

**Institute of Distance and Open Learning
GAUHATI UNIVERSITY**

**MA in Political Science
(3rd Semester)**

**Paper XII
Government and Politics in North-East India**

**Block 1
Constitutional Development in North-East
since 1974 and Political Parties
in Northeast India**



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Block Introduction:

Of late India emerged as an economic super power the path to power was not smooth. To get present status it had by-passed many difficult situations. We know that after independence India adopted a federal structure of government but due to its past experience it makes its central government stronger than the state government. later this provisions becomes a critical issue for the integrity of nation. Although India is known for its religious, cultural and ethnic diversity, after independence most of the ethnic groups fought against the central government demanding greater autonomy to preserve and protect their unique identity in a separate manner. Hence the issue of reconstructing Indian union comes to the forefront and the result is visible. In the context of North Eastern region, we find that four states were carved out from Assam to maintain peace and integrity of the nation. Since independence the government of India maintains a policy of isolation towards the North East. It becomes a issue of major concern for the people and ultimately Indian government is forced to reconstruct its territory on the basis of its demographic profile. It is well known to you that in a democratic country political parties play an important role in the progress of the society. Since the British rule many national as well as regional parties are working in the North Eastern region but they are failed to articulate the community interest. They also failed to show the path of development. Again the regional aspirations of the people of this region established many regional parties against the national parties. In the context of Assam's demography is suffering from the illegal migration, a prolonged movement termed as Assam Movement resulted As a consequences of this movement the most powerful regional party of this region was formed. Here in this block we are going to discuss the demographic profile of the North Eastern region and its unique problems along with the role of national and regional parties in the following two units.

Unit 1 deals with the factors responsible for the formation of states in North Eastern region. The unit deals with the unique nature of North Eastern region since the colonial period. An attempt is also made to discuss the consequences of colonial role in the state formation in the North Eastern region after independence. Here we will also discuss the demographic profile of its people which helps you to explore the relationship between the demography and its role in the developmental process. Thus, the unit briefly

explains the entire history of state formation in the North Eastern region: its obstacles, challenges and future perspectives.

Unit 2 deals with the role of political parties in the North Eastern region. We all know that in representative democratic system it is impossible to think the formation of government without political party. It is the political party which articulates the interest of a community as a whole. Here in this unit we are going to discuss the role of national and regional parties in its development. The unit also examines the status of regional parties in Assam with special reference to the major regional party Asom Gana Parishad (AGP).

The block consists of the following two units:

- Unit 1:** Factors Responsible for the formation of states: Reorganization of the State and Demographic Profile of the people of Northeast India
- Unit 2:** Political Parties in Northeast: Role of National and Regional parties

Unit 1

Factors Responsible for the formation of states: Reorganization of the State and Demographic Profile of the people of Northeast India

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1.1 Introduction

After independence India adopted the representative democratic system. The structure of Indian government is federal in nature with the existence of central and the state governments. One of the most important characteristics of federal government is the proper distribution of powers between the two sets of government through the norms of its constitution. But, while the balancing Act of distributing powers has burdened central government, new forces of interdependence and globalization have strengthened the cause of ethnic and religious nationalists, who increasingly demanded the grant of large scale of autonomy. Containing such demands within national boundaries has become a matter of 'life and death' for many multi-ethnic, multi religious groups. For this reason there emerged an urgent need to reconstruct its policies.

In this unit we will examine the factors responsible for the formation of new states in India. The Indian experience of federal nation building provides valuable insights into the dilemmas of power-sharing in an ethnically plural country. An attempt is made in this unit to explore the various initiatives taken by the government of India to re-organize its federal units with the help of North Eastern region. It is well known that the demographic profile of the people greatly contributed to the formation of a new culture different than others. Taking this perspective in this unit, we shall discuss how the demographic profile of North Eastern people contributed in the formation of new states in India.

1.2 Objectives

As the Indian experience reveals, splitting up existing federal units and creating new states is only one of the many strategies adopted by the Union government in order to satisfy regional demands. Over the course of six decades since independence, Indian governments have entered into various ethnic accords and created regional councils (as in the Northeast) to address the needs of rump ethnic regions surrounded by competing ethnic communities. After going through this unit you will be able to

- *explore* the factors which contributed to the formation of Indian states
- *trace* the constitutional development of Indian states
- *analyze* the North Eastern specific reasons of framing new states
- *discuss* the demographic profiles of North Eastern region

1.3 Constitutional Development

The term 'state' is used by the Machiavelli in his book *The Prince* for the first time. However we can find the existence of states known as city state since the Greek periods. The modern states are mostly large states with several cultural and economic problems. One of the most difficult challenges to statecraft lies in rationally organizing them to suit the needs of government and, conversely to adjust the process of government to meet the complexity. The process of the formation of states is not new in India. Since the time of epics we find the existence of different states. But it was the British who scientifically and systematically organized Indian states. Here in this section

we are going to analyze the constitutional development of Indian states since the British rule to the present time.

1.3.1 Constitutional Development in the colonial period

The British colonial power annexed the Indian princely within a short span of time. However in the true sense they annexed India in stages and parts and till the very end they did not annex the entire country. Consequently they evolved a variegated style of administration and control across the country.

The British Raj was a historical period during which most of the Indian subcontinent, or present-day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Bhutan, were under the colonial authority of the British (Undivided India). During the British period India is divided into 'British India' and 'native India'. Again the British India was spilt into Governor's Provinces and Chief Commissioner's Provinces and the native India was spilt into two types — 566 princely states (over 500 princely states) and tribal states. However, outside British India, the tribal areas were under the control of the Governor-General. There were several backward districts in British Indian provinces like Assam, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa where distinct tribal groups lived.

It is worth mentioning here that the British Administration in the initial period was known as Presidencies meaning properties of the President of the Board of Trade of the East India Company. The whole India was divided into three presidencies—the Bengal the largest, followed by Madras and Bombay. In this context, you should remember here that the annexation of British went on and the British Government constituted new provinces.

Though the East India Company entered India as trade group, soon they occupied whole India and established their own administrative structure. Here we shall discuss their Activities regarding the formation of Indian states. Since the inception of British rule they offered various Acts and regulation regarding the formation of Indian states. We can divide the development of Indian states during the British period into three phases as follows

Phase I: (1717 to 1857)

In this initial period the Company only tried to expand their business. Their military strength coupled with their navel power forced the Indian Kings to

take help from them to suppress other ruler. British took it as their advantages to expand their control over Indian States. Primarily after the Battle of Plassey, they got the right to govern in entire Bengal. They introduced a post namely Governor of Bengal, through which their government was running in India. Slowly the supreme authority was vested in the Company.

For smooth running of their administration they passed many Acts as follows:

- **The Regulating Act of 1773:**

Through this Act the post of Governor of Bengal was redesigned as Governor General and all the civil and military powers are vested in his hand. A provision was made for creating a 4 members council to assist the Governor General. For the first time voting was introduced for taking decisions. All the decisions in the council were taken on the basis of majority.

- **The Charter Act of 1813:**

This Act was one of the milestones of present Indian administration. The prime provisions of this Act are as follows

1. It permitted the missionaries to go and settle in India.
2. It tried to regulate the application of Indian revenues.
3. It granted to the justice of the peace jurisdiction over the European and the British subjects with regard to the case of trespass or assault committed against the people of India.
4. Through this Act the local administrative bodies got the power to impose taxes.

During this period British were more interested in trades rather than expanding their territory, and their administration was run by the regulation of Company. They got the right of India as Lease. British Crown was not directly involved in the matter of India. But this trend was drastically changed after the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. It was the beginning of Phase II.

STOP TO CONSIDER:**Religion and Indian States:**

Since the British rule religion has occupied an important position in formation of states. For the first time the impact of religion was seen in Bengal. The Bengal presidency was comprising today's West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa a part of Assam and Bangladesh. In 1904 Lord Curzon, the Governor General of British India decided to split Bengal including Bihar and Orissa into one province and joined eastern Bangladesh into two parts. The British Government justified their Action on the basis of religious grounds. This incident seriously hurt the Bengali feelings and they saw it as an attempt to divide the India into two rival religious groups Hindu and Muslim. Against this move there emerged a powerful anti-partition agitation based on religious and linguistic sentiment. Later government withdrew their decisions to split the Bengal. However it separated Bihar and Orissa from Bengal and constituted them into a united province. In 1936 Bihar and Orissa were separated into two linguistic provinces.

Phase II: (1857 to 1885)

This part was very important in Indian scenario. This period was marked by the rise of nationalist movement for independence. For the first time Indian people gathered against British Raj. The movement of 1857 completely changed the setup of Indian administration. However, due to the lack of mutual cooperation and modern equipments, the revolution was suppressed, but it brought the direct control of British Crown over India. Some important Acts responsible for making our administrative system up to date are discussed below:

The Government of India Act (1858)

Through this Act the legislative power of the government of India was transferred from the Company's hand to the hand of the Crown. A post namely Secretary of State was created to exercise the power of Crown and a council, known as Council of India for giving his aid and advice was established.

The Indian Council Act (1861)

This was the beginning of representative system in India. The Act of 1861 brought representatives institutions in Indian administration. Under this Act, Indians are associated with the work of legislation for the first time.

Phase III: (1885 to 1947)

Formation of Indian National Congress and inclusion of Mahatma Gandhi in Indian Politics changed the entire scenario of Indian politics as well as the administrative system. India witnessed a major change in administration, it looked forward, and crossed the ancient border and entered into a new world order based on popular consent that is democracy. Indian people witnessed the representative form of government and participated in the decision making process. Now here we shall discuss some Acts passed during this period which brought such changes:

Government of India Act 1919

All the Acts prior to the Act of 1919 did not generate the principle of responsible government in India. The tight central control over the provinces forced them to take Actions against it. After seeing such discontent of Indian people and the participation of India with them in the First World War of 1914, British government passed an Act which gave them more power. The Act of 1919 reoriented the provincial set-up by introducing diarchy which means double rule. Under this Act India got a responsible government. The Act introduced a uniform system of government in eight major provinces and expanded it to Burma in 1922 and North Western Frontier in 1931. in simple words we can say that the Act is the beginning of responsible government in India which associate the Princes with the administration of India especially in matters affecting the Indian states and for introducing the dyarchical from of government.

Government of India Act 1935

The government of India Act which is also known as the root of present Indian Constitution was a lengthy document consisting of 321 sections and

13 schedules. The Act abolished the diarchy and introduced Provincial autonomy. However, it was meant only for Governor's provinces not for the Chief Commissioners Provinces. The Act also provides for an all India Federation consisting of 11 provinces, 6 Chief Commissioner's provinces and all those states which agreed to join it.

The Indian Independence Act 1947

This is the last Act passed by the British Government which provided the end of British rule in India on 15th August 1947 and established two Dominions of India and Pakistan. The Act also terminated the British control over the Indian states and the conceding of right to accede to either Dominion or remain independent. This power posed a serious threat to the unity of India. However the firm and diplomatic handling of the problem of Indian states by Sardar Patel made India a federal country leading to unification of Indian states left by the British.

Hence it is clear to you that during the British rule, they divided India into some provinces known as states for the smooth running of the administration. For this purpose they enacted different laws which made India a federal country. However in some extent their policies harm the integrity of Indian people as for example splitting the states in the name of religion, language, caste etc. But the strong leadership of Gandhi, Nehru, Patel turned India an unified nation.

STOP TO CONSIDER

Diarchy:

The English word diarchy is derived from the two Greek words- 'di' meaning twice and 'archie' meaning rule. Hence diarchy literally means double government or governance by two rulers. The Montague Chelmsford Reforms Act of 1919 introduced diarchy in India. The Act divided the powers between the Centre and the Provinces. Again the powers of the Provinces subdivided into two parts, the reserved and the transferred. The reserved subjects governed by the Governor in Council and transferred subjects were governed by the governor with the help of the ministers. This system was referred as diarchy. However it worked in India only for a short span of 16 years from 1921 to 1937. During this period it was criticized everywhere and ultimately it was withdrawal in 1947.

Check Your Progress:

1. Fill in the blanks

a. During the British period India was divided into British India and _____.

b. The Act of 1935 has _____ sections and _____ schedules.

c. The Montague Chelmsford Reforms was introduced in _____ in India.

2. What is diarchy?

3. Write a note on the British efforts towards the formation of Indian states.

4. From which state Bihar and Orissa was spilt out?

1.3.2 Constitutional Development in the Post-Independence Period

Already you have learnt that during the British period India was divided into various provinces which is still continuing in India. After independence you know that India opted for a federal structure with democratic setup. And during the period of 1947 to 1950 the provinces or the territories of Indian Princes states were politically merged into the Indian union. However, unlike USA the units of Indian federation have no power to secede. In this context, it needs mention here that most of the princely states were merged into the existing provinces. However some were organized into new provinces like Rajputana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Bharat, and Vindhya Pradesh made up of multiple princely states; a few, including Mysore, Hyderabad, Bhopal, and Bilaspur, became separate provinces. It is worth mentioning here that since the formation of Indian Constitution, the Government of India Act 1935 remained the constitutional law of India.

After adoption of Indian Constitution in 1950 it clearly discussed the federal nature of India and examined every aspect of Indian states. Part I of the Indian Constitution deals with the union and its territory. Article I of the Indian Constitution specified that the territory of India shall comprise of

- a. the territories of the States
- b. the Union territories specified in the First Schedule, and
- c. such other territories as may be acquired

The Constitution of India, which went into effect on 26 January 1950, made India a sovereign, democratic republic, and a union of states (replacing provinces) and territories. The states would have extensive autonomy and complete democracy in the Union, while the Union territories would be administered by the Government of India. The constitution of 1950 distinguished between three types of states.

Again the Article II of the Indian constitution discusses the admission or establishment of new states. According to this article parliament may by law admit into the Union, or establish new states on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit. Though the formation or reformation of states is under the control of the Parliament it is not so easy. Since the British period we find a trend of separatist attitude of different communities on the basis of religion, language and other such social, cultural, ideological, economical aspects.

For this reason, in December 1953, the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru formulated a plan of re-organization of states on the basis of language. Hence the States Reorganization Commission entered into Indian politics in 1956 as States Reorganization Act. The formation of this commission brings a radical change in the structure of Indian states. The Act was responsible for the formation of the new Indian provinces on the basis of language and other social aspects which bring the amendment of the Indian Constitution in order to reinstate the Part A, B, and C states. Let us discuss these three types of States very briefly:

Part A states, the former governors' provinces of British India were ruled by an elected governor and state legislature. States like Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Bombay, Madhya Pradesh (formerly Central Provinces and Berar), Madras, Orissa, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh (formerly United Provinces) are under this category.

The Part B states are the former princely states or groups of princely states governed by a *Rajpramukh*, who was often a former prince, and an elected legislature. The *Rajpramukh* was appointed by the President of India. The Part B states were Hyderabad, Saurashtra, Mysore, Travancore-Cochin, Madhya Bharat, Vindhya Pradesh, Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU), and Rajasthan.

The Part C states included both the former chief commissioners' provinces and princely states, and were governed by a chief commissioner. The chief commissioner was appointed by the President of India. The Part C states included Delhi, Kutch, Himachal Pradesh, Bilaspur, Coorg, Bhopal, Manipur, Ajmer-Merwara, and Tripura.

Apart from these Indian Constitution has a special provision for the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Article 370 of the Indian Constitution empowers the state to make its own constitution and grants greater autonomy.

Article 3 of the Indian Constitution deals with the formation of new states, alteration of areas, boundaries or names of an existing states done by the Indian Parliament. The Article stated as below

Formation of new States and alteration of areas, boundaries or names of existing States: Parliament may by law –

- (a) form a new State by separation of territory from any State or by uniting two or more States or parts of States or by uniting any territory to a part of any State;
- (b) increase the area of any State;
- (c) diminish the area of any State;
- (d) alter the boundaries of any State;
- (e) alter the name of any State;

The Article also provides that no Bill for the purpose shall be introduced in either House of Parliament except on the recommendation of the President and unless, where the proposal contained in the Bill affects the area, boundaries or name of any of the States, the Bill has been referred by the President to the Legislature of that State for expressing its views thereon within such period as may be specified in the reference or within such further period as the President may allow and the period so specified or allowed has expired.

Though the Indian Constitution provides a steel framework for Indian states, still reorganization of states is one of the major problems for Indian government. We know that, India is known for its multi-ethnic characteristics having different linguistic and cultural groups. Hence every community since independence demands a separate state for them on the basis of their unique

characteristics. After independence we find many states are formed on the basis of different demands, for example

- **Andhra Pradesh**

Created by the State of Andhra Pradesh Act, 1953 by carving out some areas from the State of Madras.

- **Gujarat and Maharashtra**

The State of Bombay was divided into two States, i.e., Maharashtra and Gujarat by the Bombay (Reorganization) Act, 1960.

<p>SAQ:</p> <p>Do you think that the State re-organization commission of 1956 is successful in fulfilling the aspirations of Indian people? (100 words)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

- **Kerala**

Created by the State Reorganization Act, 1956. It is comprised of Travancor and Cochin areas.

- **Karnataka**

It was created from the Princely State of Mysore by the State Reorganization Act, 1956. It was renamed Karnataka in 1973

- **Nagaland**

It was carved out from the State of Assam by the State of Nagaland Act, 1962.

- **Haryana**

It was carved out from the State of Punjab by the Punjab (Reorganization) Act, 1966.

- **Himachal Pradesh**

The Union Territory of Himachal Pradesh was elevated to the status of State by the State of Himachal Pradesh Act, 1970.

- **Meghalaya**

First carved out as a sub-state within the State of Assam by 23rd Constitutional Amendment, 1969. Later, in 1971, it received the status of a full – fledged State by the North – Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act, 1971.

- **Manipur and Tripura**

Both these States were elevated from the status of Union Territories by the North – Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act, 1971.

- **Sikkim**

Sikkim was first given the Status of Associate State by the 35th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1974; It got the status of a full State in 1975 by the 36th Amendment Act, 1975.

- **Mizoram**

It was elevated to the status of a full State by the State of Mizoram Act, 1986.

- **Arunachal Pradesh**

It received the status of a full State by the State of Arunachal Pradesh Act, 1986.

- **Goa**

Goa was separated from the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu and was made a full – fledged State by the Goa, Daman and Diu Reorganization Act, 1987. But Daman and Diu remained as Union Territory.

- **Chhattisgarh**

Chhattisgarh is formed by the Constitutional Amendment Act, 2000 by dividing Madhya Pradesh on November 1, 2000.

- **Uttarakhand**

It was formed by the Constitutional Amendment Act, 2000 by dividing Uttar Pradesh on November 9, 2000.

- **Jharkhand**

Formed by the Constitutional Amendment Act, 2000 by dividing Bihar on November 15, 2000

In this context you should remember here that such a Bill giving effect to any or all the changes stated above can be introduced in either house of the Parliament, only on the recommendation of the President. If such a Bill affects the boundary or name of the State, then the President, before introducing it in the Parliament, shall refer the Bill to the State Legislature concerned for its opinion, fixing a time limit within which an opinion may be expressed by the State Legislature. The President may extend the time limit so specified.

If the State Legislature fails to express an opinion within the stipulated time limit then it is deemed that it has expressed its views. If it submits its views within the period so specified or extended, the Parliament is not bound to accept or Act upon the views of the State Legislature. Further, it is not necessary to make fresh reference to the State Legislature every time an amendment to the Bill is proposed and accepted and the bill is passed with simple majority. However, in case of Union Territories, it is not necessary to obtain the views of legislatures of Union Territories before a Bill affecting their boundaries or names is introduced.

Check Your Progress:

1. List the procedures are followed by the Indian Government to create a new state?
2. Make a comparative analysis of British Indian state and Indian state after independence.
3. Write a brief note on the constitutional provisions of Indian states.
4. Discuss the efforts made by the Indian government regarding the reconstruction of Indian states.
5. Fill in the blanks
 - a. Article 1 of the Indian Constitution deals with the_____
 - b. Sikkim was made an integral part of India in the year_____

- c. _____ is responsible for re-unification of Indian states.
- d. Arunachal Pradesh has received the status of a full State by the State of Arunachal Pradesh Act of _____.

1.4 Demographic Profile of the People of North-east India

You have already learnt India has been ruled by many different ethnic groups throughout its history and each group imposing their own administrative divisions on the region. You are also familiar with the efforts of Indian government regarding the re-unification of Indian states in the post independence era. Here in this section we are going to discuss the different aspects of North-eastern region.

North-east India refers to the easternmost region of India consisting of the contiguous Seven Sister States. In recent times, Sikkim too has been included a part of Northeast India. Northeast India is ethnically distinct from the other states of India. Linguistically the region is distinguished by a preponderance of Tibeto-Burman languages. Strong ethnic cultures that had escaped effects of *sanskritization* permeate the region. It is worth mentioning here that among the Northeastern states, Sikkim became an Indian protectorate in 1947 and a full state in 1975. More than 2000 km of boundary of this region is shared with other countries *i.e* Nepal, China, Bhutan, Burma and Bangladesh. The Northeastern region of India is known for its unique traditions. It is inherently a sensitive region and the hub of many ethnic, linguistic and religious groups living for centuries.

The “Northeast,” seen as India’s “Mongoloid fringe,” and the last area of Indian sub-continent to be taken over by the British colonial ruler. Having conquered almost the whole of it by the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the British turned to secure the frontiers of their Indian Empire from the perceived threats of Russian expansion in Central Asia and from the westward surge of the Burmese Empire. The debacle in Afghanistan forced them to leave it as a useful buffer between Tsarist Central Asia and British India, but the defeat of the Burmese army encouraged them to take over the Northeast of India. The British decided on limited administration of the Northeast.

In terms of population the Northeast consists of the original, indigenous inhabitants together with various ethnic groups, including people from Tibet,

Burma, Thailand and Bengal, who migrated into the region at various periods of history. Although there are migrants of long standing integrated into the local population over the years, an increasingly large inflow of recent migrants over a short period has caused friction with the local population. During the British colonial period and even after independence, the Northeast, adjoining China, has been a difficult frontier region. Again the partition of 1947 led to a rise in the flow of refugees and migrants from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). For this Tripura's demography changed qualitatively in two decades, with the Bengalis becoming a clear majority. The pace of demographic change was slightly slower in Assam than in Tripura, but it was pronounced enough to upset the "sons of the soil," provoking both armed and unarmed protest movements. The fear that other Northeastern states would resemble the condition of Tripura has weighed heavily on indigenous peoples and early settlers throughout the Northeast and provoked the more militant of them to take up arms.

It is worth mentioning here that the population dynamics in this region as in other societies has two basic components i.e.

1. dynamics through natural process and
2. dynamics through induced process.

Seen in the context of the natural growth rate of population during the period of 1971-2001, all the states in the region have registered higher growth rate than the rate for the whole country. As a result, the increasing population pressure in this region has given rise to linkages between quality of life, population dynamics and environmental degradation.

