can inherit the mother's properties and it is legal under the customary laws. The other tribal society of Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura followed the similar patterned of those patrilineal society of other northeastern states while there are few difference in kinship practices which we can comprehend with the similarity and identical attitude and practices.

Check your progress

1. What is patrilineal and matrilineal?

3.3. INSTITUTION OF FAMILY

Family is small social unit of any society and constituting an institution of itself. There are various types of family exist in northeast region of India among the hills tribe and plains or caste groups in the form of nuclear, joint and extended types of family. The family is oriented with respect to the type of society of patrilineal by the seven states of northeast India and matrilineal in the state of Meghalaya. In the following discussion of the family system of some of the tribes of northeast India more particularly by covering one or two tribes/ community from each of the states of the region.

The Adi tribe family of Arunachal Pradesh is the basic functional unit of Adi society. Adi family generally consist of a nucleus of father and mother with separable units of sons and daughters. Adi family is patrilocal. A married son builds his own house to stay as primary unit along with his wife and their children. The daughter generally goes to her husband house after the marriage. In Adi family, the father is the central figure and therefore authority rest upon his shoulder.

Likewise Adi tribe the Apatani community of lower Subansiri district follows the patrilocal and patriarchal system. The father is the central figure to build and make the family

strong and integrated. Apatani family is a nuclear family type, the son moves away from his parent house after the marriage.

Among the Bodos of Assam both the nuclear and joint family are practice. Father is head of the family whether it is joint or nuclear family. Bodos family are patrilocal and patriarchal. The nature of the coparcenary system gives the Bodo family a joint in type as all the male members of the family enjoy the rights until they move out of the house. Eldest son takes responsibility after the death of his father and assumes the charge of the household with the consultation of his mother.

The Mishing tribe of Assam is having both nuclear and joint families. But in the present scenario nuclear type of family are commonly found and practice by the Mishing people. It is unique to notice in the Mishing society that two or more nuclear families live peacefully together one roof which is generally a raised platform house. Father is the head of the family. There is coparcenary among the brothers and everybody works together for smooth functioning of the family. The oldest member is highly regarded and respected.

The karbis of Assam follow and practice patriarchal and patrilocal. The decision of the father is binding and his authority is undisputed. Here the male after his marriage has to settle of his own with his wife and children away from the parental home. However, to certain instance extent families are still found in Karbi society.

The *Kukis* of Manipur are patriarchal and patrilocal; father is the head and sole owner of the authority. The family structure of the *Kukis* is joint type in nature. Here the married and unmarried brothers stay together with their parent. Eldest son takes the responsibility of the family after the death of the father. The decision of the family matters is taken in consultation with the mother.

The Khasi community of Meghalaya is following matrilineal and matriarchal system where mother is considered as the head of the family. A Khasi is a matrilineal one and it

consists of her husband and their children. The role of father is also significant in Khasi society; he takes part in the family discussion and decisionmaking process. He is responsible for the upbringing of the children, providing security to the family members and also for sharing the responsibility with his wife for earning livelihood for the family. In the Khasi family the maternal uncles also become the guardians of the children of their sisters. A maternal uncle plays a very important role in Khasi family and acts as the custodian of the sister's property.

The Garo of Meghalaya like the Khasi is matriarchal and matrilineal in their family structure. Due to the matriarchal family structure mother is the head of the family and the father is considered as an outsider only who is included in the family through marriage only. As such in a Garo family, the father role is less significant according to the Garo customs.

The Jaintia of Meghalaya like the Khasis and the Garos have matriarchal and matrilineal family. A Jaintia family is always introduced with the name of the mother and not with the name of the father. Because of this fact Jaintia family is best known as mother's house where mother and her children irrespective of age and marital status reside together. Among the Jaintias though joint family system is predominant which includes mother, her married son and daughters, but as the time passed by, the joint families started disintegration and paved the way for the coming of nuclear families at present times.

In a Jaintia family the mother is the head of the family and her authority is undistributed and undisputed. In the Jaintia society the son even if he is married, he has the first response to look after his mother and then comes next to his responsibility towards his wife and children.

In case of the Mizos of Mizoram as far as the family set up is concerned they are patriarchal and patrilineal. The father is the head of the family. The girls are trained to become true housewives after the marriage. Boys are taught their duties and responsibility towards

their village and communities. A Mizo family consists of father, mother sons and daughters; so from that standpoint it is a nuclear family. When sons are married within a year or after he has his first baby he begins to live an independent life by building separate house. Similarly, if there is more than one son than the second, third, fourth and all other sons except the youngest settle down in the same manner after their marriage with his parent. The youngest son is left behind to look his parent after their marriage. From the above description, it may be mentioned that the Mizo families are also joint for temporary periods.

In Nagaland the Ao tribe is patriarchal and patrilocal. Authority of the father is unquestionable. In an Ao family the head, his wife, son daughter are there. The sons after their marriage live separately by building their own houses. Like the Ao tribe the Angami tribe of Nagaland is patriarchal and the tribe is also patrilocal as far as the family set up is concerned. The family type is unitary one as a man and his wife sons daughters along with perhaps a younger brother still unmarried is the usual family. Occasionally a second family occupies part of the house, a separate space is fenced off and a separate hearth is provided. This usually happens when a son is newly married and is unable to build his house at the prescribed time and has to remain until the following year. In some village however where house room is scarce and costly, such arrangement may be permanent and sometimes two quite different families would be found sharing one house.

The Mags of Tripura generally live in nuclear families. They are patriarchal and patrilocal. The head, his wife, sons, and daughters constitute a nuclear family of the mag tribe of Tripura.

Check your progress

2. Discuss the family structure of any tribe of the Northeast region (write about five lines).

3.4. MARRIAGE SYSTEM

Northeast region is home for verities of ethnic groups since the time immemorial. The cultural diversity is the colourful blend of the people of the region spreading over the vast geographical settings of hills and plains. The tribes of hills and plains and the caste group of the region have their distinct marriage practices. Both the community of tribe and caste group have the tradition of polygyny and monogamy as their form of marriages. Polygyny is established customary practices among the hill tribes. Polygyny form of marriages was practiced among the most wealthy and established families. The frequency of the polygyny was found in those areas in which shifting cultivation was highly practice. But in the present context, this practice is not encouraged it is almost given up by the modern family and the new generation.

Monogamy is the most popular form of practices of the marriage system. It is universally accepted and standard form found in any type of society. Both the hill tribe and caste group performed the monogamy form of marriages where one wife remained with the husband for the rest of life. The sanctity of the marriage is maintained. Now let's discuss the marriage system of the northeast region in detail.

In Arunachal Pradesh the majority of the tribe in the past did practice polygyny and monogamy as a form of marriage practices. Adi is one of the major tribe and it has got many sub-clans. In case of marriage in the Adi society, monogamy is general practice and they are exogamous within the clan and sub-clan member. Divorce is permitted in the Adi society and in the same way, desertion also may occur.

Pangchen Monpa of the Tawang district practice monogamy. However, polygamy is permitted. The cross-cousin marriage is found to be a practice among them. Parallel cousin marriage is not allowed it is strictly prohibited. Polygamous marriage is popular. Both negotiate and as well as love marriage are prevalent.

The Bodos and Kacharis of Assam state adhered to clan exogamy in their marital relationship as the Bodos constitute a patrilineal group comprising a number of exogamous clans. Marriage among the traditional Boros is like a civil contract unlike the status of a sacrament in other Hindu marriage alliances. The usual practice of contacting in marriage is by negotiation (Hatha Chuni). Hatha chuni means distribution of rice by the bride with a big size of wooden spoon. However in Bodo society marriage by servitude (Chawdang-jagarnay) and widow remarriage (Dhoka) often takes place. In marriage by servitude, the groom is to serve physically in the bride's house for a period of one year which also may be extended as per the wish of father-in-law. While in the present state it is not found and practices anymore.

Widow Remarriage is allowed in the Bodo society, but the widower must cut off his all patrilineal relationship and induct himself to the 'Ari' (clan) of the widow. There is another type of marriage among the Bodos known by the name Khar – Chanai in which girls goes voluntarily to a man with the intention of staying with him and to make him as a life partner. When this unceremonious union is sanctified subsequently in a marriage it is known as Khar Chanai marriage.

There is prevalent of junior levirate and senior sororate marriages in Bodo society. Cross cousin marriage is not allowed in this society. Class and clan-based distinction and differentiation in terms of marriage are not there in Bodo society. The system of hypergamy is absent in society.

In the present day, Bodo society procuring a bride by servitude is not popular. Nowadays negotiation marriage (Hatha chuni) is widely practiced. The system of demanding bride price is still there in society but among the educated and rich people it is not there. There is a system which is however prevalent; according to which the co-villagers of the bride may prefer to claim from bridegroom a certain amount of money called 'Malsa'. After realizing the amount this is deposited in the village fund to be spent for social purposes. But

this amount is returnable to the bridegroom family in the event of the bride becoming a widow and deserts the house of the deceased groom to stay in her father's house forever leaving 'Malsa' is known as 'Khalar'-Gathaiyanay'.

However, it is to be noted that there is fundamental ritualistic difference in solemnizing marriage between the two sections of the tribe-the traditional Bodo and the followers of Brahmanism. In the traditional Bodo society performs '*Hatha chuni*' system on the other hand Brahmas perform 'Hom-Yojna' ceremony before the sacred fire. Like the other Hindu communities, Brahma groom with a part goes to the bride's house for performing actual marriage rate, but in the traditional system of marriage the groom instead of going to the bride's house sends only a little party to fetch the girl ceremoniously to perform the rituals at the groom's house. When the bride along with her relatives arrives at the bridegroom's house she is received at the gate amidst a benedictory oration and then taken inside. Soon after the grand feast is thrown out in honor of the bride and the bridal party by killing a pig and it is customary that a portion of the pork should be kept separately for the next meal of the bridal party to be taken at the bride's house on return. As soon as the feast is over the bridal party leaves and immediately after the groom party starts a general cleaning operation of the house to hold the '*Hatha-Chuni*' the most important function of the day in a most serene atmosphere. (The word '*Hatha-Chuni*' literary means distribution of rice by the bride with a big size wooden spoon). Immediately after the cleaning of the entire household the bride is asked to make symbolic cooking and then to offer a little amount of food to the household deities. Amidst citation of invocatory prayer by the village 'Deuri' the bride makes the offering first to Mahadeva (i.e. Lord Shiva) and the Mother Goddess Kamakhya. The bride is then asked to touch the rice pot kept normally in a corner of the kitchen which she does with the left hand. At this moment the bride is administered an oath of fidelity to her new home. Then both the groom and the bride are given some sermons of

married life by one from amongst the elderly person of the village. After this is over, the bride herself is to distribute the residue for the feast at least once first to her husband and then invited guests. This distribution marks the culmination '*Hatha-Chuni*' marriage. On the eighth day of the marriage the groom is to visit the father in-law's house with the bride and also wherever possible with his friends. This visit of the groom to his father in law's house is compulsory as a part of marriage ceremony without which a '*Hatha-Chuni*' marriage is not treated as complete.

In cases of a marriage of the Karabis which is numerically largest among the hills tribe of Assam strictly follows clan exogamy. The Karbis have clans called '*Kurs*'. These are Ingti, Enghee, Terang, Teron and Timung. Each of the five clans has major sub-clan; those are completely exogamous and marriage between a boy and girl belonging to the same clan is not permitted and the violation of the same would lead to ex-communication of the couple involved. In reality, it is considered as a taboo.

Among the Karbis monogamy is the usual practice; however, there is no bar to polygamy. But the cases of polygamy are very rare in the Karbi society. In case of widow remarriage junior levirate marriage is permissible but under no circumstances, senior levirate marriage is permissible in the Karbi society.

In the Karbi, society preference is given to cross-cousin marriage. Marriage by negotiation and marriage by selection are also prevalent in Karbi society. In case of marriage by negotiation, the consent of the girls is required in particular as a Karbi girl cannot be forcibly married to a boy of her disliking. Marriage or acquiring mate through elopement is also found in Karbi society. However, in this case, formal marriage has to be solemnized after the birth of the first child at a convenient date. Divorce cases are rare in the Karbi society and if at all this is to happen it must have the approval of the village council. However the council gives its approval only when it finds that separation between husband and wife is absolutely

essential. In the case of Karbis for marriage, there is no system of bride price. After marriage the wife continues to use the surname of her father. But the children assume the title of their father.

The Mishing tribe of Assam practices two forms of marriage Formal and Informal marriage. The formal marriage is considered to be an expansive affair. Usually, it is boy parent and close relative would send the information to the bride's parent for proposal of marriage. After receiving the consent from the bride parent the boy's party make an arrangement for the formal proposal. A particular date is fixed for the proposal, that day the boy and his party approach the girl's parent with the present like Apong and betel leaves areca nuts and formal announcement are made for a marriage ceremony.

According to the customs of the Mishing society, the boy has to stay at the residence of the girl's parent for five days and during the stay, the boy is required to help the girl parent in the field. After some months or a year, the date for marriage is fixed and on this occasion also the boy's parent along with some of the relatives come to the girl's parent with *apong*, fish and betel leaves with areca nuts. All the near relatives of the girl and the village elders are invited of the same would lead to ex-communication of the couple involved.

In the state of Manipur among the *Anals* Community marriage by servitude is prevalent. They strictly follow the traditional marriage customs. No marriage is allowed between the boys and girls of a phratry group. Whoever violates the customs is condemned and ostracized. Generally, three types of marriage are found among the *Anals* community of Manipur i. Vana Vapa Poithompa or arrange marriage ii) Vada Narel Ado or love marriage iii) Pom Luhong or secret marriage.

The marriage of *Anals* is a long process and therefore it provides stability and cohesion not only between husband and wife but also of two families who are related through marriage. But the marriage of *Anals* is a long process and therefore it provides stability and

cohesion not only between husband and wife but also of two families who are related through marriage. This situation helps for the stability in the society of Anals where divorce is rare. The bride price system is prevalent among them. The bride price is given by the boy's parents to the girl's parents.

In olden times among the Anals pre-marital sexual relation between boys and girls was strictly prohibited even now also it is prohibited.

Among the *Kukis* of Manipur, it is noticeable that each *Kukitribe* has a number of clans. Through for marriage purpose, clans are exogamous yet intermarriage is prevalent among the various tribes under board *Kukigroup*.

Regarding marriage among the *Kukis*, marriage by negotiation is the prevailing practice. In the olden days, betrothal by negotiation by the parents of the boy and girl was affected at a very early age. Cohabitation, however, was not permitted until the girls were fully grown. The actual marriage took place when the boy and the girls came of age. But nowadays marriage is fixed at grown-up stage only. At present times the bride is also there among the *Kukis* and the bride price is decided as per the economic condition of the boy's house. The boy whose parents are poor and cannot afford to give the bride price in cash has to serve in the house of his would-be father-in-law for a period varying from one to three years during this period he has to stay with his in-laws and work as a member of their family. In this case co-habitations are not prohibited.

Among the *Kukis*, the traditional marriage ceremony takes place on the date fixed by the parents of the boy and the girls. The marriage is solemnized by offering a feast by the parents of the bride to their village people, relatives, and the bridegroom party. Unmarried girls have considerable liberty and hence love affairs and pre-marital relations are not uncommon. But after the marriage, the girls must remain faithful to their husbands. In *Kukis* society widow remarriage is permissible is socially permitted but it is not practiced but all the

Kukis tribes. Adultery is strictly prohibited and offenders, in this case, are generally brought before village council for divorce is permitted but the village council would decide whether divorce is permitted but the village council would decide whether divorce is actually essential or not. The divorce is however allowed to marry the co-respondent only and no one else.

Among the Khasis of Meghalaya in case of marriage since the Khasi clans are exogamous, under no circumstances marriage could take place between the boy and the girl of the same clan. Khasi is one of the matriarchal tribes of northeast India. They have their customary laws as stated above. For example, if someone would not follow clan exogamy it is considered to be a severe offense for which the Khasi society would not only excommunicate from the society but the concerned persons would be driven out from the village after dispossessing and disinheriting them from the property and other belongings of the household.

It is interesting to note the clan exogamy practice is not only applied to the mother's clan but also to the clan of the father. There is, of course, no bar in marrying a non-Khasi boy, marries a non-Khasi girl because the girl does not belong to his mother's or father's clan. Thus a Khasi society cannot absorb new elements from outside without any difficulty.

Cross cousin marriage is prevalent among the Khasi but this is generally not preferred as in this matriarchal society maternal uncle is almost regarded as one's father. Both types of levirate i.e. senior levirate, as well as junior levirate are, however, not permissible in case of Khasi society.

Being a matriarchal society among the Khasis a girl has greater freedom in selecting her life partner. If a girl expresses her desire to marry a boy and the boy agrees to marry the girl then the marriage is solemnized. However earlier if the boy was not willing the girl relatives brought the boy to the girl's house and he was compelled to marry the girl. The tradition Khasi marriage is a simple one. The boy and the girl are given marriage feast. Those

who have accepted Christianity, marriages are performed in churches only according to Christian ways. After the marriage, the bridegroom is required to stay with his wife in his mother-in-law's house. Children born to the couple would be inducted into the clan of the mother and they would naturally adopt the title of their mother. In Khasi society, divorce and remarriage of divorce are permissible. Widow Remarriage is also prevalent among them provided the rules of clan exogamy are strictly maintained.

In the case of the Garos of Meghalaya regarding marriage, they strictly follow the rules of exogamy. In case of the Garos also like the Khasis the girl takes the initiative in selecting her husband and the marriage proposal shall have initiated from the girl's falls in love with a boy not belonging to her nearest kins. Her parents or guardians then visit the house of the boy on an appointed date to negotiate the marriage. If the boy's family accepts the proposal date for marriage is fixed. DO'SIA or the negotiated marriage is performed in a very simple way by killing two fowls in front of the couple followed by a feast, dancing, and merry-making.

In the past among the Garos marriage by capture, marriage by elopement, marriage as an outcome after a girl goes and sleeps with a boy of her stealthy at night, marriage after a boy partakes with a girl at her invitation, etc., were other forms of marriage that were prevalent among the Garos.

Cross-cousin marriage i.e., marrying the daughters of mother's brother is generally preferred among the Garos. But marrying the daughter of the father or the father's sister is a taboo. If there is no marriageable daughter of the mother's brother, a girl from her clan is chosen for their son. But nowadays this rule has also been not observed strictly and hence endogamous marriage have also been recorded among them.

