UNIT 1: THE CONCEPT OF NORTH-EAST INDIA : ANCIENT, COLONIAL AND POST COLONIAL

UNIT STRUCTURE

1.1 Learning Objectives

1.2 Introduction

1.3 Concept of Northeast India in Ancient period

1.4 Concept of Northeast India in Colonial period

1.5 Concept of Northeast India in Post Colonial period

1.6 Let us Sum up

1.7 Further Reading

1.8 Answers to check your progress

1.9 Model Questions

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- the historical background of Northeast India.
- evolution of North East Region of India, how it has achieved its present form.
- how the category 'northeast' is being perceived in contemporary time.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

Northeast India is the eastern most region of India representing both a geographic, political, and administrative division of the country. India's Northeast, a region of natural splendors and rich cultural heritage, spreads over an area of 2,62,230 sq. kms and consists of the eight States: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. The states of Northeastern region is officially recognized under the North Eastern Council (NEC). NEC was constituted in 1971 as the acting agency for the development of the

and Tippera. All these allusions have led F. E. Pargiter in *Ancient Countries in Eastern India* to conclude that the kingdom known as Pragjyotisha included, at the time of the Mahabharata war, the greater part of modern Assam together with the present day Bengal districts of Jalpaiguri, Cooch-Behar, Rangpur, Bogra, Mymensing, Dacca, Tippera, part of Pabna and also probably part of east Nepal.

According to the Yogini Tantra, Kamarupa was bounded on the East by the Dikhoo river, on the West by the Karatoya river, on the North by the mountain Kunjagiri and on the South by the confluence of the Lakshya and the Brahmaputra. From these accounts, it appears that the kingdom included not only the whole of the Assam Valley but also parts of northern and eastern Bengal, part of Bhutan, the Khasi and Garo Hills and the northern portion of the district of Sylhet. The kingdom came to be known as Kamarupa during the Puranic times based on the legend that Kamadeva, the God of love—the Indian Cupid—who was destroyed by the fiery glance of Siva. Later his life was returned in the country which came to be known as Kamrupa.



LET US KNOW

Ahoms ruled Assam for about six hundred years starting from 1228 A.D.

In the beginning of the sixteenth century the Koch kings rose to power. Being forced by the Muslim power of Bengal on the West and the Ahom power on the East the Koch kingdom did not survive for long. The Ahom kingdom to the East of the Manas came to be known as ‘Asam’ or ‘Assam’, after the Ahoms. The Ahoms entered Assam during the first part of the thirteenth century. In about 1253 A.D., Sukapha, the leader of the Ahom invaders, had firmly established himself at Charaideo. Before the establishment of the Ahom rule, the region was divided into a number of kingdoms. To the East of the Karatoya river, there was the Chutia kingdom. Further West, on the South bank of the Brahmaputra, there was the Cachari kingdom, which probably extended at least halfway across

Q2. Ahoms entered Assam in

a) fifteen century b) sixteen century

c) thirteenth century d) fourteen century

1.4 CONCEPT OF NORTH-EAST INDIA IN COLONIAL TIMES

During the reign of Swargodeo Chandra Kanta Singha, at the invitation of Badan Borphukan, the Burmese invaded Assam. In that war the Burmese defeated the Ahom kings and finally the British intervened and defeated the Burmese. Under the Treaty of Yandaboo signed between the British East India Company and the King of Burma in 1826,24 February, the British East India Company annexed only the Brahmaputra valley (known as 'Bor Axom' during the Ahom rule), excluding the other hill regions of the present day Northeast India. After the signing of the Treaty of Yandaboo in 1826, the British took control of Western Assam, and Purandar Singha was made the King of Upper Assam by the British in 1833. The arrangement lasted till 1838, and thereafter, the British gradually annexed the entire region. Thus, in the colonial period, what is today called the Northeast India was the province of Assam (except the princely states of Manipur and Tripura). It was an arbitrary administrative unit. By Assam Valley, the British referred to the Brahmaputra valley.

The term 'Northeast' was first used by the British rulers to identify a geographical area. Alexander Mackenzie was perhaps the first to use the term 'Northeast Frontier' to identify Assam, including the adjoining hill areas and the princely states of Manipur and Tripura. When there was a plan to merge Assam with Eastern Bengal in the late 1890s. In the beginning of 1900, there were proposals to name the new province as the 'North Eastern Province'.

With the annexation of Assam by the British in 1826, Assam lost its erstwhile centrality and became a frontier of the British Indian territory.The fact that the entire Northeast region was very substantially bounded by Bhutan, Tibet, China and Myanmar, it became an important

Eventually the British rulers annexed the whole region in the subsequent years, the Cachar plains in 1830, Khasi Hills (1832), Jaintia Hills (1835), Karbi Anglong or Mikir Hills (1838), North Cachar Hills (1854), Naga Hills (1874), Garo Hills (1872-73) and Lusai Hills (1850-1892). These annexations brought about drastic changes in the polity as well as in the economy of the region, with the gradual decay of feudal institutions and the intrusion of capitalist economy. For instance, the Colonial Forest Policy viewed 'Khats' (pre-colonial land based mechanism to negotiate the ambivalence of overlapping spatial domains between the hills and the Brahmaputra valley) as landed property, and turned them into land revenue units.