STOP TO CONSIDER:

Communities of NE

The Northeastern states are home to many ethnic groups, that are engaged in self-preservation. In recent years, some of their struggles for such purpose have turned violent, leading to proliferation of armed insurgent groups, like the ULFA, NSCN etc. Specially after the Sino-Indian War of 1962 and especially after the rise of insurgency in the region, security influence on policies has increased. Basically the region consists of the Assamese, Bishnupriya Manipuri, Bodo, Dimasa, Garo, Karbi, Khasi, Kuki, Manipuri, Mizo, Naga, Rabha, Rajbongshi, Tiwa, Tripuri, Bengali, Nepali, Adivasi communities.

1.5 Factors responsible for the reorganization of the states in the Northeast

You have already learnt that the North East region is one of the strategically important regions of India. The regional composition of the North East at the time of independence consisted of the Assam plains of the old Assam Province, the hill districts, the North Eastern Frontier Tracts (NEFT) of the North Eastern borderland, and the princely states of Manipur and Tripura, both of which opted for merger with India in 1949. As for administrative changes in the wake of the transfer of power on 15th August, the administrative jurisdiction of the excluded and partially excluded areas in the hills of Assam was transferred to the Government of Assam which Acted on behalf of the government of India.

Due to its multiplicity of ethnic groups since the British colonial period, the North East was treated separately and differently from other regions of British India. In the early colonial period, the region formed part of Bengal Province and it was governed as though it were an adjacent subordinate area of Bengal Province even after it became the separate province of Assam in 1874.

Such policy of isolation British created a problem for the national formation and integration of independent India. Since independence, an anti-India sentiment emerged amongst the people of this region especially after the India-China border conflicts in 1962 North East became a strategic region as regards the national security of India. Thus it becomes necessary for the Indian government to create new states to please the ethnic groups of North Eastern region.

It needs to mention here that the Indian government has reconstructed the region on the basis of its ethnic aspirations from time to time. In this process, four states (Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram) were separated from Assam one after another. These four states were the areas to which entry was regulated during the British colonial period. In the four states, even before independence, there were several indigenous cultural and political organizations representing the interests of the hill peoples. After independence, some of these groups began to pursue political activities, including protest against unity with Assam, a demand for expansion of autonomy within Assam, a demand for separation from Assam, and a further demand for statehood. Hence it is clear that in the formation of a new

Northeastern region, the Indian government gave priority to the issues like, language, caste, religion, ethnic and historical backgrounds.

It is worth mentioning here that the Constitution of India has special provisions in its Sixth Schedule for the administration of “tribal” areas that were meant to protect the tribal people scattered throughout the country. The provision is specially meant for the ethnic groups in the hill region of the North Eastern region. According to the Schedule, the tribal areas of North East are divided into two parts as part A and Part B. The United Khasi and Jaintia Hills District, the Garo Hills District, the Lushai Hills District, the Naga Hills District, the North Cachar Hills District, and the Mikir Hills District are placed in Part A as an Autonomous Districts administered by the Government of Assam. On the other hand, the North East Frontier TrAct, the Balipara Frontier TrAct, the Tirap Frontier Tract, the Abor Hill and Mishmi Hills Districts and the Naga Tribal Area came into Part B which was administered by the Governor of Assam Acting as Agent of the President of India.

You should remember here that after the formation of Assam the first area to achieve statehood in the Northeast was Nagaland. However, the formation of Nagaland in 1963 has a complicated history that began in the British colonial period. In order to avoid conflicts with the Nagas and to avoid disruption in the traditional Naga society, the British administration maintained as much as possible a policy of non-interference, thus committing the Nagas to isolation. Such attitudes make Nagas more aspirant of freedom. In post independence era Tuensang area, which is defined as the “Naga Tribal Area” in the Indian Constitution, is formed into a district within the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA). In 1957, The Tuensang area was joined with the Naga Hills District to form the Naga Hills Tuensang Area (NHTA) as a Central Government Administrative Area. The NHTA was renamed as Nagaland by the Nagaland (Transitional Provisions) Regulation of 1961. The Regulation of 1961 was replaced with the State of Nagaland Act of 1962 which made Nagaland a fully fledged state. The state of Nagaland is inaugurated in December 1963.

Thus from the above discussion, it is clear to you that the ethnic groups in various areas of North Eastern region, especially the people of the hill areas, expressed dissatisfaction with the outcome of the reorganization. They

argued that the real purpose of the reorganization was to institutionalize the hill people's subordination to the Assamese and that it was a negation of their ethnic identities. Dissatisfaction of this kind led to a demand for autonomy and a further demand for the establishment of a separate state. Thus, four states were carved out from the Assam and two other states are formed in this region.

STOP TO CONSIDER:

Formation of Sikkim

Sikkim, a small mountainous area surrounded by China in the north, Nepal in the west and Bhutan in the east, followed a different process of state formation. It was a kingdom at the time of the British arrival. In 1819 British India signed a treaty, known as the Treaty of Titalia with Sikkim, through which and other engagements the British was able to exercise influence in Sikkim. In 1947 when India became independent, a treaty was signed between India and Sikkim, under which Sikkim was able to retain a special status of a protectorate of India. Sikkim became a fully-fledged 22nd state of India on 16th May 1975. The institution of king was abolished. In 1975 Sikkim was merged with India.

SAQ:

Do you think that the formation of the states of North eastern region properly fulfill the aspirations of its ethnic people. (80 words)

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1.6 Summing Up

After going through this unit now you are in a position to understand the process of state formation in India. In this context we can say that after independence the state formation emerged as a serious problem. Though Indian Constitution clearly provides various provisions regarding the formation of new state, we find that in different times various committees

were formed for this purpose. However the state formation in North East characterized as a process of pleasing the ethnic groups. The multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic character of the region brings forth the ever increasing demands for autonomy or statehood on the basis of individual ethnic identities. Even the demand for local economic development has not been able to escape from parochial ethnic interests. The logic of ethnic identity contains an ideology of exclusion on the one hand and expulsion of other ethnic groups on the other. Creation of a state on the basis of ethnicity often means the fulfillment of one ethnic group's aspiration and at the same time exclusion and oppression of other smaller ethnic groups in the vicinity. Hence, the state formation on the basis of ethnic issues becomes an issue of major concern for every political party operating in this region. Many regional political parties are formed to protect the interest of one ethnic group, for example in Assam AGP was formed to protect and promote the interest of Assamese people.

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Unit 2

Political Parties in Northeast: Role of National and Regional parties

Contents:

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Objectives
- 2.3 Presence of National Parties in the Northeast
- 2.4 Regional parties in Northeast India with Special reference to the state of Assam
 - 2.4.1 Growth of State Parties in Assam
 - 2.4.2 Role of the AGP in the Politics of Assam
- 2.5 Summing Up
- 2.6 References and Suggested Readings

2.1 Introduction

Political parties are regarded as the interest articulate groups in democratic countries. Basically they are concerned with the formation of the government through popular support. With the introduction of parliamentary system of government and promulgation of the principle of ‘universal adult franchise’ the political parties have come to occupy an important position in the Indian political system. Political parties in India originated with the formation of Indian National Congress in 1885. The geographical and ethnic diversity of India paved the way for the formation of various regional parties to secure its own interests. Unlike the national parties operating in the entire country, a regional party generally operates within a limited geographical area. They represent the interest of particular linguistic, religious ethnic or cultural groups. Although the existence of the regional parties can be traced back to the British Period numerous regional parties have emerged only after 1967 and now they are playing a key role in Indian Politics. Now we witness the impact of regional parties in Indian political structure and hence the process of politics has been “multi-directional and far-reaching”. In the previous

unit of this block we have discussed the demographic profile of NE India. Now in this unit we are going to discuss the role of National and regional political parties in NE India.

2.2 Objective

It is well known that political parties are the interest articulate groups of the society. While tracking the history of political parties in India we find that since the British rule political parties are operating at national as well as regional level. Seen the context of North Eastern region, we find that many regional parties are working since the British period along with the national parties. After going through this unit you will able to

- *trace* the development of political history of NE India
- *analyze* the role and performance of National parties in this region
- *evaluate* the growth and development of regionalism in Assam
- *discuss* the role and performance of AGP in Assam politics

2.3 Presence and role of National Parties in Northeast

In the previous unit of this block we have studied the demography of the NE region. As we know that the Northeast India comprised of seven states – Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Maghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura is the homeland of various ethnic and cultural groups with different languages, religions, beliefs and traditions. Since the British period the region has occupied an important position in national politics. However the region is far behind than the rest of India in terms of development despite having a strong base for the national parties. Here in this section we are going to discuss the presence of national parties in Northeast and their performance in its politics:

As states earlier a recognized political party has been classified as a National Party or a State Party. If a political party is recognized in four or more states, it is considered as a National Party. At present Congress, Bharatiya Janata Party, Janata Dal, Communist Party of India and Communist Party of India (Marxist) are the prominent national parties in the country. These parties are operating throughout the country. Though the regional aspirations are high in Northeast Congress has dominated the politics of this region

since independence. In states like Assam, Arunachal congress has played a predominant role in the process of its state building. On the other hand, parties like CPI influenced the politics of Tripura. BJP has also got some share in different states of this region.

It is worth mentioning here that since time immemorial the main slogan of India has been the concept of 'unity in diversity'. But in case of the North-Eastern region, we find existence of many groups struggling for maintaining identity. The National Congress ruled this region for more than three decades but failed to assimilate these diverse groups into the mainstream of national culture.

Economically, the region is one of the most backward regions in the country. Agriculture continues to be traditional, while industrialization is still not in an advanced position. The communications system continues to be backward the region. The mineral and forest resources of the region are extracted for processing outside in the region. As a result, the industrial production of other regions are marketed here. The explanation given for non-industrialization like security reason, distance (from the centre), transport bottle-neck etc. however do not satisfy the people in the region. These are taken as the 'Indian points of view' and backwardness of the resource-rich region is ascribed to the 'gross negligence' of the central government (Pakem ed. 1993: 192-193).

For such every central government is responsible. It is worth mentioning here that the Indian National Congress has not done much for promoting the interest of the tribal people of North-Eastern region. We know that the states of this region have different languages, culture and political aspirations. The unemployment problem in the North-Eastern region has been mounting up over the years but the government failed to address the issue of unemployment properly.

It needs to mention here that a democracy needs strong and sustainable political parties with the capacity to represent citizens and provide policy choices that demonstrate their ability to govern for the public good. However, since independence the national political parties have often neglected North Eastern region and at times have narrowly focused on this region only during the election season. The neglect shown by the national parties has contributed to the rise of separatist tendency among the people of this region. It is well

known that the increasing gap between citizens and their elected leaders paved the way to the formation of anti-democratic and anti-government activities. In this context we can put forward the example of Assam.

Since 1952 to 1985 in Assam the Indian national Congress formed the government with a overwhelming majority. But they failed to resolve the burning problems of Assamese people. Taking this issue ULFA a separatist organization committed to Assam's liberation from India emerged. They had voiced the Marxist-Leninist (M-L) "colonial thesis" of India's peripheral regions, such as Assam being an "internal colony" of India.

Besides Congress, the communist party gets some popularity in this region specially in Tripura. The party articulates ethnic issues to create a support base among the indigenous tribal people. In Tripura, the Communists played on the issue of tribal's sense of loss and marginalization following the end of sovereign princely rule and the kingdom's merger with India. When the tribal people were largely supportive of the Communists, the Congress altered the demographic profile of the constituencies by promoting the organized rehabilitation of the Bengali migrants. It did help the Congress as it won both the parliament seats in 1967 after losing them to the Communists in three successive elections. But as the tribals lost out in the number's game, they lost faith in the Communist party and began to turn to militant ethnic politics.

In Manipur and Assam, the Communists continue to win a few seats in the state assembly. They have strong pockets of support that were once built up through the struggle for peasant rights, but they share power only as minor partners in regional coalitions. For example, in Manipur, the CPI has joined the Congress-led ruling coalition formed in February 2002 to keep the BJP out of power in the state. But in Assam, it opposed the Congress and came to power by teaming up with the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP).

Since the British rule religion played an important role in Indian politics. Above all India is divided on the basis of religion. It well known that the NE region is the hub of different religious groups. Taking this advantage all the political parties try to influence the voters on religious grounds thereby threatening the integrity. But until the rise of BJP in India and its growth in parts of Assam by skillful exploitation of the Babri Masjid issue, Islamic radicalism practically absent in Assam and the rest of the Northeast.

However, with the rise of the BJP, Bengali Hindus in Assam, unlike their brethren in West Bengal and Tripura, largely turned toward the politics of Hindutva in a decisive way. The Muslims were left with little choice—in elections, they began to vote for the Congress and most of the leaders returned to that party. But the younger and more religious elements did form some militant groups, defensive to begin with but now increasingly proactive.

Hence it can be said that strong political parties are essential to open, competitive democratic politics, particularly in emerging democracies. People are most likely to participate politically in vigorous, sustained ways when they have a stake in the outcomes made by the parties. In NE region we find that irrespective of the efforts of the national parties to operate and form their government, the region is still deprived in terms of economic and social development and they are fighting for a separate identity.

SAQ:

Do you think that the failure of national parties is responsible for give birth the ethnic and separatist movements in NE region? (80 words)

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2.4 Regional parties in Northeast India with Special reference to the state of Assam

You all know that a region is an area, the inhabitants of which have a sense of unity and a feeling that they are different from others and regionalism can be defined as a tendency to assign primacy to the region vis-à-vis the nation. This tendency finds expression in cultural, linguistic, economic, political and administrative terms (Das 1970: 53-55). You also know that the existence of regional parties is not new in India. During the British rule some such parties were quite active.

In case of Northeast India, the region never experienced an all-inclusive political formation, nor did it form part of any larger state formation outside the region. It thus maintained a splendid political isolation, the states and tribal formations existing side by side in distinct ethnic areas. However, the British rule changed the perspective and brought a drastic change in its socio-political structure. However, in the true sense the regional aspiration in this region was formed after the independence. The federal set-up was the root cause of the formation of such aspirations in India. The dominant presence of central government gave birth to many regional parties in this region.

It is worth mentioning here that since time immemorial the main slogan of India has been 'unity in diversity'. But in case of the Northeastern region, we find that there are many groups struggling to maintain its own identity. The National Congress ruled this region for more than three decades but failed to assimilate these diverse groups into the mainstream of national culture. The economic backwardness and the negligence of the national parties are responsible for the emergence of various regional political parties in the region. However, in the initial stages they are formed as a pressure group but as time passed, they actively participated in the electoral process. Now we will discuss the formation of regional parties in this region.

From time to time in Northeast, various regional parties and organizations are formed for preserving and protecting their own culture. For example, Khasi formed 'Khasi National Durber' as early as in 1923. In 1956, the party demanded a separate Khasi state. A Jaintia Durber was formed in 1924 which was practically a cultural organization. The party later became a part of All Party Hill Leaders Conference in 1960. On the other hand, East India Tribal Union was formed by Captain William Sangma in 1952. In Garo Hills, Garo National Council was formed with the intention of promoting the welfare of Garo people. In 1960 Garo National Council become a part of All Party Hill Leaders Conference. This party created the separate state of Meghalaya. In Lusai Hills the Mizo Union formed in April 1946, was the first political party, which later merged with Indian National Congress. In 1958 people of Mizoram formed the Mizo National Front as they were unhappy with the help rendered by Assam Government at the time of famines. In addition to it, Mizo people formed Mizo Convention in order to fulfill some of their demands. Similarly in Nagaland, Naga National

Council was set up in 1946. This party demanded full autonomy for Naga Hills and safeguard for Naga Culture and identity. The party was banned. But in August 1957 Naga Nationalist Organization came into existence. Similarly as early as in 1893 in the plains of Assam Padmanath Gohain Baruah appealed to all the Ahoms to organize themselves and the Ahom Association joined with Assam Congress in 1951 (Rao & Hazarika 1983: 150-169).

Thus we can see that both the hill tribes as well as plain tribes of this region were not happy with the part played by National political parties. In addition to this, there was All Assam Plain Tribal League, Karbi Anglong People's Conference, People's Democratic Party, Assam Lok Dal and more recently Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and United Minorities Front, is the result of Assam Accord. Thus, in the North Eastern region itself there are various regional political parties which are cater to the needs of various communities of the North-East.

STOP TO CONSIDER:

DELIMITATION COMMISSION:

The word "Delimitation" literally means the Act or process of fixing limits or boundaries of territorial constituencies in a country or a province having a legislative body. The job of delimitation is assigned to a high power body. Such a body is known as Delimitation Commission or a Boundary Commission. In India, such Delimitation Commission has been constituted four times, in 1952 under the Delimitation Commission Act, 1952, in 1963 under the Delimitation Commission Act 1962, in 1973 under the Delimitation Commission Act, 1972 and in 2002 under the Delimitation Commission Act, 2002. The main purpose of the undertaking at the delimitation exercise is to rationalize the structure and composition of the electoral constituencies on the principle of "One vote and one value". The Delimitation Commission, set up under the Delimitation Act, 2002, was entrusted with the task of readjusting all Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies in the country in all the States of India, except the State of Jammu and Kashmir, on the basis of population ascertained in 2001 Census. On 14th January, 2008, the Government of India promulgated an Ordinance amending the Delimitation Act, 2002 nullifies the Final Order of the Delimitation Commission for the State of Jharkhand. Later on, the Government has passed four separate Orders under Section 10 A of the Delimitation Act, 2002, deferring the delimitation exercise in the four North Eastern States of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland.

2.4.1 Growth of state Parties in Assam

We have already learnt in the previous unit of this block that from time to time in North-East region, various regional parties and organizations are formed for preserving and protecting their own culture. For example, Khasi has formed 'Khasi National Durber' as early as in 1923. In 1956, the party demanded separate Khasi state. A Jaintia Durber formed in 1924 was practically a cultural organization. In Assam the trend has begun since the British rule. For the first time, in 1893, in the plains of Assam, Padmanath Gohain Baruah appealed to all the Ahoms to organize themselves resulting in the formation of *the Ahom Association*. But it joined Assam Congress in 1951.

It is worth mentioning here the regional aspirations of Indian people have emerged as the reaction of anti-system and anti-federal movement. We know that Assam is under the rule of Congress since mid 60s. But it faced political unrest by the end of 1966 and resulted in the establishment of various regional parties. Following are the some of the reasons for the emergence of regional or state parties in the state of Assam

- food shortage
- state language issue,
- medium of instruction and
- foreign nationals (migrants from Bangladesh) etc.

In this context we can mention the name of Asom Gana Parishad which emerged in Assam politics as a result of the Assam Movement, on the foreigner's issue. The Asom Gana Parishad was formed with the young leaders of All Assam Students Union. The Assam movement also brought various organizations or parties into the politics of Assam.

The All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) was formed on 27 August, 1979 under the aegis of the AASU to run the movement. The major constitute of the AAGSP besides the AASU, were PLP, AJD, Asom Sahitya Sabha and Sadau Asom Karmachari Parishad. This newly formed United Front of regionalist forces spearheaded the movement which was started by the Asomiya middle class or classes with a specific political design and ideology of aggressive cultural nationalism (Kalita 2010).

After the end of Assam Movement in 1985, AGP was officially formed and all the above mentioned parties joined it. In the election of 1985, AGP

formed a fresh government in Assam. In this context it needs mention here that to please and secure the Muslim community, Indian government imposed Illegal Migrants (Determination Tribunal) {(IM (DT)} Act of 1983. but due to the efforts of AASU leaders, the Act was withdraw in 2005. After withdrawal of this Act, to preserve the identity of Assamese Muslim, a separate party under the leadership of Badaruddin Azmal namely All Assam Uneted Democratic Front was formed and in 2010 it becomes a national party with the new name All India United Democratic Front.

Hence it is clear to you that in Assam, in an organized form only in 1985 a regional party AGP was formed. However, prior to AGP various parties were operating in Assam with little impact. It was only AGP who formed the first regional government in Assam.

Check Your Progress:

1. Define regional party?
2. Trace the development of regional parties in NE India.
3. Discuss the fActors responsible to the formation of regional parties in Assam.
4. What is Delimitation?

2.4.2 Role of the AGP in the Politics of Assam

It is already mentioned in the previous section that AGP was formed in 14 October 1985 consisting of Purbanchaliya Lok Parishad (PLP), Assam Jatiyatabadi Dal (AJD), All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) and ex–members of All Assam Student’s Union (AASU). You have also learnt that AGP was the result of Assam Agitation which we will discuss in our next Block. Here we will discuss the history and Role of AGP in the politics of Assam.

History:

It is pertinent to mention here that after signing the Assam Accord the State Legislative Assembly was dissolved and the date of elections was announced. It is interesting to note the Purbanchaliya Lok Parishad (PLP) opposed and

criticized the Accord. The Purbanchaliya Lok Parishad and Assam Jatiyatabadi Dal (AJD) began to make necessary preparation for coming elections. The PLP even decided to fight the election independently. But people demanded to a new regional party to implement the Accord properly. While giving due respect to the public opinion the AJD decided to merge itself with a new regional party in a state level meeting held at Guwahati on 7 October 1985,.

After that in a meeting held at Golaghat (12-14 October 1985) the issue of merger of the existing regional parties was strongly debated in the convention. It needs mention here that just before the convention, Mr.Prafulla Kr. Mahanta and Late Bhriugu Kr. Phukan, President and General Secretary of AASU respectively resigned from their offices in order to take a leading part in the Golaghat convention. The convention, presided over by Mr. Prafulla Kr. Mahanta (former President of AASU) was attended by large number of delegates representing various regional political parties including PLP, AJD, Karbi Anglong Peoples Conference, Plain Tribal Council Association and Cachar Indigenous Peoples Conference and pro–movement socio–cultural organizations (ibid. 61). Besides, some educationists, journalists, lawyers invited with the approval of local AASU units also attended the convention. And finally after prolonged three days discussion a new regional political party namely Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) was formed on 14 October 1985.

SAQ:

Do you think that the formation of a new regional political party can fulfill the aspirations of Assamese people? Elaborate your arguments with special reference to AGP. (50+50 words)

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Role of AGP in Assam Politics:

We know that political parties are indispensable for the success of a democratic institution. Their roles as ruling or opposition party in that democratic set up assume tremendous significance. Indian democracy has been 'representative or indirect democracy'. It operates through the representatives elected by the people and it is the role of the political parties to motivate and direct the people to form their government. The party which gets the power to administer the country is known as the ruling party, which forms the government for a particular period of times and the opponent party which fails to get the saddle of administrative power is known as opposition party. The AGP has functioned as a ruling party from 1985-90 and 1996–2000 and opposition from 1991–1995, 2001-2006 & onwards. It is well known that the role of political parties in our parliamentary political system cannot be ignored. Political parties are inevitable for the proper and effecting functioning of parliamentary system. On the other hand, the opposition party is always concerned with the formation and mobilization of public opinion including both domestic and international issues. It may be mentioned that norms and values of parliamentary system can be protected when the oppositions will act as a watch dog of the governmental activities.