But the most interesting factor among the Garos is the 'Nokrom' system arising out of the marriage relations. After the marriage, the son in law has to reside in the house of his

parents-in-law and becomes a 'Nokrom' which means a kind of representation of his father's clan in the family of his mother-in-law. There are two kinds of sons-in-law among the Garos, one is called Nokram and the other is Chowar. Between these two, Nokrom is the luckier one because after the death of the father-in-law he becomes the owner of everything and he is required to manage the property on behalf of his wife since the inheritance is always on the female line. The 'Chowary' on the other hand is not required to stay in the house of his parents-in-law. He builds a house in the village of his wife at his own cost and manages whatever landed property his wife receives from her mother as an inheritance. If the father-in-law of a 'Nokram' is also a Nokma or the headman of the village Nokma automatically becomes the Nokma after death of his father-in-law. Under no circumstances the son can become the 'Nokma' at the death of his wife.

The youngest is generally the most favorite member of the family and it is she who stays with the father. The person who marries the youngest daughter or the most favorite one of the family, therefore, becomes the 'Nokma'. The Garos are polygamous and if one marries two sisters of the same family he is to marry the elder sister first. The prior consent is to be obtained by the person from his wife if he wants to marry the second wife. The first wife who is naturally a senior one becomes the principal wife called 'Jik-Mamung' while the other wives are called 'JIK-GITES' meaning concubines. There is no bride price in the Garo society and junior levirate marriage is prevalent in the Garo society.

The Jaintias of Meghalaya are also matriarchal in their family structure and the same is reflected in their marriage system also. The Jaintias are following clan exogamy in case of marriage. It is a society which favors marriage through acquaintance, then after formal negotiation follows. Prior to negotiation the boy and the girl should develop intimate acquaintance, love, and liking between them. When the matter comes to the knowledge of the parents or guardians of the boy and the girls, from the boy's house a negotiation called

KSIANG sends a formal proposal to the girls family after asserting the fact that the boy and the girl don't belong to the same clan or sub-clan. Generally, the maternal uncle of the boy becomes the negotiator. If everything is found to be satisfactory the Ksiang completes the negotiation process with the parent's guardians and the maternal uncle of the boy and a date for the marriage is fixed. The marriage takes place at the bride's house at night only. The marriages partly consist of all the male family members and male relatives of the boy. But accompanying a female relative in a marriage party is a taboo. Carrying fire with the party is compulsory. In the evening a few persons from the house of the bridegroom's along with the bridegroom arrived at the house of the bride carrying with them two torches of fire.

On arrival at the bride's house, the bridegroom's feet are washed. He is then required to sit on a specific mat used for this purpose. After the exchange of betel nuts and leaves the girl is brought before the gathering. One person from each of the group's i. e., from the bridegroom side as well as from bride side highlights the special qualities of bridegroom and bride toward each other groups. After this is over the negotiator of the boy's party 'Kisiang' declares the bride and the bridegroom as wife and husband and wishes the newly married couple for a happy conjugal life.

The Jaintia priest Lyngdoh worships goddess 'Seim Waboo' and prays for a happy married life of the couple. The priest then mixes the rice beer offered by two parties in gourd pots and pouring thrice on the ground for the fertility of the married couple. After this a feast is followed where rice, pork and rice beer are generally served. Thus the formal marriage comes to an end by midnight and the boys' party return home leaving the boy in the bride's residence. The boy, however, returns to the home following morning.

The most peculiar characteristic of a Jaintia marriage is the custom of visit marriage. The son after the marriage is generally allowed by the mother to spend the night at the residence of his mater-in-law with his wife and every following morning he has to come to

his mother for work and eat in his mother's residence. This refers to a situation in which the husband is treated as an agent of procreation only. From this standpoint, as a customary rule of the Jaintias the residence of the boy is not matrilocal. But with the passage of time this system is eroding; as because if a boy works in a distance place, then he might be allowed by his mother to stay in the residence of his wife

In the case of marriage, the Jaintias are monogamous but earlier some instances of practicing polygamy were there among the Jaintias some instances of practicing polygamy were there among the Jaintias which are now socially looked down. As such the incidence of polygamy is rare in the Jaintia society. Divorce among the Jaintias is a common phenomenon. Divorce generally takes place if both parties agree. Widow Remarriage is permissible takes place if both the parties agree. Widow Remarriage is permissible and it is prevalent among the Jaintias.

Among the Mizos of Mizoram regarding marriage i.e. in the selection of a life partner for their children the Mizos parents generally become very careful. First, in the Mizo society boys and girls have equal status. As such the parents not only enquire carefully about the character and accomplishments of the bridegroom or bride to be. But also into his or her lineage, the reputation of the parents and their ancestor is also kept into consideration.

The parents always take the initiative in selecting a bride at the same time, a clever young man can and always does play a deciding factor as in the Mizo society where free mixing of boy and girl is permitted and the young men can in advance obtain the consent of the girl to a marriage and thus pave the way for a smooth negotiation. For selecting the bride there is no boundary. One can select a bride from other villages also which is generally considered as the sign of prestige, power and wealth. In case of choosing a wife for the son of a chief the girl from another village, preferably the daughter of a chief is sought. A notable system of engagement is the one called '*zawl-puan-phah*'. When the marriage is agreed upon

but cannot be solemnized for some unavoidable circumstances the boy and the girl are allowed to make love in the girl's house. However, for some reasons, if marriage does not take place after '*zawl-puan-phah*' the boy is required to pay a fine of four mithuns. There can be no excuse for deferring payment of the fine and it must be clear at once.

Before a marriage is fixed, a '*palai*', i.e., a negotiation is sent from the boy's family to arrange the terms of marriage. Sometime in advance, another man is sent before the actual negotiator is sent to finalize the bride price and fix the time of the marriage. The bride price is calculated in terms of mithuns. It may be noted that different rates are fixed for different clans, the highest being the price for girls of the chief's clans. The bride price may be reduced or enhanced according to the property given to her during her marriage ceremony.

It is necessary for a bride to provide herself with some items of the property before their marriage. These are: (a) *pawnpui* a kind of rug the weaving of which is special to the Mizos, which could be used by one for her life as its durability is much more comparing to other rugs. (b) *Thul*, a kind of basket in which a Mizo stores all his or her valuables; and (c) *Zawlken Puan*, a special kind of black cloth used for covering a dead body in the past. After including this item of cloth after the marriage of the girl it is believed that she is dead to the family in which she was born and brought up. Important a girl should possess all of them before her marriage otherwise the marriage cannot be performed. After all arrangements are completed and the bride's price is paid, the marriage is arranged. Generally, the bride's father is to slaughter generally an animal, a Mithun, a cow or a pig for the feast. The meat is divided into two halves. One portion with the head is given to the groom's party. Feasts are given in both the houses where relatives and friends are fed. At night the bride is taken for the first time to the groom's party. Feasts are given in both the houses where relatives and friends are fed. At night the bride is taken for the first time to the groom's house. This bride taking function is called as *laur chhiatzan* meaning temporary visit. The most important functionary

for this ceremony is *lawichhiat*. He is the guardian and protector of the bride. On the way to the groom's house, the young men of the village would try to throw mud; water, etc., on the bride, and it is the duty of the *lawichhait* to protect the bride from them. If the *lawichhiat* hits anyone in his attempt to protect the bride he is within his right and is not liable to pay any fine.

The bride returns early next morning to her house after this temporary visit and in the evening she is again taken to the groom's house by the *lawichhait* band a few close friends only. This is known as *lawithat* which means permanent entry. All the things given to the bride during the marriage are taken alongwith her at that time.

Among the Mizos there is no bar to marriage one's own clan. Marriage between first cousins is however not encouraged. Committing adultery by the woman is taken seriously and generally, she is driven out from her husband home. Mizos are generally monogamous. Divorce is permitted and may be resorted to by either side in Mizo society. However, in case of divorce depending on its nature, liabilities for payment of the price of the bride are changeable (Thanga, 1978: 18-23)

In the case of Ao Nagas of Nagaland men usually, marry between the ages of twenty and twenty-five. The usual practice is for a man first to visit a girl for some time at night before he decides to marry her. Having sounded her parents informally and after receiving the necessary encouragement he decides to ask formally for her hand in marriage then the bride price/ marriage price is discussed and that is decided on within the next few days. J.P. Mills observed (1926: 270-271) that the bride price was not big. It was varying from five to sixty baskets of rice; in some villages to a leather shield and one or more *daos*. After paying the bride price the bride is brought to the bridegroom's house and a feast is arranged for the villagers by the parents of the bridegroom. The Aos are monogamous. Clan exogamy and

tribe endogamy practices are strictly followed. Divorce is permissible only for valid reasons. Widow Remarriage is permitted.

Like the Ao tribe of Nagaland, the Angami Nagas in case of marriage follow clan exogamy and tribe endogamy. Hutton (1969, Rp. 219) observed that bigamy in case of Angami or polygamy is looked with disfavor. The marriage by a man of two sisters concurrently is not allowed and the second marriage one also. Generally, two types of marriage among the Angamis of Nagaland are found viz., celebrated with ceremony and formality and one without any noticeable both the forms are socially recognized. Formal marriage is preferred by persons who have respect for themselves and their fellows. Formal marriage involves quite a large amount of expenses which a person with weak economic footing cannot perform.

Informal marriage is very simple. In this case, the man is taking the girl to his house where they remain '*Kenna*' for one day. Informal marriage is usually the outcomes of an intrigue between the two or is compelled due to the poor economic position of both the parties.

The ceremonial marriage is however very much formal. In this case, when a man intends to get married takes the help of a woman negotiator or gets his father to take the help of an old women negotiator to negotiate with the girl's parents. The old women negotiator makes all the arrangements and up to a point of time there is no interaction between the parties. After observing some omens like strangling of the fowls, dreaming by the to be bridegroom and to be bride the old women discusses the marriage price/bride price with girl's parents. As Hutton pointed out (1968 Rp. P. 220) the marriage price consists normally of a spear, two pigs, chicken, and fifteen or sixteen fowls. This would be bridegroom to buy a spear, pigs, chicken and keep them in his house while the bride would start making rice beer for the ceremony. When everything is finally and satisfactorily arranged, young men of the

girl's family go to the would-be bridegroom's house on a fixed day and bring the spare, the pigs and chickens to the bride's house, which they kill and eat at the bride's house and all the girl's kindred go and eat and drink there. A small portion of the same is kept for the bridegroom and at dusk two men carry these to bridegroom's house along with the bride. In the bridegroom's house there are the bridegroom and his parents. A procession of seven men and the bride arrive at the bridegroom's house and after reaching there only five of these groups of men remain in the bridegroom's house and the rest two return home. After the bridegroom first eats meat and drink brought by men while the bride eats a little piece of meat and rice brought by her own and also amount of liquor which too she brought for herself. After that bridegroom goes to the *morung* house and sits on the '*machan*'. Next to the bridegroom's kindred present the bride's escort with a fowl and give one fowl each to the who brought the meat and drink after which all go away to their houses except the one boy and three girls who spend the night in the bridegroom's house. The next day morning one of the bridegroom's kindred gives a fowl each to the boy and to the girls. Then the bridegroom's mother gives the bride a small amount of liquor in a leaf cup drinking which the bride drinks up. The bride must not leave the house sunrise, after which she takes a pot and fetches water and cooks for the households of the bridegrooms including herself.

Hutton pointed out that "this day the household is in *Kenna*" but on the following day the bridegroom go to the fields and work together on the part given to them by the bridegroom's parents. They eat together in the fields. For the next three days, they are confined to their village, but they visit other villages after that ceremony i.e., after three days when the ceremony is complete. Thus through formal marriage, the conjugal life begins among the Angamis Nagas.

Among the Mogs of Tripura who are generally branded as Jhumia tribe (a tribal group practicing shifting cultivation) are having two endogamous divisions. Their clan Palemsa is

sub-divided into two exogamous sub-classes viz., *Bara Palemsa* and *Chota Palemsa*. A girl of *Chota Palemsa* can only marry a boy *Bara Palemsa* and vice-versa. However, a girl of *Chota Palemsa* is sometimes allowed to marry a boy who belongs to the clan of the other moiety. Some of them belonging to the second moiety as follows: *Farengsa*, *Regesia*, *Rekhoisa*, *Karaonusa*, *Lugdunsa*, *Khemsa*.

Among the *Mogs* three types of marriage are generally found viz., “*Khobo miyanijare*” (love marriage), and *Khematore* (by service). Women enjoy freedom in the *Mog* society. Widow re-marriage and divorce are allowed. But such cases are very in the *Mog* society because these cases are looked down. Child marriage is not there among the *Mog*. Their marriage ceremonies are simple and after a bride is brought to the bridegroom’s house by following the above mentioned three types of marriages, a feast is given and marry making is made in bridegroom’s house. But it may be noted that there is no building on the bridegroom’s part to give a feast to the village community or even to his broad kindred groups.

Check your progress

3. What is the ‘NOKROM’ system among the Garos of Meghalaya Related to their traditional marriage (write about five lines)
4. What are the special features of Mizo traditional marriage (write about five lines)

3.5. TRADITIONAL POLITICAL INSTITUTION

The political system which is proposed to discuss here is the traditional self-governing institution that is prevalent among the tribes of the different states of northeast India. Among some tribes, there are democratic like structures of self-governing institutions and some have chieftainship as the local governments. In northeast India there are numerous tribes and their subgroups and each tribe of the region has its own self-governing institutions along with its subgroups. The self-governing political institutions are different from each other. However,

for illustration purpose it is proposed to discuss the tradition political/self-governing institution of one or two tribes from each of the states of the region.

The Adis of Arunachal Pradesh has the democratic type of village institution. Every Adi village (*dolung*) is run by a council called *Kebang*. All the adult members of the village are its members and they participate in the sessions of the *Kebang*. The deliberations of the *kebang* are guided by the elders of the council who are known as *kebang-abus*. Thus the *kebang* has a collective leadership. The *kebang* leadership is also not hereditary but is acquired by an elder by virtue of his personality, wealth, influence and ability to present a case in the traditional manner. During the time of British rule in northeast India, some village elders who were appointed as *Gams* also served as *kebang abus* in the village council. At present all the experienced and mature leaders are *nyioks* Orators and *Gams* of the village are *kebang- abus*.

Theoretically, *kebang* is a democratic institution and all member of the village have to take part in it. Since the Adis are patriarchal and patrilineal therefore in *kebangs* the male members get prominence. The *kebang* is thus an all-male affair. However, those women who are active and willing may participate in the *kebang* session, particularly when they themselves are involved in any issue.

The *dolung kebang* village council is held at *dere* or *moshup* (public hall) which is generally located in the middle of the village. The *dolung kebang* is the earliest and smallest administrative institution of the Adis. During the British period two higher *kebangs* were organized one for the area comprising several villages and was known as *bango kebang* (council of villages) and the other for the whole tribe was called *bogum-bokang kebang* (council of the whole tribe). The British government appointed three more categories of official who also served as the leaders of these *kebangs*. They were *Gam*, political jamadar

and kotoki (political interpreter). Thus there are at present three types of *kebangs* with all non-official and official leaders in them.

In with of *kebang* generally, any matters are introduced and moved by the experienced members known as *kebang* abus and they guide the proceedings of the session. Matters of interest and importance are discussed, debated and argued in detail. The deliberation goes on as there someone is willing to speak on the subject. Thus the session of the *kebang* continued for a long period till all are exhausted and arrived at an agreeable decision.

The traditional village organization of the Pangchen Monpas of Arunachal Pradesh is constituted by Lama (Buddhist monk), two village chiefs and three '*Ganzen*'s (assistant to chiefs). The traditional self-governing institution among the Pangchen Monpas is known as '*Mangma*'. The meeting place of the village is known as '*Mangkhem*'. The '*Mangma*' settles all the disputed as per customary laws.

Among the Bodo Kacharis of Assam, there are two important self-governing institutions viz., *Hadengoura* and *Hachung-Goura*. The *Hadengoura* refers to a judgeship with jurisdiction over twelve adjoining villages and the later with the jurisdiction in each such twelve village. *Hachung-goura* is subordinate institution of *Hadengoura* whose sphere of operation in the village only. In many cases it helps *Hadengoura*. But the more common institution in the Bodo villages is the village council. The decisions of this council are binding and only men of character and social status generally preside over them. The social outlooks of the Bodo Kacharis of Assam are democratic in nature. They never practice any differentiation while establishing a social hierarchy. The Gaonbura (village headman) and is assistant the *Halmazi* (courier of errands) organize village level works. The '*Douri*' (*Deuri*) besides presiding over other religious rites also guide the proceedings of the village council whenever it is required. In the Bodo Kachari traditional self-governing institutions the

appointments are open to all however the person to be selected are capable of discharging public responsibilities.

Among the Mishing of Assam, the traditional self-governing institutions are there which is known as *Kebang*. In every village, there is a *dolungkebang* i.e, the village council. The members of '*Dolung Kebang*' are elderly men of the village. Traditionally, the '*Gam*' presides over the meetings of the *Kebang*. He is similar to that of the present-day Village Panchayat President. The '*Doloung Kebang*' generally settles the disputed of the villagers and criminal offenses. Under chairmanship of the '*Gam*' these are settled with fines and sometimes without fines. '*Doloung Kebang*' performs the functions of the legislature, executive and jurisdiction of the village community.

Apart from the *Kebang* there is an institution known as '*Mimbir Yame*'. It is an organization of unmarried young men and women of Mishing village. The leaders of the organization are '*Deka Borah*' for the men and '*Tiri Borah*' for the women. The responsibility of the former is to organize the boys while the latter is to organize girls. It is an institution which is meant for rendering help and cooperation to the families in difficulties particularly in construction houses and harvesting crops. With the advent of modernization, an institution like youth clubs, libraries are gradually developing in the Mishing villages yet the importance of '*Mimbir Yame*' still remains in augmenting their process of development.

The traditional Karbi political system is based on three-tier organization. At the top of the *Lingdokpo* means the supreme political authority is there. He followed by the *Habe/Habais* and the Rong-Sarthes are at the bottom. The *Lingdokpo* is selected by representatives of different clans and sub-clans. The *Lingdokpo* is the highest judicial officer. All important disputed are referred to him for arbitration, adjudication and for giving verdict. Social matters his verdict was adjudication and for giving verdicts. In social matter, his verdict was considered final. The selection of a *Lingdokpo* is democratic; the *Pinpomers* after

discussion among themselves unanimously selected a man who is known to be honest knowledgeable about customary laws, having commendable character and quality of leadership. A *Lingdokpo* could be removed if he indulged in misuse of power and position any time.

Habe/Habai is an officer appointed by the *Pinpomers*. *Habe's* duty was to look after the customs and traditions of the Karbis. So he is always appointed from among those who are well based in Karbi laws and customs.