Thus, in pre-independent India as far the evolution of the Northeast India is concerned, it can be stated that the then state of Assam was comprised of present day Assam along with Garo Hills district, Khasia-Jaintia Hills district, Naga Hills district, Lushai Hills district, North East Frontier Agency (NEFA, present Arunachal Pradesh) and the princely states of Manipur and Tripura remained as British protectorate states.



ACTIVITY 2

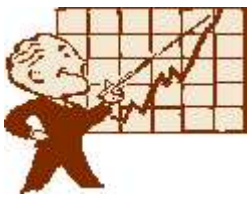
Mention the implications of the introduction of the provision of 'Inner Line' and 'Outer Line' during the colonial rule on the inhabitants of the Northeast region.

.....

.....

.....

.....



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-B

Q1. The Treaty of Yandaboo was signed in

a)1827 b)1826

c)1825 d)1829

it became a full-fledged state. Following the death of the last ruling king Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya, Tripura acceded to the Indian Union in 1949 through a Merger Agreement signed by Queen Kanchan Prava Devi. Initially administered as a Union Territory, Tripura gained full statehood on 21st January 1972 as per the North-East Reorganisation Act, 1971.

On April 14, 1975, a referendum was held, in which Sikkim voted to merge with the Union of India. Sikkim became the 22nd Indian state on April 26, 1975. And in 2002, Sikkim was integrated as the eighth state in Northeast India.

LET US KNOW



Laldenga formed an organization known as Mizo National Front (MNF) in 1961 with the objective to form an independent state for the Mizos.

The concept of Northeast was formalized politically and the term became popular with the formation of the North Eastern Council (NEC) in 1971. Since its inception the NEC functions as a regional planning body for the whole northeastern states and thus it is the nodal agency for economic and social development of the region.

Sanjib Baruah states that Assamese sub-nationalism began in the middle of the nineteenth century as an assertion of the autonomy and distinctiveness of Assamese language and culture against the British colonial view of Assam as a periphery of Bengal. It is seen that autonomy and distinctiveness is a continuing theme in post colonial Assamese sub-nationalism, accentuated by heavy immigration into the area. This has created an environment of fear of being turned into a minority among the indigenous peoples. Further the aspiration for a distinct identity among the ethnic groups resulted in a number of ethnic movements demanding autonomy.

In the postcolonial India, the most popular projection of Northeast India has been that of a 'troubled' frontier. Since Independence, starting with the Naga insurgency, the region has withnessed several ethnic

- Development Paradigm: It was adopted during the 1980s, with the view that if institutions of development were created and expenditure is made in the region, then many problems of the region would get somehow minimized if not completely eliminated. Developmental Initiatives undertaken in the region from 1995-2005 are mentioned below:
- August 1995: North-eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd (NEDFL) was constituted.
- October 1996: Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda announced a 6,100 crore package to boost Northeast India's development.
- December 1997: North-Eastern Industrial Policy (NEIP) was announced. This included tax incentives and subsidies to stimulate industrial development in the region.
- August 1999: India participates in the Kunming Initiative, which is now the Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar Regional Cooperation Forum (BCIMRCF). This is the first among a number of sub-regional initiatives focused on building connectivity between Northeast India and its cross-border neighbours like China, Myanmar and Bangladesh.
- 2001: A central government Department of Development of North-Eastern Region (DONER) was created.
- July 2002: The first North-East Business Summit in Mumbai, Sponsored by the Indian Chamber of Commerce, took place.
- 2004: DONER became a full-fledged central government ministry.
- 2005: North-Eastern Council (NEC) Act, 1971 was amended to transform NEC from an Advisory Body to a statutory Regional Planning Body.

While on the one hand the region witnessed territorial fragmentation, on the other hand it was sought to be brought under a common identity. It has been highlighted by a number of scholars that one of the main impediments in addressing the issues in Northeast lies in the very perception of the term 'northeast' itself. Mrinal Miri observes that to a vast



ACTIVITY 3

1. What are the functions of the DONER Ministry.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Write a note on India's Look East Policy.

.....

.....

.....

.....



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-C

Q1. North Eastern Council was formed in

a) 1971 b) 1970

c) 1965 d) 1961

Q2. Nagaland became the state of Indian Union in

a) 1947 b) 1963

c) 1950 d) 1975



1.6 LET US SUM UP

- Northeast India is the eastern most region of India representing both a geographic, political and administrative division of the country.
- India's Northeast is a region of natural splendors and rich cultural heritage which spreads over an area of 2,62,230 sq. kms.
- It consists of the eight States: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim.

- Reid, Robert. (2013). *History of the Frontier Areas Bordering Assam from 1883-1941*. Bhabani Offset Pvt. Ltd. Guwahati.
- Saikia, Yasmin. and Baishya, Amit. R, editor. (2017). *Northeast India: A Place of Relations*. Cambridge University Press.

1.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No A: 1. Kamadeva

2. thirteenth century

Ans to Q No B: 1.1826

Ans to Q No C: 1.1971

2.1963



1.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Question (Answer the questions within 150 words) :

Q1. Describe the geographical location of Northeast India.

Q2. Mention four developmental initiatives introduced in the northeaster region.

Long Question (Answer the question within 300-500 words) :

Q1. Write an essay on the concept of Northeast India formed during the past-colonial period.