In this context it needs mention here that political parties owe their genesis to distinct ideological premises. Ideologies are the outcome of different socio-economic and cultural environment. They help political parties in acquiring power for political and social change. In terms of AGP ideological goals of AASU largely influenced it because it is formed by the ASSU leaders. The 1985 manifesto of AGP clearly reflects the middle class interest of the Asomiya society. The key note of the manifesto is the declaration that the party is pledged to protect the political rights of the Assamese people, to bring about their economic prosperity and to protect their cultural identity and interests. The manifesto further promises to implement the "Assam Accord" of the 15th August 1985, to put an end to separatist tendencies and strengthen national integration and bring about trust and good will amongst the various religious, linguistic and ethnic communities of Assam. It also promises to restore the fundamental and democratic rights of the citizens and to bring about such agricultural, industrial and business developments, which will help the people of the state.

Again, keeping in mind the Assam Accord, the AGP is pledged to take up permanent measures for the issue of immigration of foreign nationals in Assam, and also for the maintenance of peace and amity amongst all classes of the people residing in the state. While doing this, the AGP would ensure that no Indian National is harassed in the name of language or religion.

AGP also fought for the following issues:

- a. Abolition of Article 356 of the Constitution
- b. Linkage with International Organizations
- c. Separate North–East Circle
- d. Local self–government: For development of all indigenous groups of people the Panchayati Raj system would be introduced
- e. Opposed Communal Politics
- f. Protection for un-divided Assam

Apart from these, for the implementation of land policy AGP promised the following measures:

- a) Permanent land patta would be given to all indigenous peoples.
- b) Preference would be given to the landless tea labours and ex–tea labours, in case of land patta.
- c) The land patta would be given to flood and erosion victims.
- d) Only landless peoples would be given patta in government land.
- e) Landless people who are residing in ‘Touji’ and ‘Eksania’ land would be given land patta.
- f) AGP would never abolish land of ST and SC people, except for special needs of the government.

AGP has deep regret for the division of Assam which brings four new states. Since the establishment of these states they lack harmonious relation and border dispute is main reason behind this. AGP wants a peaceful cooperation between these states and want a permanent settlement of border dispute. They condemn Congress for this chaos.

Though AGP has some noble issues for Assamese people but they fail to fulfill these. With a great hope Assamese people choose them as an alternative of Congress government in 1985, but they were far away from their policy implementation. For this reason they lost in the 1990 elections but soon they came to power. The second term of AGP was not good. During that period they were pushed to back foot in Assam politics. Specifically, the issue of “Secret Killing” weakened the party and ultimately they lost power and till now they have not recover from this. Their performance clearly reveals their decreasing support base. It also indicates their failure as a ruling and opposition party. In the next section we are going to analyze the performance of AGP in Assam election basically in 1985, 1991, 1996 and 2001 legislative elections and 2009 Lok Sabha election.

STOP TO CONSIDER:

Major Issues of AGP in 2009 Lok Sabha Election

In the 2009 Lok Sabha elections AGP has consigned certain new objectives. In their manifesto, AGP focused on the issue of establishment of pure form of federalism where state will get more power. In other words we can say that they prefer decentralized policy, they are concerned with the issue of flood control and soil erosion and forced the central government to announce Assam’s flood problems as National Issue.

Some other important issues reflected in their manifesto as follows:

1. Check infiltration and implementation of Assam Accord.
2. Development of tribal peoples and solution to the problem of scheduling
3. Establishment of upper house in State Legislative Assembly.
4. 100 percent of the amount granted by the central government for the flood control should be declared as an aid and proper settlement of those people who are affected by the flood or erosion.
5. They greatly emphasized the insurgency and wanted to resolve this problem politically. They totally opposed the military intervention and the Acts like POTA, TADA etc.
6. One important provision taken by them which is undermined by other parties is to prevent the Muslim Insurgent Groups like HUI, ISI etc which are recently active in Assam.

Performance of AGP:

Though the curving of Meghalaya and Union Territory of Mizoram from Assam reduced the electoral size from 126 to 11, again it was retained on 126 constituencies in 1985.

After a prolonged struggle for the protection of the interest of Assamese people in 16th December 1985 finally the eight Assam Legislative Assembly elections were held. The 1985 Assembly elections brought the rule of the Congress party to an end and the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) was voted to power. AGP won 63 seats while the Indian National Congress (INC) had won only 25 seats. The Assamese people overwhelmingly supported the AGP. Table 1.1 clearly indicate percentage-wise party position of 1985 Assembly elections.

Performance of AGP in 1985 Assembly Elections

Name of the parties	No of seats contested	No of seats won	Total valid vote polled	Percentage secured
INC	125	25	17,28,043	23.47
AGP	105	63	25,43,102	34.54
JNP	43	—	1,07,077	1.45
ICS	73	4	2,35,572	3.20
BJP	34	—	79,068	1.07
CPM	38	2	5,19,852	4.34
UMF	36	17	7,98,554	10.85
PTCA	27	3	2,67,640	3.64
CPI	20	—	72,877	0.98
LKD	19	—	16,806	0.23
UTNLF	15	1	—	—
IND	533	10	11,94,222	16.22
Total =	1128	125	73,62,797	100.00

Source: Government of Assam, State Election Office, Dispur, the 2nd March 1988.

On the other hand in 1985 Lok Sabha elections the regional political party AGP has won the largest number of seats i.e. 7 constituting 50.00 percent while the powerful Congress (I) won only 4 seats constituting only 28.57 percent. The Assam Movement paved the way for the unprecedented victory of AGP which virtually eroded the support bases of the age-old dominant force, i.e. the Congress.

However in 1991 legislative elections, AGP lost its previous support. In that election they got only 19 seats, polled 14,97,615 votes, the percentage being 18.07. Simultaneously in the 1991 Lok Sabha elections the AGP contested all 14 seats in Lok Sabha but won only one seat, polled 14,89,894 votes, the percentage being 17.62.

Again in 1996, AGP formed the government. In that election AGP won highest number of seats i.e. 59, the percentage being 29.70. On the other hand the former ruling party won only in 34 seats, percentage being 30.56. A significant aspect of 1996 Assembly elections is the fact that according to percentage being the AGP 29.70 but Congress (I) percentage 30.56 respectively, both the parties nothing different according to their percentage. The support base of Congress (I) not less than the AGP. It is worth mentioning here that in 1996, simultaneous elections were held to the House of people and Assam Legislative Assembly. In Lok Sabha election AGP had won 5 seats. The percentage being 27.17 and the Indian National Congress had won equal number 5 seats, the percentage being 31.64.

In 2001 AGP again lost its support base. In that election a significant turn took place in Assam politics with the decision of the AGP and BJP leadership to forge an alliance in spite of the strong opposition from the state BJP units. However, it was not fruitful both for the AGP and BJP. Where AGP only won in 20 seats and BJP got 8 seats.

Despite the result of 2001 election, AGP merged with the BJP for the Lok Sabha election of 2005, which resulted in a worse performance done ever. In the Lok Sabha election of 2005 AGP managed to won only in 1 seat with 14.60% of vote share. However, BJP gained by managing to win in 4 seats with 16.21% of vote share which is highest ever in Assam.

Hence it is clear to you that AGP, the biggest regional party of Assam has many upheavals in its electoral politics. Though AGP managed to form government for two times, it is failed to make a strong support base in the Assamese society. The reverse suffered of AGP is very significant in Assam electoral politics. It not only lost in terms of seat but also lost the popular support. The basic reasons behind their debacle in the election raised many questions. In the first instance, we can see their failure as an opposition. We know that under a parliamentary system of government, the opposition has an important role. It not only keeps the government on the guard through

constant criticism of the government's functions but also provides an alternative choice to the people. One organized opposition can help government to take necessary step for upgrading the society. In the present context, AGP has totally failed as opposition party. The members are busy with the issues like reconstructing their party structure rather than formulating public policies. Their failure as an opposition resulted in their defeat in 2001 Assembly election. Since then they are operating as opposition party. Again they lost in 2006 and in 15th Lok sabha Election they are again pushed back. This reveals that they are not successful as opposition. They failed to produce any common programmes which could be considered as superior programme of ruling party.

Check Your Progress:

1. Examine the nature of regionalism in Assam.
2. Trace the development of AGP in Assam politics.
3. Critically examine the role and electoral performance of AGP in Assam politics.

2.5 Summing Up

After going through this unit, you are in a position to analyze the development of regionalism in India, especially in the context of Northeast. Now it is clear for you that political parties are an integral part of present representative democratic system. It is the instrument or media through which people can participate in the decision-making process of the government. In NE India we find that almost all the national parties are operating since independence, especially the INC ruled the region more than two decades. But gradually regionalism got its impetus in this region due to the failure of nationalist parties in fulfilling the demands of its ethnic groups. Hence, the regional parties were formed for protecting their own unique identity. In this context we can point out the case of Assam where AGP was formed for the protection of Assamese identity and formed government twice. AGP played an important role in Assam electoral politics. Congress was overthrown by the AGP from the Assam politics who reigned since 1951 to 1985. The major focus of AGP is to protect the interest of ethnic Assamese people and save

Assam from the migrated people. However, due to lack of common programmes AGP lost popular support in Assam.

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**Institute of Distance and Open Learning
GAUHATI UNIVERSITY**

**MA in Political Science
(3rd Semester)**

**Paper XII
Government and Politics in North East India**

**Block 2
Major Issues of Northeast**



Contents:

Block Introduction–

Unit 1: Insurgency

Unit 2: Migration and Internal Displacement

**Unit 3: Economic Development: Role of Northeastern
Council**

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Block Introduction:

Already you have learnt that the North East India comprises of eight contiguous states of highly undulating hilly terrains, covering 263,179 sq km which is about 8% of the total geographical area of the country. The region is the home of extraordinarily diverse mosaic of ethnic groups having distinctive social, cultural and economic identity, more akin to their South Asia neighbours than main land India. As we have discussed in our first block, the state formation in North Eastern India leads to ethnic conflict which in return hampering its economic growth. Though the government of India took, various initiative to develop this region many problems like mass migration completely changed the demographic and economic scenario of the region and it leads to the emergence of various insurgent groups. It is well known that the region is grossly deficient of infrastructure to tap the available resources and push the economy forward. Here in this block we are going to discuss the insurgency problems of this region along with the problems created by the migration. An attempt is also made to examine the economic profile of and the initiative of North eastern Council to boost up its economic growth. Thus the block helps you to examine the overall aspects of North Eastern region in the following three units:

Unit 1 deals with the insurgency problems of North Eastern region. Insurgency in simple words means an armed rebellion against an established government. The problems of insurgency is not new in this region. The people of the region started alienating themselves and the feeling of self-determination started to germinate. With the aim of preserving their own identity various ethnic groups inhabiting in the region, undisturbed for centuries, began to differentiate among each other severing the local ties and affinities and started to struggle with arms. Thus, insurgency has mushroomed in the region and the secessionist movements, either for sovereignty or for separate homeland, began to lock horns leading to a vertical division among various ethnic groups and hampering the economic growth of the region.

Unit 2 deals with another burning problem of North Eastern region that is migration and internal displacement. Both, migration and internal displacement can change the demographic profile of a region. In this unit, we are going to discuss the factors responsible for migration to northeast as well as the alarming growth of internal displacees in the region.

Unit 3 deals with the economic scenario of the region. We know that the region is economically backward despite being rich in mineral and natural resources. It is worth mentioning that the economy of the region is still agrarian and a huge majority of population still depends on agriculture. The government of India with the help of the state governments undertook various activities to develop this region. In this context we can point out the role of Northeastern Economic council which is a premier organization which is responsible for the economic development of this region. In this unit an attempt is made to discuss the entire prospects of its economic development along with the activities of NEC.

Thus the block consists of the following three units:–

Unit 1: Insurgency

Unit 2: Migration and Internal Displacement

Unit 3: Economic Development: Role of Northeastern Council

Unit 1

Insurgency

Contents:

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Meaning of Insurgency
- 1.4 Factors Responsible for the Insurgency in North- East India
 - 1.4.1 Reasons for Insurgency in North- East States in India
- 1.5 Insurgency as a Barrier to Development
- 1.6 Summing Up
- 1.7 References and Suggested Readings

1.1 Introduction

In simple terms insurgency means the state of insurrection. It has been noticed that the insurgents try to overthrow the existing economic, political and social set up and replace it with a system of their choice. India is experiencing internal conflicts in various parts of the country. It has become the homeground for many insurgent groups. The issue of insurgency in Kashmir, West Bengal and North- East India has occupied an important place in world politics. After independence though there were fights between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, yet there was no organized group of insurgents in the valley till late 1980s. In the 1987 election, it was alleged that the election was fixed in favour of Farooq Abdullah. It led to the rise of armed insurgency known as the '*Mujahadeen Insurgency*' in the region by those who lost the election. Most importantly, Pakistan has supplied arms to these insurgent groups in Kashmir. Another example of insurgency in India is the Naxalite Movement. The Naxalites are declared as terrorist organization under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act of India, 1967. The Naxalites are mainly operating in Chattisgarh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. Again the insurgency in North- East India is a serious problem for the government of India.

In this unit, we are going to discuss the insurgency movement in North-East India. We shall discuss the meaning of the term insurgency. This unit shall focus on the factors responsible for the insurgency movements in North-East India. We shall also discuss insurgency as a barrier to development in the region.

1.2 Objectives

You have already learnt that insurgency is a state of insurrection. After going through this unit you will be able to—

- *understand* the meaning of insurgency
- *discuss* the factors responsible for insurgency in North- East India
- *explain* the relationship between insurgency and underdevelopment.

1.3 Meaning of Insurgency

It has already been mentioned above that insurgency is an armed rebellion against a constituted authority. Insurgency is mainly concerned with the occupation of a territory or enjoying political power. For doing so, they generally need the support of the population living in that specific territory. But on the other hand, terrorism does not require such kind of support from the general masses. They do not even require the sympathy of the people.

It is already known to you that North- East is the most neglected region of Indian Union. The various issues been unattended over the years have turned multilayered and multifarious. The number of issues in North- East is greater in number than any other part of the nation. Among these issues the issue of insurgency calls for an immediate attention. The problem of insurgency has become a major problem in the region. Moreover the varied nature of their objective, role and activities made the problem difficult to understand.

It needs mention here that the interests of the insurgent groups are different from each other and this difference has led to a situation of unrest, ethnic clashes, distrust, segregation between ethnic groups etc in North- East India. You should remember here that though the aims and objectives of the insurgent groups vary from each other there is a common thing among them that all of them fight against the Indian government. To combat the problem of insurgency everyone should think and act collectively.

Stop to Consider:**Characteristics of Insurgency:**

Though the insurgency movements differ from each other, there are some common characteristics of all the insurgency movements. These are as follows-

- The insurgents must have an ideology to explain what is wrong in the present socio- political and economic system.
- Insurgency involves the question of legitimacy. While the authority considers the insurgents as illegitimate, the insurgents consider the authority itself as illegitimate. The insurgents are motivated by an objective of grievance. This grievance may be real or perceived.
- Popular support is a requisite for the long term effectiveness of insurgency. The popular support helps in the growth of the movement.
- Insurgency mostly occurs in states where there is social division on the basis of race, culture, religion, ideology etc. it also may occur in economically weak states.
- Though the aims and objectives of insurgent groups vary from each other one thing is common among all the insurgent groups. The chief aim of all the insurgent group is to change the existing system whether it is political, social, economic or cultural.
- Some insurgent groups depend on single leadership. They are guided by the charisma of the leader.

1.4 Factors Responsible for the Insurgency in North- East India

The North- East India comprises of seven sister states namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura and the state of Sikkim. These states except Sikkim, often face insurgent activities since independence. It needs mention here that, the North- East region covering the area of 255,037 sq. km is bordered by China, Myanmar, Bhutan, and Bangladesh. The concept of North- East emerged only after the coming of the British. Therefore the term North- East can be called as a post colonial concept. In the pre- independence era the term North- East was not popularly used. The construction of the region called North- East is a post-independence development. This region is surrounded by international borders and linked to the mainstream India with a narrow corridor (Siliguri Corridor) which is popularly known as *Chicken Neck*.

Again, the people of North- East were not psychologically integrated with the mainstream India and they were also not a part of the process of Indianness during the independence struggle of India. This can be considered as the major reason behind the insurgency problem in North- East India.

You should remember here that there is a long history of the problem of insurgency in North- East. The reason behind this problem may be mentioned as the narrow politics, the Delhi centric approach, widespread criticism, feelings of subjugation and notion of being colonized. This led to the feeling of self determination which alienates the people of the region from the mainstream. The fear of losing identity is also another major reason. In the process of preserving their identity many ethnic groups in North- East have resorted to arm struggle. The secessionist movements have become a feature of this region.

You have already learnt that there are various reasons of the problem of insurgency in North- East India. These mainly include the geographical isolation of the region, absence of cultural and psychological integration with the mainstream and economic discontent and the clash between tradition and culture and forces of change. The unchecked migration becomes an added problem. Many parts of the region have started movements against Indian union with the objective of separating from the Indian union.

It is clear to you that the North- East India is experiencing continuing relative instability. It has already been mentioned above that the North- East is connected to the rest of the country through a 21 km long Siliguri Corridor which is popularly known as *Chicken Neck*. The region feels alienated from the country and this feeling of alienation has given rise to the culture of violent separatism. In North- East the demands of the insurgent groups vary from each other. Some demand secessionism while some others are in favour of self governance within the Indian Territory. Again, some insurgent groups have taken insurgency as a money making process without any political ideology. In contemporary time the insurgent groups have lost the ideology of their earlier leaders. Now they have taken insurgency as an easy means to earn money. They demand political autonomy, economic justice or cultural rights. There may be various factors which can be the basis of insurgency like political, economic, cultural, ethnic, religious or combination of two or more.

The immigration process has also helped in fuelling the problem of insurgency. The indigenous people resort to insurgency in the fear of losing their identity and being minoritized. The immigrants provide a feeling of insecurity of losing their identity and submerging themselves to the mainstream. The migration from East Bengal to the states mainly Assam and Tripura has intensified the problem. Within two decades the Bengalis became the powerful majority in Tripura. It has threatened the identity of the tribals of Tripura. The migrated people have created disturbances in the region. In the beginning the migrated people were settled in the wastelands. The problem began when they started occupying the forestlands especially in the tribal areas. It severely affected the economy of the region. The North-East has witnessed several insurgency movements based on this migration or foreigner issue. The Chakmas are considered as foreigners in Arunachal Pradesh and Bengalis in Tripura. Likewise the Chin refugees are treated as foreigners in Manipur and Mizoram. In Assam, the Bengalis and the refugees from Bangladesh are treated as foreigners.

SAQ:

Do you think that by checking illegal migration in the region, the problem of insurgency can be solved? Explain. (50 words)

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Again, the economic factor also is one of the main reasons behind insurgency in North-East. The economic instability and political tension took various forms like political agitations, violent struggle, militant activities and insurgencies. The North-East is full of natural resources like oil reserves, tropical forests, hydro-electricity potentials of the Brahmaputra and its tributaries, tea, coal, timber, silk and jute etc. But it is still backward. The main reason behind this is that these resources are not fully exploited. Moreover, some of the resources are under-utilized. The lack of economic development leads to lack of employment opportunity. This has created a state of dissatisfaction and insecurity among the youths compelling them to resort to armed violence.

It is pertinent to mention here that initially the government of India has neglected the region from the viewpoint of economic development. The government of India also did not pay any attention regarding the protection of international boundary. When this problem took serious shape of insurgency, the government of India sanctioned huge amount of money for unplanned development projects in the region. It gives the administrative officials a chance to become corrupt and also gives the insurgent group an opportunity to buy arms. Thus the effort of the government to strengthen the economy of North East, in turn, makes the insurgent groups stronger.

Again, in 1958 the central government has introduced the Armed Force Special Power Act (AFSPA). This Act has empowered the armed forces of the North- East states to exercise special powers. It has resulted in lawless violence and human rights violation. This has compelled the state governments to withdraw the Act without informing the central government. This is evident of the fact that there is a huge gap between state and central government in assessing the situation and it has hampered the peace talks. This has ultimately given birth to new insurgent groups to protest the atrocities of the army. The demands of the insurgent groups range from protection of fundamental rights to breaking away from India.

In this context, you should remember here that the failure of the government of India to handle the problem efficiently made the problem more serious. There is a continuous failure of the government talks with the militancies which made the militant group lost their faith in government. The failure of most of the tripartite talks indicates that the government of India has not taken the problem seriously. The central leadership has been miserably failed in integrating the country especially this region. This is one of the major reasons of insurgency in this area. Another reason is the failure of the government to understand the psychology of the people of the region. Moreover, the government tried to deal with the issue by repressing the insurgents instead of peaceful talks. It also hurts the sentiments of the people. The government is not taking serious steps in checking illegal immigration through international borders. Again, the planning in India has a centralized character which deprives the indigenous people from taking part in the development process. As a result they do not want to co- operate with the government. The political leaders also do not want to solve the problem in peaceful manners due to their various vested interests. They are more

interested in enjoying political power rather than solving the problems of insurgency. Their negligence towards the region and inefficient handling of the problem made the issue more acute.

SAQ:

1. Do you think that the government of India has not been successful in combating the problem of insurgency? Give reasons in support of your answer. (30+ 30 words).

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2. Do you think Indian government should take special measures to combat the problem of insurgency in North- East India? Explain. (50 words)

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It needs mention here that the problem lies with the misunderstanding that the people take the help of foreign nation thinking them as friends. But these nations are trying to promote *hate India* mentality. The foreign countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Myanmar, Pakistan etc. play a very important role in making the problem of insurgency more acute. These nations supply arms to the insurgent groups and also provide financial funding as well as training of the cadres. Bhutan and Bangladesh provides training camps and bases to the insurgents. Among these nations Bangladesh and Pakistan play the most crucial role by providing arms and training camps to Indian insurgents.

Again, the government of India has introduced the law known as Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) in the year 2002. This law has been introduced with the objective of countering insurgency and terrorism by replacing the weak and soft normal laws of the land. But the law has to be repealed when the religious and ethnic minorities alleged that the officials and police are abusing the power given by the law. This has given strength to the insurgent groups.

The ineffectiveness of India's counter insurgency strategy also can be cited as one of the reasons of insurgency in North- East India. The government of India has not been able to handle the insurgency problem efficiently. They launched the *Operation Bajrang* in 1990 to counter the ULFA insurgency. But just when the operation was about to get the success the government of India declared ceasefire. This gave the insurgents enough opportunity to flee to the neighbouring countries and reorganize their forces.