It is seen that above *Habe/Habais*, *Pinpomers* are there. When one *Pinpomers* dies the other *Pinpomers* gathers together and search for a person who is well versed in the Karbi laws and customs from the clan in which death had occurred. The selection of the *Pinpomers* must receive the approval of the *Karbi-a-Riso* the Karbi king.

The *Karbi-a-Riso* was a constitutional monarchy. Even a few years back the last monarch who is living is gifted with a beautiful house by the District Council of Karbi Anglong. He is still revered in today's. Earlier *Pinpomers* were having different functions. They were the guardians of the Mikir Customary laws. Among the *Pinpomers*, the *Pinpomers* of Rongkhang were considered hierarchical above than other *Pinpomers* and many times the other *Pinpomers* were carrying out the orders of the Rongkhang *Pinpomers*. In earlier times Rongkhang *Pinpomers* was the final authority in all matters. In earlier times Rongkhang *Pinpomers* could pass death sentence to the offenders.

After *Lingdokpo* and *Habe/Habais* the third in hierarchical grading is the officer of the village level administration. The officer appointed as chief by the *Habe/Habais* is called *Sarthe*. The *Sarthe* is the real powerful officer of the village. He has control over the villages and minor disputes are settled by him except the major offenses of serious nature which are generally tried by the *Lingdakpo*. All matters of community concern at the village level are attended and decided by the *Sarthe*.

To settle intra-village problems there is another body called '*Me*'. It is formed by the adult male members of the villages as representatives. The *Sarthe* presides over the '*Me*' the '*Me*' plays very important roles in regulating the social, economic and religious life of the village. The orders and rulings of the '*Me*' are seldom defied. As such *Sarthe* is a very powerful officer in the traditional political system of the Karbis.

The British administration introduced the *Gaon-Burah* (village headman) system. But the importance of *Sarthe* is not diminished. In fact, both institutions are functioning now. The Karbis still value the *Sarthe* and the '*Me*' more than the *Gaon-Burah*. The Autonomous District Council also recognizes the importance of the *Sarthe* and the '*Me*'.

The *Kukis* of Manipur are having chiefs in their traditional self-governing institutions; these chiefs are hereditary in nature. In each *Kuki* village, there is a hereditary Chief and he possesses unlimited power and whose authority is also unquestionable. Virtually a *Kuki* Chief is supreme in his village. It is the Chief who settles all disputes in his village and it is his responsibility to select and distributes jhum sites to his villagers. Further he is the person who decides when and where a village is to be moved. Each of the villagers to whom the jhum land are distributed by the chief, in turn the villagers are to give a portion of rice produced by them to the chief. Moreover, the chief also gets a portion of every animal killed by any villagers of his village. Besides, he receives the fines levied on the offender. However the chief has some responsibilities also. He is to look after the orphans and other persons who are not having any source for earning and to sustain themselves and to give shelter to them. In return, these people are to work for the chief. The orphan girls thus brought up in chief's house when married it is the chief who gets the bride price. The *Kukichief* has a number of officials under him who are to help him in discharging his duties. It is to be noted that though a *Kuki* chief is having unlimited powers he exercise the same in a rational manner. But nowadays the *Kuki* chiefs are becoming simply a symbol and the chieftainship has also

become defunct due to the emergence of new leadership under the present political system prevailing in the state.

Among the Khasis of Meghalaya, there are several democratically elected chiefs or ruler called *Syiems*. Every ruler has a '*Darbar*' consisting of several officials including Mantries and village elders which assist him in discharging his duties. *Bakhras*, *Basans*, and *Lyngskors* are the other officials apart from the Mantries. In each village or in a group of village the presiding headman is always assisted by a Darbar.

In the traditional self-governing set up of the Khasis, politically the Khasis could be divided into three groups-

- i. *Syiems, Wahadadars, Sirdars, and Lyngdohs* are considered as ruling class.
- ii. *Mantries, Bakhras, Basans, and Lyngskors* which constitute the Aristocratic class and
- iii. The common subjects or people: In the Khasi society of Meghalaya the *Syiemship* still continues. But their officer is nominated in nature since the district council set up under the sixth schedule of the constitution of India has more or less deprived the *Syiems* of their traditional duties and has more or less deprive the *Syiems* of their traditional duties and responsibilities to a considerable extent. The village Darbars, as well as the Darbars of the *Syiems*, will settle disputes and try cases of minor nature.

It is really fascinating to note that though the Khasis have a matriarchal system of family structure yet the women are not allowed to participate in the traditional administration set up starting from the *Syiemship* to village Darbar.

Among the Garos of Meghalaya in their traditional self-governing institution chieftainship is there. The tradition village chief is also the clan chief called '*Nokma*'. He is the custodian of all the lands suitable for shifting cultivation in and around the village. Among the majority of the hill tribes of northeast India, it is worthwhile to mention that there is community ownership of land. However in case of the Garos through right a man is free to

cultivate the plot over jhum cycles. But here also *Nokma* has the role as the overall management of the jhum land of the village. Interestingly the land administration in a Garos village carried on by the *Nokma* and the council of village elders. A *Nokma*, however, cannot sell his land without his wife's *Machong*

Nokma is the male tribal chief of the village through Garos are having matrilineal society and he plays a very important role in the village administration. The *Nokma* with the assistance of the village council constituted with the elders' tribes all cases and disputes in an open assembly. The plaintiff and the accused are under oath to speak the truth. The decisions of the village council presided over by the *Nokma* are binding on both parties. In all matters relating to village administration observance of festivals, religious functions, marriage, death ceremony, starting of shifting cultivating and harvesting of the same the *Nokma* of the village is consulted.

Among the Jaintias of Meghalaya it is interesting to note that they have a very strongly organized traditional self-governing village institution. Every Jaintia village has a council which manages the affairs of the village. The Jaintias were having their own kingdoms and during the reign of the Jaintia kings the regional chiefs named *Doloi* were there to look after the administrative works of the kingdom. These *Doloi*s were elected by the people. However, apart from the administrative works the *Doloi*s were performing the religious functions also. Now also all the religious festivals performed in their localities are supervised by them. The *Doloi*s are assisted by a large number of officers in discharging his duties. The junior officers like, the *pators* have to settle disputes of minor nature. The juniors officers like, the *pators* have to settle disputes of minor nature. The *Dans* are to collect the tax and tolls. The *Basans* are to execute the orders of the *Doloi*s. The *sangot* acts as policemen under the supervision of *Pator* of his locality, the village announcer is called *Chutiya*. Through with the emergence of new political set up in Jaintia areas like District council and

its members have deprived *Dolois* some of their traditional functions and responsibilities, yet still in the Jaintia society, *Doloiship* plays an important role so far as village administration is concerned.

Among the Mizos of Mizoram, village chiefs are considered powerful officers in their traditional self-governing institutions of the villages. Among the village chiefs the Sailos were the most powerful chiefs and they ruled practically the entire Mizo dominated areas i.e., present Mizoram till the advent of the British. In Mizoram, the chieftainship was hereditary in nature and he was known as *Lal*. It was the chief who owned the entire land of the village and he was the sole authority in distributing land for homestead purpose and also for jhuming. Apart from the fact stated above the chief had to run the village administration with the help of ‘*Upas*’ and every Mizos village had a definite boundary. Usually each chief had to set up new villages within his boundary for his adult sons. The youngest son became the chief over his father’s land on the demise of his father.

Since the chiefs were having control over they were required to select and distribute suitable land for jhuming. The cultivators (jhumias including *Ramhuals*) had to pay ‘*fathang*’ a kind to tribute to chiefs in terms of baskets of paddy. After the chiefs there were ‘*Zalens*’ in terms of hierarchy in Mizo society and they were considered as men of possession who were exempted from paying ‘*fathang*’ due to the reason that they were to help the chief in village administration. However with the emergence of new political leadership under the aegis of district council the powers of chiefs were curtailed and these were vested to district and regional councils.

In Nagaland there are different groups of Nagas viz., *Ao*, *Angami*, *Chakesang*, *Konyak*, *Lotha*, *Sema*, etc. each group has its own traditional self-governing institutions. However, these are different from each other. The *Konyaks* had kingship, the *Ao*’s have most democratic system. The common feature of the naga traditional self-governing system was

the existence of village council headed by a chief which was later on replaced by the village council headed by a chief which was later on replaced by the village development board when Nagaland state came into being. In the past, each and every Naga village had its own village council and the members of the council were all the adult male members of the village.

The chief of the village council in cases of Naga tribe was either selected or elected. In case of selection, a meeting of all the villagers was held. The women were not required to be present in the meeting. The meeting was attended by senior adult male members of each and every clan of the village. Generally, this selection is done unanimously.

The chief of a Naga tribe in his village is generally revered by the villagers. He is invited to all social functions and festivals of by the villages. Among the *Angamis* of Nagaland, the chief is offered the best 'Zou' (rice beer) as a mark of respect during any social function or in any religious function.

The chiefs of any Naga tribe are to distribute the land of their respective villages to the villagers for cultivation. The chiefs are to settle disputes that may arise among villagers and in many cases especially among the *Ao's* and *Semas* they are to take part in religious functions. New political orders like the villages developments boards have reduced the functions of traditional Chiefs; still, the village, as well as clan, are revered much in any Naga society.

Among the *Mags* of Tripura their traditional self-governing institution is known as village council. They have village councils in every four villages which are generally grouped together. The head of the council is known as 'Bemarang'. He is generally elected. While electing the head of the village council where all the adult males of the four villages are the members consideration is given on his possession of wealth, property and personality. The 'Bemarang' is head of the village council and he is generally assisted by a junior selected

official known as *Karbari* and also a messenger viz., *Peada*. The '*Bemarang*' is to convene and preside over the village council meetings where the disputes of the village members settle as per traditions'.

3.6. THE MODERN INSTITUTION

After India's independence, many of the tribal traditional village council was replaced, modified and coexisted side by side with the modern political and administration. The modern political or governing mechanism is based on Panchayat Raj system at the rural level and Municipality system at the urban area by the amendment act of 73rd and 74th amendment act of India. this act provides that every rural area should have a three-tier system of governance system based on democratic principle each member should be elected not selected or nominated on the basis of caste, religion, gender, and language. Every development activities should be taken care by the institution with the help of district administration. At the grass-root level there is Gram Sabha member represented by every adult member of the village, and Anchal Samiti and Zilla member based on elected representative by the villagers at the second and third level of the three-tier system.

Municipality in an urban system act as local urban bodies which organized the system of urban to function in proper and dynamic way. An urban local body is also based on the democratic principle which is represented by the elected representative for the office bearer for a period of time.

The law of modern society is now taken over by the judiciary. Any breach of law from the criminal case to civil cases is now deal by the judicial institution. The customary law act as referential point the major decision is now decided and taken by the rule of law.

The legislature is the lawmaker for society. Unlike the traditional hierarchy based council, the group of the legislature of assembly makes decision which is beneficial and

potential for human and societal development. Legislative of assembly are elected members by the community people acted on the principle of democratic principle.

Check your progress

5. In which tribal group Dolung Kabang, Bango *Kebang*, and Bogum Bokang *Kebangs* are there as traditional political institutions? Describe their functions briefly (write about five-line)
6. Is Mizo chief is hereditary in nature and by what name he is known in the society, further who are the Zalens? (write about five lines)

3.7. SUMMARY

After reading this unit the students is now acquainted with the traditional social institution of the tribes of the tribes of northeast India in general and of the tribes in particular who are taken as examples selected from the numerous tribes and subgroups.

More especially the student could understand about the major universal institutions which are of traditional in nature that are depicted in this unit.

Further, the student could come to know as to how the traditional tribal institution like family, marriage, and polity are of varying in nature both in patriarchal and matriarchal tribal societies of northeast India.

3.8. KEY TERMS

Kin group: Kin group are two types viz, consanguineous kin group and affinal kin group. The first one traced the relation through the blood of the Uterus. Affinal kin groups are related through marriage.

Lineage: Tracing the descent line from through father's line or mother's line.

Patriarchal: It refers to the dominance of male in the social structure

Matriarchal: It refers to the dominance of male of female in the social structure

Kenna: It is also known as Genna among some of the tribes of northeast India. It refers that before performing a religious ceremony in the immediate proceeding day people of the village generally observe fasting.

3.9. ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. The Adis, Pangchen Monpas, Bodos, Mishings, Karbis, *Kukis*, Ao and Mog tribes trace lines of descent through the male line only. The Khasis, Jaintias and Garo tribes trace their descent through female line only.
2. Adi's family is considered a basic functional unit. The family of Adis consists of a nucleus of father and with separable units in sons and daughters. The Adis are Patrilocal.

The answer to the question is an affirmative as the rules of residence among the Angami Nagas are somewhat different than that of other, Naga Tribes. The family of the Angami Naga is unitary in nature which consists of man, wife, sons daughters and unmarried younger brothers. Occasionally the married son occupies a part of the house which is provided with a separate hearth and the part is properly fenced. Some due to paucity of space for living different families are found sharing one house.

3. NOKRAM is system arising out of the marriage relations among the Garos of Meghalaya. After the marriage, the son-in-law resides in his parent-in-law's house and becomes a nokrom which refers to a kind of representatives of his father's clan in the family of his mother-in-law. Nokrom becomes the owner of everything after the death of his father-in-law and he shoulders the responsibility of managing the property on behalf of his wife as the Garos are matriarchal

4. Among the Mizos as far as traditional marriage is concerned the parents always take initiative. Free mixing between the boy and girl is permissible. As a sign of prestige one can marry a girl from another village. The system of social engagement before marriage is

prevalent in the Mizos society and it is known as *zawl-puan-phah*. If for some reasons after engagement marriage is delayed the boy is to pay a fine of four mithuns to the villagers.

5. Among the Adis of Arunachal Pradesh the political institution like *Dolung Kebang*, *Bango Kebang*, and *Bogum Bokang Kebangs* are there. These are meant for as under

Dolung Kebang - Village council

Bango Kebang - regional council consisting of the villages of a region

Bogum bokang Kebang- Traditional political council for the whole Adi Trib

6 The Mizo chief hereditary in nature. He is generally known as *Lal* in the Mizo society. *Zalens* are the status groups just after the *Lal*. As such Mizo society is stratified.

3.12. MODEL QUESTIONS

1. “The Tribes of northeast India follow certain social organization” give an account of the same state-wise and examine critically examine the differences of the social organizations of tribes of different states of the region
2. Describe the kinship system that is prevalent among the Khasis and Garos and examines the difference if any is there between the two tribes.
3. Describe kinship system of the Karbis and *Kukis* of Assam and Manipur respectively.
4. Discuss the rules of patriarchal families of Adis and Angamis of Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland respectively. Point out critically if there are some differences are there between the two.
5. Discuss the rules of matriarchal families of Khasis of Meghalaya.
6. Do you find the rules of residence different among Khasis of Meghalaya? Critically discuss.
7. “*Nokna* sons-in-law are considered fortune in Garo society” discuss
8. Discuss the role of *Kebang Abus* and in the *Dolung Kebang* of Adi society
9. Discuss the traditional political institution of the Karbis of Assam

10. Elaborately discuss the traditional political institutions of Khasis of Meghalaya.

3.11. FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT IV- SOCIO-CULTURAL DIMENSION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

4.0. Introduction

4.1. Unit Objectives

4.2. Agriculture practice in hills and plain

4.3. Land relation

4.4. Historical background of industrialization in the Region

4.5. Types of industries

4.5.1. Tea industry

4.5.2. Bamboo industry

4.5.3. Oil industry

4.5.4. Handloom industry (Problem and prospects)

4.6. Summary

4.7. Key terms

4.8. Answer to check your progress

4.9. Questions and exercises

4.10. Further reading

4.0. INTRODUCTION

The northeast part of India has eight states comprising an area of 255,083 km² with hills, valley, and plateau. This region is inhabited by 100 major tribes and immigrant communities. Due to topographical and environmental conditions this region is rich in biodiversity and is one of the hot spots of the world. Altitude ranges from 150 to 7,300 m and temperature varies from freezing point to 37°C. Mostly tribal people and immigrant communities depend on farming and forest products for their food and livelihood. Local people have been maintaining traditional agricultural practices, agro-biodiversity and knowledge. Generally farmers practice jhum or shifting agricultural system with other sedentary agricultural practices. About 400,000 families practice jhum cultivation covering a land area approximately 386,300 ha annually. Other agricultural systems are wet rice cultivation which is practiced in valley land and Aji system where rice and millet are cultivated with fish in deep water.

In valley land mono cropping as well as mixed cropping is practiced by farmers. Terrace land cultivation system introduced by government could not get wide acceptability by farmers due to high input of labour and fertilizers. Farmers also have cultivation systems such as home gardens and agroforestry that link their families to the forest ecosystem. Recently government and non-governmental organization have introduced agri-horti-silvipastoral system for good harvest and yield. The population density of the region is 324 person per km² that is lower than the whole country. However, the growth rate during 1991–2001 has been recorded 31.2 person/km², which is higher than the national rate of 21.4 person/km². If population growth continues at this rate then a serious threat may occur to the sustainability of agro-ecosystem and rich biodiversity of the region. An attempt is made here to focus on agricultural practices, their productive capability, and viable sustainable land use strategies for people of the region.

4.1. UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Elaborate the agriculture practices in hills and plain
- Discuss the various system of land relation
- Explain the historical background industries and industrialization
- Discuss the basic socio-economic problem and prospects

4.2. AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES AMONG THE HILL TRIBE

The northeastern area is rich in diversity of wild relatives of cultivated crops and out of 355 reported from all over India, 132 are found in this region. This area is also considered as the native origin of more than 20 major agricultural and horticultural crops and the native home of about 160 domesticated species of cultivated crops. The utilization of bio-resources by tribes and other communities is based on indigenous and traditional knowledge that help in sustainable use and conservation of natural resources. The tribal farmers have been using hundred of locally adapted major and minor crops in the various agricultural systems that helped them to survive under risk and hard prone conditions. The yield and energy efficiency of different agricultural systems depends on the type of crops cultivated. The more efficient were found where rice is cultivated with maize or millet or any other crop. Maximum yield has been reported in home-gardens and Aji agricultural system practice by Apatani tribes.