2.3 LOCATION OF N.E INDIA

The northeast region of India is comprised of eight states namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. The region is located in the easternmost corner of India. The region lies between 21.57 N – 29.30 N latitude and 89.46 E – 97.30 E longitudes. The total land area of northeast is 262,230 sq.km and it accounts for 7.98 percent of the total area of India. N.E India is surrounded by foreign countries—Myanmar in the east, Bhutan and China in the north, Bangladesh in the southwest and Nepal in the west of northeast India. The Siliguri Corridor in West Bengal connects the northeast region with East India. The narrow part which connects the region with the territory of India is known as Chicken's Neck.

2.4 BOUNDARIES OF N.E INDIA

All the eight states of northeast share international boundaries.

- Arunachal Pradesh, the largest state in the northeast region shares its boundaries with Tibet in the west, China in the north and Assam along with the other northeast states in the south.
- Assam shares its boundaries with Bhutan and Arunachal in the north, the other northeast states in east and southwest, Bangladesh and Tripura in the west.
- Nagaland has its boundaries with Burma and Arunachal in the east, Assam in the northwest and Manipur in the south.
- Mizoram has its boundaries with Assam and Manipur in the north, Tripura and Chitagarg hills of Bangladesh in the west and hills of Burma in the southeast.
- Manipur is surrounded by the other northeast states in all sides.
- Meghalaya has its boundaries with Bangladesh in the southeast, Goalpara and Karbi Anglong district of Assam in the north, and North Cachar district of Assam in the east.
- Tripura has its boundaries with Bangladesh in the northwest and south, Assam and Mizoram in the northeast.

Hot weather is experienced in between the onset of June and the end of the month of September. The northeast region experiences rainy seasons from the month of March and lasts till the end of October. The southwest monsoon is responsible for bringing 90% of the annual rainfall to the region. The inhabitants of this region depend on monsoon rains for their agricultural activities. The rainfall is unevenly distributed in the region. For example, 'Mawsynrum' in the state of Meghalaya receives the highest annual rainfall while the lowest in Nagaon district and northern portion of Karbi-anglong district of Assam.

The region is covered by the mighty rivers – the Brahmaputra and the Barak. Temperatures are moderate in the river valleys of these two rivers. Apart from these two main rivers system there are many big and small rivers consisting the tributaries in the region. The important tributaries of the Brahmaputra are Siang or Dihang, Dibang, Lohit, Subansiri, Kameng or Jiabharali, Jia Dhansiri, Manas, Beki, Pagladiya, Gadadhar, Sankosh, Burhidihing, Dikhow, Dhansiri, Digaru, Kopili,etc. The important tributaries of the Barak are Jiri, Jatinga, Sonai, Dhaleswari, Lubhu, etc. Besides these, there are many wetlands in northeast India. Majuli in Brahmaputra is the largest fresh water river island of the world.



ACTIVITY 2

Find out the tributaries of the two rivers system of north east and make a list

.....

.....

.....

.....

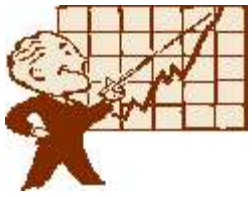
2.6 ASSAM–ITS LOCATION AND ECOLOGY

Assam is a northeastern state of India located just below the foothills of eastern Himalaya. It is surrounded by the other north eastern states. Assam and its commercial capital Guwahati form the gateway to the north east region comprising of seven states together known as seven

National Park, the Nameri National Park and the Manas National Park.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of Assam. It accounts for 63% of the state's work force. Rice is the staple food of the region and cultivation of rice is the main occupation of those engaged in agriculture. Different pulses, jute, tea, fruits are the other agricultural crops. Sugarcane, potatoes, cotton, oilseeds, coconut and areca nut cultivation is also practised in the region. Jhum cultivation or shifting cultivation is done by the people of hilly areas. This practice is followed by the tribal farmers through burning of selected areas of forest land and they use it in a cyclic period order. Among fruits, Assam has oranges and other citrus fruits, bananas, guavas, pineapples and mangoes. Forests are an important part of Assam's economy. Timber and bamboo are two major products of the forests in Assam. Assam is known for its tea as a major cash crop. About 15% of the world's total output of tea comes from the tea gardens of Assam. 75% of the tea gardens are located in the Brahmaputra valley districts of Darrang, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. Cachar district accounts for 20% and remaining 5% is accounted by the lower Brahmaputra valley.

Assam is endowed with vast mineral resources. The major minerals are coal, oil and natural gas, limestone, dolomite, iron, siliimanite, fireclay, pyrite, kaolin, glass-sand, salt, copper, gold,etc. Coal is found in Garo hills, Khasi hills, Jayantia hills, Mikir hills and Makum. The oil producing areas of Assam lie in the upper Assam valley. There are four oil refineries in Assam namely, Digboi, Noonmati, Bongaigaon and Numaligarh refinery limited.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

a) Majuli is situated in the state of Manipur. (True/False)

b) Rice is the staple food of Assam. (True/False)

c) Shillong is the capital of Assam. (True/False)

d) Assam is the largest state of northeast India. (True/False)

- Temperate forests – are found in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and some parts of Mizoram.
- Alpine forests – are found mostly in the states, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.

The states of northeast are the richest storehouses of medicinal and aromatic plants in the world. The highest diversity in terms of floral species is reported in the states of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim. Assam has more than 292 species of orchids and this is about 42% of the total species found in northeast India. Out of the 1300 species of orchids, northeast region hosts to about 800 species. The listed threatened species include Red Vanda found in the state Assam; Fox Tail known as kopou phul (local term in Assam); Eria Fragrans found in Manipur and Mizoram; Dendrobium Fimbriatum found in the lowlands of Sikkim; Clerodendrum as a cure for blood pressure and Siroi Lily found in Manipur are some of the rare species.