Stop to Consider:

Counter Insurgency:

Counter insurgency refers to the actions of the authorized government to suppress insurgency. Whereas insurgency tries to destroy the existing system, counter insurgency tries to protect the existing system from the attacks of the insurgents. Counter insurgency may use the method of armed rebellion. Again, they may also follow the rule of divide and rule policy. They try to break the links between the insurgents and the general masses. In this context we can cite the example of *Operation All Clear*. It was a joint operation by the government of India and Bhutan to remove the ULFA and NDFB insurgents from Bhutan. Again the *Operation Green Hunt*, a name given to the operation in the *Red Corridor* against the Naxalites is another example of counter insurgency in India. This operation began in 2009.

From the above discussion you have learnt that there are several causes of insurgency in North- East India. In short we can sum up these causes in following manners-

- One of the major causes of insurgency is poverty and the exploitation of the vulnerable section of the society.
- When the young people feel that they are discriminated they may take the path of insurgency
- The vast gap between rich and poor also is one of the major reasons.
- The economic backwardness of the regions results in limited employment opportunity. The youths are left with no option than to take up arms.
- The illegal migration has increased the felling of son of the soil

Check Your Progress:

1. What do you mean by insurgency?
2. Trace the difference between insurgency and terrorism.
3. Explain the role of economic factor in making the insurgency problem more serious.
4. What is POTA?

1.4.1 Reasons for Insurgency in the North- East States in India

It should be mentioned here that though all the insurgent groups in North-East India have some grievances against the Indian government, the reason of the grievances differ from states to states. Let us now discuss in brief the specific reasons of insurgency in the seven states in North- East.

ASSAM:

In Assam the insurgency problem started to control the influx of immigrants. The process of heavy migration compelled the indigenous people to demand for the application of the theory of son of the soil. United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), which is the powerful insurgent group in Assam, has been formed in April 1979 as a protest against the illegal migrants. The illegal migrants became a threat to the identity of the ethnic people in Assam. It created the problem of identity crisis. Again after the partition the Assamese government was forced to accommodate the Bengali refugees. The central government has threatened to deprive the Assamese government of their development funds if they do not accommodate the refugees. They were even forced to distribute the lands among the landless Assamese and refugees. It has developed a feeling of resentment among the Assamese people.

In this context we should mention here that to deal with the foreigner issue the Assam Accord has been signed in the year 1985 between the representatives of government of India and the leaders of Assam Movement. According to this Accord the detection and deportation of foreigners will be done by taking as 1971 the cut off year. But the failing of Assam Accord made the Assamese people believe that the Indian leaders neglect the issues

which are of vital importance to the Assamese people. The members of the insurgent group ULFA further believe that Delhi is exploiting the resources of Assam and it can be stopped only through resorting to violent insurgency. They are demanding secession from Indian union so that the resources of the region can be used for the benefits of the people of the place. The ULFA demanded for sovereignty of Assam. Again the Bodo insurgency led by the NDFB has started as a cultural movement which has taken the form of political movement in course of time. Though the NDFB insurgents are still active in the state, yet granting of autonomous power to Bodo area in the form of BTC has solved the problem to some extent. In the next block of this paper we shall discuss the Bodo insurgency in details.

SAQ:

Do you think that the failure of Assam Accord is one of the major reasons behind the problem of insurgency in Assam? Give reasons in support of your answer. (20+ 30 words)

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TRIPURA:

You have already learnt that the insurgency problem in Assam has started to deal with the issue of illegal migrants. In Tripura too the insurgency problem is mainly related to the issue of immigrants. In Tripura, the immigrants have captured the economic and political structure in such a way that leaves little scope for the local tribes to participate. They are loosing their rights over land. In Tripura the insurgency began in order to eradicate the Bengali immigrants from the area and to liberate itself from Indian union. The congress government in the state with Bengali majority supported the domination of Bengali and also the capturing of tribal land by the Bengalis. This has provoked the tribals in the region to take up arms. The main insurgent groups in Tripura the Tribal National Volunteers (TNV), All-Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) and National Liberation Force of Tripura (NFLT) etc are formed

with the intention of driving out the Bengali migrants from the state. They held the Bengalis responsible for the physical, cultural, political and economic marginalization of the indigenous tribesmen. The insurgent group like TNV and NLFT have opined that the only way to break away from the dominant Hindu- Bengali culture is the acceptance of Christianity. But the ATTF is silent on religious debates.

MANIPUR:

Hijam Irabot Singh has started the revolutionary movement in Manipur. Hijam Irabot Singh was a communist leader and he opposed the merger of Manipur with Indian union. The merger of Manipur has been done forcefully and the agreement of merger has no clause included in it for the development of the state. Instead he proposed the establishment of Purbanchal state including Manipur, Tripura, Cachar and Mizo Hills. To oppose this merger he formed the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) in 1964 with the chief objective of restoring the pre accord status to Manipur. He demanded that the Kabaw valley said to be given by Nehru to Burma shall be restored back to Manipur. Moreover, Manipur was granted a minimal development fund till the fifth five year plan. It has upset the youth of the region. Some groups of Meiteis have taken up arms demanding the pre- merger status of the state. After that within a very short span of time many insurgent groups have been formed in Manipur. Peoples Liberation Army (PLA), Peoples Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) formed in 1977 led by R.K.Tulachandra, Kangleipak Communists Party (KCP) formed in 1980, Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL), Peoples United Liberation Front (PULF), the Army of People's Revolutionary Front in 1978, led by Nameirakpam Bisheshwar, etc are some of the insurgent groups in Manipur. The chief aim of all the insurgent groups in Manipur was to restore the lost pride and prestige of the state. In Manipur the insurgent groups are running a parallel government influencing the government decisions. They even interfere in issues like awarding contracts, supply orders and appointments in government service. Extortion becomes the order of the day. They drain off the foodgrains meant for the public distribution and collect the protection money even from salaried persons also.

NAGALAND:

The Naga insurgency is the longest running guerilla warfare in South- Asia. The Naga National Council (NNC) under the leadership of Phizo was the first insurgency group in Nagaland. NNC was further been spelt into National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN). In 1988 the NSCN also split into two factions, namely NSCN (Isaac– Muivah) and NSCN (Khaplang). The chief objective of these insurgent group is mainly to restore the self determination of Nagaland. (In the second unit of third lock of this paper, the Naga Movement has been discussed in details.)

MIZORAM:

Till now you have learnt that insurgencies in Assam and Tripura are mainly due to illegal migration whereas the insurgency in Nagaland and Manipur can be attributed to cause like self determination. Unlike these, the Mizo insurgency has economic character. The insurgent group in Mizoram, the Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF) under the leadership of Laldenga was formed in 1960 to provide relief to the famine affected people in Mizoram. The local people were not satisfied with the reliefs provided by state government as well as central government. The party got success in providing reilef and it transformed itself to Mizo National Front (MNF) demanding secession form Assam. MNF started the ‘Operation Jericho’ in 1966 against the Indian army and captured 11 towns. The demand for separate Mizo state independent of Assam has been materialized through the Mizoram Accord signed in 1986.

MEGHALYA:

Like Assam and Tripura, in Meghalaya also the first insurgent group Hynniewtrep Achik Liberation Council (HALC) was formed to throw out the outsiders from Meghalaya. In 1992 the group witnessed a split and a new insurgent group was formed under the name of Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC). This group also shares the same objective of throwing out the outsiders from the territory of Meghalaya along with the objective of freeing Meghalaya from Garo domination. Again another split led to the formation of insurgent group namely Achik Matgrik Liberation

Army (AMLA) which represented the interest of the Garo people. Off late the HNLC is organizing insurgent activities. But they do not have mass support. Among all the North- East states, Meghalaya is comparatively free from the problem of insurgency.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH:

Unlike the other states in North- East, the problem of insurgency in Arunachal Pradesh is comparatively low. The insurgent group in Arunachal called the Arunachal Dragon Force (ADF) and National Liberation Front of Arunachal (NLFA) did not cause any lawless violence as they are not significant in numbers.

From the above discussion you have learnt that there are various reasons of insurgency in North- East India. In Assam and Tripura the insurgency movement is mainly due to the influx of immigrants. In Manipur the reasons for insurgency can be attributed to corruption and unemployment and self determination. On the other hand, the insurgency in Nagaland is due to economic and geographical reason while the insurgency in Mizoram is for economic reason.

Stop to Consider:

Some Insurgent Groups in North East India:

The Kuki National Army (KNA)- It was formed in the year 1988. The chief objective of this group was to bring together all the Kuki inhabited areas. They aims at establishing *Zalengam* which means the 'Land of Freedom'.

The Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF)- It was formed in 1996. It demanded a homeland in the state of Mizoram. But when they realized that their demand cannot be materialized, they started demanding for Autonomous District Council. They also demanded the rehabilitation of the Reengs. The Mizoram government has forced out the Reengs to Tripura.

Bodo Liberation Tiger Front (BLTF)- In Assam this group has been organised in 1996 demanding separate Bodoland. They indulged in various violent activities like killing, bombing, extortion, kidnapping etc. Ultimately on 10th February 2003, they were given a separate politico administrative structure known as Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) within the existing State of Assam.

The Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA)- This group protects the interest of the Zomi people residing in various places of the region. It aims at establishing a separate state within Indian territory which will be known as *Zogam* which means Land of the Zomi people.

1.5 Insurgency as a Barrier to Development

After going through the previous sections of this unit you must have learnt that insurgency is a serious problem in North- East India. The insurgency has a deep, wide and complex impact on society, development and politics of the region. It leads to internal displacement of the population. It has become a barrier in the path of development. Kidnapping, extortion, killing, *bandh*, strikes, curfew etc hampered the developmental works in the region. The cases of insurgency deeply wound the psyche of the public. They live under constant threat of killing, kidnapping and extortion. The education of children has also suffered due to insurgency. The right to education has been made a fundamental right. Yet the students in insurgency affected areas cannot go to school for days due to various *bandhs* called by insurgent groups.

Again, the funds meant for the development process is pocketed by the insurgents. The funds meant for the development works and the poor and needy, are being diverted to the insurgent groups. In this context we can cite the example of the arrest of the Constitutional head of N. C. Hills Autonomous District Council for his alleged links with the terrorist group Dima Halim Daogah (DHD). DHD an insurgent group in Assam. This group mostly operates in Cachar, N C Hills, Karbi Anglong and Nagaon districts of Assam. This incident shows that the officials have links with the insurgents and they divert the development funds to the insurgents. They use these funds to buy arms.

Moreover, the contracts and supply works are given to the insurgents. They hardly implement the works and even if they materialize it, the quality of work is poor. It hampers the development of the region.

It is known to you that security is the main pre-requisite of economic and social stability. The atmosphere of insecurity created by the insurgent activities is the chief reason of economic instability and underdevelopment in North- East India. The insurgent activities destroy the communication

system and damage the rail tracks consequently leading to setback in the import system. The business groups hesitate to invest in the region due to extortion though the region is full of natural resources. As a result, the region is not at all industrially developed.

It needs mention here that in North- East India, petroleum and tea industry are the two most important industries of development. The insurgents consider these two industries as the means of exploiting the masses by the central government and they attack these industries. Oil pipelines are often blown up by the insurgents. They also kidnap the officials of these industries. Extortion is likely to be higher in these two industries. These attacks have a negative impact on the development of the regions. The insurgent activities terrorise the prospective investors.

The ecology of the region is also suffering due to insurgency. The insurgents take shelter in the forest areas destroying the environment. Again the operations against the insurgents by the government also needs to destroy forest areas. It ultimately leads to loss of valuable natural resources leaving the region in the state of underdevelopment.

SAQ:

Do you think insurgency is the only reason behind the economic underdevelopment of the region? Explain. (50 words).

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The North- East is comprised mainly of rural areas. But the problem of insurgency is hampering the development of these rural areas. The government workers do not want to go to the rural areas in fear of extortion, abduction or death. As a result the development work is suffering.

You should remember here that the development works in a region requires experts from different territories. But the hatred of the insurgents towards the outsiders has limited the inflow of expert minds to the regions. Therefore the expert ideas are lacking in the development process which hampers it.

The insurgents are demanding development of the region on the one hand. On the other hand, they are targeting the agents of development in the name of protecting the interest of the indigenous people.

But it will be unfair to blame the insurgency alone for the economic underdevelopment of the region. Till the 20 years of independence there was no insurgency in the region. But the development projects were not there.

Check Your Progress:

1. Explain the reasons of insurgency in Tripura.
2. Name some of the insurgent groups in Manipur.
3. What is the full form of HNLC?
4. Why the North- East is economically underdeveloped despite having abundance of natural resources?

1.6 Summing Up

After going through this unit you have learnt that insurgency is a situation of armed rebellion against the constitutional authority. It is a major problem in North- East India. This unit has also focused on the factors responsible for insurgency in North- East India which differ from region to region. Illegal immigration, economic instability and inefficient handling of the problem by the government are the root causes of the problem of insurgency in North- East India. The neighbouring countries are also adding fuel to the problem. They are helping the insurgents in various ways. Again, this unit also gave you an idea that due to the problem of insurgency the region is not being able to develop economically. The funds which are allocated by the central government for development projects, in reality these funds are utilized by the insurgent groups to buy arms. As a result the development works in the region are suffering. Moreover, the insurgent activities like killing, abducting, kidnapping, extortion etc. prevents the investors from investing in the region. You have also learnt that which is termed as insurgency in North- East India, in reality, is the violent expression of grievance against the political and economic structure of the region in which the indigenous people have

little or no share. To combat this problem of insurgency, the central government needs to reverse the policies and shall adopt an open mind to the region.

1.7 References and Suggested Readings

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Unit 2

Migration and Internal Displacement

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- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Objectives
- 2.3 Meaning of Migration and Internal Displacement
- 2.4 Factors Responsible for Migration to Northeast
- 2.5 Factors Responsible for Internal Displacement in the Northeast
- 2.6 Problems Associated with Migration and Internal Displacement
- 2.7 Summing Up
- 2.8 Reference and Suggested Readings

2.1 Introduction

In the contemporary period, migration has become a major issue as people from different areas have started moving from one place to another. This type of migration can be voluntary as well as involuntary or forced migration. Again, migration of population may take place within the boundary of the state and sometimes it may cross the geographical boundary of a state. Displacement of population within the boundary of the state is known as internal displacement. Though, migration is necessary for the proper development of different areas of a country, sometimes it creates problems too. Therefore, it is not wrong to say that in today's world most of the countries faces the problem of migration and internal displacement.

This unit is an attempt to introduce you to the concept of migration and internal displacement. Migration and internal displacement have changed the demographic profile of Northeast India. Since this unit specifically discusses the problems of northeast India, in this unit we are going to discuss the factors responsible for migration to northeast as well as the alarming growth of internal displacees in the region. This unit will further discuss the major problems associated with migration and internal displacement.

2.2 Objectives

Migration is defined as the movement of population from one locality or country to another. With both positive and negative consequences, migration has posed problems in different parts of the world. India has also experienced migration in different phases of history. After reading this unit you will be able to:–

- *explain* the meaning of migration as well as internal displacement
- *analyse* the factors responsible for migration and internal displacement in Northeast
- *discuss* the problems associated with migration and internal displacement

2.3 Meaning of Migration and Internal Displacement

We all are familiar with the term ‘migration’. In common parlance, it means moving from one place to another. Hence, migration is understood as a movement of the people for the purpose of establishing a new or semi-permanent residence. Migration may be of two types — internal or external. In this unit we shall discuss the issue of internal migration or internal displacement in later section. Again, migration may be in-migration or out-migration. Immigration stands for migration into a place or migration to a country where the person does not belong. On the other hand, out-migration means migration from one’s own place or country.

History is the witness of the fact that human beings have been migrating from one place to another for different reasons like war, economic opportunity etc. In fact, one can go to the extent of saying that migration has changed the course of human history. According to the estimate of World Migration Report 2010, the number of international migrants is 214 million in 2010. In India, the British Rule had changed the socio-political and economic life of the whole country. Moreover, in 1947 the partition of the country and the resultant migration from the British India to the newly formed Pakistan and vice-versa has changed the whole demographic profile of the country.

Now let us discuss the meaning of internal displacement. We have already mentioned that sometimes migration may take place within the boundary of a state. Such type of migration may be termed as internal migration or internal displacement. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border. Thus, internally displaced persons are the people who are forced to leave their homes, villages or towns and find refuge in another part of their country.

IDPs face many difficulties after losing their homes. Many times, the children of IDPs are forcibly recruited in hazardous jobs. They become insecure after losing their traditional sources of livelihood. IDPs can be caused by different factors. Three major internal displacement are —

1. conflict-induced displacement
2. natural-disaster induced displacement
3. development-induced displacement

In the following sections we will mainly focus on the factors responsible for migration to Northeast India as well as internal displacement in this region.

SAQ:

Do you think that Internal displacement is different from migration as both involves dislocation?

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2.4 Factors responsible for Migration to Northeast India

From the above sections of this unit, we have got an idea about the meaning of migration. We also know that migration may be in-migration or out-migration. There are various factors responsible for both in-migration and

out-migration. Factors responsible for in-migration can be called pulling factors while factors responsible for out-migration is called pushing factors. Pushing factors of migration refers to those factors which made the environment and the situation unfavourable for living. The pushing factors are —— lack of job opportunities, famine or drought, political unrest or fear of persecution, forced labour, loss of wealth, natural disasters, death threats, poor housing, discrimination or war. On the other hand pulling factors are those factors which attract a person to a new area. Pulling factors are—— job opportunities, better living conditions, political or religious freedom, better opportunity for education, better medical care, security and good climatic condition etc.

To have a better understanding of the migration issue in Northeast we must know its geographical location. The Northeast region of India is surrounded by four foreign nations, viz, China, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Burma (Myanmar). This region is basically a hilly region and it has only three valleys viz,—— Brahmaputra, Barak and Imphal Valley. Earlier, Northeast region of India refers to a group of seven states, namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. Recently, Sikkim has also been included in the Northeast.

The Northeast region of India covers an area of 255,083 sq km, constituting 8.39 percent of the geographical area of India. The total population of the region, as recorded in the 2001 census, was 3,83,16,918 accounting for 3.73 percent of the population of the country. The density of population of the North East according to 2001 census was 150.21 per sq km against the national average of 324 sq km.

India as a country has been a host to different migrant groups in different periods of history. The Northeast India has also sheltered a number of migrants within its geographical boundary in different phases. The region has received migrants from different countries as well as from different states of India. Between 1901 and 2001, the population of India grew by 331 percent while the population of Assam grew by 710 percent. The difference in growth rate can mostly be explained by large scale migration of people from other parts of continent (Nath and Nath, 2009).

Migration to this region had taken place in different phases and also from different areas. We can divide migration in three phases —— pre-colonial,

colonial and post-colonial phases. Again, as discussed above there are various factors responsible for migration. There are various pulling factors in the region which led to in-migration to this region in different periods.

Though all the Northeastern states receive the migrants from different places in different periods of history, Assam has been the most favourite destination for the migrants. Therefore, she has received highest number of migrants among the northeastern states. If we look back at the history of migration to Assam, it is found that Austro-Asiatic and the Tibeto-Burmans were the first group of people to come to Assam. Bodos constitute the first group to have entered and settled down in Assam's plains. After some period, the Indo-Aryan groups migrated to Assam. Thus, it is clear to us that migration to this region took place from very early period, i.e. much before the coming of British.

In the colonial period large-scale migration to this region took place for various regions and from various places. The rate of growth of population in Assam has been much higher than that of India's average since the colonial period. In 1921, when the population growth rate was negative for India, Assam had shown a tremendously higher growth rate, i.e. 20.77 percent. During the period 1901-1971, the growth rate of Assam's population was quite high and it continues to be so in the later part of the twentieth century too. Hence, it is evident from the discussion that migration is the major factor responsible for the high growth of population in Assam as well as the entire Northeast. Demographer Das (1980: 850) has observed that Assam's rate of population growth during 1901-51 has been the second highest (137.80%) in the world exceeded only by Brazil (204.00%) (Hussain, 1993).

The violent or turbulent conditions in the neighbouring countries have also resulted in the migration of populations to the region. For example, political turbulence and unrest in neighbouring Bangladesh has resulted in the migration of population to some states of the region like Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura etc. According to available data, in Assam the total population growth rate was 34.71 percent during 1961-1971. It is believed that this growth rate was caused by migration from neighbouring countries and not by natural growth.

Another significant cause for the migration of population to this region has been selling of labour or search of economic opportunities. Here, we can

cite before you the example of Nepali-speaking community. However, migration of the Nepalis in to the Northeast India for settlement in a large scale started during the British period with the recruitment of Gurkhas in the colonial army. By 1900, the Nepalis constitute almost 50 % of the population of Sikkim and Darjeeling. (Nath, 2005)

Stop to Consider:

Migration of Nepalis to NE:

In Northeast India, the Nepalis migrated for the purpose of labour, for recruitment in the army, to open up forestlands and tea plantations in the colonial period. In the last part of 19th century and early part of twentieth century, Nepali Brahmins and Chettris began to migrate to take up grazing, dairy farming and agriculture as they were attracted by the availability of grazing land. Many Nepali people after retirement settled down in the foothills, forest fringes and other strategic locations on the frontier and created some Nepali pockets in places like Sadiya in Assam, Mantripokhari in Manipur, Aizwal in Mizoram and Mokokchung in Nagaland and some other places of Arunachal, Tripura and Meghalaya. According to the Census of 1941 Nepal provided 45 percent of the migrants to India (Chetri 1983:13)

The Nepali migrants are now settled over the seven states of Northeast India. Historical evidences show that some limited migration of the Nepalese took place long before the British colonization of Assam. It is also estimated that one group of pandas (priests) of Assam's Kamakhya temple owe their origin to Nepal (Chetri 1983:13).

Another flow of migration in entire Northeast that draws the attention of the social scientists as well as the civil society has been migration of population from East Bengal (presently known as Bangladesh). British also encouraged Bengali Muslim peasants from present Bangladesh for cultivation. The Bengali Muslim peasants occupied vacant lands. Again, immediately after partition the Bengali Hindus from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) migrated to this region for fear of religious persecution resulting in the decline of percentage of Hindu population. It is also observed that the Muslim peasants from East Bengal were driven mainly by the pressure on the soil at home. Thus, the peasants of East Bengal, mainly from neighbouring Mymensingh and Pabna districts migrated to Assam's wastelands. The first significant migration from

East Bengal took place at the beginning of the 20th century. The Census of India for the first time recorded the peasant migration in 1911. The Soviet demographer Peterov too noted that the migration of peasants from Mymensingh district was especially considerable in 1901-1911 (Hussain 1993:204). This migration helped to increase the quantum of colonial revenue and agricultural production (Hussain, 1993:45). However, it has been alleged that migration of population from present Bangladesh in search of livelihood still continues. Environment crisis in Bangladesh and relatively greater economic opportunities for livelihood in Assam and other parts of India provide the primary motivations for cross-border migration of population.

During the British rule there is another flow of population of educated Bengali Hindus from neighbouring Bengal who can help in the administrative matters by working at sub-ordinate levels of administration. In the colonial period, along with the Europeans, a Bengali educated group came to this region. They migrated to Assam along with colonial rulers to occupy the secondary positions in the colonial administrative set up. Besides those who assist the colonial rulers as their subordinates, a section of the Bengalis was also engaged in various professions and small business..