The efficiency of different agricultural practices varied between 1.7 and 75.2 and 0.7 and 8.8 respectively from the ecological and economic viewpoint. The maximum energy efficiency was recorded for the Aji system. As far as efficiency of jhum agricultural system is concerned optimum efficiency was reported with jhum cycle of 10 years period otherwise on shortening or increasing the cycle period efficiency declines. In general terrace land has the lowest efficiency among the different existing agricultural systems. In jhum system farmers grow several crops under mixed cultivation, therefore known as one of the rich agro-

biodiversity systems. This system, despite being rich in agro-biodiversity, does not harbor good yield and energy as the Aji system. The jhum system is generally practiced on hill slopes and the major causes of nutrients loss are due to blown off, run-off and through percolation of mineral nutrients that lead to poor yield and efficiency. Perhaps because of this reason farmers cultivate mixed crops comprising a variety of cultivars in jhum system so that they can get maximum yield and output. In this context a number of studies have been carried out and workers have suggested many alternatives and modified practices for overall improvement of agricultural systems and socio-economic status of the people of this region. The popularization of agro-forestry and horticultural practices, improved fallow management by introduction of native nitrogen fixing plants, recycling of agricultural waste in the form of composting is important among them.

Agriculture is an important sector in the economy of the NER, with its share in State Domestic Product (SDP) ranging from 19 percent to 37 percent in different states (Table 1). This contribution of agricultural sector in SDP has declined during the past three decades. This is though considered a sign of development, population dependent on agriculture remains very high. As a result, agriculture in the region has not been able to generate surpluses for investment and augment purchasing power, not to speak of employment generation. Moreover, factors like natural calamities, a large number of smallholders, low intensity agri-inputs and negligible seed/variety replacement are also threatening the livelihood-sustainability in the region.

Check your progress

1. How many major crops and domesticated drops are found in the region?
2. Which agriculture practices is considered as the least efficiency and rich agro-biodiversity system?
3. What is the full form of SDP?

Table 1. Selected economic indicators of NER

	Nagaland	Tripura	Arunachal Pradesh	Assam	Manipur	Meghalaya	Mizoram
Share of Agriculture* in SDP (%)	31.2	37.5	27.1	32.0	18.9	32.5	24.7
Rural poverty (%)	33.5	36.0	28.5	33.9	19.5	32.7	34.4
Cultivated area (%)	2	35	6	10	4	13	27
Annual compound growth rate (% , 1993-2003)							
SDP	2.4	2.3	6.2	7.1	NA	7.5	10.0
Agriculture	1.3	0.4	3.5	6.0	NA	14.4	4.4
Population	2.01	1.44	2.15	2.66	NA	5.22	1.10
Per capita income	1.3	1.5	3.1	4.0	NA	1.9	7.9
Total cropped area ('000 ha)	239	3860	347	174	NA	116	216

* include crops, lives stock, fisheries, forestry and mining, Source: www.mospi.nic.in, NA: not available.

Agriculture in NER is characterized by

Geo-physical conditions limit horizontal expansion of cultivable land. The percentage of cultivated area to total geographical area ranges from 2.2 percent (in hilly states like Arunachal Pradesh) to 35.4 percent (Assam), as compared to 43.3 percent at the all-India level.

Domination of a single crop of rice is vulnerable to risk and low level of productivity. Prevalence of traditional agricultural practices and low productivity in the region is very high among the hills tribe. The shifting cultivation (Jhum) is one such system.

Agricultural diversification of crops, livestock-fish, and silk exist in the region, but their contribution to economic development is negligible, as reflected in the low per capita income (Rs.7979 in 2001 at constant price, which is 17% lower than the national average)

The dominance of rice: Rice is the major staple crop commonly grown in the NER states. But the rice-based agriculture system has failed to provide required household income-security. Rice is a three-season crop, viz, autumn (*Ahu*), winter (*Sali*) and summer (*boro*) in Assam. Although winter rice accounts for more than two-thirds of total rice area, the average yield is 1.53 ton/ha, which is nearly half a ton less than the national average during the triennium ending 2003. A notable change in the rice production system is the introduction of Boro rice in Assam. Boro rice is a low risk option with yield 30 to 40 percent higher than the normal yield. It has increased cropping intensity, leading to a situation of surplus production in Assam. This successful venture should be replicated in other states also.

Shifting cultivation: This slash-and-burn system of cultivation (Jhum practice) is a unique feature of the region, which covers nearly 2 million hectares area (one-fourth of the total cropped area). The system faces criticism due to its low productivity and environmental diseconomies but provides support to about 443 thousand jhumia households. On account of diversified nature of the system, the jhum cultivation provides not only food security but also household nutritional security. Most importantly, it has the potential to enhance system productivity too. Being a socially-preferred practice, instead of banning, it needs a focussed system based R&D to improve the overall productivity and food security.

Tea: It is a commercial crop grown entirely by the corporate sector, and occupies nearly half a million hectares in NER. But recently, the government intervention as in Assam has enabled some of the entrepreneur farmers to undertake tea cultivation. It can provide ample scope for income generation but its impact is yet to be examined.

Crop	Arunachal Pradesh	Assam	Manipur	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Nagaland	Tripura	NER
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Rice	49.9	65.3	45.4	59.6	66.8	62.6	82.3	64.3
Other								
Cereals	23.1	2.8	16.8	14.8	0	32.9	1.4	6.2
Pulses	2.6	2.3	6.1	0.8	3.5	1.0	1.7	2.5
Oilseeds	10.9	8.3	5.4	5.3	7.0	0.2	0.5	7.3
Fruits &								
Vegetables	11.2	13.3	8.5	8.6	14.3	3.1	4.8	11.9
Spices	1.8	2.2	2.4	10.4	6.6	0.0	1.5	2.4
Others*	0.5	5.8	15.4	0	1.6	0.1	47.8	5.4

* include fibres, nuts, sugarcane, sericulture, etc.

Crop diversification: A large number of households in the NER practice crop diversification by growing multiple crops as well as livestock, fishery, piggery, etc. High-value crops like fruits and vegetables, oilseeds, spices, and nuts are also widely grown in the region (Table 2). Fruits and vegetables occupy the second place (12% area share) next to rice. Interestingly, not only the area allocation is high, the proportion of households growing fruits and vegetables is also high. The area under other crops is also growing and the notable gainers include fibers, sugarcane, rubber, sericulture, coffee, areca nut, and coconut. Floriculture is also expanding rapidly. But, a huge potential remains untapped due to a number of constraints and institutional rigidities. The growth in productivity of major staple crop, rice, has been slower than that of population, which may lead to food insecurity in the region (Table 3). Barring Assam, the entire region is foodgrain-deficit. The region produces nearly 5 million tons of food grains as against a demand of 6.7 million tons. This imbalance in food-security remains unabated due to slow growth in production as well as productivity of major food grains.

Table 3. Annual compound growth rate (%) in rice production in NER: 1990-2003.

State	Area	Yield	Production

Arunachal Pradesh	1.30	0.10	1.39
Assam	0.21	1.54	1.75
Manipur	0.11	0.83	0.94
Meghalaya	0.14	3.90	4.04
Mizoram	3.05	3.80	0.75
Nagaland	1.97	1.91	3.88
Tripura	0.15	2.42	2.27

Source: NEDFi, NER Data Bank, Guwahati, <http://databank.nedfi.com>

Check your progress

4. How many a time rice crop is grown and cultivated in Assam?
5. What is the total approximate area is under the shifting cultivation?

Cropping pattern

Agriculture condition in North East India is basically influenced by the physiographic conditions having varied topography, different soil types and uneven distribution of Temperatures and rainfall etc. About 70% area of the region is mountains and hills having red soil, lateritic soil and mountain soil which cover mostly of Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Sikkim and half of Tripura, one-fifth of Assam and nine-tenth of Manipur, while the plains of the region with alluvial soils are –The Brahmaputra Valley of Assam, the Barak Valley and the Tripura plains in the south, the Imphal Valley of Manipur comprising only 10% area of the state. Based on these physical features the agriculture practices of the region are of two types- (i) Shifting cultivation (Jhum), and (ii) Settled or plains agriculture.

As a large part of the region is hilly features settled by different tribal groups, shiftingcultivation isthe utmost customary which the rudimentary life supportive subsistence

intensive agriculture is. Shifting cultivation is commonly practising in hilly red soil and laterite soil region. They are mostly practise by tribal in all districts of Arunachal Pradesh, hill region of southern Assam, mountain areas of Tripura, Mizoram, Nagaland and *Kukis* and Nagas in the hill regions of the Manipur.

On the other hand, the plain or settled agriculture is generally practise in fertile alluvial plains of Assam, plain areas of south eastern Nagaland, Brahmaputra plain in southern Arunachal Pradesh, Barak Valley and some plain areas of Tripura and the central Imphal Valley of Manipur. About three-fourths of her population, on the average, depending on agriculture and other allied activities and 40 percent of Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) comes from agricultural sector (Goswami, 2006). Since the region is dominated by the tribal population, reference may be made to the tribal method of cultivation. 19.91 lakh hectares (83.73%) of the land in the region is under shifting cultivation or Jhuming, a practice once considered as a farmer friendly has now become an ecological menace. The cropping pattern of North East India is not much similar to the other parts of the country. About 70% of the area is a hilly region taking manual based intensive agriculture, Crop combination in the region is mostly multiple systems of rice, maize, wheat, and oilseeds which are the main crops in fertile alluvial plains of the whole areas of the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam, southern parts of Tripura, Imphal valley of Manipur and Barak valley. The region produces nearly 5 million tons of food grains as against a demand of 6.7 million tons. This imbalance in food-security remains unabated due to slow growth in production as well as productivity of major food grains (Barah, 2006).

Foodgrains

In 2001-02, there are two different types of crop combination system found in the region having different crops in each state. The three (3) crops combination system of rice, maize, and potato are found in Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland; rice, maize and vegetables in Meghalaya and Tripura; rice, maize and oilseeds crop combination in Manipur. While five crop combination systems of rice, maize, potato, vegetables, and oilseeds are practiced in Assam, a combination of rice, maize, pulses, oilseed, and vegetables is found in Mizoram.

Assam leads the whole North-Eastern states by sharing 2755 thousand hectares and 67.6 per cent of food grains production. Tripura is the next largest state in area and production of food grains with a share of 258.5 thousand hectares and 10 per cent of the region's Products. Nagaland follows Tripura with an area of 257.5 thousand hectares while Manipur is the third largest producer with a share of 6.7 per cent to the region's product. Influence by the application of modern tools and techniques, people think not only for subsistence.

Table. 4.1: Rank wise area and production of food grains in NER (2001-02 and 2009-10)

State	Rank			
	Area		Production	
	2001	2010	2001	2010
Arunachal Pradesh	4	4	6	5
Assam	1	1	1	1
Manipur	5	5	3	4
Meghalaya	6	6	5	6
Mizoram	7	7	7	7
Nagaland	3	2	4	3
Tripura	2	3	2	2

Agriculture which depends only on manual family labour, they need surplus products for commercial activity by applying modern tools and techniques, High Yielding Variety Seeds (HYVs), chemical fertilizers and biocides, Meghalaya and Tripura state become more specialised in 2009-2010 from three crop combination to two crop combination of rice and maize while Assam and Mizoram state also practiced from five crop combination in 2001-02 to three crop combination of rice, potato, vegetables in Assam and rice, maize and pulses in Mizoram respectively. In the same way, Manipur and Nagaland are found change from three crops Combination to four crop combinations of rice, maize, oilseed and pulses in Manipur and rice, maize, potato, and vegetables in Nagaland in 2009-2010 respectively. As the state of Arunachal Pradesh is hilly terrains which lack the infrastructure facilities, the cropping systems is not much change. Rice continued to remain the dominant crop in the region supporting foodstuffs to the populace in the low lying plain areas and in hilly regions. It is mainly grown in fertile alluvial plain areas in the system of Settled or Wetland cultivation in Assam, Imphal Valley of Manipur, plain areas of Nagaland, Barak valley of Tripura and Brahmaputra valley of Arunachal Pradesh and in the system of Jhumming in most of the hill areas.

Rice is a three-season crop, viz, autumn (*Ahu*), winter (*Sali*) and summer (Boro) in Assam. A notable change in rice production system is the introduction of Boro rice in Assam. It is a low-risk option with yield 30 to 40 per cent higher than the normal yield. It has increased cropping intensity, leading to a situation of surplus production in Assam (Barah, 2006). Maize is the next important crop for all the hill states except Tripura and Assam having the character of fertile alluvial plain which has good soil for growing crops like rice, wheat, oilseeds, and tea supporting the whole North Eastern Region. As rice is one of the dominant and staple food crops in the region, it shares with the area of 3384.8 thousand hectares in 2001, which decreased to 3356.3 thousand hectares and products of

5495.3 thousand tonnes in 2001, increased to 6002.9 thousand tonnes in the year 2010. Among the North-Eastern states, as Assam is the largest plain area having most fertile alluvial soil occupying ninth tenth of the state and 70% areal extent of the region. There are blameless means of transport and communicationsystem, advantage of the application of new tools and techniques, chemical fertilizers, biocides, irrigation facilities, marketing, huge and cheap manual labor and financial facilities. They have noble climatic situation of required amount of precipitation and temperature. The state rank top in area as well as in the production, as they have fertile alluvial plains of Brahmaputra great plain, sharing 2537 thousand hectares (74.9 per cent) in 2001 but decreased to 2495.8 thousand hectares (74.3 per cent) in 2010.

The production also increased from 3854 thousand tonnes (70.1 per cent) in 2001 to 4335.8 thousand tonnes (72.2 per cent) in 2010. The Tripura state having vast alluvial plains is the next, shared the agricultural area of 7.2 per cent in 2001 and 7.1 in 2010 of area and production of rice by 10.6 per cent, followed by Manipur shares 4.8 per cent in 2001 and 5 per cent in 2010 of area, and production by 7 per cent in 2001 which decreased to 5.3 per cent in 2010. Maize is the second most important and staple food crops in the North-Eastern region with the area of 130.1 thousand hectares in 2001 but increased to 163.7 thousand hectares in 2010, producing 175.6 thousand tonnes in 2001 and increased to 199 thousand tonnes in 2010. Nagaland is a hilly Tropical evergreen and deciduous climatic state which is good for the growing of maize with red soil, huge atmospheric moisture and humus content of the soil. It has the largest area and production of maize crops sharing 30.7 per cent in 2001 and increased to 41.6 per cent to the region with 31.3 percent in 2001 and increased to 36.7 per cent of production in 2010. Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya are the next major producing states in the region contributing 30.2 per cent and 13.2 per cent respectively. Assam is synonymous with tea both at domestic and global level. Tea as an economic venture has

flourished in Assam since 1840 and has been the most important aspect of revenue generation to date. Dibrugarh district has the highest Production followed by Jorhat, Sibsagar, Tinsukia, and Golaghat. Over 90% of the gardens are located in these five districts (Chakraborty, 2006).

Check your progress

6. How many types of agriculture practices are found in the region?
7. Name two highest producer of food grains in the region.

4.3. LAND RELATIONS

Implications for Land Relations in North-Eastern India

The Northeast is known in the rest of India mainly for its conflicts. One cannot deny that this home of many ethnic groups and tribes have for five decades witnessed armed conflicts that are integral to its people's search for a new identity amid the economic and cultural crises they face. One of their reasons is the interface between modernisation and their traditions with no preparation. It has had an adverse impact on many tribes. An area in which this interface has made a major impact is the legal framework governing land relations. Most tribes of the region run their civil affairs according to their community based customary law but the individual based land law of the country is superimposed on them. Because of the disruption it has caused in their lives one of the demands of many tribes in recognition of their customary law. It has been recognised through constitutional amendments in Nagaland and Mizoram. Community ownership also gives women some control over land but this paper will limit itself to the land laws and will only allude to its gender and class implications.

The community ownership tradition has not remained unchanged but has been modified over time. Even when their customary law is recognised, the elite among them tends to interpret it in their own favour. For example, the Sixth Schedule was meant to be a

protective measure but it has not always gone in favour of the community, especially women. For example, the Garo of Meghalaya who comes under the Sixth Schedule has experienced a changeover to commercial crops and individual ownership that goes against women and leads to class formation. Signs of its beginnings are visible among the Dimas of Assam, the Aka of Arunachal Pradesh and others. This discussion will discuss some of these issues, especially the interface of their customary law with the formal law and its implications for land relations.

Land Laws and Tribal Communities

Though the complex phenomenon of the conflicts has often been oversimplified as secessionist or terrorist, in reality, an identity search is central to it. Their land and customary laws are closely linked to their identity which is in fact built around them. Today land relations are being modified by immigration, encroachment and the changes that the modern legal system introduces in their tradition. They do not begin the conflicts but exacerbate those existing already. The conflict was initially against “outsiders” who, the local people felt, were controlling their economy, alienating their livelihood and were attacking their culture. Because of this combination of causes, the conflicts combined economic demands with sub-nationalism and cultural resurgence (Datta 1990: 36-37) including the customary law.

One of the reasons why in most struggles a major demand is recognition of their identity linked to their land and customary laws. Their laws have changed in many ways in response to formal education and the new economic, religious and political relations. In some cases, individual land ownership has come to be accepted as the norm. However, most tribes continue to treat their customary laws and the community ethos as intrinsic to their identity. That is also the reason why the negotiations leading to the formation of Nagaland and Mizoram States had recognition of their customary laws as one of the conditions. It was granted to these two States through Articles 371A and G respectively of the Constitution.

Implications for Land Laws

The tendency to view the nation from the point of view of the Centre rather than the periphery also has implications for the land laws and land relations in the region. Most tribes are communitybased but the formal land laws are individual based and are founded on the principle of the State's eminent domain. In this view, land is only a commodity for cultivation and construction (NCHSE 1986) while to the tribals it is an ecosystem with the local community at its centre. For centuries their communities have treated the resources as renewable and have built a culture and economy of their sustainable use (Iyer 1996: 375-377).

The 19th century land laws made to suit the colonial need of exploiting the resources to the benefit of the British Industrial Revolution ignored the latter view. The colonial regime needed to change the Indian economy and turn the colony into a supplier of capital and raw material and a captive market for its products. It required a monopoly over land for coal mines, coffee and tea plantations, roads, railways and other schemes. New land laws were enacted to facilitate the process of land transfer to the profit of British plantation and mine owners. The effort to turn the livelihood of the local communities into a commodity began with the *Permanent Settlement 1793*. It continued in the *Assam Land Rules 1838*, the Calcutta law of 1824 and others meant to make land available for purposes like salt pans and culminated in the *Land Acquisition Act 1894* that remains in force today (Upadhyay and Raman 1998). The colonial regime based these laws on the principle of eminent domain. Its first facet is that land without an individual *patta* is State property. The second is that the State alone has the right to decide a public purpose and deprive even individual owners of their assets. This State power is overriding (Ramanathan 1999: 19-20).