Like flora, the region is rich in faunal diversity. Of the 15 known species of primates in India, 9 occur in northeast region. The 'golden langur' is one of the most localized species discovered in the Chakrashilla Hills Reserve in Dhubri district of Assam. Among 6 big cats recorded from India, 4 have been reported from northeast region. These are – the tiger, the leopard, the snow leopard and the clouded leopard. The tiger, which has become a very rare animal in the entire region finds good habitat for survival in the state of Assam. All the bear species that occurs in India are found in the northeast region. The Hoolock is the only ape in India that occurs in the states of this region has become a rare animal. The foothill grassland and evergreen forests of the region harbor important population of Asian elephant, one-horned Rhinoceros, and wild water buffalo. The brow-antlered deer, locally known as the sangal, is endemic to Manipur and is one of the rarest subspecies of deer in the world. Arunachal Pradesh is home to some herbivores, such as the newly discovered Chinese goral, the red goral, the takin, and the scrow. Among the lower vertebrates, 137 species of reptiles are found in northeast India. This region has highest diversity of turtles. 58 species

b) Discuss about the ecological features of the Brahmaputra valley.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2.8 ECOLOGICAL HOTSPOTS

The northeastern region has been identified under the eastern Himalaya hotspot zone for its high biodiversity. The Himalaya, which represents the youngest and complex mountain system on the surface of the earth has been recognized as one of the 34 global biodiversity hotspots. The Indian Himalayan Region (IHR), with geographical coverage of over 5.3 lakh sq.Km, constitutes a large proportion of its biodiversity and contributes greatly to the richness and representativeness of its biodiversity components at all levels. This region covers 10 states entirely, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya), and two states partially i.e, hilly districts of Assam and West Bengal. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has identified the entire Eastern Himalaya as a priority Global 200 Ecoregion. The region is an endemic bird area and important centre for the origin of cultivated crops. North east India probably supports the highest bird diversity with about 836 of the 1200 bird species known from the Indian subcontinent. It has been identified by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) as a centre of germplasm and the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR) reports emphasized the region to be rich in wild elatives of crop plants.

The Eastern Himalaya biodiversity hotspot scaled up as Indo Burma hotspot is the second largest in India. This hotspot covers all the eight states of northeast India. In Assam it covers the Kaziranga National Park for the famous for the one-horned rhinoceros; the Orang National Park for the endemic sticky frog; the Nameri National Park for the Indian

Conservation Prioritization Project (BCPP) 2002 by WWF-India was the first exercise that attempted to identify priority sites and species on the basis of biological and socioeconomic values and develop strategies for their conservation. The priority sites of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Sikkim are identified under this project. Likewise every state has Natural Resource Management for nature protection and ecological conservation.



LET US KNOW

WWF stands for the World Wide Fund for Nature is an international non-governmental organization founded in 1961.



2.9 LET US SUM UP

- The northeast region of India is comprised of eight states namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.
- The region is located in the easternmost corner of India.
- The region lies between 21.57 N– 29.30 N latitudes and 89.46 E – 97.30 E longitudes.
- From physiographical view this region can be divided into certain units namely, the hilly region, the plateau region, the alluvial plains region, and the piedmont zone or the foothills.
- The climate of northeast region experiences a peculiar pattern having variations from extreme humidity during summer to relative coolness.
- Hot weather is experienced in between the onset of June and the end of the month of September.
- North east region of India consisting both plains and hilly areas is famous for its greenery, abundance of flora and fauna of varied species.

Ans to Q No1: (f) Jhum cultivation is a process of cultivating whereby the farmers select a piece of land in the forest, clear it and the cultivate in that piece of land for few years. After 2-3 years they leave that piece of land so that it can regain its fertility.



2.12 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer the questions within 150 words)

Q1. What is meant by ecological hotspot?

Q2. Name four rare species of flora found in NE India?

Long Questions (Answer the questions within 300-500 words)

Q1. Describe the location and ecology of North east India?

Q2. Discuss about the endemic species found in Assam?

Q3. Write a note on the flora and fauna of North east India.

Q4. Discuss the problems that threatened the rare species in ecological hotspots and suggest remedial measures.

excluded areas. After independence the sense of incompatibility grew among different tribes in the Northeast into resentment against the idea of being made a part of India.

As national integration was the most immediate need and issue confronting the new sovereign state, consolidation of a new nation state was urgently required. Adding fuel to the fire was the emergence of the Northeast as a strategic region of crucial security interests after the Indo-China conflicts of 1962. Notions of anti-nationalism were attached to any indigenous ethnic movement as they were thought to be security threats. Considering the strategic location and political complexity of the northeast, state-formation here in post independence was a challenging process. Also, there was an anti-India sentiment amongst the region's people as there was a cold attitude from the Centre towards the region's local aspirations and demands

With 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 Central government. Although the Indian government after independence continued with the colonial policy of isolation of the Northeast, a special provision in the form of the Sixth Schedule for the administration of tribal areas was formulated. The tribal areas of this region were divided into two parts, Part A and Part B. Tripura and Manipur were earlier princely states, were not promoted to states but were made special administrative regions under the control of central government. Thus, the regional composition of the Northeast at the time of independence consisted of the Assam (which included the plains of the old Assam province, the hill districts, the North east Frontier Agency) and the princely states of Manipur and Tripura

During this period Nagaland was an integral part of Assam. But a section of the Naga leadership continued opposing such integration and rose in rebellion under the leadership of A. Z. Phizo. They continued demanding separation from India and complete independence. They were encouraged in this move by some of the British officials and missionaries. In 1955, these separatist Nagas declared the formation of an independent government.