Moreover, we can cite another flow of population basically meant for working as tea garden labour. It needs mention here that in the earlier part of nineteenth century Assam was a labour-scarce state. Therefore, British imported labour from central and east-central India to work as labourer in tea gardens. They mostly came from the Jharkhand-Chotnagpur region to Assam's tea plantations. They are termed as 'black tribal'. From South India also a group of plantation labour entered in the tea gardens of Assam. These labourers worked hard and contributed towards building the tea estates in Assam. The migration of these labourers did not take place in one phase. Rather, they kept on coming in different phases within a span of 100 years. Their massive migration of these people even changed the demographic structure of Assam and led to higher growth of population in the state. Thus, a new group of population known as 'tea-labourer' constituted of various tribes from outside Assam. According to colonial historian Gait (1905:362), the population of tea-labour in 1921 was 1.3 million or one-sixth of total population of Assam emerged in Assam. In 1997, the total population of tea garden labourers stood at around 15 lakh.

Till now we have seen that migration from different places to this region took place mainly for economic reasons. Migration of Marwaris to this region was also motivated by that factor. They mostly migrated during the British period for trading purpose. They set up business establishments. Even now they have been dominating the market in many of the states of Northeast including Assam. Economically also their condition is better off. They are mostly concentrated in the urban areas and trading centres. It needs mention here that the local people often categorize them as Hindi-speaking people.

The Biharis also came in search of livelihood to this region. This group even engaged themselves in toilsome jobs. The Biharis are the largest group among Hindi speakers in Assam. They are mainly engaged in laborious and toilsome jobs like rickshaw pulling, thela pushing, portering, brick making, earth-filling, building roads and embankments and as construction labourers. Moreover, some of them are engaged in small business like vegetable selling, fruit selling, hawking and pan shops.

Other communities which came to this region in search of livelihood are — — North Indian Muslims, small groups of population from Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. However, number of population of these groups are less and they are mostly engaged in business and commerce.

Immediately after independence, the large-scale acceptance and inflow of the Hindu Bengali refugees dramatically transformed the demographic equation of Tripura within a short period of time wherein the indigenous tribal became a minority and the refugees a majority.

Hence from the above discussions and data available to us, it is clear to us that migration to Northeast India is mainly influenced by two factors ——— i). search of livelihood ii) search of shelter. Again, though migration of different sections of population contributed to the economy of the region, in the recent times migration has created various problems. The land-man ratio has been declining steadily. With that per-capita cultivable land is also decreasing. It has affected the region which pre-dominantly relies on agriculture. Again, it has also contributed towards the problem of unemployment and under-employment.

2.5 Factors Responsible for internal Displacement in the Northeast

We have already learnt that internal displacement may be caused by conflict, natural disaster or development projects. Conflict is a major reason of population displacement in the Northeast region. In fact, in India two major conflict prone regions are — Kashmir and Northeast, though conflicts have affected number of people in Punjab and Gujarat. Such conflicts result in massive displacement of population. For example, conflicts in Kashmir in 1989-90 forced the minority community living there to flee to other places. It is estimated that in by 1996 more than 2.5 lakhs population of Kashmir fled to Jammu and Delhi. Again, during Kargil war more than 1 lakh population fled from the people living in the border areas.

In Northeast India too, we find that conflicts between groups have become very common. As mentioned earlier, the Northeast region has been a home to different ethno-cultural groups. In the post-independence period, the region has witnessed more than seven major conflicts in different states of the region. In fact, conflicts among groups in this region started immediately after the independence of India. Here, we must mention the name of Naga rebellion that started in mid-fifties of twentieth century. Mizoram also witnessed separatist movement after a decade or so. In the later period, Manipur, Tripura and Assam also faced a number of conflicts. Major conflicts leading to displacement of a huge number of populations took place in Kokrajhar and Karbi-Anglong district of Assam. It is very difficult to estimate the number of conflict-induced displaced people as there is lack of proper data. Moreover, all the displacees may not go to the camps established by the government. Many times, such displacees go to different places to protect their lives and in search of livelihood. However, it can be said that lakhs of populations have been internally displaced in different conflicts in entire northeast. In Manipur conflicts between Nagas and Kukis displaced more than one lakh population of these two communities. Then, Mizo-Reang conflicts led to the displacement of 39000 Reangs in Mizoram.

In the twentieth century, the demand for separate homeland has become the fundamental cause of conflict induced IDPs in Assam. The conflicts in the last decade of twentieth century in Kokrajhar district have led to the displacement of more than 200000 populations belonging to different communities like Bodos, Santhals, Muslims and Bengalis etc.

Hmar-Dimasa ethnic violence of 2003 led to the displacement of the Pnar tribe from Assam to Meghalaya (2003). Although it is difficult to ascertain the number of displaced population but till May 2004 more than 2000 Dimasa persons were in camp.

Vilence against Hindi-speaking people, ethnic clashes between Kuki and Karbi displaced over thousand population in November 2003 in Karbi Anglong.

In Meghalaya anti-Bengali movement has displaced a large number of Bengali population of Meghalaya. Again, ethnic conflict between the majority tribal group Mizo and minority Reang has resulted in the displacement of 15000 to 50000 Reang populations since 1997.

Thus, conflict has been the major reason of population displacement in North East.

Development–Induced Displacement:

Another major cause of population displacement has been development programmes or activities. We all know that India is a welfare state and it takes up development projects for reducing poverty and for providing various facilities to the people. Keeping that goal in mind government from time to time take up the task of building new infrastructure, constructing industries or even establishing parks and road network which ultimately leads to forced displacement of population. Since land is a major requirement of development activities, population displacement is the resultant consequence of development. According to an estimate, the lives and livelihoods of nearly 10 million people across the globe are adversely affected annually by forced displacement due to infrastructure projects such as irrigation schemes, mines, industries, power plants and roads. It needs mention here that the majority of development displacees belong to economically backward communities.

The problem of development-induced displacement is more acute among the newly independent countries of South-Asia and Africa. These countries after attaining independence put lot of emphasis on developmental activities even at the cost of population displacement. Among these development projects dams constitute the most significant factor of displacement. In India, among the development induced displacees, dam induced displaced

constitute more than 77%, while World Bank funded projects involving dams and reservoirs accounted for more than 63% of the total displaced (WC on Dams Report, 2000).

It needs mention here that the entire Northeast is economically backward and a small number of industries were established during the colonial and post-colonial period in this region. However, of late, development-induced displacement and movements of the common people against development projects in the northeast India have drawn the attention of different circles of society. Because of increasing development activities, the number of development-induced refugees is also increasing in Assam. Development-induced displacement in Assam started with the establishment of oil companies as new oil townships around the oil industries were established displacing the inhabitants of those areas. Again, two paper Mills of Assam at Jagiroad and Cachar have also led to the displacement of population besides adversely affecting the surrounding areas. Moreover, the expansion of Guwahati city has mainly displaced the population of tribal communities like Karbis and Bodos as the non-tribes are settling down in the city area. Moreover, with the expansion of Guwahati different institutes like IIT are also being set up in the outskirts which have displaced the original inhabitants of those areas. Besides, construction and expansion of roads as well as construction of bridges also displaced a number of populations in the region.

It is worth mentioning here that among the different development projects, dams have the highest potential to displace people. India being an agricultural country has been emphasizing building dams since pre-British period. During British period also dam-building continues for agricultural purposes as well as for electricity generation. The nation-builders in the post-independence period put heavy emphasis on dam-building for development and modernization of the nation. However, it is estimated that in the post-independence period, dams in India have displaced millions of people. In the recent times government has decided to construct more than 150 dams in Northeast. Among the states of the Northeast, Arunachal Pradesh is going to have the highest number of dams. These dams may contribute towards the development of the nation by producing hydro-electric power, but the natives will have to bear the brunt for that. In case of Arunachal Pradesh, these dams may not displace a huge number of populations as the density of population of the state is very low. But it would cause severe

damage to the people living in the borders of Assam. By now it has become clear that mega dams have done more harms than good to the people. But still the central government is proposing new plans having dangerous consequences ignoring the fragile ecology of this region.

The 2000 MW Lower Subansiri project to be constructed on the border areas of Assam and Arunachal is already facing opposition from the people as well as from the governments of both the sectors. The project was planned by National Hydro Electric Power Corporation (NHPC), a government run public sector unit and it is very keen to construct the dam as it has obtained environmental clearance for the projects. The proposed height of the dam is 116 meters and it will submerge 3436 hectares of land. At the same time more than 1 Lakh tribals of Arunachal Pradesh will be adversely affected by the dam, out of which about 15000 faces the threat of physical displacement. Besides it will affect the rich bio diversity of the region. The Dumbur Dam of the Gumti Hydel Project in South Tripura district, aims at generating 8.60 MW of power, has displaced a total of 5845 tribal families – between 35,000 to 40,000 people in all. The Gumti Hydel project has mainly displaced the people belonging to Reang community.

Likewise, Tipaimukh Multi purpose project is also going to displace over 15000 people. It would mainly attack two tribal communities- Zeliangrong Nagas and the Hmar. It is to be mentioned here that the tribal people have close relationship with nature. The construction of such projects disturbs their community life and breaks their relationship with nature. Besides, in the Northeast such displacement due to development creates the problem of space further creating ethnic conflicts among them.

Tuli paper Mill of Nagaland has also displaced hundreds of tribal families and affected the rich biodiversity and environment. The Loktak Hydel project in Manipur displaced around 20,000 people as their villages went under water. In Arunachal Pradesh more than 20,000 would be displaced by the Siang project (Bhaumik, 2005).

Displacement due to Environmental Degradation:

It is difficult to ascertain the number of IDPs caused by environmental degradation, i.e. flood, riverbank erosion, and landslide etc. However, we all have witnessed the dangerous consequences of environmental degradation

in the recent years. Of late, flood and river-bank erosion in the plains, and landslide in the hills have displaced many families from their original habitat. River bank erosion of Brahmaputra River as well as many of its tributaries have posed serious threat to the lives of the people. Moreover, because of erosion the people loose not only their habitats but also their agricultural lands. It needs mention here that the people of the Barak Valley also faces the problem of river-bank erosion

Moreover, in the recent times flood is becoming more devastating than what it used to be earlier. It is estimated that the flood of 2004 affected more than ten million people in Assam. The region is also experiencing another natural calamity known as flash flood. In an unprecedented flash flood in October of 2004, nearly one thousand people died in Goalpara district of Assam. The victims of flood and river-bank erosion are not properly rehabilitated leading to their marginalization and pauperization.

Stop to Consider:

The Pagladiya Dam Project:

The Pagladiya Dam Project is to be constructed in Nalbari District of Lower Assam. The project is going to irrigate 54,125 hectares of land, protect 40,000 hectares of land from flood and erosion, and generate only 3 MW of electricity. But it would displace almost 1,05,000 population most of whom are tribal people. The rehabilitation and resettlement package offered by the government is also not acceptable to the people of the area. Besides many of them do not possess proper ownership documents and therefore will not get any compensation. Hence, the people have started their movement under the banner called "Pagladiya Bandh Prakar Ksatigrastha Alekar Sangram Samiti" against the implementation of the project. The Central government as well as the Brahmaputra Board, which is the implementing agency of the project, is making all efforts to construct the dam there. But till now the resistance of the people have been quite successful and the authority has failed to do even the ground survey because of the massive resistance of the people.

2.6 Problems associated with Migration and Internal Displacement

The major problem associated with migration and internal displacement has been rehabilitation problem. Let us now discuss the major problems associated with migration and displacement.

- ***Loss of habitat:*** Both internal displacees as well as migrants lose their original habitats after displacement or migration. One's home and habitat determines his/her identity. People also develop attachment to their place of origin. Therefore after losing homes and hearths, the displacees as well as the migrants suffer from identity crisis and it becomes a traumatic experience for them.
- ***Loss of livelihood:*** besides losing their habitats, the internal displacees and migrants also lose their traditional sources of livelihood. Various communities usually depend on the resources locally available for earning their livelihood. But once the people get displaced from their habitat and place of origin they tend to lose their source of livelihood. These displacees find it absolutely difficult to adjust themselves in a new environment and find that similar source of livelihood. In the absence of other skills for earning livelihood, these people find it difficult to earn livelihood in a new situation leading them to pauperization.
- ***Problem of resettlement and rehabilitation:*** resettlement and rehabilitation of the migrants and internal displacees is the stupendous work faced by governments of different countries. Over the years the number of migrants as well as internal displacees are increasing rapidly. While for the migrants there are international laws, but for internal displacees there is absence of such laws. Again, most of the times, the concerned authorities or governments do not keep the proper records of these people. Lack of proper resettlement and rehabilitation leads to pauperization of these communities.
- ***Community breakdown:*** we have already learnt that migrants and internal displacees lose their habitats. After displacement they resettle in new locations. However, all the families of a community may not be resettled in a new place. In such a situation, there is community breakdown. This is a great social loss for the displacees.
- ***Educational problems:*** the displacees find it difficult to pursue their education after displacement. In case of displacement induced by conflicts and natural disaster, the displacees stay in camps for a long period. The inmates of the camps face difficulties in pursuing

education. Moreover, loss of livelihood often leads to economic backwardness of these communities which stands as obstacle in pursuing education.

- ***Problems relating to Health:*** the displacees and migrants after displacement sometimes are forced to resettle in a very unhygienic location. Moreover, most often in camps also the health and hygiene part is ignored. They are not provided with clean drinking water. They also face sanitation problems. Unhygienic living conditions lead to the health problems of the displacees. Therefore, they often suffer from most of the water-borne diseases like jaundice.
- ***Problems faced by women and children:*** from the above discussions it is clear to us that the displacees and migrants suffer from various problems after displacement. However, the women and children as displacees suffer doubly. Women suffer from various problems in camps as well as in new location after displacement. Again, the children as displacees face various problems after leaving their homes. They also face problems in pursuing education. Besides, the displaced women and the children are also vulnerable to different diseases.

Besides, the above mentioned problems the migrants and internal displacees also suffer from some other problems arising out of loss of property. They face the problem of security in new locations. Moreover, there is every possibility of inter ethnic conflicts and inter community conflicts after displacement.

2.7 Summing Up

After reading this unit you are now in a position to explain the meaning of migration and internal displacement. This unit has also helped you in understanding the factors responsible for migration and internal displacement. These two phenomena are common now-a-days in the whole world. India is no exception and in Northeastern region of India these problems have become acute over the years. There are also different factors responsible for migration to this region which can be categorized as pulling factors. Likewise, there are different factors responsible for internal migration in this

region. After reading this unit you are now able to discuss various factors responsible for migration and internal displacement in this region. Moreover, this unit also helps you in understanding the problems associated with internal displacement and migration.

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Unit 3

Economic Development: Role of Northeastern Council

Contents:

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Objectives
- 3.3 Economy of the Northeast
- 3.4 Obstacles to the Economic Development in the Northeast
- 3.5 Measures to Overcome Such Obstacles
- 3.6 Role of the Northeastern Council
- 3.7 Summing Up
- 3.8 References and Suggested Readings

3.1 Introduction

The Northeast region of India comprises of eight states — Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Tripura and Sikkim— a region poorly connected with the rest of country with a small corridor. The country is surrounded by Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh and China. The region is economically backward despite the fact that the region is rich in mineral and natural resources. Economy of the region is still agrarian and a huge majority of population still depends on agriculture.

There are various factors responsible for the lack of economic development of the region. They are—low capital formation, in-adequate infrastructure facilities, geographical isolation and poor communication, lack of investment and high rate of unemployment etc. this unit will make an attempt to discuss the major obstacles to the economic development of the region. The Central government has adopted various measures for the development of the region and Northeastern Council is established with that purpose. Hence, in this unit we will also discuss the role of the Northeastern Council in the economic development of the region.

3.2 Objectives

It is already known to you that despite having rich mineral resources, the Northeast India is still considered to be one of the economically backward regions of the country. There are various factors responsible for the backwardness of the economy of Northeast. After reading this unit you will be able to:–

- *discuss* the economy of the Northeast
- *examine* the factors responsible for the backwardness of the economy
- *analyse* the role of Northeastern Council

3.3 Economy of the Northeast

Before discussing the economy of the northeast region of India, it is pertinent to know the peculiarities of this region. The northeast region is a hilly region. We know that the Northeast (NE) India comprises of the eight states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim, is known for its biological and cultural diversity. This region of India is strategically located as it shares 98% of its boundary with foreign nations viz, – Bangladesh, China, Myanmar and Bhutan.

The region is inhabited by different ethnic communities. It has also witnessed inter-ethnic conflicts at different times. Insurgency is a major problem faced by the region. While many are of the opinion that insurgency has stood as an obstacle to development, others consider lack of development as the major factor behind the growth of insurgency. Though the debate regarding development and insurgency is still on, we must admit that both are closely related one having strong impact on the other.

The pace of development of the hilly areas is more than the plain areas. Most of the populations of the northeast reside in rural areas. Economy of the region is still agrarian and a huge majority of population still depends on agriculture. Hence, Agriculture is the chief economic activity in the region. However, the old method of cultivation is largely used by the cultivators. Therefore, yield from agriculture is very low in this region. Moreover, in the hilly areas a different method of agriculture is practiced which is known as slash and burn method. Rice is the main product of this region. Lack of

irrigational facilities and absence of technology has resulted in lower yield from agriculture. It has resulted in low per-capita income.

There are differences in the level of industrialization in different states of northeast. The region is rich in mineral and natural resources. The industrial sector has mainly grown around tea, petroleum and natural gas etc. Since industrialization is not properly developed there is employment pressure on agriculture and service sector. Per-capita income in the region is very low in comparison to the national per capita income. There are various factors responsible for the lack of economic development of the region. They are— —low capital formation, in-adequate infrastructure facilities, geographical isolation and poor communication, lack of investment and high rate of unemployment etc.

Development in the Northeast region is lagging behind the rest of the country due to historical factors and geographical location. Transport communication both with the rest of the country and within the region is very poor/inadequate. This region is often cited as land-locked region. Improvement of communication network, both by road and water, is very important to accelerate the movement of goods, people and services. Such improvement would improve trade, commerce and tourists projects in northeast region

There is a need to have a holistic approach to settle the problems of Northeast region. Though there are some common problems in the states of northeast, it must be admitted that each state has its unique culture, heritage and social norms different from each other. There are different ethnic groups in the region and these groups are very conscious of their separate and distinct identity. Proper development of the region will help in curbing the insurgency problem to a large extent.

Because of prolonged insurgency in the region, despite abundance of natural resources no outside investment has taken place. Unemployment particularly the problem of educated unemployment is very high.

It has been observed that absence of proper governance, corruption, gross underdevelopment and the lack of basic infrastructure have been pushing the region to a situation of backwardness.

In 1950s northeast essentially meant Assam, Manipur and Tripura. In the later period, because of the demands of different ethnic groups four other districts, namely, Nagaland (1963), Meghalaya (1972), Arunachal Pradesh

and Mizoram (1987). Very recently, Sikkim is also included in the Northeast. The northeast states have lagged behind economically further and further in relation to the other states.

Along with the issues of identity and security, underdevelopment is another factor which has given rise to agitation and insurgency. Barring Nagaland all other insurgency movements in the north-east had their genesis in economic backwardness.

Assam stands at the centre of this region. Rapid growth of industrialization cannot be achieved without proper provisions for industrial infrastructure. Low level of private investment has also stood in the way of development. Corruption has also slowed the process of development in the region. There should be good governance where transparency, accountability and capacity building becomes the hallmark.

Hence from the above discussions it is clear to you that due to lack of investment and poor communication network growth is stagnant in the region. People of this region very depend on the service sector i.e, government and the construction sector. Though the government is taking various steps for the development of the region and money is also flowing to this region, the common people are hardly benefited by it. Corruption is all pervasive in all the sectors and all the levels which deprive the common people from getting the benefits of huge development effort.

3.4 Obstacles to The Economic Development in the Northeast

It is well known that development and Northeast India are seen to be opposite to each other. One of the strategic regions of India with eight vibrant states with each having distinct social, cultural, economic indicators, the region needs fruits of development along with rest of the country. The pace of development of the hilly areas is more than the plain areas. Economy of the region is still agrarian and a huge majority of population still depends on agriculture.

There are differences in the level of industrialization in different states of northeast.

You have already learnt that NorthEast is inherently a sensitive region due to its many ethnic, linguistic and religious groups which are living for centuries.

It is a home of tribe-structured self-governing local societies with a long history of isolation, stagnation and foreign domination. Though the region is rich in terms of its natural resources, the proper utilization and negligence of the government make the region much more backward than the rest of India. The economic inequality was begun since the partition of India in 1947. Due to the partition it was converted into a high cost high price economic region. Due to the high transportation cost of marketable products and raw materials from within and consumer articles, raw materials and capital equipments from outside became prohibitive. The national markets and the theatres of production being far away, the economy of the North-East was virtually crippled. Here in this section we are going to discuss some major obstacles faced by this region in the path of economic development.

1. POPULATION DYNAMICS:

We know that the growth in population beyond the optimal size associated by socio-political development and technical revolution results in increased pressure on natural environment as well as on the process of economic development. Since the British period NE India witnessed a high rate of population growth. The growth is not natural. It is because of migration from various parts of India and other neighbouring nations to this region. However, regarding the natural growth rate of population, during the period of 1971-2001, all the states of this region have registered a higher growth rate than the rest of India. As a result, the increasing population pressure in this region has given rise to linkages between quality of life, population dynamics and environmental degradation. Here, we can say that population explosion has made a reverse effect in its productive sector. The economy of the region greatly relies on agriculture. Due to the over population the rate of cultivated land is decreasing day by day along with the production. In this context we can point out that food grain production in North-East India has registered a 37.41 % growth during the period 1971-87, and about 3.72 % of the country's population resides in the North-East but its share in total food grain production is only 2.6 %. From the following table we can clearly imagine how the population is increasing in this region as compared to entire India.

	Decennial		Av. Anl. Exponential		1981	1991
	1971-81	1981-91	1971-81	1981-91		
Arunachal Pradesh	35.15	36.85	3.04	3.06	8	10
Assam	36.05	24.24	2.12	2.12	254	236
Manipur	32.46	29.29	2.85	2.51	64	82
Meghalaya	32.04	32.86	2.80	2.76	60	79
Nagaland	50.05	56.08	4.09	4.50	47	73
Tripura	31.92	34.30	2.79	2.90	196	263
N.E. Region	36.28	36.00	2.94	2.97	104	130.50
All India	24.66	23.85	2.22	2.11	216	273

Source: Basic Statistics of North Eastern Region, 1995, NEC, Shillong.