The Law and the North Eastern Communities

That is the background of the interface of the customary and formal laws that has modified many tribal laws but its extent depends on the nature of their contact with the world

outside their own, the application of the Sixth Schedule and of their customary law. The Constitution was amended in 1963 and 1987 to recognise the law in Nagaland and Mizoram under Articles 371A and 371G respectively. The Sixth Schedule that recognises community ownership of land and forests is applicable to parts of Tripura, two districts of Assam and to the whole of Meghalaya (Fernandes, Pereira and Khatso 2005: 22-23). In the remaining States, the tribes live according to their community based customary law but the formal law recognises only individual ownership. It has changed its customary law to various degrees.

The Aka of West Kameng district in Arunachal Pradesh are close to their tradition and govern themselves according to their customary law. The Sixth Schedule does not apply to them but it has not had much impact on them because their contact with the outside world is recent (Sinha 1962). This *jhum* practicing tribe lacks the very concept of land ownership and only has the tradition of community control and of usufruct right over the CPRs. In the *jhum* season every family cultivates as much land as it needs. After it the land reverts to the community. However, slow change is visible among them. Today some claim individual ownership but others with a salaried job call themselves landless since they have lost their right over the CPRs by not practicing *jhum* any more (Fernandes and Bharali 2002: 7-8).

The Dimas of North Cachar Hills in Assam have been exposed to the dominant cultures since their Hinduisation by the Bengali administrators who accompanied the British colonial rulers but have retained their internal autonomy, continue to be governed by their CPR based customary law, come under the Sixth Schedule and have a district autonomous council. Many of their clans have dual descent with property inheritance through the male line and the clan and family name coming through the female line (Bordoloi 1984). However, their elite are moving towards individual *pattas*. One of their leaders owns over 200 acres (Barbora 2002: 1287). On the other side, a voluntary agency has introduced oranges and other commercial crops in some villages without changing the ownership pattern. Some families

that have accepted individual ownership have conferred inheritance rights also on women. Thus the trend towards individual ownership goes hand in hand with the change of their land use without changing the land ownership pattern drastically (Fernandes and Pereira 2005: 37).

Check your progress

8. In today's situation how the relationships are changing?
9. Why did Britishers introduce new land laws?
10. What is the concerned area of Sixth Schedule? List the states in which it is applicable.

The matrilineal but patriarchal Garo of Meghalaya are governed by their customary law and the Sixth Schedule. Many of them in the East Garo Hills have begun to show signs of class formation and of strengthening patriarchy. An important reason for this change is the introduction of rubber plantations. It got them to interact with the administration that gives loans and subsidies only to individual owners and “heads of families” that most financial institutions interpret as male. The families we studied in West Garo Hills continue their CPR culture and have not planted commercial crops. Thus, they have not combined the modern with the tradition that the Dimasas can become if more accept recent changes.

On the other side, the *Adibasi* of Jharkhand origin whom the British brought to Assam in the 19th and 20th centuries as indentured labour to work in its tea gardens are not included in the Schedule though they speak of a customary law that has very little value today. So they represent the type of modernisation that results in impoverishment and exploitation (Fernandes, Barbora and Bharali 2003: 33-34). Landlessness is the highest among them and literacy very low (Toppo 1999: 133-134). Though they have lived in Assam since the 1850s, they continue to be considered non-indigenous. As late as the May 2004 general elections a

candidate appealed to the voters to recognize himself as indigenous and reject his opponent from the plantation labourer community as non-indigenous (*The Telegraph* May 5, 2004).

The Boro, a plains tribe not under the Sixth Schedule, have won a Boro Territorial Council (BTC) after a struggle but till recently their community based customary law was not recognized (Roy 1995: 16-17). As a result they have almost fully internalized the ideology of individual ownership in the sense that those living on the CPRs call themselves encroachers while others like the Aka and Dimasa consider themselves CPR dependants. The BTC has recognized their right partially but has not granted them the Sixth Schedule status. Also the Rongmei, a Scheduled Tribe of Bishnupur district in Manipur are not governed by the Sixth Schedule. Several have lost their land to ethnic conflicts and some to the Loktak project but have not even been compensated since much of what they sustained themselves on was CPRs that the law does not recognize as their livelihood. These two tribes represent the interaction of their CPR based customary law with the individual based administration that can deprive them of their livelihood with no right to any alternative (Fernandes and Bharali 2002: 16-17). The Angami, a major tribe living mainly in the Kohima district of Nagaland numbered 97,433 in 1991. Terrace cultivation based agriculture was their main economic activity till recent years many took up salaried jobs. They were at the forefront of resistance to the British regime and after 1947 they led the Naga Nationalist movement and played a major role in the ethnic movement under the leadership of Z. A. Phizo. In the process, they underwent rapid social change and gained access to modern education and political systems. They have the Village Development Board that also has women among its members. Thus, tradition and modernity live side by side (D'Souza, Kekrieseno and Nokhwenu 2002: 26-27).

Land Laws and Ethnic Conflicts

We have mentioned these tribes as examples of various degrees of interaction of their communities and tradition with the formal law. Its implications have come out clearly in most

of our studies. We give in the Table below an example from two of them. One can see from it that landlessness is all but non-existent among the Aka whose interaction with the external world is recent. The “landless” are persons with a salaried job and have stopped *jhum* cultivation and have thus given up their usufruct right over the CPRs. The slow change is visible in the two persons who claim to own one or two hectares each of individual land. They belong to the elite that have appropriated to itself irrigated land near the river.

The extent of landlessness among the *Adivasi* shows their exploited state. Alienated from their land in Jharkhand and later from their customary law and community, they have slowly lost their tribal identity itself and have internalized a non-tribal psyche of subordination. Such internalization has been intensified by the regimented work structure of the tea gardens and by the denial of a Scheduled Tribe status to them. Among them, we chose 50% of the respondents from the *bastis* outside the gardens. They are not regular workers in the garden and are expected to be cultivators but their land ownership remains low.

Table: Land Ownership Pattern among Some Tribes in the Northeast (acres)

Tribe	Landless	Jhum	Below 1	1.01-2.5	2.51-5.0	5.01-10.0	10+	Total
Adibasi	128	0	23	12	6	0	0	169
Aka	3	38	0	0	2	0	0	43
Angami	13	1	64	21	18	24	29	170
Boro	32	0	3	14	6	3	0	58
Chiru	0	0	8	13	6	0	3	30
Chotei	1	0	8	9	6	0	3	27
Dimasa	1	79	0	21	4	1	0	106
Garo	84	0	57	41	28	8	5	223
Rongmei	4	0	54	31	19	1	1	110
Total	266	118	217	162	95	37	41	936
%	28.42	12.61	23.18	17.31	10.15	03.95	04.38	100.00

Source: Fernandes and Barbora 2002a: 116; Fernandes and Bharali 2002: 23

Of importance is the extent of landlessness among the Garo who was till recently a CPR dependent matrilineal tribe. When rubber plantation was introduced among them, the Rubber Board and the financial bodies insisted on individual *pattas* as preconditions for loans and subsidies. Patta ownership was usually understood as male. It has started a move away from the community to the individual male owner. Today individual ownership is a fact and male ownership has become a demand of middle-class men. This move has been in existence for many decades on a low scale (Kar 1982: 254). Rubber plantation has intensified the demand and its catalytic role was crucial to it (Fernandes, Pereira and Khatso 2005: 10-11). Thus, even where the Sixth Schedule recognises community ownership, the administrative system goes by individual values and sets in motion processes that can weaken the tribe.

That the Dimasa too are close to their tradition but not to the same degree as the Aka is seen in the nature of land ownership among them. Three-fourths of them continue to depend on *jhum* land which is their livelihood. Some of them have started moving towards individual ownership because of their exposure to the commercial forces and the administration. They want individual *pattas*. If done without any preparation it can take them towards the extent of landlessness seen among the Garo (Fernandes and Pereira 2005: 93-95).

Landlessness is very low among the Rongmei but 50% of them own less than one acre each and nearly 30% own less than 2.5 acres (one hectare) considered the minimum a family requires for its sustenance. They lost much of their land in their conflict with the *Kuki*. The law could not protect their land. Some others lost their land to the Loktak project but were not counted among the displaced or compensated for it. The reason for both is that the formal law did not recognise community ownership according to which they lived. Most of them have now occupied the CPRs of some neighbouring villages and have declared them their own.

There is very little landlessness among the Angami whose customary law has been recognized. It bans land transfer to persons not belonging to their tribe. They also have a

tradition of combining individual with community ownership on one side and terrace cultivation with *jhum* on the other. That tradition combined with the political processes of the nationalist struggle and access to education to make it easier for them to deal with the changes than what the others have done. However, some tension is felt today in the form of land alienation within the tribe and the consequent class formation. One of the forms it has taken is hidden absentee landlordism (Fernandes and Barbora 2002a: 48-49).

Land Relations and Conflicts

We have discussed until now the impact of imposition of the formal land laws on tribes that have lived by their tradition. The formal law was imposed on them with no preparation. Where there was some preparation, they were able to deal with the changes more than those who came face to face with them with no preparation. The Garo belong to the latter category while the Angami and Dimasa have had some preparation in different forms. Such an intervention has disrupted their societies and their reaction was initially against outsiders like the immigrants. Because of it, the region has witnessed killings of Biharis in Karbi Anglong, anti-Bengali conflicts in Tripura and others elsewhere (Bhaumik 2003: 84-85).

This interface and land alienation that results from it has also resulted in shortages. They have led to conflicts between various communities of the region and most of them are around land. On one side the local people view the immigrants as a threat to themselves. On the other, the shortages that result from this encounter force them to compete among themselves for the scarce resources. One of its results is hardened identities and exclusive claims over the resources of an area. Each community rewrites its history to declare itself the original inhabitants of a given region, as such the sole claimants to its resources. Be it the Naga-*Kuki* conflict in Manipur (Fernandes and Bharali 2002: 52-55), the Bodo-Santhali (Roy 1995) and Dimasa-Hmar tension in Assam (*The Telegraph*, 23rd April 2003) or the Tripura

tribal demand for a homeland (Bhaumik 2003) all have their origin in competition for land. These conflicts between communities of the region arise because in the context of shortages caused by encroachment and the failure to create productive jobs every group views the limited land and jobs as its exclusive right. Given their symbiotic relationship with land, the community views the resultant conflicts as a defense of its culture, identity, and livelihood. Thus, the changes begin with outside intervention. Once the result in shortages, they both intensify traditional rivalries and create new ones within the region (Baruah 1999: 29-32).

A crucial issue in them is commercialisation of land and forests and the resultant transition of most ethnic groups from subsistence to a commercial economy and of their land from livelihood to a commodity. The administration supports the transition to a commercial commodity by insisting on individual *pattas* for subsidies and loans. The reaction of the local communities is ambiguous. Many of them want to retain control over land but at the same time move away from it as a livelihood. Most Aka and Dimasa families sustain themselves on land but it is not the case with the Rongmei, *Adibasi* and to some extent Bodo who have lost much of their land to ethnic conflicts. Some of the Rongmei sell their land in order to earn money to bribe officials and get a job in the administration or for their children's education. They have lost hope inland as sustenance and are ready to part with it for an alternative but are not to abandon their cultural attachment to it as an essential ingredient of their identity. This effort to keep control over it while moving beyond it is another cause of conflicts.

4.4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF INDUSTRIALIZATION IN THE REGION

The Present Status and the Past History of the Industrial Sector in North East India

Northeast India, which occupies the remote corner of India, is one of the least developed regions of the country. This development begins with the region's initial absorption into the world economy as a marginal periphery, a part of frontier of the British

rule and which eventually leads to the region's peripheral position within the Indian nation-state after independence. Assam had interaction with the British East India Company as early as 1792, at the request of the king of Assam, "for commercial advantages" by friendly and open intercourse. The persisting internal strife and disorder led Burmese occupy the plains of Assam from 1817 to 1826 and Manipur from 1819 to 1826. With the request of the king of Assam, the British defeated the Burmese and were forced to surrender their suzerainty over Assam and Manipur by the Treaty of Yandaboo in 1826. Eventually the British rulers annexed the whole region in the subsequent years, the Cachar plains in 1830, Khasi Hills (1833), Jaintia Hills (1835), Karbi Anglong or Mikir Hills (1838), North Cachar Hills (1854), Naga Hills (1866-1904), Garo Hills (1872-73) and Mizo Hills (1890). These annexations brought about drastic changes in the polity as well as in the economy of the region, with the gradual decay of feudal institutions and the rise of capitalist economic entities.

The British East India Company had no interest in the North-eastern region until the discovery of tea in 1823. The modern economic development in the North-eastern region became a priority with the increased interest shown by the East India Company on items like tea, oil, and coal available plenty in the region. Robert Bruce, a British merchant, who came to Assam in 1823 learned about the existence of tea plant from a Singpho chief. The information provided by Bruce led William Bentinck, the Governor-General of India, to appoint a twelve-member committee (Tea Committee) to examine the possibility of introducing tea cultivation in 1834. Subsequently, some European and Indian entrepreneurs formed the Bengal Tea Association in 1838. The Assam Company was formed in England in 1839 and within a year the Bengal Tea Association merged with Assam Company.

Check your progress

11. In which year tea plant was discovered? How many member committees was appointed for tea cultivation?

Apart from tea, oil and coal were the two other important discoveries of the British in Assam. The formation of Assam Railways and Trading Company in 1881 became the forbearer of economic development in Assam. The company introduced railways, developed petroleum and coal as an object of emergent trade and geared up tea and timber industries. After the Assam Railways and Trading Company gave up its interests in petroleum, the Assam Oil Company was formed in 1899 with its headquarters at Digboi. Assam Oil Company was engaged in exploration of oil and set up Digboi refinery in 1901. All these undertakings by the British brought about a new dawn in the field of industry. Yet, this commercial adventure did not leave any scope for native participation. Though the region came under colonial economic system, except for tea plantation, no strong linkages were established with outside market. The plantation revolution was not accompanied by any agricultural revolution within Assam to raise the agricultural productivity and marketable surplus. The local economy was not able to meet the needs of the rising immigrated workforce in the plantation sector. As a result, food grains were imported into the region to meet these rising needs. From this it can be said that people were brought in to meet labour

requirement, their foods imported and their wages remitted back home by the laborers, thus the region acted as a resource provider, to be extracted and exploited by outsiders, where the local population have nothing to gain out of it. The limited participation of the local population in the economic activities furtherrestricted their fusion with the main currents of development.

Check your progress

12. In which year Assam Oil Company was set up and which place?
13. Why there was no agriculture improvement in Assam during the colonial period?

In the hill areas of the North-eastern region the British rulers resorted to the policy of minimum interference of the tribal areas and the traditionally structured tribal societies continued to remain autonomous with minimum colonial presence. Due to the unique geopolitical and historical background of the tribals and with a view to check entry of people into this area, the hills and plains were governed by different laws. As a result, the tribal people in the hill areas of the North-eastern region remained outside the ambit of the capitalist path of development and continued to lead a life of relative independence. The fact was that the hill areas were of little economic value and considered to be a burden by the British rulers.

That Northeast India has remained industrially underdeveloped can be understood from a glance at table 1 showing the shares of industrial sectors in domestic products. While the share of industries taken together is lower in each state of the region than the all India share, in case of manufacturing the share is even less than half of the all India share. Even for Assam, which has a long history of modern manufacturing, the share was below 10% in 1999-2000 - much less than 14.78%, the share for the country as a whole. The relatively small share of the manufacturing sector in the NDP of the region indicates that the region has not made much progress in industrialisation during the post-independence period.

Percentage Share of Industry in GDP at Current Prices in 1999-2000

<i>State/ Region/ Country</i>	<i>Mining and Quarrying Supply</i>	<i>Manufac- Turing V=II+</i>	<i>Electricity, Gas & Water</i>	<i>Industry Total</i>
<i>I</i>	<i>II</i>	<i>III</i>	<i>IV</i>	<i>III+IV</i>
Arunachal Pradesh	0.86	2.50	2.88	6.24
Assam	7.67	9.04	1.41	18.12
Manipur	0.00	8.22	3.83	12.05
Meghalaya	6.86	2.10	3.58	12.54
Mizoram	0.52	1.24	0.71	2.47
Nagaland	0.00	1.34	1.77	3.11
Tripura	1.08	2.18	1.98	5.24
The Northeast Region	5.57	6.94	1.84	14.35
India	2.33	14.78	2.49	19.60

Note: Basic data are taken from National Income Statistics Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, January 2004 for the States and Economic Survey 2002-03, Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

At the time of independence, there was a small but significant modern industrial sector in Assam developed and dominated almost entirely by colonial capitalists. This sector consisted of plantation and manufacturing of tea, mining of coal and oil, refining of oil, manufacturing of plywood and other forest resources based products and railways developed to facilitate the transportation of output of these industries (Sarma 1993). But in the changed circumstances after independence, industrialization process in Assam received a serious setback. Partition of the country at independence cut off the region's approach routes to the rest of the country and the world through East Bengal. Consequently the narrow corridor of

North Bengal remained the only link of the region with the rest of the country and the region got burdened with a transport bottleneck and high cost of movement of man and material to and from it. This, in turn, has hindered economic integration of the region with the rest of the country and reduced the attractiveness of the region as a destination of investment. While foreign colonial interest in taking up new industrial ventures waned, there was no significant step up of investment by domestic private or public sector for sustaining the growth of industries.

As independent India embarked upon a public sector dominated program of industrialization, political considerations came to have bearing on the decisions regarding the location of major industrial units. This development did not help the already disadvantaged Northeast region in getting due share of investments in industries, at least in the first two decades of economic planning. Goswami (1981: p954) narrates a glaring instance of the region losing out due to politically influenced decisions.

“Thanks to extensive oil exploration in the post-independence period, the estimate of Assam’s recoverable crude increased severalfold. This necessitated the setting up of additional refining capacity. In addition to Indian experts, a team of Soviet experts was invited by the Government of India to advise them on the site for the proposed refinery in the public sector. The Soviet consultants unequivocally gave their opinion in favour of Silghat near Nowgong as the technically superior site. They also suggested linking Silghat with the main consuming centers outside Assam with a product pipeline. But the Central Government flouting all expert opinion for reasons anything but economic decided to set up the refinery at Barauni in Bihar and to transport crude from Assam through 1151 kms. long pipeline costing Rs. 75 crores as against the estimated cost of Rs. 35 crores only for the product pipeline”.

Subsequently, of course, responding to the growing public discontentment in the region, the Central Government started paying greater attention to the problems of industrial

and overall economic backwardness of the region. Several public sector industrial units were then set up and fiscal transfers to the States of the region have also since been enhanced. As a result there was a revival of industrial activity in the region in the 1970s. However the upswing did not survive very long and in the liberalized environment of the 1990s the industrialization process took some fresh beating in the North-East. The flow of foreign direct investment (FDI) is also not much encouraging. Realizing the increased difficulty of the region in attracting industrial investment in post-reform environment, the central government made provision for fiscal and other concessions for newly established industrial units. According to a press release dated March 21, 2007 of the Department of Commerce, Government of India, Rs 1067 crores were invested to set up 681 industrial units in the region during 1999 – 2004. Many of these units, in reality, were little more than packaging units of goods manufactured outside. Such units were obviously set up only to take advantage of the fiscal and other incentives and they cannot contribute significantly to real industrial development in the region. The fiscal and other incentives have been further strengthened in the North East Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy (NEIIPP), 2007¹. The impact of the new policy, if any, will be visible in the coming years only.