National Famine Front, a body formed for famine relief in 1959, later developed into a new political organisation, the Mizo National Front (MNF) in 1961. Moreover, the imposition of Assamese as the official language of the state in 1960 also led to the feelings of being marginalised among the Mizos and this led to further discontentment. Thus, a period of protests and armed insurgency followed in the 1960s with the MNF seeking independence from India, the most prominent being the March 1966 MNF uprising. On 1 March, MNF launched attacks on the Government offices and security forces' post in different parts of the Mizo district in Assam.In 1971, the government agreed to convert the Mizo Hills into a Union Territory, which came into being as Mizoram in 1972. Following the Mizoram Peace Accord of 1986 between the Government and the MNF, Accord Mizoram was declared a full-fledged state of India in 1987.

Manipur and Tripura both were once independent princely states. After India gained independence from the British, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, the first Home Minister of independent India, set about with the ardent task of integrating more than 500 princely states, with the newly formed Indian Union. Manipur and Tripura were among them.Manipur was merged with the Union through the signing of an Instrument of Accession on 21st September 1949. The treaty was signed by Maharaja Bodhachandra Singh on behalf of the state of Manipur and the Government of India. Manipur was initially a Union Territory from 1962 and achieved full statehood in 1972.

The former princely state of Tripura was ruled by the Maharajas of Manikya. According to the royal chronology of Tripura, around 184 kings ruled over it before it merged with the Indian Union on 15th October 1949. On January 26th 1950 Tripura was accorded the status of a 'C' category state. On November 1st 1956, it was recognized as a Union Territory. With the sustained efforts and struggle of the people of Tripura, it gained full statehood on January 21, 1972.



ACTIVITY 5

Research on the Mizo Famine and the role of MNF in making Mizoram gain statehood.

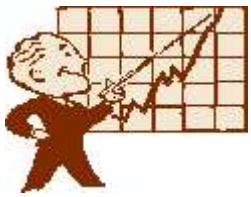
.....

.....

Find out about the clauses under the Instrument of Accession signed for creating the state of Manipur.

.....

.....



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-B

Q1: Monarchy was abolished in Sikkim through a people's referendum. (True/ False)

Q2: Sikkim is the 23rd state of the Indian Union. (True/False)

3.5 FORMATION OF AUTONOMOUS COUNCILS

Political autonomy and statehood have been the most significant structural changes in the administration of Northeast India, with the Interim Government of India appointing a sub-committee to form the Constituent Assembly of North- East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas Committee under the chairmanship of the first Assam Chief Minister Gopinath Bordoloi. Recommendations came from this committee about setting up of autonomous district councils to provide due representative structures to the tribal population at the local level. This is because administration of tribal areas has always been a challenging issue. These recommendations were later included in the Sixth Schedule article 244 (2) & Article 275(1) of the Indian Constitution. Setting up these councils has been an effective tool of governance as the people of these areas enjoy judicial, executive and legislative power considerably.

There are two types of Autonomous Councils in Northeast India based on the status granted by the Central and State Government. The first type

established by the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. (True/False)



ACTIVITY 6

Find out about the different powers and functions of the Autonomous Councils in Northeast India.

.....

.....



3.6 LET US SUM UP

- In early colonial period, Northeast India formed part of Bengal province which became a separate province of Assam in 1874. Till then, it was treated separately and differently from other parts of the country. Separation and isolation formed the core of British policy towards Northeast.
- Considering the strategic location and political complexity of the northeast, state-formation here post independence was a challenging process.
- The North-East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas Committee under the chairmanship of first Assam Chief Minister Gopinath Bardoloi recommended about setting up of autonomous district councils to provide due representative structures to the tribal population at the local level.
- These recommendations were later included in the Sixth Schedule article 244 (2) & Article 275 (1) of the Indian Constitution.
- There are two types of Autonomous Councils in Northeast India based on the status granted by the Central and State Government. The first type includes those that are established by the Central Government under the Sixth Schedule while those of the second type are established by the State Legislature.

UNIT 4: DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF NORTH-EAST INDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 Learning objectives

4.2 Introduction

4.3 Race

4.4 Linguistic diversity in northeast India

4.5 Religious Composition of the population in northeast India

4.6 Size of Population in northeast India

4.7 Density of Population

4.8 Sex Ratio

4.9 Rural-Urban Composition of Population

4.10 Birth and Death Rate

4.11 Literacy Rate

4.12 Let Us Sum up

4.13 Further Reading

4.14 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.15 Model Questions

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to-

- know about different races that reside in the northeastern region.
- know about size and density of population in the northeastern region.
- know about the sex ratio, birth and death rate and the literacy rate in the region.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous units we have discussed that the Northeastern region in India is the easternmost part of India representing both a geographic and administrative division of the country. The entire land is a mosaic of disparate races, civilization, culture, languages which gained a definite geographical identity only after India's independence. At present the region comprises of eight states namely- Arunachal Pradesh , Assam, Manipur,

Brahmaputra valley. In the Barak valley different groups like Barui, Baidya Das, Namasudra, Saha, Sutradhar, Mahishya, Patni, Tanti Dholi, Jhalo-Malo, Mahara, Mali etc can be found. During the colonial period the state witnessed the migration of different groups (either voluntarily or forcefully) and now they are an integral part of Assam. Some of the major groups who had migrated to Assam during colonial period are the Santhals, Munda, Oraon, Kharia, Gond etc from the present day Jharkhand, the Gorkhas, the Marwaris, Biharis etc.