2. POOR MEANS OF INFRASTRUCTURES:

It is well known that infrastructure is the foundation or that structure upon which the economy of a country rests and makes headway through the path of development. It consists of

- Transport- Railways, roads, shipping and aviation and terminal facilities
- Energy or power
- Banking
- Irrigation
- Education
- Health care facilities
- Market development etc.

a. Transport- Railways, roads, shipping and Aviation and terminal facilities

- **Railways:** Railways is the most important profit making public sector undertaking. It is the easiest and cheapest way of carrying goods. Though the headquarter of North East Frontier Railway is in Assam the railway is not well developed in this regions. Most of the region do not have railway connectivity.
- **Water Transport:** with the Brahamaputra the region has a great potentiality in this sector. However, lack of government's negligence and outdated communication system barred its development.
- **Road Transport:** NE region is a land locked region and hence road transport system plays an important role in its economic development. The road transport network is not so improved. Like the colonial period it is mainly concerned with connecting the existing

roads of middle age and limited to the city area. The rural areas are kept out from the highways. So, the economic progress of this region is influenced adversely by higher transport costs bidding to higher accession costs to the factors market and higher distribution cost to product market.

Like these three sectors others are also in poor conditions. In the educational sector there is a silver lining that literacy rate of the Northeast region outperforms the nation as a whole. Literacy Rate in the seven states *i.e.* A.P Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura in 2000 are 32.87, 43.20, 49.00, 39.15, 67.36, 51.09, 49.86, 21.31 (%) respectively. The variation is 21.31 with the national level. Again, when we observe the quality aspects of education in terms of average distance traveled by school students to reach the nearest school in the rural area, number of teachers per school/college level of knowledge, status of the libraries, etc. the situation will seem reversed. In the banking sector the average population pressure per bank in the year 1992 is 35 % more than the pressure at national level. Regarding the consumption of electricity and other energy sources, the Indian per capita consumption of electricity is more than three times of the consumption level in North East region.

Stop to Consider:

Ner Project:

The government of India has undertaken an ambitious plan which includes (a) Special Road Development Programme to improve the road connectivity to remote places of NE region. This includes four lining, two lining and improvements of the National Highways. Further development of the strategic roads, state and district roads are also included in this programme. (b) In addition to, upgradation by making 6 lines and 4 lines and 2 lines roads, big roads, by passes, grade separation, service roads etc. are included. These programmes are implemented by the National Highway Development Authority. The main source of fund for this is the World Bank assistance and assistance form Asian Development Bank. The future of this project rests on a futuristic programme of public private partnership.

3. POLITICAL INSTABILITY:

The socio-political scenario is still worse. Frequent changes and instability in government, the move for separation by some strategic states, continuing law and order problem, interference of religion into politics, communal riots and the number of deaths therein, high expenditure of the home departments (police), corrupt administrative machinery, increase in the number of criminal incidents, degradation of human values, religious and intertribal conflicts are some of the factors prevalent in Northeast region adversely affecting the economic development. The influence of ethno-linguistic elements on the resource distribution system poses some threats to the same particularly for the subordinated social group (Guhathakurta, 1994).

4. INSURGENCY:

Insurgency is one of the major obstacles of this region's development. Since independence various militants groups have emerged in this region and they are working against the mainstream politics. A huge amount is lost due to the protective measures taken against them. For the first time British left India, the Indian nation-state faced uprisings in Tripura almost immediately after Independence and in the Naga Hills since the mid-fifties. Tripura has witnessed periodic bouts of tribal militancy, with the Bengali refugee population its main target. The Naga uprising, the strongest ethnic insurrection in northeast India has been weakened by repeated splits on tribal lines. Armed uprisings also erupted in the Mizo Hills following a famine in 1966. A year later, guerrilla bands became active in Manipur and Tripura. ULFA also posed major challenges to Assam. In short by the early 1980s, the whole region was gripped by large-scale violence.

5. UNEMPLOYMENT:

The unemployment also posed a great threat to the regions development. It leads to the depression of youths and forced them to join militant groups or engage in un-social manner to earn easy money. It is because, the primary sector of Northeast economy due to small landholding, high cost of inputs and low yield rate is no more considered lucrative by the educated job seekers. Creation of employment in public organizations has already reached

the point of saturation in terms of very high public servants to population ratio. Jobs created in slow growing private industrial and service sector are inadequate to meet the demand for jobs and as a result the problem of unemployment has risen in all the states of the Northeast region. The mismatch between jobs created and job seekers available has added to the problem (Panda, 1990).

SAQ:

Discuss the major problems of the northeast economy. (50 words)

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Thus from the above discussion we come to conclude that the basic cause of lack of economic development in NE region's economic un-development is related to the poverty- population growth linkages. It is observed that explosive population growth is responsible for economic backwardness. A high growth of population puts a pressure on the availability of resources, which in turn affects the per capita availability of Gross State Domestic Product. The poor masses allegedly degrade the environment by their uncivil and unscientific ways of using environmental resources to meet their needs for food, fuel, and fodder. Even more importantly, they do so by multiplying their numbers, and bringing the already scarce natural resources under further strain. As such poverty abetted by ever growing population is the worst pollutant in developing world.

SAQ:

Do you think that insurgency poses a serious threat to the economic development of the NE region? Give arguments in favour of your answer. (80 words)

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3.5 Measures to Overcome Such Obstacles

Though the NE region faced several problems in the context of its economic development since independence, with commitment of the government as well as the people these problems can be solved. Following are some measures which may help in removing such obstacles:–

- To change the perception of the people by providing education so that they will equalize the perceived level of resources received with the aspired level of resources that should be received.
- To provide adequate resources
- Active participation of people in the governmental decision making process, so that they will get an idea about the policies undertaken by the government concerned.
- Commitment of the bureaucrats to the utilization of public policies.
- Proper utilization of Directive Principles of State Policies
- Proper planning
- Scientific techniques should be used in the productive sectors to create more jobs
- Proper investigating agency to monitor governmental functions

In this context it needs mention here that Government, both at the centre and the state level has to pay sufficient consideration to the high variation in the magnitude of quality of life indicators across the states in Northeast region while assigning priority for their developmental process. This is an inclination towards equity perspective for sustainable development that breaks the vicious chain of poverty. At the same time the efficiency perspective cannot be ignored where stress is on mobilization of resources by maintaining both vertical and horizontal harmony.

Hence, a mixed approach may be developed to tackle such situations by putting a check on unsustainable patterns of production and consumption. The development only come through socially equitable, ecologically viable and economically efficient developmental process.

Check Your Progress:

1. Describe how population growths influence one region's economic development?
2. Critically examine the economic conditions of NE India.
3. What are the major obstacles to the economic development in the Northeast? Suggest some measures to overcome such obstacles.

3.6 Role of the Northeastern Council

In Indian federal system all the state powers are divided between the central and the state governments. Again as per the principle of cooperative federalism it is the duty of the central government to look after the developmental process of its each state and it has to maintain a healthy relation with every regions. Again we know that for the smooth running of the administration Indian territory is divided into various region. The North Eastern region is comprised of the eight States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. And for the greater development of this region as a whole a council known as North Eastern Council (NEC) is established. It is the nodal agency for the economic and social development of the North Eastern Region. The NEC was constituted in 1971 by an Act of Parliament which marked the beginning of a new chapter of concerted and planned endeavour for the rapid development of the Region. The NEC started functioning in the year 1972. Since its inception, over the last 39 years it has been instrumental in setting in motion a new economic endeavour aimed at removing the basic handicaps that stood in the way of normal development of the region and has ushered in an era of new hope in this backward area full of great potentialities.

Organization:

The members of the NEC consist of the Governors and the Chief Ministers of the eight member States including Sikkim, apart from the Chairman and three Members who are nominated by the President of India.

Role of NEC:

Before discussing the role of NEC we have to know the functions of it. The North Eastern Council was constituted for performing the following functions:-

- To discuss any matter in which some or all of the States represented in the Council have common interest and advise the Central Government and the Governments of the States concerned as to the action to be taken on any such matter, particularly with regard to
 - (i) any matter of common interest in the field of economic and social planning;
 - (ii) any matter concerning inter-State Transport and Communications;
 - (iii) any matter relating to Power or Flood-control projects of common interest.

- To formulate and forward proposals for securing the balanced development of the North Eastern Areas particularly with regard to
 - (i) a unified and coordinated Regional Plan, which will be in addition to the State Plan, in regard to matters of common importance to that area;
 - (ii) prioritizing the projects and schemes included in the Regional Plan and recommend stages in which the Regional Plan may be implemented; and
 - (iii) regarding location of the projects and schemes included in the Regional Plan to the Central Government for its consideration.

Where a project or a scheme is intended to benefit two or more States, to recommend the manner in which such project or scheme may be executed/ implemented and managed, the benefits there from may be shared, and the expenditure thereon may be incurred.

- To review, from time to time, the implementation of the projects and schemes included in the Regional Plan and recommend measures for effecting coordination among the Governments of the concerned States in the matter of implementations.

- To review progress of expenditure and recommend to the Central Government the quantum of financial assistance to be given to the States entrusted with implementation of any project included in the Regional Plan.
- To recommend to the Governments of the States concerned or to the Central Government the undertaking of necessary Surveys and Investigations of projects to facilitate inclusion of new projects in the Regional Plan for consideration.
- To review, from time to time, the measures taken by the States represented in the Council for the maintenance of security and public order and recommend to the concerned State Governments further measures necessary in this regard.

Hence it is clear to you that NEC is an advisory body and it can discuss any matter in which the north-eastern states have a common interest and advise the Central Government as to the action to be taken on any such matter. This was to done so as to take care of economic and social planning of these states (since they were lagging from other states) and to take care of inter-state disputes. The council is credited for its achievements basically on the electricity and education sector. In this context it needs mention here that it has funded projects producing around 250 MW of electricity to reduce the region's dependency on West Bengal and Orissa. The council has also taken up major highway and bridge building projects and fund many engineering and medical colleges. In terms of its funding it mainly lies with the central government with small portions contributed by the state governments concern.

Stop to Consider:

Achievements/Initiatives of Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region in 2009:

During the year 2009, the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region has carried forward its commitment to the people of North East for overall development of the Region. The Ministry has taken many new initiatives for development of the North East Region. Again in the month of January, the 5th Plenary Session of North Eastern Council was held at New Delhi under the

Chairmanship of Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar, the Minister for DoNER, also Chairman, North East Council, NEC. The Governors and Chief Ministers of North Eastern States, Members of NEC, Planning Commission and State Governments of the North Eastern Region participated. Various issues related to the development of North Eastern Region were discussed. Some of the decisions taken include:

- (i) The proposed 11th Five Year Plan of the North Eastern Council could be redrafted by incorporating the views of Member States.
- (ii) The NEC should directly negotiate with Air India to work out for the dedicated airlines in the North Eastern Region.
- (iii) It was decided to take up the scheme for promotion of art and culture in the NEC plan in October, 2009.
- (iv) The Council endorsed the report of the task force and advised that North Eastern Council Secretariat and Ministry of DoNER should process the recommendations with the concerned authorities in Government of India.
- (v) NEC needs to earmark funds in their Plan for engagement of consultants for preparation of DPRs for various development projects.
- (vi) NEC should be adequately strengthened so as to act a statutory body for regional planning.

3.7 Summing Up

After reading this unit, you are now in a position to give an over-all picture of the economy of Northeast. From this unit you have learnt that the Northeast region of India comprising of eight states is economically and industrially underdeveloped. Though the region is rich in terms of forest and mineral resources, the per-capita income is very low in comparison to the national per-capita income. There are certain obstacles which stands in the proper development of northeast economy. After going through this unit you are now in a position to list those obstacles that stand in the way of economic development of the region. Moreover, you have also learnt the measures to overcome those obstacles, lastly this unit has helped you in assessing the role of North-Eastern Council in the development of the economy of the region.

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**Institute of Distance and Open Learning
GAUHATI UNIVERSITY**

**MA in Political Science
(3rd Semester)**

**Paper XII
Government and Politics in North East India**

**Block 3
Ethnic/Identity and Students Movements**



Contents:

Block Introduction–

Unit 1 : Assam Movement

Unit 2 : Bodo and Naga Movement

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Block Introduction:

Social movements can be defined as a series of contentious performances, displays and campaigns by which ordinary people made collective claims on others. In short, social movements can be seen as major vehicle for common people's participation in public politics. It is a means to change or resist the existing status. It may be violent or non-violent in nature. For example, Mahatma Gandhi's movement against British was non-violent in nature, but movement of ULFA in Assam is violent. It is well known that in India social movements now becomes a way of life or a tool in hand of common people to argue their demands in front of the government. Since independence we have witnessed various social movements led by different sections of people including students and professionals to make sure that their ideology should retain and their identity should be maintained. In case of Assam and North East due to its ethnic diversity produces various social movements in different course of time. A common characteristics of Northeastern movements is that all of them directed towards protection of the identity of one sections and almost are violent in nature. Here in this block we are going to discuss three major movements of North-East India in two units.

Unit 1 deals with the Assam movement, which brought a drastic change in the socio-political and economic structure of Assam. The movement was basically led by the students of Assam under the banner of All Assam Students Union, supported by almost all sections of Assamese society. Though, the movement was led by the students its demands were for the protection of the interest of ethnic Assamese people and deportation of foreign nationals. In 1985 the movement ended and it gave rise to new trends in Assam politics with the establishment of Asom Gana Parisad as its first organized regional party.

Unit 2 focuses on Bodo and Naga movements. Both the movements demanded a separate statehood for their respective people. The Bodo movement of Assam was started as a socio cultural movement but later it emerged as the socio economic movement of the Bodo tribe. The Naga

movement is one of the long running ethnic movements in North East India. We can also find an another resemblance of these two movements as they favoured armed struggle against Indian government. Finally it can be said that economic deprivation and persevation of distinct cultural identity are the main causes of the origin of differant movements in North Eastern India.

Thus this block consists of the following two units:

Unit 1 : Assam Movement

Unit 2 : Bodo and Naga Movement

Unit 1

Assam Movement

Contents :

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Assam movement: its origin and causes
 - 1.3.1 Origin and Causes of the Assam Movement
 - 1.3.2 Objectives of the Movement
- 1.4 The end of the movement
- 1.5 Consequences of the movement
- 1.6 Summing Up
- 1.7 References and Suggested Readings

1.1 Introduction

A movement can be defined as a collective activity of a group of people with some continuity to promote or resist a change in the society or group of which it is a part. It may be violent or non-violence in nature. The Assam movement is the reflection of Assamese people's anger to the National government for their failure to protect and promote the cultural heritage as well as territorial integrity of the State. Assam Movement is a much maligned movement which is led by the students. An association of Students, All Assam Students Union (AASU) led the movement fought for the issues like the illegal immigration of foreign nationals to Assam from the neighbouring countries- Bangladesh and Nepal and preventing them into entering the electoral politics and deportation of all foreigners living illegally in Assam along with the protection of the distinct identity of Assamese people during 1979 to 1985 marked as Assam movement. This period witnessed a major change in Assamese society and politics followed by many violent incidences. Thus it can be said that in Assam we find that growth in population due to the illegal migration beyond the optimal size associated by socio-political development and technical revolution results in increased pressure on natural

environment as well as on the process of economic development. Hence, in order to achieve a better quality of life, to protect and promote ethnic identity an arrangement should be taken in all the systems and sub systems. But the failure of Indian National Congress, the ruling party brought a state wide social movement to protect the ethnic identity of Assamese people along with to preserve rich heritage of Assam. In this unit an attempt is made to explore the causes responsible for the Assam movement and its impact in Assam politics. The unit also deals with the consequences of the movement.

1.2 Objectives

During the period 1971-81, Assam has registered higher growth rate of population than the rate for the whole country due to the several reasons danger to the unique identity of Assamese people which result a prolong movement against the Central government by the AASU. After going through this unit you will be able to–

- *trace* the origin and causes of Assam movement
- *evaluate* the Assam movement
- *thrash out* the consequences of the movement

1.3 Assam movement

We know that among the Northeastern state of India, the Assamese are the only major community with a history of state formation, a highly developed language and social theory and religion but with an incomplete nationality formation. It is due to the history of separation and isolation from the rest of India in the colonial period. In the North East, a sense of incompatibility grew into one of resentment against being made a part of India, and an anti-India sentiment emerged amongst the region's people, especially when the Indian government did not meet local aspirations. In Assam, due to the government negligence towards solving its common problems united Assamese people stood up against the government of India, which resulted a prolonged mass movement. Here in this section we are going to discuss the origin and causes of Assam movement in details.

1.3.1 Origin and Causes of the Assam Movement:

The movement of Assamese people against illegal immigrants led by All Assam Students Union (AASU) and the 'All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad' (AAGSP) between 1979 and 1985 is termed as the Assam Agitation or Assam Movement. Both AASU and AAGSP to continue the movement and articulate the common people set an agitational program to compel the government to identify and expel the illegal immigrants. The agitational programs were largely non-violent, but there were incidents of acute violence, like the Nellie massacre.

Though the Assam Movement started in 1979, its origin dates back to the British colonial period. As we know that Assam came under the British occupation from 1826 onwards and in 1874 Assam become a separate province under a Chief Commissioner directly responsible to the Government of India. With the opening of tea-industry opened the flood gates of immigration to Assam. The rapid growth of the tea sector during the later half of the nineteenth century significantly changed the economic as well as demographic structure of colonial Assam. Due to the negative attitude of Assamese people towards the labour work the British administration, encouraged large-scale immigration into Assam tea garden form the neighbouring states. Because of the migration the population rapidly increased in the state. The following table clearly reflects the population growth of Assam during that period.

Growth of population in Assam during 1871-1941

Period	Percent of Growth
1871 – 1881	9.1
1881 – 1891	9.2
1891 – 1901	5.9
1901 – 1911	14.6
1911 – 1921	12.8
1921 – 1931	15.6
1931 – 1941	15.5

Source: *Goswami S. (1997): Language politics in Assam, Ajanta publications, New Delhi. P.34*

During this period the most important events took place in Assam history that was establishment of a student body which was not political. In 1959 the students of Assam organized as like democratic foundation and non-partisan, non-political nature. The body tried to protect the interest of greater Assamese society endeavored to solve the problems common to the students of Assam as well as to promote the spirit of culture, literature, sports etc. However, participation in the Refinery Movement and Language Movement it has branded as partisan and politically motivated. Therefore, there was mounting pressure for the organization of a Student Union whereby the students of all classes irrespective of language, religion, hills or plains could take a common platform (Barua 1990: 20). In 1958-59 different college and different places formed student organization namely in 1958 Gauhati Students Union, Sibsagar District Students' Association, in 1959 the Inter College Student Union and it create a new sense of patriotism. And finally on 8th August 1967 All Assam Students Union (AASU) is formed in Tezpur. During the period of 1969 to 79 it participation in different mass movements like,

- (a) The movement for second oil refinery in Assam (1969-70),
- (b) The movement for state language (1960),
- (c) The movement for Assamese medium of instruction upto the graduate level two universities of Assam in 1972,
- (d) The All Assam Students Union Movement for economic development of Assam in 1974, (Hussain 1993: 2) and
- (e) Finally the movement against foreign nationals popularly known as Assam Movement 1979 to 1985.

Hence it can be said that the origin of the Assam movement dates back to the British colonial period. The large scale of migration from various neighbouring states leads to a unnatural population growth. These migrations endangered the identity of ethnic Assamese society and to protect the interest and resolve the common problems of Assamese people ASSU was formed and they took initiative to overthrow the foreign nationals which is popularly known as Assam Movement.

1.3.2 Causes of the Assam Movement:

According to the leadership of the movement, “The main cause behind this mass upheaval in Assam was the monstrous problem of infiltration by illegal foreigners, mainly from erstwhile East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) and Nepal and to a less extent from Bhutan and Burma. This has led to an abnormal increase in population. That this abnormal increase in population has been due to the infiltration in an irrefutable fact, agreed to even by the most biased critics and detractors of this peaceful non-violent movement” (AASU & AAGSP 1980: 1). You have already learnt that, after gaining independence at the time of the partition, there has been flow of lakhs of Hindu refugees who were rehabilitated in Assam on humanitarian ground. At the mean time, the infiltration of the Muslim immigrants through the open border continued on a massive scale. Again the large scale influx of immigrants from the East Bengal districts, particularly the Muslims, and its impact on the socio-economic milieu of colonial Assam undoubtedly provided a base for political mobilization of communal line; nonetheless, the primary issue remains unresolved. As a result, the influx of immigrants, both Hindu and Muslim, from erstwhile Bengladesh continued. Nevertheless, the fear of Assamese being gradually dominated by Muslim immigrants politically as well as culturally, continued to be one of the most important factors in the political process of post-independence Assam. (Kalita, *Regional Politics*. P. 40)

The significant decline of indigenous population in the lower Assam districts and the large scale influx immigrants, particularly the tea garden labour to the upper Assam districts had certain adverse effects on the land abundant agrarian economy of the Brahmaputra valley. The agricultural sector failed to meet the increasing demand for food from the plantation sector due to an acute shortage of manpower. As a result, prices of food grains had grown up as the annual import of flood grains into the valley increased during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The situation therefore, demanded an expansion of the agricultural sector. The colonial regime allowed the ex-tea garden labourers to take up waste lands for cultivation mainly in the neighbourhood of tea gardens since 1905. (*ibid*, p.38).

Thus it can be said that the basic cause which is responsible for the Assam movement is influx of foreign nationals. The illegal migrations from the various states of India and foreign countries drastically changed the geo-physical structure of Assam and led to a state of poverty and crisis of natural resources

and livelihood. And to protect the interest of Assamese people the situation needs an urgent action to fight against the central government's isolative policies. The regional aspirations and uniqueness of its ethnic identity brought the Assam movement into scene of Indian politics.

Stop to Consider:

Support base of Assam Movement:

The Assam movement the core base high-caste Asamiya Hindus composed of Brahmins, Gonaks, Kayasthas and Kalitas. Both socially and culturally they are the dominant groups in Assam. Because of their advanced social and cultural position in a backward economy. Besides, the dominant majority of the Asamiya middle class, businessmen, contractors and small capitalists belong to these caste groups. They dominate the state administration, police, professions, educational institutions and the powerful regional press and media (Kalita, p.184, 185). Geographically the support base of the Assam Movement was confined to the Asamiya dominated areas of the Brahmaputra Valley alone; socially, the high castes were the most vocal supporters of the movement.

Mangoldoi by-election and the Assam Movement:

The Mangoldoi by election is the immediate cause of the Assam Movement. Due to the death of sitting MP Hiralal Patowari (Janata Dal) the Mangoldoi parliamentary seat had fallen vacant and announce was made to fill up the post through By election in the year 1978. The main issue for that election was elimination of foreign nationals. The issue has become more serious when the Chief Election Commissioner in a conference of the state electoral officers held on 24th October, 1978 stated that "the large scale inclusion of foreign nationals (in the electoral rolls) in some states especially in the North-Eastern region was alarming and required drastic action" (Kalita, 2010). With the announcement of Janata Party Chief Minister Golap Borbora that the influx of foreign nationals is an issue of major concern for Assam to save its ethnic people. And subsequently the anti-foreigners movement in Assam started from April, 1979 under the leadership of All Assam Students Union. ASSU has made the issue of foreign national in Assam widely expectable to the common people. The Movement affected every sphere of Assam's social life as Hussain describes fundamental elements of a social movement affecting all aspects of the society.