4.5. TYPES OF INDUSTRIES

4.5.1. Tea industry

Tea is considered as one of the main agricultural products in the state and is reputed all over the world for its aromatic quality. The other agricultural products in the state are rice, potatoes, pulses, jute, sugarcane, etc. Different fruits like bananas, jackfruits, pineapples, mangoes, guavas are also produced in the state. The major industries in the states are petroleum and natural gas, coal, tourism, limestone, granite and tea industry, some other industries are fertilizers, sugar, paper, rice mills food processing and sericulture. Some traditional industries are brass-metal works, bamboo and cane work, spinning of *endi*,

mugasilk, pat silk, blacksmith, wood carving, village carpentry, gold smith, pottery, weaving etc. Tea industry was doing well in the beginning of 20th century and was recognized as one of the major manufacturing industry in Assam with enormous potential. It boasted relatively better workforce due to its majestic position in those days. The organization of the British in this respect was quite commendable; the infrastructure had reached snooty heights, the employment prospect was rising day by day even the freedom movement never actually affected the tea trade.

After Independence, there was a radical change that took place in tea industry as some of the tea estates in Assam came under control of Indians by purchasing maximum shares at the stock exchange or buying the tea estates directly. Most of the new buyers were not aware of tea plantation and lack of knowledge of the trade and a desire to make fast money from the business; they ignored the basic requirements of labour essential for plantation. They appointed unskilled labourers with low salaries and did not give adequate attention to improve the tea gardens. As a result, the quality of tea was adversely affected and consumers started complaining at the London tea auction. Countries like North America, Australia, and Britain shared more than 80 percent of India's export. Due to unprincipled actions of India owned tea gardens, lesser-known tea producing countries such as Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Japan began blowing up in the international market. The demand for Indian tea in the international level went down, but some Indian owned tea gardens in Assam priced significantly well in the international market as these tea gardens were given more attention by big agency houses in Kolkata and yielded a better result.

Check your progress

14. What led to the decline of the Assam Tea industry?

The Indian Government abolished the managing agency system at the end of the 60's decade, which has destabilized the English stronghold on tea estates in India and forced them to walk out of the Indian tea plantations. The planning commission hereafter decided to restrain absurd practices of the tea estates to improve its form. Assam on its part has the largest domain for tea plantations and enjoys as the largest producer of tea in the world by employing utmost number of labourers. The tea industry in Assam contributes significantly in the development of state economy. The figures had moved on to more than Rupees 5000 crore annually as agriculture income, the number append up as the state also receives a share of income tax and export duties from the center.

After the departure of Europeans, the supplies of tea chest are being looked after by various plywood industries of Assam and these industries provided employment to a vast number of people. It also opens market for Assam coal and the fertilizer industry as fertilizers and coal is needed by the tea industry. Therefore, it can be accomplished that tea industry shares 15% a significant employment burden for the state of Assam directly and indirectly. Tea is considered as the most important crop in Assam. It has been producing some of the finest teas in the world. Assam produces about 51% of the tea produced in India and about 1/6th of the tea produced in the world. The climate of Assam favors producing sweetness and tangy tea in the region. The world's largest CTC tea auction center is in Assam and the world's second-largest in terms of total tea. Assam mainly exports its tea to Europe and Middle East countries and also to Pakistan, Egypt, Japan, and Israel. Tea is grown in both the Brahmaputra and Barak plains in Assam. Tea gardens are mostly found in Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Golaghat Darrang and Sonitpur districts of Assam. About 17% of the workers of Assam are engaged in the tea industry. Though Assam plantation generally produces black tea, the region also produces smaller quantities of green and white teas. There

are more than 850 tea estates and more than 2500 tea gardens in Assam that covers thousands of acres of land.

The tea industry in Assam is about 180 years old. This industry plays an important role in the state economy as well in the national economy. The first Indian tea produced in Assam was sent to United Kingdom for public sale in the year 1838. Subsequently tea cultivation was extended to other parts of the country between 50s and 60s of the last century. As of today, Assam tea has retained its international standard and commands significant share in the world market. The tea industry in Assam also gives average daily employment to more than six lakh persons in the state, which is around 50 percent of the total average daily number of labor employed by tea industry in the country.

4.5.2. Bamboo Industry

It is one of the important minor forests produces that assists in subsistence income of tribal folk to a greater extent. It has deep cultural significance in the Indian culture and is the highest yielding renewable natural resources and different species occur in different parts of the country.

India is the second only to China in Bamboo production and it is immensely popular in northeastern region. Bamboo is one of the most abundant and environmental-friendly and sustainable resources available in North East Region, which is not being used to its full potential. North Eastern Himalayan region of India has great diversity of bamboo resources. Most of the species come across in our country are indigenous. Of them are two primary species *dendrocalamus strictus* and the *bambusa arundinacea*. Dense bamboos are found mostly in Arunachal Pradesh followed by Mizoram and Manipur. Mizoram occupies the largest forest area under different bamboo species, followed by Meghalaya. As this region is the largest reservoir of bamboo resource in India, screening is required to identify the most delicate bamboo species the development of package of practices for their mass

multiplication. Four States of Northeast i.e. Tripura, Assam, Mizoram, and Nagaland have formulated their own policies for the development of Bamboo and conservation of Bamboo forests.

High diversity of bamboo resource plays a significant role in the food and nutritional security of the tribal population. Tribal communities of the region use this potential resource for food, shelter, furniture, handicrafts, medicines and various ethno-religious purpose. The skill of working with bamboo is extremely widespread with a large percentage of the ethnic population capable of refined craftsmanship in this material. The vigorous bamboo craft tradition of North East gets the most creative expression through the craftsmanship of the various Northeastern tribes.

Intricate structures and myriad types of cuts and profiles made from numerous types of chisels are richly illustrated through the various types of bamboo crafts that these artisans make. The items they make often include things like trays, unique furniture, bamboo and cane mats, decorative lamp shades, stools, hand fans, baskets, handbags, jewelries, etc. This region can add to the global export of steamed and canned bamboo shoot to European countries. All these are labor intensive industries which have an employment potential to the developing states. Thus bamboo industry has the potential to become a major employer in the North Eastern States.

There are many popular uses of bamboo that varies from region to region and can be grown without much care having flexibility of giving us varieties of products of different designs. It was traditionally popular as a cheap raw material for building rural dwellings, for manufacturing utilitarian goods like baskets, various types of beautiful crafts, weaving and spinning types of equipment in textiles operation and storage bin in agricultural produce, etc. North-Eastern India is famous for bamboo wares notably various decorative items of

Tripura, utility items of Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh like beer *mugs*, *japas*, baskets, etc and decorative as well as utility items of Mizoram like the famous Mizo hat.

There are many legends and folk stories associated with the creation of bamboo craft. There are many heroes all over India who contributed towards growth and development of bamboo craft. Amongst tribes of northeastern India, there are many heroes and many of them were legendary. It is believed that growth of bamboo forests ensures good rainfall. That was the reason why during ancient period growing bamboo was encouraged. During modern days it is scientifically proved that the friction created due to rubbing of bamboo stems when the wind blows has positive effect on ecology to cause sufficient rain, which corroborates the ancient belief. Bamboos are also considered as a medicinal plant. Many ancient and modern kinds of literature recognize this fact. Unfortunately not much research has been concluded on bamboo hence, not much data is available for planning to utilize bamboo effectively. Scientific mode of utilization of the bamboo resources will not only lead in improving the socio-economic condition of the region but also help to maintain the ecological balance. Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee launched the National Bamboo Mission on June 5, 1999. The Mission got a boost with UNDP deciding to initiate a Cane and Bamboo Technological Upgradation and Networking Project in the North East Region, where bamboo is an integral part of daily life and culture of diverse ethnic communities. Moreover former President Late A.P.J Abdul Kalam called for embarking on the development path in a mission mode Bamboo Mission, which targeted for North-Eastern India. Thus in North Eastern India two centers chosen are Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati and NERIST, Itanagar. IIT, Guwahati has an industrial design center and bamboo being the priority item in North Eastern India, development of bamboo craft is one of the subjects chosen by this interface. This

center has turned out to be a center of excellence and has developed varieties of value-added elements.

Check your progress

15. Do you agree that bamboo plants can cause rainfall?

There is a fairly well-established industry which supplies finished products to handicraft emporia in the metropolitan cities. This industry is distributed over several locations in Tripura, Assam, Meghalaya, and Manipur. Most of these emporia-type products are sold as curios which are far removed from any functional context. Perhaps this factor has contributed to the degeneration in the aesthetic and structural quality standards of these products. An excessive preoccupation with decorative detail which has no reference to material properties or traditional form is also responsible for this degeneration. It is painful to see such products being promoted by state corporations and government development agencies. Perhaps the best strategy would be to help local craftsmen to select the best examples from among the vast range of traditional products and help them see afresh the strengths inherent in these products. Product diversification should be firmly rooted in the traditional wisdom expressed in these products if quality standards are to be maintained in the face of change caused by market pressure.

4.5.3. Oil industry

Northeast region comes under the oil resource mapping system; it is one of the richest and unexplored areas so far. The Assam oil-based regions are being harnesses since the colonial period and Digboi is one of the oldest oil refineries in India. There is other part of the regions which has pot potential and abundance stock of fossil fuel.

The oil refinery was focused during the second and third five-year plan, there were Guwahati and Bongaigaon refinery centers which were taken over by the two oil-producing companies like – Oil India Ltd and ONGC Ltd.

The history of Oil and Gas Industry in India dates back to 1889 when India's oil well was drilled near Digboi town of Assam. Assam is one of the leading producers of onshore crude oil and contributes over 24% of total onshore Crude production which is about 12.18% of total crude production in the country. Assam alone has oil reserved of about 1.6 billion tones.

Handloom industry

The handloom sector has a long tradition of excellent craftsmanship in India. It is also the country's second-largest employment generation sector next to agriculture. The weaving community consisted of a wide range of ethnic groups reflecting their caste and community identity in the weaving pattern, style, and motif. It has been a traditional occupation for women who produce clothes for family members. It is also a source of livelihood, especially in industrially backward States of the northeastern region (NE region) of India for a large section of rural women. Welfare schemes, financial assistance and health insurance of weavers are some of the interventions for development of handlooms taken up by the government. The result of such interventions help the NE region occupy a remarkable place in the country in terms of number of handloom workers, number of handloom households and looms, yet the average working days are less as compared to other States. Owing to large domination of part-time weavers, the economic contribution from the weaving activity cannot be derived fully. Having said this, the region has tremendous potential in promoting handloom sector as a trademark of the ethnicity. There is no social stigma of a woman working as a weaver because culture demands that women know this occupation. In this mechanized and globalized market, the handloom sector is providing a refreshing change in

unique manual skill and diversity. It can play a positive role in providing livelihood to a large section of women in the NE region

4.5.4. Handlooms for Livelihood in North-Eastern Region: Problems and Prospects

Table1: State-wise Distribution of Handloom Worker Households

State	Total Handloom distribution Worker Households ('000)	Per cent distribution	Total handloom weaver households ('000)	Per cent
Arunachal Pradesh	30	1.09	23	1.53
Assam	1,241	44.58	1096	72.7
Manipur	179	6.43	175	11.67
Meghalaya	11	0.41	10	0.71
Mizoram	39	1.42	38	2.58
Nagaland	61	2.19	42	2.82
Sikkim	1	0.02	0.53	0.03
Tripura	121	4.33	118	7.87
NE total	1683	60.47	1506	66.44
All India	2,783	100	2,268	100

Source: Handloom Census of India, 2010, Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India.

Table 2: Distribution of Handloom Workers by Age

NER/India	Total workforce (lakh)	Less than 18 years (%)	Adult workers (18 years and above)(%)	Total

NE region	21.6	8.7	91.3	100
India	43.3	11.2	88.8	100

Source: Handloom Census of India, 2010, Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India.

Table 3: Distribution of Adult Handloom Workers by Social Groups

NER/India	Scheduled Castes (%)	Scheduled Tribes (%)	Other Backward Castes (%)	Others
North-eastern region	7.2	34.3	33.9	24.6
India	10.1	18.1	45.2	26.6

Source: Handloom Census of India, 2010, Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India.

Production, Employment and Income

The nature of handloom production, employment and economic contribution from handloom are examined to identify impediments to the growth of the sector. Majority of the handlooms in NE region could contribute less economically to the family income (19 per cent only) while it is 58 per cent in other States of India (Handloom Census 2010). The region has to increase the average working days for getting higher income. While handloom workers in the region work on an average 140 days, other States in India work for 245 days in a year. The reason is that the NE region handloom sector is dominated by domestic production (62 per cent) and a large portion of domestic workers work mostly on a part-time basis. The other States of India are primarily engaged in commercial production of handlooms. The region also has highest proportion of idle looms in the country. As almost half (45.9 per cent) of weavers worked in domestic production and therefore, there is low productivity. Hence contribution from handlooms to household income remains marginal. However, the weavers support the family by supplying clothes which are used by family members for daily wear, festivals, and ceremonies. When compared to States which are primarily engaged in

commercial production the region recorded low productivity. While half of the weavers in other States produce above two meters per day, only a few weavers in the region produce above two meters per day. Half of NE weavers generally produce one meter per day. The condition did not improve after two decades because the handloom census 1988 estimated productivity among the States where there were working looms and recorded that Assam had the highest number of working looms (12.9 lakh) but lowest productivity, Manipur fourth-largest looms (2.7 lakh); but both had productivity way below the average Indian production of 5.12 meter per loom per day (Handloom Census 1988). The low productivity of handlooms was on account of four factors- (1) nature of work pattern (2) technology (3) management and (4) market structure (Debi 1994). For the growth of handlooms sector the impediments have to be addressed with government support and mobilization of weavers to change their attitude towards more productivity. The Handloom Census 2010 reported that the average share of handloom income to the total household income in India is 30.2 per cent, but in NE region except Meghalaya, all the States show below the national average (see Figure 2). Where there is a dominance of commercial production the share of handloom income to the total household income is 58.1 per cent. Since the economic contribution is less in NE region, the proportion of indebtedness (1.6 percent) is also low compared to states like Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha, and Karnataka. There is low penetration of mills and power looms, so there is less threat in NE region. With proper intervention in terms of market access and organization of weavers, the sector can be a source of livelihood for women who are either educated or uneducated. Besides this, handlooms being viewed as a cultural accomplishment, 30 per cent of handloom households in the region reported preferring their children to follow this traditional occupation.

Check your progress

16. What are the factors responsible for handloom low productivity in the region?

4.6. SUMMARY

- The utilization of bio-resources by tribes and other communities is based on indigenous and traditional knowledge that help in sustainable use and conservation of natural resources. The tribal farmers have been using hundred of locally adapted major and minor crops in the various agricultural systems that helped them to survive under risk and hard prone conditions. The yield and energy efficiency of different agricultural systems depends on the type of crops cultivated. As a large part of the region is hilly features settled by different tribal groups, shifting cultivation is the utmost customary which is the rudimentary life supportive subsistence intensive agriculture. Shifting cultivation is commonly practicing in hilly red soil and laterite soil region.
- Most tribes of the region run their civil affairs according to their community based customary law but the individual based land law of the country is superimposed on them. The Community ownership tradition has not remained unchanged but has been modified over time. Today land relations are being modified by immigration, encroachment and the changes that the modern legal system introduces in their tradition.
- The modern economic development in the North-eastern region became a priority with the increased interest shown by the East India Company on items like tea, oil, and coal available plenty in the region. The plantation revolution was not accompanied by any agricultural revolution within Assam to raise the agricultural productivity and marketable surplus. The local economy was not able to meet the needs of the rising immigrated workforce in the plantation sector.

4.7. KEY TERMS

Livelihood:	A source for maintaining one's own life
Shifting agriculture :	A popular agriculture practices among the hill tribes

Mono cropping:	The system of growing one specific crop in a particular plot of land.
Agro-forestry:	A combination of agriculture and forestry
Horticulture:	The art or practice of garden cultivation and management.
Crop diversification:	Growing several kinds of crops.

4.8. ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS YOUR PROGRESS

1. 20 major agricultural and horticultural crops and the native home of about 160 domesticated species of cultivated crops.
2. In general terrace land has the lowest efficiency among the different existing agricultural systems. In jhum system farmers grow several crops under mixed cultivation, therefore known as one of the rich agro-biodiversity systems
3. State Domestic Product (SDP)
4. Rice is a three-season crop, viz, autumn (*Ahu*), winter (*Sali*) and summer (*boro*) in Assam.
5. This slash-and-burn system of cultivation (Jhum practice) is a unique feature of the region, which covers nearly 2 million hectares area (one-fourth of the total cropped area).
6. Based on these physical features the agriculture practices of the region are of two types- (i) Shifting cultivation (Jhum), and (ii) Settled or plains agriculture
7. Assam leads the whole North-Eastern states by sharing 2755 thousand hectares and 67.6 per cent of food grains production. Tripura is the next largest state in area and production of food grains with a share of 258.5 thousand hectares and 10 per cent of the region's Products.

8. Today land relations are being modified by immigration, encroachment and the changes that the modern legal system introduces in their tradition.
9. The colonial regime needed to change the Indian economy and turn the colony into a supplier of capital and raw material and a captive market for its products. It required a monopoly over land for coal mines, coffee and tea plantations, roads, railways, and other schemes. New land laws were enacted to facilitate the process of land transfer to the profit of British plantation and mine owners
10. The Sixth Schedule that recognizes community ownership of land and forests is applicable to parts of Tripura, two districts of Assam and to the whole of Meghalaya.
11. In 1823. William Bentinck, the Governor-General of India, to appoint a twelve-member committee (Tea Committee) to examine the possibility of introducing tea cultivation in 1834.
12. The Assam Oil Company was formed in 1899 with its headquarters at Digboi.
13. The plantation revolution was not accompanied by any agricultural revolution within Assam to raise the agricultural productivity and marketable surplus. The local economy was not able to meet the needs of the rising immigrated workforce in the plantation sector.
14. After independence, most of the tea industry was brought and came under the control of Indians by purchasing maximum shares at the stock exchange. They were not aware of tea plantation and lack of knowledge of the trade and a desire to make fast money from the business; they ignored the basic requirements of labour essential for plantation. They appointed unskilled labourers with low salaries and did not give adequate attention to improve the tea gardens.