- Arunachal Pradesh: It is the easternmost state of the region with the majority of the people belonging to the mongoloid race. The north eastern part of the state is occupied by Mishimis. There are three sub-tribes among Mishmis. The central region of Arunachal Pradesh is inhabited by the Adi Tribe. There are 15 sub-tribes within the Adi tribe. The western part is inhabited by the Monpa tribe which is again divided into six sub tribes. The southeastern part of the state is occupied by Wancho, Nocte and Tangsa tribes. But the Tangsa tribe is again divided into 15 tribes. The Nishis, Apatanis, Hill Miris, Tagins, Nas and Sulungs live in upper and lower Subansiri districts. The Lohit district is inhabited by Mishmis, Zakhrings, Meyors, Khamtis and Khamiyars.
- Meghalaya: Three major tribes inhabit Meghalaya are they are the Khasis, Garos and the Jayantiyas. The Khasis reside in central Meghalaya, the Garos resides western Meghalaya and the Jayantias live in eastern Meghalaya. The Khasis belong to the Austroloid Monkhemer race. It is believed that they are one of the earliest settlers in the Indian sub-continent. They are divided into four major clans Khynrium Pnar, Bhoi War and Lyngngam. The call themselves the Hynniewrep people which means Proto-Austroloi Monkhemer race. The Garos prefer to call themselves the Achik. Besides the Khasis, Garos and Jayantiyas Meghalaya is inhabited by other tribes like Bodo-Kachari, Hajongs, Rabhas, Hmars, Mikirs, Mizo, Naga and several Kuki tribes. Apart from these tribes, in the recent times people from other parts of India have migrated to different

and Bhutia from Bhutan and Tibet. The Nepalese people in the state comprise of both Mongoloid and Indo-Aryan stock.

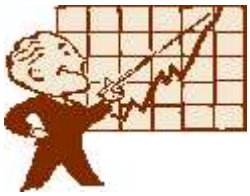
- Tripura: Tripura is another state in the northeastern region of India. Until 1881 the state was a tribal kingdom with 90 percent of its population constituting tribes. Some of the major tribes in Tripura are Tipra, Jamatia, Reang Noatia Halam and Uchoi. Today 31 percent of the population of the state constitute the tribes. They are mainly distributed in the northern and southern parts of the state which have a hilly terrain. After the partition of India, large scale migration of refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan had changed the demographic profile of the state.

4.4 LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN NORTH-EAST INDIA

People in a region can also be classified or grouped on the basis of the language. As already mentioned. North east India had experienced migration from different parts of the world in different waves. Accordingly social groups belonging to diverse linguistic groups can be found. In other words people may belong to one racial group but different linguistic family. Some of the major linguistic groups are Sino-Tibetan/Tibeto-Burman/Tai-Kadai, Austro-Asiatic and Indo-Aryan. The major Indo-Aryan languages spoken in this region are Assamese, Bengali, Hindi and Nepali. The languages spoken among the Khasi and Jaintia tribes belong to Khasi-Khmic sub-family of the Austro-Asiatic group. Communities such as Tai-Ahom, Tai-Phake and Khamti speak languages which are parts of the Tai-Kadai linguistic family. Another important linguistic family to which most of the languages spoken in the region belong is the Tibeto-Burman linguistic family. This is spoken by the Mongoloid race. George Abraham Grierson had divided this groups into three segments and they are

- Tibeto-Himalayan, the North Assam branch. The North Assam branch comprise of seven groups .
- Bodo- Naga and Kachin groups of Tibeto-Burman linguistic family
- Kuki-Chin and Burma groups of Tibeto- Burman linguistic family.

the number of Christians is lowest in Tripura (3.2%) and Assam (3.7%) as compared to other states in northeast yet both the states record a higher concentration of Christian population than India as a whole (2.3%). Thus, it reveals that though Hindu and Muslim population constitute about 95 per cent of the entire population in the country but this pattern is not seen in northeast India. The region accommodates different communities of people having different religious faiths.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

(A): Mizoram is the 2nd highest Christian state of India. (True/False)

(B): What is the official language in Manipur ?

.....

4.6 SIZE OF POPULATION IN NORTH-EAST INDIA

As we have already discussed in the previous section, the North eastern region of India is characterized by extraordinarily diverse ethnic groups having distinctive social, cultural and economic identity. This region occupies 8.55% of the tribal population in India. The region is inhabited by both tribal and non-tribal people. The percentage of non-tribal population residing in North east India is 47.22 percent but the land area under the tribal population as a whole is more than the area under non-tribal groups. Among the eight states, four states have tribal population as a majority; specifically, Mizoram (94.5 per cent), Nagaland (89.1per cent), Meghalaya (85.9per cent), and Arunachal Pradesh (64.2 per cent) (NER Vision 2020). According to the census 2011, the total population of the region is estimated to be about 45 million. Out of this, Assam contributes the highest (68%) share of the total population followed by Tripura (8%). The population of Assam is 31 million, 3.67 millions in Tripura, 2.96 in Meghalaya and 2.72 millions in Manipur. Sikkim records the least with 0.61 million population. The table 5.1 depicts the population of the eight states in northeast India from 1971 onwards.