Though the movement started as a protective movement against the government decisions and tries to eliminate all foreign nationals through peaceful manners in some place it turned violent. Many people were killed in the movement. The following table clearly reflects the violence incidence that took place during the movement.

Number of Bomb-blasts and number of deaths – 1979-84:

Year	Number of Blasts	Number of Deaths
1979	4	0
1980	47	8
1981	81	5
1982	39	27
1983	259	55
1984	41	6
Total –	471	101

Source : *Hussain M (1993) : The Assam Movement :class, ideology and iIdentity, Manaks Publications, Delhi, p.143.*

It is worth mentioning here that The All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) was formed 27 August, 1979 under the aegis of the AASU to run the movement. The major constitute of the AAGSP besides the AASU, were PLP, AJD, Asom Sahitya Sabha and Sadau Asom Karmachari Parishad. This newly formed United Front of regionalist forces spearheaded the movement which was started by the Asomiya middle class or classes with a specific political design and ideology of aggressive cultural nationalism (Jana & Sarmah ed. 2002: 276-277).

Though the movement against the foreign nationals is termed as Assam Movement, but the movement was limited only to a specific geographical location. Initially the movement emerged in the Brahmaputra Valley and gained mass character and popularized in the later part of 1979. But the movement was failed to attract the attention of the people of Barak Valley along with the two hill districts. In short it can be said that geographically

the movement was limited to the Brahmaputra Valley only which is the inhabitant of Asamiyas. However, the tribal of this area did not give their mass support to it. Besides the Na-Asamiya, Muslims and Nepalis also did not give their support to the movement. But it is interesting to note that from the very beginning of the movement the Asamiya Muslims supported the movement but due to the coalition and friendship with the RSS and BJP they withdrawal their support from the movement. Hence it is clear that though the movement termed as Assam Movement all people were not involved with it. Practically only the middle class Assamese people were involved with it.

Nevertheless the Assam movement had its roots in the society and its impact was felt deeply by the people. In addition to the political, constitutional and economic implications, it had significant social implications also.

Stop to Consider:

The Nellie massacre

The massacre was one of many violent incidents during the infamous 1983 elections conducted in the midst of the Assam Agitation. The elections were declared against the wishes of the Assam Agitation leaders who did not want an election till the electoral rolls were cleansed of illegal immigrants.

The Nellie massacre took place during a six-hour period in the morning of 18 February 1983. The massacre claimed the lives of 2,191, people (unofficial figures run at more than 5,000) from 14 villages Alisingha, Khulapathar, Basundhari, Bugduba Beel, Bugduba Habi, Borjola, Butuni, Indurmari, Mati Parbat, Muladhari, Mati Parbat no. 8, Silbhetta, Borburi and Nellie—of Nagaon district. Most of the victims were Bangladeshi Muslims who had illegally immigrated to the region during Bangladesh war. A group of media personnel passing by the region witnessed to the massacre.

The government gave the survivors of Nellie compensation for each death of as little as 5,000 rupees, contrasted for instance with Rs. 7 lakhs that have been paid to survivors of the Sikh carnage of a year later in 1984. Six hundred and eighty eight criminal cases were filed in connection with Nellie organised massacre and of these 310 cases were charge-sheeted. The remaining 378 cases were closed due to the police claim of “lack of evidence”. But all the 310 charge-sheeted cases were dropped by the AGP government as a part of Assam Accord; therefore not a single person has even had to face trial for the gruesome massacre.

A Commission of Inquiry was instituted under Tribhubhan Prasad Tiwary, the report of which has not been made public. There is enough evidence to suggest that successive local governments, belonging to both the Congress and the AGP, have suppressed information about the massacre.

1.3.2 Objectives of the Assam Movement

Already we have learnt that the history of separation and isolation from the rest of India in the colonial period created a problem for the national formation and integration of independent India. And the influx of foreign nationals to Assam gave birth the Assam movement which aimed at the elimination of foreign nationals and to protect and promote the interest of ethnic Assamese people. The Movement of 1979 has the following objectives (Quoted from the memorandum to the Prime Minister of India submitted by AASU on 2nd Oct. 1980):

- Detection of is an important objective. Detection must be made on the basis of the constitution and the rellevant laws based on the constitution. In the process, help must be taken in 1951 National register of Citizens (NRC) and the Electoral Rolls of 1952. No detection must be sought to be done on the basis of language or religion.
- It is the bounded duty of a responsible Government to deport all the foreigners who have entered illegally. But the Government has expressed its inability to deport all the foreigners. The Government want to deport only post 1971 foreigners. In view of this, AASU proposed that 1951 – 71 entrants be distributed throughout the country. Assam must not be made to bear the wholeburden of a national problem. In view of the Governments inability to deport the foreigner’s dispersal of them is the only natural alternative.
- AASU wants a permanent solution of this problem. So, to pave the way for a lasting solution AASU & AAGSP proposed to retain the 1951 – 61 entrants in Assam provided the center agree to take out all the 1961 – 71 entrants for rehabilitation in other states outside Assam with such clear measures, so that the Dispersed entrants cannot come back to Assam.
- The proposal to settle the 1951 – 61 entrants in Assam could be considered only after they are detected. The decision to retain the 1951

– 61 entrants was taken by AASU in the larger interest of sustaining the age – old tradition of communal harmony in Assam and on humanitarian consideration. But AASU’s offer was conditional. Rest of country must bear the burden of 196-71 entrants. Assam alone can not and need not be benevolent.

Hence it can be said that the basic objectives of the Assam Movement is the detention of the foreign nationals and to protect the interest of Assamese people.

SAQ:

Do you think that the Assam Movement was successful in mobilizing all sections of Assamese people? (80 words)

.....
.....
.....

Stop to Consider:

Demands of the Movement:

The Demands of AASU and AAGSP: (Quoted from the memorandum to the Prime Minister of India submitted by AASU on 2nd Oct. 1980) were:

1. Foreign national’s must be detected and deported from our country. Names of the foreign nationals must be removal from the concerned electoral rolls before holding any election in Assam. And inclusion of names foreign nationals in electoral rolls in future must be made impossible with the help of adequate and strong election machinery.
2. Borders of India with neighbouring countries must be fully protected and effectively check infiltration.
3. Indian voters residing in Assam should be issued identity cards with photographs affixed.
4. Necessary constitutional safeguards should be provided to the people of North–Eastern region for next 15 to 20 years for making necessary constitutional provisions for the protection of the identity of the indigenous people in the region.
5. The government of Assam should be free to reject any (citizenship) certificates issued by the District authorities of West Bengal and Tripura.

1.4 The end of the movement

Due to the gradual but slow erosion of their support base and popular response to protect actions the leaders of the Assam Movement By the end of 1980, the leadership of the movement and the government of India agreed to negotiate. You have already learnt that one basic demand made by the leaders of Assam Movement is the National Register of Citizens (NRC) of 1951 should be made up-to-date by taking into consideration the additions to the number of each family since the time of completion of the Register. In this context it needs mention here that the leadership wanted 1951 as cut-off year for detecting and deporting the foreign nationals from Assam. It brings havocs between the Government and the leaders of Assam Movement. In their meeting of 1980, Indian government agreed with them on two point's *i.e.*

- (i) 1951-61 entrants should not be deported and
- (ii) all the post-1971 entrants should be deported.

However, no solution was found and disagreement continued over the entrants of 1961-71. In the mean time Assam government accepted the proposal of Movement leaders 1967 as the cut-off year for the detection of foreign nationals from Assam. But they were not agreed. After that at many times discussions were going on between the leaders of the Movement and Government but no result was made. In 1981, the leaders of Assam Movement discussed the matter with the Indian Government where the government used many artifices to win over the AASU leaders but the indomitable guidance of Mr. Prafulla Kr. Mahanta saved the situation. The Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi then expressed optimism that Assam problem was bound to be solved sometimes and said that on initiative in this regards was a continue one.

Again in 1982 a trilateral meeting was held between the leaders of Assam Movement, opposition parties and the Indian Government in Delhi. The meeting was attended by the Home Minister Zail Singh, two ministers of state for Home P. Vankatasubbiah and N.R.Laskar, Minister for parliamentary Affairs Bishma Narayan Singh and Law Minister Jagannath Kaushal. The opposition leaders were Ravindra Varma (Janata), Bhola Paswan Shastri (Congress S), A.B. Vajpayee (BJP), Indarjit Gupta (CPI) and Harikishan Singh Surjeet (CPI-M). They discussed on the issue like

sealing Assam's border with Bangladesh against future infiltration. According to the agreement, physical barriers, including masonry walls, barded wire fencing and other obstacles will be erected all along the international border (Trivedi ed. 1997: 103-104).

The situation was turned worse when in 1983 the election was declared. Due to the arbitrary rule of Indian government especially after the assaulting the Jyotish Barua, chief editor of Dainik Asom by the CRPF, AASU & AAGSP continued their agitation programme and from 5 to 22 February 1983, the agitator declared non-cooperation in election.

In 1984 a new government was formed in Assam under the leadership of Congress. During that period Indian government gave its assent to the establishment of tribunals in Assam to screen and determine illegal migrants. But the issue was still unresolved. Again on 28 March, 1985 for the solution its foreigner's problem, leadership of the movement met the President, Giani Zail Singh at Shillong and they demanded revision of electoral rolls in Assam. After that the leadership of the movement held two rounds discussion with Prime Minister on the 14 August 1985 and with the acceptance of 1-1-1966 as the base date and year for the purpose of detection of foreigners they signed a memorandum with the government of India. They also accepted the decision to allow the entrants of 1966-71 to stay in Assam, and to disfranchise them for ten year first and then again to give them the voting rights after the gap of ten years. Secondly the leadership of the movement accepted the Illegal Migrants (Determination Tribunal) (IM (DT)) Act, 1983 to detect, delete and expelled the foreigners who come to Assam on or after March 25, 1971. This particular aspect of the Assam Accord, however, has remained as a major political issue (Kalita, 190). Thus Six years of strife in Assam came to an end at 2.45 A.M. on the 15 August, 1985.

It is worth mentioning here that after signing the Assam Accord the State Legislative Assembly was dissolved and the date of elections was announced. It is interesting to note the Purbanchaliya Lok Parishad (PLP) vehemently opposed and criticized the Accord. The Purbanchaliya Lok Parishad and Assam Jatiyatabadi Dal (AJD) began to make necessary preparation for coming elections.

Check Your Progress:

1. Examine the causes of Assam Movement.
2. Discuss the impact of Mangoldoi by-election on Assam movement.
3. What are the basic objects of the Assam movement?
3. Who supported the Assam movement was supported? Write a critical note on it.
4. Write a critical note on the support base of Assam Movement.

1.5 Consequences of the movement

Any movement can bring a drastic change in its socio-political structure. The Assam Movement has also some implications on Assam socio-political history. It has both positive and negative consequences. Here in this section we are going to discuss the consequences of the Assam Movement.

Already you have learnt that Government of India and Assam along with the AASU and AAGSP have all along been most anxious to find a satisfactory solution to the problem of foreigners in Assam. And Keeping all aspects of the problem including constitutional and legal provisions, international agreements, national commitments and humanitarian considerations, it has been decided to proceed as follows :-

1. For purposes of detection and deletion of foreigners, 1.1.1966 shall be the base date and year.
2. All persons who came to Assam prior to 1.1.1966 including those amongst them whose names appeared on the electoral rolls in 1967 elections, shall be regularised.
3. Foreigners who came to Assam after 1.1.1966 (inclusive) and upto 24th March, 1971 shall be detected in accordance with the provisions of the Foreigners Act, 1946 and Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964.

For this purpose, Government of India will undertake suitable strengthening of the governmental machinery.

Socio Economic Consequences of the Movement:

On the basis of the demands made by the leaders of the Movement Constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, as may be appropriate, shall be provided to protect, preserve and promoted the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of Assamese people. Again the Government takes this opportunity to renew their commitment for the speedy all round economic development of Assam, so as to improve the standard of living of the people. Special emphasis will be placed on education and science & technology through establishment of national institutions.

Apart form these the end of the movement also brings a drastic change in the history of Assam politics. For the first time a well organized Regional Political Party was formed in Assam namely Asom Gana parishad. Due to the popular support and their commitment during the [period of the movement Assamese people overwhelmingly supported them in the election of 1985. their win in that election ends the Congress era in Assam politics. The Assam movement also brought the following changes in Assam:

1. Establishment of Oil refinery
2. Central Government will render full assistance to the State Government in their efforts to re-open :-
 - i) Ashok Paper Mill.
 - ii) Jute Mills.

Besides the arrangements mentioned above and keeping in view security considerations, a road all along the international border shall be constructed so as to facilitate patrolling by security forces-Land between border and the road would be kept free of human habitation, wherever possible. Reverting patrolling along the international border would be intensified. All effective measures would be adopted to prevent infiltrators crossing or attempting to cross the international border.

<p>SAQ:</p> <p>Examine the impact of Assam Movement in the political scenario of the state (80 words)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

1.6 Summing Up

After going through this unit now you are in a position to examine the Political history of Assam with reference to the Assam Movement. We have learnt that when a government machinery is unable to fulfill the desires of its people, they come forward and protest against the government. The Assam Movement was the reflection of Assamese people anger against the norms of the Central Government. the students of Assam with the help of almost all sections of Assamese people and some other associations they begun a movement against the foreign nationals who used to settle in Assam. Their efforts against these nationals termed as Assam Movement. Though the Movement started with the ideology of non-violence, as time passed in many areas it took violent nature. Finally the Indian Government make an agreement with the protesters and make a solution of these problems which brings end to the movement in the years 1985. The end of the movement brings a drastic change in Assam's socio-political and economic history. For the first time after this movement Assam was ruled by a regional party and it also witnessed of raising many minority institutions to protect their interest.

1.7 References and Suggested Readings

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* * *

Unit 2

Bodo Movement and Naga Movement

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- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Objectives
- 2.3 Bodo Movement: Origin and Causes
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 - 2.4.1 Causes of the Naga Movement
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- 2.6 References and Suggested Readings

2.1 Introduction

In the previous unit of this block, you have learnt that social movements as a type of group action demanded some changes in the existing system or resisted the existing system. We know that since independence, Assam has experienced various mass-movements which changed its ethnographic profile. Here in this unit we are going to discuss some ethnic movements specially Bodo and Naga movements. In your previous semester you have already read the Bodo movement of Assam, which started as a socio cultural movement but later on emerged as the socio economic movement of the Bodo tribe. The Naga movement is also another ethnic movement in North East India. Economic deprivation and preservation of distinct cultural identity are the main causes of this movement. Again, in this unit an attempt is made to discuss the origin of both the Bodo and Naga movements. It is worth mentioning here the both the Bodo and Naga movements demanded separate homeland. The Bodos demanded a separate state independent of Assam called *Udayachal*. But after realizing that this demand is not going to be fulfilled they opted for a separate Bodoland territory within the state

of Assam. Likewise the Naga movement under the leadership of Phizo demanded a separate sovereign state independent of India. This unit will also try to explain the causes and consequences of both the movements.

2.2 Objectives

The Bodo and Naga movements are the two major ethnic movements of North East India. Economic deprivation is the major reason behind these movements. After reading this unit you will be able to–

- *discuss* causes of the Bodo and naga movements
- *examine* causes of origin of both Bodo and Naga movement
- *analyse* the causes and consequences of both the movements.

2.3 Bodo Movement: Origin and Causes

In the previous semester you have already learnt that the Bodos are considered to be the earliest immigrant tribes in Assam. The Bodo tribal community belongs to a larger group of ethnicity popularly known as the Bodo Kachari. Let us discuss here the origin and background of the movement in short.

You have already learnt that Bodo movement started as a socio- cultural and economic movement of the Bodo Kachari tribe. In due course of time this movement has been developed to become a socio- political movement demanding separation from Indian union. To materialize this demand, a political party namely Plain Tribal Council of Assam(PTCA) was formed on 27th February 1967. The chief objective of this party was to demand a union territory called Udayachal to be carved out of Assam. But this demand has never been materialised as PTCA became a coalition partner in the 1978 Janata party government. The Bodoland movement has started in the real sense on March 2nd, 1987, under the leadership of *Bodofa* Upendra Nath Brahma of All Bodo Students Union (ABSU). But the state government did not accept their demand for a separate state. Consequently they resort to violent activities including abduction, bombing and killing and became a strong anti- government force.

To resolve the problems, a series of tripartite talks among the representatives of central government, state government and the Bodo leaders were held.

But it could not lead to any solution due to the insurgent activities of various ABSU activists. On February 20, 1993 the Bodo Accord has been signed by the representatives of central government, state government as well as ABSU. This Accord paved the way for the creation of Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) with 40 elected members and an executive body. The chief condition of this Accord was that the Bodo militants will have to surrender their arms and ammunitions before the authority. But the ABSU leaders did not accept this Accord and they again resort to violent activities demanding the creation of a separate state.

It is well known to you that the government of Assam has given 2075 villages along with 112 other forest and revenue villages in the six districts of Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Rangia subdivision of Kamrup and Darang district to BAC. But failed to make the ABSU leaders happy and they were demanding more and more autonomy. To assert their demand for greater autonomy they formed National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) on November 25, 1994. Again on June 1996, Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) is formed. The granting of Sixth Schedule status to the Bodo areas enable the Bodos to exercise their rights over land. It also ensures the protection of their tradition and ethnic identity as well as grant them the right to self government. Eventually the Bodoland Territorial Areas District (BTAD) under the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) has been established as per the memorandum of settlement of February 10, 2003. Hagrama Mohilary has been appointed as he first chief executive member of BTC on 7th December 2003. BTAD consists of four districts namely Kokrajhar, Baksa, Udalguri and Chirang with Kokrajhar as its headquarter. Though NDFB has been maintaining ceasefire since June 1 2005 yet it has not completely given up its violent activities.

Stop to consider:

Bodo Culture

The Bodos generally speak Tibeto- Burmese language. In contemporary time, they have also accepted *devnagari* language though they have their own distinct language known as *deodahi*. It is closely related to the *dimasa* language of Assam as well as the *garo* language of Meghalaya. Traditionally Bodos like non vegetarian dishes. Their main food is rice which is mostly accompanied by non-vegetarian dishes like fish or pork. A drink called Zu Mai meaning rice beer or

rice wine is their favourite drink. They prepare it mostly in festivals like *Bwisagu* and *Domasi*. The Bodos practice a culture which is known as *Bathouism*. The Bodos take *Siju* plant as the symbol of *bathou* for the worship. In this worship they offer rice, milk and sugar. They do not practice anti social systems like dowry and caste system. Weaving is an integral part of Bodo culture. It is believed every Bodo women is a great weaver. One of the vital parts of Bodo culture is its *bagrumba* dance which depicts the beauty of nature. *Bordoisikhla* which is a popular and colourful dance form of the Bodos have also contributed towards upholding the cultural traditions of Assam.

2.3.1 Causes of the Bodo Movement

There are several causes of the Bodo movement. These are as follows-

- The Bodos were against the policy of assimilation with Assamese identity. They wanted to preserve their distinct language and culture. They wanted due recognition of their distinct identity. But the state government had failed to accommodate the Bodos properly. It has worsened the situation and consequently led to the launch of massive Bodo movement. Hence, we can say that the Assamisation policy of the Assam government compelled the Bodos to demand a separate statehood. Through this policy, the government imposed Assamese culture and language upon the tribals. This has made them fight for their own separate identity. Again after the coming of the AGP government, the policies like only 10% job reservation for plain tribes (including the Bodos) and the knowledge of 'Assamese' language in order to get jobs in Assam had further deteriorated the condition of the Bodos. Again in 1986, Assamese was made the compulsory language in schools by the Secondary Board of Education in Assam and that worsened the situation.
- The separatist movements in Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram etc. also inspire the Bodos to demand for a separate state based on their right of self-determination and distinct identity.
- Again, the Bodos were economically deprived for a long period of time. They were not so developed as a community. But the problem started when they had to live with a comparatively advanced group of people under a common political system. They are not able to

march together. As a result, they lagged behind. Moreover, the economic exploitation by the non-tribal also gave momentum to the movement. The Bodos had little or no access to the central government aid. Finally they demanded for a separate statehood for themselves. They also hoped that it will bring sound economic condition to thousands of Bodo families. Policies like encroachment, alienation through mortgage and setting up major big industries led to the loss of their agricultural land. Economic exploitation or the process of land alienation was one of the major causes of the Bodo movement.

- The then chief minister Sir Muhammad Sadulla introduced a new development scheme in Assam according to which the waste lands were to be divided into blocks and allotted to different communities including the immigrants. Consequently, the local people started occupying the lands allotted to the tribals through tribal belts. It has given impetus to the movement. The Bodos were not given permanent land rights by the British government as they were migratory cultivators shifting from one place to another in search of fertile land. The rich landlords and immigrants gradually started occupying the lands. It gave a set back to the Bodo economy. Moreover, the imposition of ceilings on agricultural land holdings adversely affected the ignorant and illiterate Bodo people.
- The Assam government, which according to the Bodos was not the government of people of Assam but the government of Assamese people, was very repressive upon the tribal people. The then ruling party AGP was elected out of Assamese chauvinist way. The Bodos took it as a threat to their identity. Their demands for justice and constitutional and legitimate rights met with brutal police atrocities and tortures. The tribals remain the most backward section of Assam as the AGP government took no developmental programmes for the tribals. All these humiliation has led to the feeling among the Bodos that they should and must have a government of their own. Only the enjoyment of the right of political self determination can bring them concrete and complete all round security.
- The Bodos of Assam have a very distinct and rich linguistic and cultural heritage different from Assamese language and culture. The

establishment of educational institutions in the Bodo dominated areas led to the spread of literacy among them. Consequently, they got the opportunity to learn their own language and know their culture. A new era of revivalism and self- regeneration ushered in with the help of Bodo Sahitya Sabha and Tribal Sangha. It has also helped in uniting the Bodo people into one common cord.

SAQ:

Do you think that the non-tribals in Assam has economically exploited the Bodos. Give reasons in favour of your answer. (100 words)

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2.3.2 Consequences of the Bodo Movement

The movement has adversely affected the economy of the Bodos. The impact of the movement was visible on every aspect of the Bodo society like social economic environmental etc. We can summarize the consequences of the Bodo movement as follows:

- The first concrete impact of the movement cab be seen as the act of recognition of the Bodo language as a medium of instruction upto the secondary stage. The Bodos have accepted *devnagari* script to maintain their distinctness from the Assamese people. Moreover, the Bodo language has also been incorporated in the 8th schedule of the constitution of India.
- One of the major impacts of the Bodo insurgency is visible on the forests and wildlife populations in the Manas Wildlife Sanctuary. This sanctuary is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The stealing and killing of rhinos and deer in this area made these animals rare. Consequently, the Manas Wildlife Sanctuary has come on the World Heritage Council Danger List since 1992.
- For a long period of time, the entry into the lower ranks of Hindu caste was a glaring practice among the Bodos and other plain tribals. This phenomenon of mass conversion has been stopped as a result of the movement.