15. It is scientifically proved that the friction created due to rubbing of bamboo stems when the wind blows has positive effect on ecology to cause sufficient rain, which corroborates the ancient belief.
16. The low productivity of handlooms was on account of four factors- (1) nature of work pattern (2) technology (3) management and (4) market structure

4.9. QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Discuss the growth and development of industry in northeast India.
2. What is horticulture? What is the significance of horticulture for NE region?
3. What are the factors responsible for the un-development of the industry in the NE region? Explain
4. Cite a suggestion for the proper development of industry in the NE region.

4.10. FURTHER READING

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UNIT-V ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

Structure

5.0 Introduction

- **Measurement of Human Development**
- **Human Resource Development in Northeast India**
- **Issues and the problem of Human Resource Development in Northeast India**

5.1. Unit Objectives

5.2 Migration

- **Types of Migration**
- **Illegal Migrants**
- **Consequences of illegal migrants**

5.3. Cross border infiltration

- **Problems of border infiltration**

5.4. Ethnic Identity

5.5 Inter-state Boundary Dispute

- **The border dispute between the Northeast states of India.**

5.6. Insurgency

- **Insurgency in Northeast India**
- **Causes of insurgency in Northeast India**
- **Recommendations to solve the Insurgency**

5.7. Look East Policy

- **Brief background of Look East Policy**
- **Policy initiatives in practice**

- **Economic consequences for the Northeast**
- **Act East Policy**

5.8. Summary

5.9. Key Terms

5.10. Answer to check your progress

5.11. Questions and Exercises

5. 12. Further Readings

5.0. INTRODUCTION

The development and growth of a nation greatly depend upon proper utilization of its human resources. To utilize these resources, there is a need to convert human beings into human resources. Development of human resource is essential for any organization that would like to be dynamic and keep growth-oriented. Unlike other resources, Human Resource has rather unlimited potential capabilities. The potential of human resource can be created by identifying, nurturing and using the capabilities of people. Human Resource Development (HRD) was first introduced by Leonard Nadler in 1969 in a conference in U.S. He defined Human Resource Development as “those learning experience which is organized for a specific time and designed to bring about the possibility of behavioral change.” According to M.M Khan, “Human Resource Development is the across of increasing knowledge, capabilities and positive work attributes of all people working at all levels in a business undertaking.

Human Resource Development (HRD) includes such opportunities as training, employee’s career development, performance management and development, coaching, mentoring, succession, planning, tuition assistance, and organization development. HRD is the framework for helping employees develops their personal and organizational skills, knowledge and abilities.

MEASUREMENT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

To measure the welfare of the people United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its first report on human development (UNDP 1990) introduced the concept of human development and its measurement. It was introduced as a composite measure of economic progress and human welfare and intended to be a better substitute to per capita income that could neither capture nor exhibit the exact level of development of human beings nor that of nations. The measure is popularly known as Human Development Index (HDI).

Human Development Index is a composite index of 3 basic components of human development, viz, longevity, knowledge, and standard of living where Longevity is measured by life expectancy, knowledge measured by a combination of adult literacy and standard of living is measured by purchasing power, based on real GDP per capita adjusted for the local cost of living.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHEAST INDIA

HRD and Employment sector is one of the important sectors in the North Eastern Council (NEC) Secretariat. The sector deals with education, sports, social welfare, skill development, and training. In addition to planning in various sectors mentioned above it also plays a catalytic role in infrastructure development and promotional activities in all 8 Northeastern states in the field of education, sports, social welfare, and gainful employment.

HRD and Education sector has the following major schemes:

1. Infrastructure Development of Educational Institutes in the Northeast Region.
2. Financial Support for students in the Northeast Region.
3. Development of sports and youth activities in the Northeast Region.
4. Development and Promotion of Education and Social sector.

HRD plays a major role in the following sectors:

a) EDUCATION

Education is the main driver of HRD. It primarily shapes the future of our nation and is in need of quality investment to realize the aspirations of its over 1.25 billion people. As far as Northeast India is concerned, according to 2011 census, the literacy rate except for Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, in the other 6 states of Northeast Region is higher than the National Average (74.04%) with Mizoram topping the list at 91.33%. However, a study conducted by Federation of Indian Chambers of commerce and industry (FICCI) in 2015 revealed that while a no of quality institutions for

higher education have come up in the region, primary and secondary education are still areas that require many improvements in terms of Quality and Outreach. In this regard, the northeastern state governments can also refer to ASER-2016 report published by PRATHAM for assessing standard of primary education and the gaps therein.

Another problem is the provincialisation of schools started by people at grass root level and standardization of teacher's salary for maintaining quality of education at primary stage, growing no of colleges lack qualified and trained teachers, inadequate infrastructure and laboratories. Keeping in mind the gaps in the education sector in the northeast, the North East Council(NEC) seeks to prioritize investments in the development of human resource of northeast states.

b) SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The Government of India in order to achieve its vision of 'skilled India' has tasked the ministry of skill development with the co-ordination of all skill development efforts across the country, building the vocational and technical training framework, skill up-gradation and innovative thinking for existing and future jobs to be created.

c) SPORTS

North-Eastern Council (NEC) also focuses on development of sports infrastructure which is still lacking in northeast India.

Check your progress

1. What do you understand the Human Development Index?

ISSUES and PROBLEM OF HRD IN NORTHEAST INDIA

Like every aspect has its advantages and disadvantages, human resource development also has its own drawbacks:

- 1) The growth of the population very fast in the Northeastern region demands immediate attention. It is not because growth of population by itself is undesirable, but when the economic growth of the region does not lend support to growth of population, resources are spent on maintaining the life than enriching it.
- 2) Secondly, we have noted the features of occupational distribution. The proportions of workers in the primary and tertiary sectors are overwhelmingly large while secondary sector most important for material prosperity employs very small proportion of workers. If human resources are to be better utilized, industrialization of the northeast region economy is the first prerogative of planning for development.
- 3) The region produces educated manpower that suits the swelling tertiary sector at most and is possibly unemployable in the secondary sector. Once industrialization takes place, the demand for skilled manpower will increase. The existing educational institutions will have to start technical and professional education programs. Several new educational institutions will have to be started especially for technical and professional courses suiting to the need of the growing economy.
- 4) Urbanization in the region is on an increase due to which the rural inhabitants in search for some remunerative occupation, the educated youth stick on to urban centers in search. Such migration leads to uneven development i.e. overloading of urban infrastructure and insignificance attached to rural development.

5.1. UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the meaning, types and consequences of migration
- Discuss the problems of cross border infiltration
- Define the ethnic identity and its related boundary disputes
- Explain the issues and problem of insurgency
- Discuss the significant of look east policy and its impact

5.2. MIGRATION

The term migration is originated from the Latin word '*migrare*' which means to change residence. Migration is the movement of people from one region to another region. When people leave their place of residence and permanently inhabited in a particular place then it can be termed as migration. Migration is not a new phenomenon in this world. "From the antiquity, people are found to move from one place to another, sometimes in search of better opportunities, when they see some of their needs and desires are not adequately fulfilled in their present location, sometimes just to maintain the status quo when they see their present situation seems to be a declining one. The study of migration is one of the major branches of demography. It is the third demographic component of population change along with fertility and mortality. Migration can change the size of the population and also the other compositions like age, sex, language, religion, etc. It brings both quantitative and qualitative changes in the socio-economic and political pattern of a region.

Types of migration

In general, the field of migration study can be divided into two parts- Internal migration and International migration.

Internal migration is when people migrate within the same country or region, also known as 'in-migrant'. While international migration is when people migrate from one country to another country, also termed as 'immigrant'.

The area from which a migrant departs is termed as 'area of origin' and the area at which he arrives is termed as 'area of destination'. When a large number of migrants depart from a common area of origin and arrive at a common area of destination during a particular period of time is known as 'migration stream'.

Who are the illegal immigrants?

Unlike a refugee, an illegal migrant is a person who crosses an international boundary and without any valid document, enters into another country for the purpose of carrying on any illegal or anti-social activities in that country or for other economic or political purposes. According to Section 2(b) of The Citizenship Act, 1955, an “illegal migrant” means a foreigner who has entered India:

- 1) Without a valid passport or other travel documents and such other document or authority as may be prescribed by or under any law in that behalf; or
- 2) With a valid passport or other travel documents and such other document or authority as may be prescribed by or under any law in that behalf but remains therein beyond the permitted period of time.

Consequences of illegal migration

1. Social consequences

Crisis of Identity: The influx of immigrants may create a crisis of identity among the indigenous tribes. Their cultural survival will be in jeopardy, their political control will be weakened and their employment opportunities will be undermined by such illegal migration.

Environmental Degradation: Large areas of forest land will be encroached upon by the immigrants for settlement and cultivation.

Difficulty to Identify the Illegal Migrants: In case of Assam, due to the similar language spoken by illegal migrants from Bangladesh and the indigenous Bengali speaking Muslim of Assam, it becomes difficult to identify and deport the illegal migrants from Assam soil.

2. Economic consequences: Increasing Financial Burden: Immigration has increased pressure on the part of state government, as the government has to increase the expenditure on education and health facilities to the immigrants.

Displacing Native Workers: There is a fear particularly during a recession that immigrants might take away the jobs thus creating competition and conflict.

Decrease of wage level with the increase of population: Illegal immigration has been adding a good number of people to the existing population and is considered to be the main reasons for population explosion. Due to the increasing human labor and less work there is a possibility of decreasing wage level.

3. Political consequences: Anti-Government Agitation: The failure of the government to respond the issue of illegal migration leads to agitation. Northeast India has witnessed governmental instability, sustained civil disobedience campaigns and worst cases of ethnic violence.

4. Illegal Voters: There are instances of immigrants who have got their names enlisted in the voting list illegally, thereby claiming themselves as citizens of the state. The immigrant's population act as a vote bank for the political parties.

5. Issue of Terrorism: It is alleged that among the illegal migrants there are also militants, who carry out the terrorist activities.

Check your progress

2. What is migration? State few ill effects of migration in NER.

5.3. CROSS BORDER INFILTRATION

Cross border infiltration is an illegal attempt of crossing the international border and entering into a neighboring country in order to carry out criminal activities, to disrupt socio-political order and harmony of the nation. India shares a border with Bangladesh, China, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh. All states except Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Telangana, Delhi, and Haryana have an international border or coastline. India's

boundary with Pakistan(3323km), China(3488km), Nepal(1751km), Bhutan(699km), Myanmar(1643km) and Bangladesh(4096.7km).

Problems of Border Infiltration

1)Illegal Immigration- Inthe case of Bangladesh, Underdevelopment, religious persecution, environmental concerns, etc pushed Bangladeshis into India, while India’s huge economy and accommodative society helped pull immigrants.

2) Cattle and other smuggling- Cattle from as far as Haryana, U.P, Bihar is taken to borders for grazing and then smuggled to Bangladesh. Along with cattle, smuggling of arms, and other essentials such as sugar, salt and diesel, human and narcotics trafficking, counterfeit Indian currency, kidnapping, and thefts are quite rampant along the India- Bangladesh border.

3) Indo-Pak Border- Despite fencing, smuggling mainly of Heroine is rampant at border of Punjab because villagers at both sides of the border are accomplice to such activities. Apart from this, anti-India Jihadist Groups are in collision with Pakistan armed forces who constantly tries to push terrorists to Indian side of LOC, which has further resulted in indiscriminate firing from Pakistan where many soldiers and citizens have been martyred.

4) The location of the Indo-Myanmar boundary throws up many challenges. Though the boundary is properly demarcated there are a few pockets that are disputed. The rugged terrain makes movement and overall development of the area difficult. The internal dynamics of the region in terms of the clan loyalties of the tribal people, inter-tribal clashes, insurgency, and transborder ethnic ties also adversely affect the security of the border areas. Insurgents make use of the poorly guarded border and flee across when pursued by Indian security forces. The location of the boundary at the edge of the “Drugs golden triangle” facilitates the unrestricted illegal flows of drugs into Indian Territory. Heroin is the main item of drug trafficking. It is reported that the local insurgent groups are actively involved in drugs and arms trafficking.

5.4. ETHNIC IDENTITY

The term ethnic and ethnicity have their roots in the Greek word ‘ethnos’, which describes a community of common descent. Ethnic identity refers to a person’s social identity within a larger context based on membership in a cultural or social group. Ethnic identity is formed by both tangible and intangible characteristics. Tangible characteristics such as shared culture or common visible physical traits are important because they contribute to the group’s feeling of identity, solidarity, and uniqueness.

Ethnic conflict, a form of conflict in which the objectives of at least one party are defined in ethnic terms and the conflict. Its antecedents and possible solutions are perceived along ethnic lines. Ethnic identity is seen as unique in intensity and durability and as an existential factor defining individual self-identification and communal distinctiveness. Mobilization of ethnic identity and ethnic nationalism is a powerful tool to engage the group in a political struggle. Ethnic divisions and ethnic conflict are considered inherent to multiethnic societies and a common phenomenon. Ethnicity as a device used by individuals and groups to unify, organize, and mobilize populations to achieve larger goals. Those goals are mostly of political nature and include among others, demands for self- governance, autonomy, access to resources and power, respect for the group’s identity and culture and minority rights. Several factors contribute to the salience and intensity of ethnic identities. First, the history of common efforts, stories of sacrifices for a common goal and memories of human suffering create strong connections among the members of affected ethnic groups. Secondly, a group’s ethnic identity is stronger if mass literacy is achieved. Literacy allows elements of identity to be stored in writing, which means that historical and cultural narratives can reach a mass audience and stay the same over time.

Check your progress

3. Define ethnicity.

5.5. INTER-STATE BOUNDARY DISPUTE.

Border areas have their own problems and peculiarities and more often vulnerable to illegal infiltration of population, which adds pressure on their economic and environmental resources. Moreover, the porous nature of the border enables easy cross border passage for insurgents and criminals including drug traffickers. Thus, governments of the states with international border are required to bear heavier burden for not only providing basic facilities to the people living in such areas but also for the broader national goal of securing the border. The border disputes raging in the region for decades have enveloped the states of Northeast India.

1) Border Dispute between Assam and Nagaland.

It is the most prominent border dispute with a history of violent clashes between border communities. Both the states have accused each other of illegally occupying each other's territory. The dispute between the two began right at the time of inception of Nagaland state in 1963. Assam claims that more than 50 thousand hectares of its territory have been annexed by Nagaland. Whereas the Nagaland State act of 1962 had defined its borders, according to the 1925 notification when Naga Hills and Tuensang area were integrated into a new administrative unit and made an autonomous area. The Naga's did not accept the boundary delineation and demanded that Nagaland should comprise the erstwhile Naga Hills and Naga dominated area in North Cachar and Nagaon districts, which were part of Naga territory. Since Nagaland did not accept its notified borders, tensions between Assam and Nagaland soon flared up resulting in the first border clashes in 1965 at Kakodonga Reserve Forest. Since then violent clashes along the Assam-Nagaland border have become a regular feature, with major armed conflicts reported in 1968, 1979, and 1985.

2) Border Dispute between Assam and Meghalaya.

The states of Assam and Meghalaya have been embroiled in a border dispute for decades now. It was first started when Meghalaya challenged the Assam Reorganization Act of 1971, which gave parts of Mikir hill of Assam and those, according to Meghalaya, are parts of United Khasi and Jaintia hills. However, there are regular clashes between both the sides along the border, which has resulted in the displacement of a large number of inhabitants and loss of life and property.

3) Border Dispute between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

When Arunachal Pradesh was carved out of Assam in 1987 as a state under the North-East Reorganization Act, 1971, the people of Arunachal Pradesh accepted their notified borders with Assam. However, subsequent to this, there has been the issue of Assamese encroachment. Amidst the widespread sense of helplessness, there is also an overwhelming desire and force to be free from such a situation of conflict which cripples the people from all sides. At such time we require that the government should come up with practical and acceptable solutions to the interstate border problems at the earliest.

4) The dispute between Assam and Mizoram.

Apart from all the problems and peculiarities of border areas, the Assam- Mizoram border has remained relatively calm despite the disputed nature of the border. However, there were a few instances in 1994 and 2007 when tensions along this border flared up. But because of timely intervention by the Central Government, a major crisis was averted and the situation was quickly brought under control. Following the 2007 border incident, Mizoram declared that it does not accept the present boundary with Assam and that the inner line of the Inner Line Reserve Forest as described in the 1875 notification under the East Bengal Frontier Regulation of 1873 should be the basis for delineating the border.

Check your progress

4. Cite any one issue of interstate boundary disputes happening in the region.

5.6. INSURGENCY

The Northeast region of India comprising of Eight states- Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Tripura, and Sikkim. North East India is a region poorly connected to the Indian mainland by a small corridor- Siliguri Corridor (also known as the Chicken Neck- with a narrow width of only 23 kilometers) North-Eastern India has been facing problems of insurgency for nearly 5 decades, but things are now settling down and peace has started to prevail.

What is Insurgency?

Insurgency is an armed insurrection or uprising against established civil authority, while the persons engaging themselves in insurgency are called the 'insurgents'. The insurgency can be variously classified on the basis of their influence, organization, means of expression, ideology, and structure. While in some cases ideology emerges as the most determining factor for the establishment of the insurgent body, in many other cases the area of their actual operation(geographically) could also determine the nature of their demands and hence their identity. It is a well-known fact that in Northeast India all insurgent(or militant) groups are not necessarily Anti-Indian or as asking for a sovereign state, as some of them are products of ethnic conflicts and want to protect the rights and interest of their communities.

INSURGENCY IN NORTHEAST INDIA

Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, and Tripura had been witnessing conflict since 1950-1960 periods, but since 1990, the intensity of conflicts started to decrease. Now the only state where prominent insurgency exists is Manipur. But in this region several armed factions

operate. Some groups call for a separate state, others for regional autonomy while some extreme groups demand complete independence. Some of the insurgent groups in Northeast India are:

Nagaland- NSCN (IM), NSCN (K)

Manipur- Peoples Liberation Army, PREPAK

Assam- ULFA, NDFB, KLNLF, UPDS

Tripura- National Liberation Front of Tripura, All Tripura Tiger Force

Meghalaya- ANVC, HNLC

CAUSES OF INSURGENCY IN NORTHEAST INDIA

The roots or causes of insurgency in Northeast India can be basically attributed to the social, economic and political scenario of the region. The causes can be broadly enumerated in the following way:

The Social Cause

1. The problem of poverty and exploitation of the vulnerable sections of society can be said to be one of the main causes of insurgency in the Northeast.
2. The youths tend to become insurgents because they have a feeling of being discriminated and treated as second class citizens.
3. The appalling gap between the rich and the poor, the privileged and unprivileged also gives rise to rebellious tendencies.
4. Cultural clash, with the intermingling of various cultures, also gives rise to a feeling of loss of identity, which in turn results in attempts at saving the culture in the name of insurgency.
5. In many cases, it has been seen that brutal force is used by the high and mighty to settle personal scores. On the other hand, the social system is so corrupt that the victim of such

highhandedness cannot secure any redress. It is such frustrated individuals, who in utter depression ultimately take up guns.