4.7 DENSITY OF POPULATION

From the section above we have come to know that the growth of population in this region over the years has increased but the population is less in comparison to the rest of the nation. At the same the distribution of population across the states in the North east region is uneven. A major chunk of the population resides in the rural area. According to the census report of 2011 data 84 percent of the rural population is living with an average population density of 173 people per sq. km. With increase in the size of population, density of population per sq. km. has been increasing.

In last two decades, there has been a 15.23 percent increase in density of population in north east region compared to 17.53 percent increase witnessed in India as a whole. In both the decades, i.e. 2001 and 2011, the region recorded high variability in the density of population. Among all the states Assam recorded the highest density of population. . Arunachal Pradesh is recorded as the most sparsely populated state not only in the north eastern region but in the entire nation with 13 persons per sq. km. in 2001 and 17 persons per sq. km in 2011. The density of population in Assam is 397 persons per square km, followed by Tripura (350 persons per sq km), Meghalaya (132 persons per sq km), Manipur (122 persons per sq km.), Nagaland (119 persons per sq. km.) and Sikkim (86 persons per sq. km.). However we must note that even within a state the population is unevenly distributed. The high degree of population concentration is found in the central part of the region, where economic conditions and better infrastructural facilities ensure a quality life. In tangential mountainous areas of the region, the concentration of population is very less due to isolation and inaccessibility of various facilities. The table (4.2) below reflects the density of population in different states in Northeast India.

TABLE : 4.3 SEX RATIO OF NORTH EAST REGION IN 2001 AND 2011 (THE FIGURES BELOW INDICATE NUMBER OF FEMALE PER THOUSAND MALE)

State/Country	Sex Ratio	
	2001	2011
Arunachal Pradesh	893	920
Assam	935	954
Manipur	978	987
Meghalaya	972	986
Mizoram	935	975
Nagaland	900	931
Sikkim	875	889
Tripura	948	961
NE total	937	956
India	933	940

Source: Census of India, 2011

4.9 RURAL-URBAN COMPOSITION OF POPULATION

The process of urbanization in Northeast region of India has witnessed a slow pace in comparison to rest of India. A look on the Sector-wise distribution of population in northeast region reflects that 81.64 percent of the population resides in the rural areas. Accordingly the urban population constitutes to be only 18.36 percent which is much below the all India figure of 31.16 percent in 2011.In recent period, among

than the rest of India. Out of the eight states, Manipur and Tripura records the lowest birth rate. This followed by Nagaland (16.8), Mizoram (17.1) and Sikkim (17.8) in recent period. It found that throughout last three decades, the birth rates has been found higher only in two states, which are Meghalaya and Assam. This indicates a positive demographic scenario of the region. However Assam has recorded the poorest performance in terms of death rate. Over the period of last four decades, which is since 1981, death rate in Assam has been higher than the national average. But in this aspects Manipur has recorded a better result. The death rate in Manipur is not only lower than others states of northeast but it also lower than the national average. Overall, all other north eastern states (except Assam) have recorded lower death rate. Thereby the region is trying to conform with the desired goal of national population policy. Table 4.4 depicts the birth and the death rate in the northeastern states since 1981.

Table 4.5

Birth and the death rate in the northeastern states

State	Birth Rate				Death Rate			
	1981	1991	2001	2010	1981	1991	2001	2010
Arunachal Pradesh	NA	30.9	22.2	20.5	NA	13.5	5.7	5.9
Assam	33.0	30.9	27.0	23.2	12.6	11.5	9.6	8.2
Manipur	26.6	20.1	18.3	14.9	6.6	5.4	5.2	4.2
Meghalaya	32.6	32.4	28.3	24.5	8.2	8.8	9.0	7.9
Mizoram	NA	NA	15.7	17.1	NA	NA	4.4	4.5
Nagaland	NA	18.5	NA	16.8	NA	3.3	NA	3.6
Sikkim	31.0	22.5	21.6	17.8	8.9	7.5	5.1	5.6
Tripura	26.4	24.4	16.1	14.9	8.0	7.6	5.6	5.0
India	33.9	29.5	25.4	22.1	12.5	9.8	8.4	7.2

Table 4.6 Literacy rates in different states of Northeast India

State	2001			2011		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
Arunachal Pradesh	54.34	63.83	43.53	66.95	73.69	59.57
Assam	63.25	71.28	54.61	73.18	78.81	67.27
Manipur	69.93	79.54	60.10	79.85	86.49	73.17
Meghalaya	62.56	65.43	59.61	75.48	77.17	73.17
Mizoram	88.80	90.72	86.75	91.58	93.72	89.40
Nagaland	66.59	71.16	61.46	80.11	83.29	76.67
Sikkim	68.81	60.40	15.64	82.20	87.29	76.43
Tripura	73.19	81.02	64.91	87.75	92.18	85.15
NER (in total)	70.73			75.60		
India	64.83	75.26	53.67	74.04	82.14	82.14

Source Census of India, 2001 and 2011.



4.12 LET US SUM UP

- The Siliguri corridor in West Bengal which is famously known as CHICKEN'S NECK connects the northeastern states to the rest of India.
- It comprises an area of 262,230 square kilometer, almost 8 percent of India.
- According to the 2011 census the total population of the region is 45,772,188.
- Its unique elements has helped shaping the demographic features of the region.