- The movement has created ethnic tension and clashes among the Bodos and non- Bodos. The non- Bodo settlers of Bodo villages are planned to be cleansed up by the Bodo extremist groups. They get threatening to evacuate the places so that the Bodos can be settled there. Thousands of non- Bodos were forced to leave their villages. This movement has alienated the Bodos from the composite Assamese society. A strong feeling of hatred towards the Assamese people have developed among them.
- The Bodos prefer their traditional attire over the Assamese attires. The Bodo women wear *dakhna* instead of *saree* or *mekhela sador*, the traditional Assamese attire for women. Likewise the male members of the Bodo society also like to use *arunai*, the Bodo scarf. Hence it can be said that Bodos want to maintain a separate and distinct attire from that of Assamese people.
- The movement led to the setting up of various educational institutions in the Bodo dominated areas. The Kokrajhar University is the greatest example in this regard.
- The movement has affected the economy of the state to a great extent. The businessman do not want to settle down in the Bodo dominated areas in fear of Bodo militancy.

Check Your Progress:

1. When did PTCA beed formed.
2. Who is known as bodofa?
3. When did Bodo Accord has been signed?

2.4 Naga Movement- Origin and Causes

Nagaland is surrounded by three Indian states viz. Assam in the west, Arunachal in the north and Manipur in the south. In the east it is surrounded by Myanmar. This sixteenth state of India came into being on 1st December 1963. There were more than 16 major tribes practicing district culture, dialect, custom and system of governance who were commonly known as Nagas. The term Naga covers 16 mongoloid tribes among which *Angami*,

Lotho, Kuki etc are well known. The Britishers faced resistance when they tried to enter the Naga region in 1830s. A non-aggression pact was concluded between the Naga chiefs and the colonial power. But they continued to violate the agreement until they were dominated by the sovereign British. Here in this section we are going to discuss the causes and origin of the Naga movement.

2.4.1 Causes of the Naga Movement

It is pertinent to mention here that though the district of Naga Hills was constituted in 1866, yet it took almost five decades to the Britishers to bring the Nagas under their effective control. Eventually the Nagas came under unified administrative system for the first time. But the Britishers very tactfully kept the Nagas aloof from the rest of India and tried to befriend them with the help of Christian missionaries. The Christian missionaries became successful in transforming the ethnic identity of the Nagas into Christianized identity. The Nagas gradually started to participate in the modern civilized society due to their exposure to Christianity. But this exposure has certainly disturbed their environmentally isolated life style confined to villages, cans and families. In 1926, when the Simon commission came to India, the Nagas presented a petition in front of the commission to allow them to keep their separate identity independent of India.

You should remember here that just before the declaration of India's independence, the rebel Nagas under the leadership of Phizo declared independent Naga Hills on August 14, 1947 and observed it as Naga independence day. But fortunately this revolt was successfully suppressed by the government of India. The Naga insurgency is rooted in this revolt initiated by Phizo.

With the independence of India, the Nagas got the opportunity for civilisational transformation yet a misguided section of Nagas were still in favour of the creation of an independent Naga state. After the independence of India, the Nagas mostly settled in Assam and Tuengsang division near Indo- Burmese frontier demanded that they should be separated from India. The Nagas started their agitation and set up the Naga National Council under the leadership of Phizo. The Naga National Council (NNC) aimed at the social welfare of the Naga people. Eventually its aims have been extended

to the unification of Naga tribes as well as the fulfillment of their political aspirations. Phizo arranged a plebiscite in 1950 and the Nagas almost unanimously favored the formation of an independent Naga state.

It needs mention here that in 1947 NNC issued an ultimatum stating that the Indian government should act as guardian power over the Naga Hills for a period of 10 years. After the completion of 10 years the power to decide the political future of Nagaland should be left in the hands of Naga people. This memorandum was submitted to the last viceroy of India Lord Louis Mountbatten. In May 1947 when the Bordoloi sub committee of the Constituent Assembly visited Kohima this memorandum has been reiterated to the committee. But unlike the British government the Indian government did not accept it. By June end the Hydari agreement was signed between the Assam governor Sir Akbar Hydari and NNC. According to this agreement, the Assam Governor as the agent of Indian union will exercise a special power to duely observe the agreement for a period of ten years. The agreement also states that after the end of the 10 year period the NNC will decide whether to extend the period or not. But this agreement was misinterpreted by some Nagas as after the completion of 10 years the Nagas will get independence whereas on Indian side it was planned to give the Nagas autonomy within the Indian union. In the plebiscite held in May 1951, the Nagas were in favour of complete independence. Talks and negotiations started among the different shades of Nagas as well as with Indian government but led to no result. While the Indian government agreed for autonomy within Indian union, the Nagas demanded complete independence.

By now you have learnt that the NNC has transformed itself into a militant organization with the chief objective of complete independence. In 1948, Phizo was arrested for his anti- India activities. But he had to be released on compassionate ground following the death of his son. In December 1950, he was elected as the president of NNC. While he was in jail, he promised to help and assimilate in the process of political modernization of India. But after his release from jail, his actions were contrary to his promises. He started consolidation of various rival Naga clans together to meet his own political ambition. He even went to Delhi to meet Nehru and pleaded for his demand for independence. But Nehru rejected his demand.

Phizo became disappointed with the decision of Nehru and started popularizing the slogan of Naga nationalism among the youths. For the achievement of Naga independence he organized various groups like People's Independence League, the Naga Youth Movement and Naga Women's society etc. with the support of missionaries like Rev Michael Scott. He directly challenged the government of India by boycotting the general election in the year 1952. Though he was a success in this venture yet he declared that the Naga separate state issue should be taken to UNO. In course of time the movement became violent and they started killing those whom they considered as their enemy.

Stop to Consider:

Naga Community

Some of the important features of Naga community are as follows- their ethnic identity is rooted to the image of headhunter, they were fighting against each other for their respective supremacy, they lived in the north east corner of India in a strange system of anarchy, they had no unified dialect and for inter communication he still depend on broken Assamese known as Nagamese etc. Till their christianization Nagas were not a homogenous tribe.

We can analyse the origin of the movement chronologically as follows:-

1950 to 1960:

You should remember here that during this period the situation became worsened when some of the Naga groups went underground and became more violent. To control the situation the government of India deployed army in Nagaland under the Assam Disturbed Areas Act which came into force in 1955. NNC under the guidance of Phizo formed the underground Naga Federal Government (NFG). With the formation of Naga Federal Government (NFG) in 1956 the situation became more violent. The outposts convoys of the armies have been attacked by the rebellious Nagas. To control the activities of this organisation the Indian army marched in Naga Hills. Eventually, Phizo escaped to London with the help of Rev Michael Scott. Though the Indian government suppressed the violence with a very tough stand, the door for peaceful negotiation with the rebel Nagas was

never closed. But the deployment of Indian armed forces and raid in the houses of NNC leaders became a challenge for Phizo.

You have already learnt that NNC started violent activities in Nagaland. The outbreak of hostilities divided the NNC into extremist and moderate groups. Some group of Nagas were in favour of peaceful negotiation but Phizo totally opposed it. The Nagas took a violent step and demanded for a separate statehood outside India. But the government of India dominated this with repressive measures. But there were some leaders who were not in favour of Phizo's actions and they dropped the demand for an independent Naga state. They met the Prime Minister in 1956 and demanded the unification of Nagas under single administration. Nehru was willing to meet this demand if the Nagas restored peace. Moreover, the escape of Phizo adversely affected the morals of the insurgents. This gave an opportunity to the moderates for the initiation of a peaceful negotiation. Consequently, the first Naga People's Convention was held at Kohima on August 22, 1957 with Imkongliba AO as its President and Jasokie Angami one time associate of Phizo as General Secretary. In 1957 the Naga People's Convention made an agreement with the government of India. According to this agreement, the Naga Hills Tuensang Area (NHTA) comprising the Naga Hills District of Assam and the Tuensang Frontier Division of the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) has been established under the Ministry of External Affairs. The governor of Assam as an agent of Indian President was to administer this area with effect from 1st December 1957. In the second convention of NPC held in Ungma in May 1958, an appeal was made to the rebel Nagas to give up violence and co-operate with the government of India. A committee was constituted to contact the Naga rebels and win them over. The third convention demanded the creation of a separate statehood for Naga Hills within Indian Republic. It emphasized on making a 16 point programme demanding the separation of this NHTA. It would be called Nagaland. In July 1960 an agreement was signed between the government of India and the Naga People's Convention to settle the problem of Nagas. This agreement between the NNC and government of India led to the incorporation of clause (1) and (2) of article 371A in Indian constitution. According to the clause

(1), no act of parliament should affect the social and religious practices of Nagas while clause (2) gave further autonomy to the district of Tuensang.

On the basis of these recommendations, a separate regional council was formed to recommend on the acts of Nagaland legislature. Moreover, a member from the Tuensang district had to be appointed as the minister of Tuensang affairs and he would have direct access to the governor in matters of the district. This arrangement is followed even today. The affairs of the village community are generally handled by the traditionally maintained village councils and area councils.

Check Your Progress:

1. Write a note on Hydari Agreement.
2. What was the main aim of naga national council.
3. When did the Naga Federal Government is formed?

1960 to 1970:

It needs mention here that the government of India had accepted almost all the points with some modifications. The government of India declared that it will try to give a separate statehood to the Nagas. But until then Naga Hills was placed under the Nagaland (Transitional Provision) Regulation 1961. An interim body called executive council was also constituted with 45 members elected from different sub tribes of the Nagas. The executive council took oath on 18th February 1961 and Dr Shilu AO became its first chairman. In the mean time the insurgent groups did not like this and gunned down two moderate leaders namely Imkongliba and Phanting Phong on August 22, 1961 and August 29, 1962 respectively.

The sixteen-point agreement in July 1960 between the Naga Peoples Convention and the then Prime Minister of India paved the way for creation of Nagaland as a separate state within Indian Union. The constitution thirteenth amendment act was introduced on 21st august 1962. With the passing of this act on 4th September 1962, Nagaland was given the status of a full fledged state. On 1st December 1963, Nagaland was formally declared as the 16th state of Indian union. A five member caretaker government was also made with Shilu AO as its head. The first state assembly election was held in January 1964 and the Naga Nationalist Party under the leadership of Dr Shilu came to power. Unlike their boycott in the 1st general

election in 1952, in the 1964 election over 70% of Nagas exercised their franchise. It was the victory of democracy. Shilu sworn in as the first chief minister of Nagaland after the constitution of first Nagaland Legislative Assembly on February 11, 1964. The voters turn out of around 70% in all the successive elections was the proof to the fact that the larger majority of Nagas had willingly joined the democratic mainstream of the country.

Stop to Consider:

Nagaland (Transitional Provisional) Regulations

The Nagaland (Transitional Provisional) Regulations were announced in the year 1961. These regulations states that;

1. In Nagaland a body of elected representatives of Naga tribes will be set up with a maximum strength of 45. out of this 5 members will be picked up as members of advisory body, which will advice the governor in the discharge of his obligations. This advisory body will be named as executive council.
2. It will be the responsibility of this body to frame schemes of the development of Nagaland.
3. The body shall have advisory role.

SAQ:

Do you think that the naga have willingly joined democratic mainstrea. Give reasons (20+30 words)

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But the extremist Nagas under the leadership of Phizo were not satisfied with this arrangement and desparately wanted to make this experiment a failure. They killed the chief minister Shilu. Phizo tried to get western support for this Naga cause and wanted to get Nagaland issue on UN agenda but failed in this venture. You should remember here that one important aspect of Naga insurgency is the help from foreign nations like China, Myanmar, Pakistan etc. The motive force behind the creation of tribal states in North-

East India is ethnic urges and political expediency. It is believed that they get support from China and Pakistan for guerilla training and supply of arms and ammunitions as well as financial support. They became more and more violent but the government of India was successful in dominating these violent acts.

Eventually some of the hard core rebel Nagas came out to co-operate with the government of India. The Indian government clearly stated that no negotiation will be held with Phizo and his followers until they agree to do it within the framework of Indian constitution. It was also declared that Phizo will not be allowed to enter India until then. The government declared all the revolutionary Naga bodies as unconstitutional and their activities were banned.

Hence, in April 1964, a peace mission was formed with the help of Naga Baptists church for lasting peace. Eminent personalities like Rev. Michel Scott, a Baptist Church leader and British National and a foreign missionary, Bimala Prasad Chaliha, the then Chief Minister of Assam and Jai Prakash Narayan, the Sarvoday leader became the members of this mission. A ceasefire agreement was signed between the underground representatives of rebel Nagas and government of India on August 15 1964 but came into practice on September 6. But Scott acted as the spokesman of Naga rebels as he was in favour of liberation of Nagaland from Indian union. He got expelled from the country on May 3 1966 for his anti- national stand. Eventually the peace mission was dissolved. Though this mission was a failure it brings some kind of positive changes like closing the communication gap between the government and the rebel ngas, peaceful participation in the 1964 election etc.

1970 onwards:

When all efforts made by the both side the government of India in 1972, imposed a ban on NNC, NFG and other militant groups under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act by Government of India. Moreover, strong counter insurgency measures were also taken by the government of India to control the insurgents. In 1975 about 200 Nagas were arrested who were suspected of getting training in China and creating disturbances in Nagaland. All these had forced the insurgents to come to negotiation table

with the government of India in 1975 and the insurgents got ready to accept the Indian constitution. Moreover, a group of China trained insurgents surrendered their arms before the security force. In accordance with the Shillong Accord of 1975, an agreement was made between the government of India and the hostile Nagas. According to the agreement the government of India was agreed to release the detained Nagas and withdraw charges of violence while the hostile Nagas were agreed to give up their violent activities and surrender their arms. In return, government of India agreed to release the arrested rebels and suspended operation by security forces in Nagaland. However, Phizo and Muivah section of NNC did not accept the agreement, and, Muivah constitute a separate organization named as National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN). The basic difference between the NSCN and NNC was that while NNC bear a more traditional character NSCN was committed to a sovereign socialist Christian independent Nagaland. In 1988 the NSCN has been further splitted into two groups viz. Issac Muivah and Khaplang groups. But despite of these repressive measures some Nagas did not give up their arms, as they were still in demand of a sovereign Naga state outside India. This accord did not last long. In June 1977 Morarji Desai met Phizo in London to find a solution to the Naga problem but nothing fruitful came out of this meeting.

Though the Shillong Accord effectively established the democratically elected got in Nagaland, those rebel Nagas who were not a party to the Accord rejected it. Leaders of NNC like Issac Swu., Muivah and Khaplang contacted Phizo in London. They requested him to condemn the Accord. But Phizo maintained silence in this regard and eventually they denounced his leadership. This led to the formation of a new group named as Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN) in late 1970s with Isak Chisi, S.S.Khaplang and T.Muivah as Chairman, Vice-President and General Secretary respectively. Their manifesto prepared in January 1980 strongly stated their old stand on sovereignty and revival of hostility against the government. Though the death of Phizo in 1990 was a blow to the rebel Nagas yet they were successful to maintain themselves as a force. There was a constant effort on the part of the central authorities to bring the underground Nagas into negotiating table.

But unfortunately in the mid nineties the frequent eruption of violence has compelled the government of India to declare the state as a disturbed area.

But the desire of people for peace acted as an incentive for renunciation of force. A ceasefire was negotiated in 1997 between the united front government at the centre and the NSCN Issac Muivah group. The government was willing to take the same step with the other two groups viz NSCN Khaplang and Naga Federal Group (NFG). In the late 1980s NSCN further got divided into two groups one led by Issac and Muivah called NSCN (IM) and another by Khaplang called NSCN(K) due to ethnic rivalry. The main reason behind this split was the struggle for the establishment of ethnic supremacy. The ceasefire agreement between the NSCN(IM) and government of India, the meeting between NSCN(IM) and the central leaders in UPA cabinet in November 2004 and subsequently in February 2005 hardly brought any final solution to the problem.

Check Your Progress:

1. Write a note on the peace mission of 1964.
2. What is the basic difference between Naga national Council and national Socialist Council of Nagaland.
3. Fill in the blanks:
 - a. On 1st December 1963, Nagaland was formally declared as the state of Indian Union.
 - b. The first Assembly election in Nagaland was held in.....
 - c. was the first Chief Minister of Nagaland.

2.4.2 Origin of the Naga Movement

The history of Naga movement can be traced to the memorandum given by the Naga club to the Simon Commission in 1929. Through this memorandum they demanded the exclusion of their community from the proposed constitutional reform in the British administration in India. The Naga club was formed by the British in 1918 to solve the socio-administrative problems of different rival Naga clans.

The creation of Pakistan has inspired a group of Nagas and they also demanded the same after the departure of the Britishers from India. Eventually, in March 1946, the Naga club was being converted into a political

organization known as Naga National Council (NNC) with Imti Aliba AO as its first President.

On June 1946, the NNC submitted a memorandum to the cabinet mission demanding a separate political geography comprising of Naga inhabited areas of Nagaland, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Myammar (Burma). This was the beginning of political conflict between Nagas and the government of India. Again a demand was made for the independence of Naga Hills for ten years through a memorandum of NNC submitted to the British crown on May 19, 1947. the memorandum also stated that the after the completion of 10 years the Naga people will decide whether to become a part of Indian union or maintain their sovereignty.

The inefficient handling of the Naga problem by the then police and administration was one of the major causes of the movement. In 1952 NNC was banned which was a blunder. This declaration compelled the leaders to go underground. Delhi was not aware of the popular support behind NNC at that point.

Again on 30th march 1953, an opportunity to settle the Naga problem came when Prime Minister visited Kohima. The Nagas were gathered to submit a memorandum to the Prime Minister. But the then Deputy Commissioner of Kohima did not allow them to submit the memorandum for some unknown reasons. This has a negative repercussion among the people.

2.4.3 Consequences of the Movement

The growth of electoral politics gave a set back to the insurgents. But the huge monetary grant from centre to state made the leaders more and more ambitious and power hungry. They started using insurgency for their self interest to win the power politics. Corruption and political vices emerged and consequently of this power politics crippled the economy of Nagaland. Again, the government of India extended the ceasefire agreement. This has led to the fear in the minds of people of other states that government of India may accept the demand for greater Nagalim including the Naga inhabited territories of Assam, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh. Consequently the inter state ethnic conflicts were in rise. Phizo's theory of accomplishing Naga solidarity proved wrong when his hard core followers denounced his leadership and split into various groups.

It is worth mentioning here that, when the Nagas came into contact with the outer world, their primitive life style has changed noticeably. In contemporary period Nagaland has a literacy rate of about 67.11% which is much ahead of the national average. Unlike one government high school in Nagaland in 1947, there are thousands of primary schools, hundreds of high schools and a university with a number of colleges in this small state with a population below 20 lakhs. But all these positive developments have been criticized by the insurgents as political trap. Despite of a number of agreement since 1954, no workable solution is found. Though all the leaders from Phizo to Muivah talked about peaceful negotiation, in between thousands of innocent lives were lost.

The idealism behind the Naga movement has been completely lost. The movement has been degenerated into utter terrorism with killing of innocents, extortion, looting, intimidation and threats becoming the order of the day. The gun culture become the order of the day. The leaders of the movement have lost the vision, wisdom and democratic credentials. Now they do not consider the will of the people. They merely impose their decisions upon the people through threat and gun point.

The movement has made Christianity the undeclared state religion of Nagaland. As the movement was inspired by various biblical stories, therefore it helped in the spreading of the religion in the Naga soil. The movement has almost ruined the economy of Nagaland. Frequent confrontation with Indian army as well as different factions of Nagas crippled the economy. The closure of shops, imposing of curfew gave a death blow to the Naga economy. Moreover, the extortions also had a negative impact on the people and economy.

The movement has disturbed the social set up of Naga society. The leaders of the movement who were supposed to be the protector of the people became the oppressor of the people. The movement also brought division among the people on the basis of their tribes. Many Naga children became orphan due to the movement. This movement has lost some o great leaders as well. The movement gave rise to a traumatic situation as in most of the people were under trauma and threat. Most of the time they were engrossed with the thought of how to protect themselves from being killed by others.

In the political scenario the underground Nagas try to manipulate the voters. They use both money and gun power. They threaten the people if they do not vote for their candidates. It is worth mentioning here that the eco system has also suffered due to the movement. The underground Nagas cut down the forests to make it fit for human habitation. The camps of underground Nagas are shifted from one place to another due to security reasons. Hundreds and thousands of trees are cut down in this process. It has an adverse effect on the nature and deforestation itself has various negative impacts.

In contemporary time vast majority of Naga people have understood that it is almost impossible to create a separate Naga state outside India and eventually they have come under the peace movement. Then comes the leaders like Issack and Muivah who incited the Nagas to demand liberation from Indian union. In the 1982 assembly election the Nagaland national Democratic Party (NNDP) which was a merger of two parties namely United Democratic Party led by Vizol and Naga National Party led by J B Jasokie became successful in capturing 24 seats out of 60 seats. But congress I came to power with the help of independent candidates. But the groups like Naga Nationalist Social Council (NSCN) was persisting with its demand for a separate Naga state independent of Indian union. I K Gujral the then Prime Minister took a stiff action and declared 3 months ceasefire in august 1997. it has been extended three times before Bajpayee Government extended it by one year on 28th july 1999.

SAQ:

1) Do you think that naga movement has affected the demographic set up of Nagaland. (100 words)

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2) Examine the orogin and consequences of Naga Movement. (100 words)

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2.5 Summing up

After going through the unit now you are in a position to understand the ethnic movements specially the Bodo and Naga movements. Here, you have learnt that the socio- cultural movement of the Bodos which is the largest community of Assam, has developed to a socio political movement in due course of time. You have also learnt that the organizations like plains tribal council of Assam, *Bodo Sahitya Sabha*, *Bodo Students Union* etc played an important role in the development of the movement. This unit has also helped you in learning that after prolonged violence and peaceful discussions, the Bodo movement experienced success in the form of Bodoland Territorial Areas District (BTAD) under the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). This unit has provided the insight to the causes and consequences of the movement. Here, you have also learnt about the Naga movement which is another ethnic movement in North East India. The differential treatment given to the Nagas led to the emergence of the movement which resulted in violent activities under Phizo. This unit has also helped you in understanding the causes and consequences of the movement. Unsuccessful handling of Naga problem by police and Indian administration led to the rise of Naga insurgency problem. NNC under the leadership of Phizo played an important role in this movement. Nagaland got its recognition as the 16th state of India on 1st December, 1963. But this recognition of statehood also could not solve the Naga insurgency problem totally. The Nagas took a violent step to fulfill their demand for independent sovereign Naga state, but Indian government dominated the demand with repressive measures.

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