The Economic cause

1. Northeast India is essentially economically backward in terms of infrastructure and industrialization; this means there is a limitation of employment opportunities. As a natural corollary, the youths are swayed to commit unpardonable acts of rebellion, for they think that the best way to give vent to their indignation and frustration is to take up guns.
2. It can be contended that the youths in this vulnerable area do not have simple opportunities for their overall development. Hence to give meaning to their aspirations they have resorted to underground movements.
3. The growing inequality in the society due to uneven development and the monopolization of all privileges and facilities by a small group of Neo Rich is another important cause of social tension which provokes the marginalized and the exploited to revolt against the existing social order.

The Political Cause

1. It has often been noticed that power turns the heads of the political upstarts and they go to any extent to use their power. When the life of the victims is of blatant abuse of power becomes meaningless and they find no difference between life and death, they resort to insurgent activities in the false hope that in this way they can attain a glorious end.
2. The concept of 'son of the soil' is likely to have led to some sort of a regional arrogance, which might have culminated in the form of insurgent activities in the region.
3. Patronage from some political parties and leaders has also led to insurgent acts in the region.

Other causes

- Historical reasons – loosely administered under British India.

- Tensions between these states and the central government.
- The tension between the tribal/indigenous people of the state and migrant people from other parts of India.
- Geographical reasons- not well connected with the present Indian mainland.
- Developmental reasons- poorly developed due to lack of fund from center/ states.
- Environmental reasons.
- Military reasons- AFSPA(Armed Forces Special Power Act)
- Foreign policy- Look East Policy and market changes.
- External support- China and Myanmar.

In conclusion, it may be said that ‘Insurgency’ is undoubtedly the ugliest face of dissent. This phenomenon should be condemned universally and unequivocally. However, unless corrective measures are evolved by the government to wean away the path of violence by providing the youths with enough educational facilities and employment avenues, and the feeling of discrimination and deprivation is removed by accelerating economic growth, there is always the danger of spurt in insurgent activities in the Northeast and in the whole country.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO SOLVE NORTHEAST INDIA PROBLEMS

- Insurgency: Thorough background check of all insurgents group should be carried out before the central government enters into any ceasefire or suspension of operations agreements with the insurgents.
- Political
 1. Political solutions to the Assam problem should be discussed openly as widely as possible to avoid backlash from the tribal and the minority population of the state.
 2. A system of work permit should be issued so that the illegal Bangladeshi migrants do not end up as Indian citizens.
 3. The Autonomous District Councils should be empowered.

4. Governance should be improved in a step by step manner. Strict supervision by senior officials should be initiated to improve the delivery system of the government.

- **Development**

1. The Ministry of the Development of the North East Region (DoNER) be merged with the North East Council(NEC) for better strategic planning and coordination of various developmental projects in the region.

2. The focus of the Ministry of DoNER and NEC should be on investment in mega-projects which will make big difference to the development of the region.

3. Institutional capacities in the Northeast should be developed urgently.

4. Pragmatic land use policy should be formulated for attracting industries in the region. Micro, small and medium enterprises should be encouraged.

5. Local tourism should be promoted. Medical and higher education tourism should be encouraged to travel within the region.

6. The Northeast should become a single economic unit without disturbing the political boundaries of the states. No internal traffic barriers in the region. There should be plans for northeast focusing on the development of infrastructure.

- **Look East Policy**

1. Greater awareness about the Look East Policy and its benefits to the Northeast should be generated among the policymakers and the intelligentsia of the region.

2. The Northeast region must be included in the India-ASEAN strategic cooperation.

3. Integrated and bottom-up approaches are required for integration of the northeast in the Look East Policy. The northeast should formulate plans as to how it can engage with the ASEAN. Better coordination of efforts by all the northeastern states should be ensured.

4. Visa offices of Bangladesh and Myanmar should be located in the northeast.

5. Center/ Departments for the studies of neighboring countries like Myanmar, Bangladesh, Tibet, Bhutan and Nepal in universities should be set up in universities to understand India's neighbors better.

- **Border issues**

1. Special economic zones along the India-Bangladesh border, especially in Meghalaya and Assam should be set up.

2. States should focus more on the development and security of the border areas.

3. Sentiments of the people of Arunachal Pradesh should be taken into consideration by the central government while discussing the frameworks for resolution of the border dispute with China.

4. Matching infrastructure and military capability should be built to ensure peace and enable negotiations from a position of strength.

Check your progress

5. Discuss the social consequences of insurgency in northeast India (two points).
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5.7. LOOK EAST POLICY

The Look East Policy is a proposal initiated by the central government to address Northeast's long-standing covets for development. Introduced in the early nineties this policy was indented to direct a major portion of the Northeast's economic and commercial activities

towards its eastern international neighbors. It was believed that this policy will bring the Northeast India tremendous possibility of engagement in various sectors with both the thriving as well as the emerging economies of South and Southeast Asia. The Look East Policy introduced by the Government of India was basically a strategy to change its foreign policy in accordance with the changed world business scenario. This policy had its genesis at the end of cold war following the collapse of Soviet Union. It is an attempt to integrate India with her neighboring eastern economies. Even when India's approach to development was inward-looking and state-controlled some smaller countries to its east had emerged as strong economies and came to be known as the 'Asian Tigers'. The performance of these economies finally compelled policymakers in India to look eastward for inspiration for rapid economic development. The implementation of this policy will certainly impact upon the economy of the northeast. The Northeastern region of India is a geographically isolated area which is linked to the rest of the country through a 'chicken neck' at Siliguri in West Bengal. For better part of the post-independence period the region had a peripheral existence in the Indian economy. With the initiation of the Look East Policy this region has become a focal point. It is expected that the successful implementation of this policy will bring certain economic benefits to the Northeastern region.

BRIEF BACKGROUND OF LOOK EAST POLICY

After Independence, India was attracted to the tremendous development achieved by western countries. It had been recognized that the noteworthy factor behind the rapid economic development of these countries was the process of industrialization. India was inspired by the concept of economic planning which particularly prevailed in the economy of the erstwhile Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Accordingly, India initiated five-year plans from 1951 onwards and the prime aim of which was rapid economic growth of the country through industrialization. One of the main objectives of planning was to attain self-

reliance which is possible only when a country is able to produce everything domestically. Two types of trade strategies were sought to be promoted towards this end strategy: Import Substitution and Export Promotion. Strategies of Import substitution were generally designed to produce those commodities, which were previously imported from foreign countries, domestically. This trade strategy had two major objectives:

- a) To save valuable foreign exchange due to the import of desired commodities.
- b) To achieve self-sufficiency in the production of as many imported items as possible.

On the other hand, Export promotion strategies were conceived to expedite the export sector. But due to export pessimism Indian policymakers decided to go for import substitution rather than export promotion. These trade policies were unable to bring any significant contribution to the economic growth of India. It is well known that in the 1980s, problems such as a growing fiscal deficit, inflationary pressure and balance of payments crises became severe. As result policymakers felt the need to change the development strategy. In this context the Indian government introduced economic reform measures in 1991. These reform measures were both internal and external in nature. Through internal reforms the Indian economy was liberalized from excessive state control and a market-oriented approach was adopted. On the other hand external reforms paved the way for opening up the Indian economy to the global market. Thus greater integration of India with the rest of the world economies was ensured through globalization. As part of the policy of globalization, the policy of looking towards the countries in the east was encouraged. The economic prosperity achieved by countries like Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia attracted India's interest. The spectacular growth of China's trade and liberalization policy since 1980s injected an intense desire to develop the Indian economy. Expanded and stronger trade relationships with the eastern countries were thought to be beneficial by the Indian Government in this regard. As a result policy such as Look East Policy assumed importance.

India and ASEAN

- With the exception of the European Union, ASEAN is the most successful example of economic cooperation at regional level. It was established in 1967 by 5 countries of this region under the treaty of Bangkok, signed by Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Singapore on 8 August 1967. At present there are 10 members in ASEAN.
- The improvement in relations between India and ASEAN are the core element of India's Look East Policy.
- In the past decade, both have expanded the areas of cooperation in such fields as trade, investment, security, culture, tourism, and science and technology.

Indian –ASEAN FTA-

1. India has signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with ASEAN on 13th August 2009, in Bangkok to boost the trade between the two. It came in to force on 1st January 2010.
2. The FTA covers the trade in goods only. This is considered a milestone in the bilateral relations of two.

POLICY INITIATIVES IN PRACTICE

To enhance economic cooperation with the eastern economies, the Government of India is trying to establish closer economic ties through increased trade relations. Accordingly, certain proposals have been made to form regional blocks so that preferred and free trade can be initiated with these countries.

1. BIMSTEC

As an endeavor to forge regional economic cooperation, a sub-regional grouping BISTEC was established on June 6,1997, in Bangkok among the countries along the Bay of

Bengal – Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand Economic Cooperation. Myanmar was an observer but joined this organization as a full member at a special ministerial meeting held in Bangkok on December 22, 1997 upon which the name of the organization was changed to BIMSTEC. In 2003 Bhutan and Nepal joined this group. This association seeks to increase economic cooperation between member countries in certain important areas such as trade, Investment, fisheries, agriculture, transportation, and human resource development. Its first summit was held on July 31, 2004 in which the grouping was renamed the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation. It was expected that the two Southeast Asian nations- Thailand and Myanmar would provide necessary linkages to other member nations to increase economic cooperation to the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the East Asian countries. Effective implementation of India's Look East Policy depends upon closer relationship between the Northeast and Myanmar since geographically this region and Myanmar share a common international border.

2. KUNMING INITIATIVE

Another effort to enhance regional cooperation with the eastern countries was the Kunming Initiative. A conference on Regional Cooperation and Development between Bangladesh, China, India, and Myanmar (BCIM) was held on August 17, 1999 in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan province in the southwest of China. An agreement for improving communication links among these countries called the Kunming Initiative was signed. The main thrust of the agreement was to request the concerned governments to develop adequate road, rail, waterway, and air communication facilities between the southwestern region of China and the northeastern region of India. An attempt had also been made to revive the ancient southern silk route between Assam and Yunnan. As the northeastern region is located at the eastern corner of India it can become the gateway of the country to the east expediting international trade between India and rest of the developing economies.

3. The Mekong -Ganga Cooperation project.

This project is another significant attempt to increase regional cooperation among India and the Southeast Asian nations. The project was approved between India and 5 Southeast Asian nations, namely Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar on November 10, 2000, in Vientiane, the capital of Laos. The main aim of this project was to develop overland trade, tourism, communication and transport linkages including the East-West Corridor project and the Trans-Asian highway.

ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES FOR THE NORTHEAST

The following observation could be considered potential benefits that Northeast could derive from the implementation of India's Look East Policy.

- There is a considerable scope of improving trade in certain local products such as tea, spices, handloom, bamboo and cane handicrafts. Improvement of quality is the necessary condition for these products to capture the foreign market and derive benefit from enhancing trade activities.
- Illegal trade along the border has resulted in huge loss of revenue for the Government of India as well as for the state government of the northeast. The Look East Policy will help in legalizing informal trade along the border and encourage the trading partners to expand their business. In addition, legalization will also enable the concerned government to earn revenue through collection of duties on imports and exports.
- There are immense possibilities for the northeast to enjoy the spin-off effects from trade by developing certain service sectors like hospitality, transport, and communication, storage, banking, and insurance.
- There is ample scope for entrepreneurial development among the local people of the region which in turn will create a favorable environment for the establishment of

hotels, restaurants along transportation routes. To meet the increased demand for food items, the establishment of animal husbandry and fishery farms will be accelerated.

- A favorable impact may be expected from India's Look East Policy on the existing unemployment problem in the northeast. Unemployed people will find profitable jobs in the above ventures that will help in solving to a certain extent the acute unemployment problem faced by the region.

ACT EAST POLICY

Look East Policy of India was launched by the former Prime Minister of India P.V. Narasimha Rao in 1991. The main focus of this policy was to shift the country's trading focus from the west and neighbors to the booming South East Asian countries. This policy continues until the formation of NDA government in 2014. Since the formation of the new government in the center, the government upgraded to "Act East Policy". The "Act East Policy" was launched at the East Asia Summit in Myanmar in November 2014.

The main difference between "Look East Policy" and "Act East Policy" is that the focus of the "Look East Policy" was to increase economic integration with the South East Asian countries and the area was just confined to South East Asia only. On the other hand the focus of the "Act East Policy" is economic and security integration and focused area increased to South East Asia and East Asia.

The Objective of "Act East Policy" is to;

- a. Promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop a strategic relationship with countries in the Asia-Pacific region through continuous engagement at regional, bilateral and multilateral levels.
- b. To increase the interaction of the North-Eastern Indian states with other neighboring countries.

- c. To find out the alternatives of the traditional business partners like; more focus on the Pacific countries in addition to the South East Asian countries.
- d. To curb the increasing impact of China in the ASEAN region. Two-way trade between India and ASEAN moved up to \$71.6 billion in 2016-17 from \$2 billion in the early 90s. In contrast, two –way trade between China and ASEAN stood at \$452.31 billion in 2016.
- e. Experts say that under the “Act East Policy” the government is relying on the 3C’s (Culture, Connectivity, and Commerce) to develop better relations with ASEAN nations.

In order to harness the benefit of the “Act East Policy”, India has upgraded its relations to strategic partnership with Japan, Australia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Association of Southeast Asian Nations(ASEAN), Republic of Korea (ROK) and forged close ties with all countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

Further, apart from ASEAN, ASEAN Regional Forum(ARF) and East Asia Summit (EAS), India has also been actively engaged in regional forum such as Indian Ocean Rim Association(IORA), Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation(BIMSTEC), Asia Cooperation Dialogue(ACD) and Mekong Ganga Cooperation(MGC).

5.8. SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learned:

- Human Resource Development was first introduced by Leonard Nadler in 1969.
- He defined Human Resource Development as “those learning experience which is organized for a specific time and designed to bring about the possibility of behavioral change.

- Human Development Index(HDI) is a composite index of 3 basic components of human development, viz, longevity, knowledge, and standard of living.
- The term migration refers to movement of people from one region to another region when people leave their place of residence and permanently inhabited area and move to another region for occupation, education, environmental conditions, poverty, etc.
- The illegal migrant is a person who crosses an international boundary without any valid document, enters into another country for the purpose of carrying on any illegal or anti-social activities.
- Social consequences of illegal migration like the crisis of identity, environmental degradation, difficulty to identify the illegal migrants.
- Economic consequences like increasing financial burden, displacing native workers, etc
- Political consequences like Anti-Government agitation, illegal voters, issue of terrorism, etc
- Cross border infiltration is an illegal attempt of crossing the international border and entering into a neighboring country in order to carry out criminal activities, to disrupt socio-political order and harmony of the nation.
- Problems of Border infiltration like Illegal immigration, cattle and other smuggling, etc
- Ethnic identity refers to a person's social identity within a larger context based on membership in a cultural or social group.
- Ethnic identity is formed by both tangible and intangible characteristics
- Insurgency is an armed insurrection or uprising against an established civil authority while the persons engaging themselves in the insurgency are called the insurgents.
- Look East Policy is a proposal initiated by the central government to address Northeast's long-standing covets for development. Introduced in the early nineties this

policy was intended to direct a major portion of the Northeast's economic and commercial activities towards its eastern International Neighbors.

- Policy initiatives in practice like BIMSTEC, Kunming Initiative, and the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation project.
- The “Act East Policy” was launched at the East Asia Summit in Myanmar in November 2014. And the main focus of this policy is economic security integration and focused area increased to South East Asia and East Asia.

Check your progress

6. What is Look East Policy for Northeastern region of India?
7. What is the difference between the Look East and Act East Policy?

5.9. KEY TERMS

Human Resource Development: Human Resource Development as “those learning experience which is organized for a specific time and designed to bring about the possibility of behavioral change

Illegal Migrants: an illegal migrant is a person who crosses an international boundary and without any valid document, enters into another country for the purpose of carrying on any illegal or anti-social activities in that country or for other economic or political purposes.

Infiltration: infiltration is an illegal attempt of crossing the international border and entering into a neighboring country in order to carry out criminal activities, to disrupt socio-political order and harmony of the nation.

Ethnic: Ethnic identity refers to a person's social identity within a larger context based on membership in a cultural or social group

Insurgency: Insurgency is an armed insurrection or uprising against established civil authority, while the persons engaging themselves in insurgency are called the ‘insurgents’

Policy: Policy is a proposal initiated by the central government to address long-standing covets for development.

5.10. ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1	A composite measure of economic progress and human welfare and intended to be a better substitute to per capita income that could neither capture nor exhibit exact level of development of human beings nor that of nations.
2.	The term migration is originated from the Latin word „ <i>migrare</i> “which means to change residence. Migration is the movement of people from one region to another region. CONSEQUENCES; Crisis Of Identity, Environmental Degradation, Economic consequences, Political consequences.
3.	The term ethnic and ethnicity have their roots in the Greek word ‘_ethnos’, which describes a community of common descent. Ethnic identity refers to a person’s social identity within a larger context based on membership in a cultural or social group.
4.	Border Dispute between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh since state formation
5.	The problem of poverty and exploitation of the vulnerable sections of society can be said to be one of the main causes of insurgency in the Northeast. 2. The youths tend to become insurgents because they have a feeling of being discriminated and treated as second class citizens.
6.	Look East Policy is a proposal initiated by the central government to address Northeast’s long-standing covets for development. Introduced in the early nineties this policy was intended to direct a major portion of the Northeast’s economic and commercial activities towards its eastern International Neighbors.

7.	The —Act East Policy was launched at the East Asia Summit in Myanmar in November 2014. And the main focus of this policy is economic security integration and focused area increased to South East Asia and East Asia.
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5.11. QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Discuss the pattern of agriculture practices between hill and plain population?
2. What is shifting cultivation? Discuss the problem and its solution.
3. Discuss the system of land relation of Arunachal Pradesh.
4. Discuss the historical development of industrialization in Northeast region.
5. Discuss the types of industry found in Northeast region.
6. Discuss the problem and prospect of industrial growth in northeast region.

5.12. FURTHER READINGS

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