(D) 4. Tripura

(E) 1. Bodo



4.15 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer the questions within 150 words)

Q1. Write short note on literacy rate in NE India.

Q2. What is meant by demography?

Long Questions (Answer the questions within 300-500 words)

Q1. Explain the steps involved in developing a compensation plan.

Q2. Discuss the demographic composition of the northeastern states.

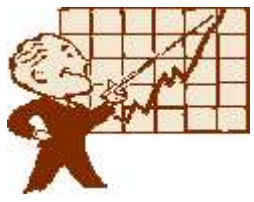
about the social institution found among some of the tribal groups of Northeast India in detail.

5.3 MEANING OF SOCIAL INSTITUTION

There isn't a clear definition of the term "social institution" that can be found in ordinary language or in literature. There are different forms of understanding of social institutions as well. Nevertheless, contemporary sociologists use the term social institution to refer to complex social forms that at times tend to reproduce or act like the governments, the family, human languages, universities, hospitals, business corporations, and legal systems. Jonathan Turner defines social institution as a "a complex of positions, roles, norms and values lodged in particular types of social structures and organising relatively stable patterns of human activity with respect to fundamental problems in producing life-sustaining resources, in reproducing individuals, and in sustaining viable societal structures within a given environment." Further, Anthony Giddens states that, "Institutions by definition are the more enduring features of social life."

A functionalist view understands social institutions as a complex set of social norms, beliefs, values and role relationship that arise in response to the needs of society. Social institutions cater to the social needs of the individuals in a society. Accordingly as a result we find informal and formal social institutions in societies. Institutions such as family and religion are examples of informal social institutions while law and (formal) education are formal social institutions.

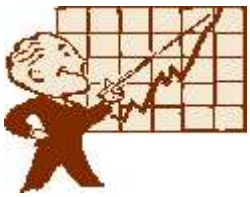
It is convenient to conceive of social institutions as possessed of three dimensions, namely, structure, function and culture. While the structure, function and culture of an institution provide a framework within which individuals act, they do not fully determine the actions of individuals.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. Institutions also impose_____ on individuals and provide them with _____.

in their marriage and family customs while others are patrilocal. In the first case, the newly married couple stays with the woman's parents, whereas in the second case the couple lives with the man's parents. In a patriarchal family, the men exercise authority and dominance, and in matriarchy the women play a major role in decision-making in the family. While matrilineal societies exist, the same cannot be claimed about matriarchal societies. Although families are considered to be distinctive and separated from the other spheres such as the economic or political, a close examination will prove that the structure and norms of the family are linked to the rest of society.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q6. Family can be termed as the most ____ social entity.

Q7. What does the family do according to the functionalists?

.....

.....

Q8. What is the reason according to A.M Shah for increase in join families in the post- independence period?

.....

.....

Q9. Define patrilocal and matrilocal family?

.....

.....

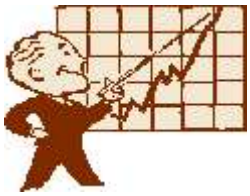
- **The Institution of Marriage**

Marriage has been found to exist in a wide variety of forms in different societies and performs differing functions. The system of marriage in fact reveals an astonishing variety of modes and customs.

Marriage has a large variety of forms. These forms can be identified on the basis of the number of partners and rules governing who can marry whom. In terms of the number of partners that can legitimately enter into matrimony, we have two forms of marriage, namely, monogamy and polygamy. Monogamy restricts the individual to one partner at a time while

● **Kinship**

Family is a group of individuals connected by kinship connections. Kinship connections are association or relations formed between individuals and they are established either through means of marriage or through descent. The institution of marriage is a socially acknowledged institution and when individuals get married they become kin to one another. However, the marriage bond also connects together a wider range of people. The parents, siblings and other relatives become relatives of the partner through the institution of marriage. The family of birth is called family of **orientation** and the family in which a person is married is called the family of **procreation**. The kin who are related through blood are termed as **consanguinal kin** and the kin related through marriage are called **affines**. As we move on to the next section on work and economic institutions, you will notice how the family and economic life are closely interconnected.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q14. Family is a group of individuals connected by ____ connection.

Q15. Define kinship connections?

.....

.....

Q16. The family of birth is called family of _____and the family in which a person is married is called the family of_____.

Q17. What are the kin connected through blood and marriage termed as?

.....

.....

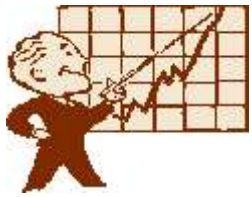
5.5 DEFINING THE CONCEPTS OF RELIGION, ECONOMY AND POLITY AS SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

● **Religion**

The social institution of religion has been subject of study and reflection

can carry forward an action even if they are opposed by others. Power is not exercised in isolation but in relation to others. Power is mostly exercised through authority. Authority is the institutionalised and legitimate form of power.

Economy as a social institution monitors the whole process of production, consumption and distribution. Economic institutions can be termed as well established structures or arrangements within the culture or the society. For instance specific system for property rights, customary tipping etc. Economic institutions can be termed to cater to the survival needs of a community. Thus, different societies have a varied structure of economic institutions which functions and looks after the processes of production of goods and services. Economy as an institution keeps on changing.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q18. All religions seem to share some characteristics like a set of _____, _____, a _____ of believers.

Q19. Religion has had a very close relationship with_____and _____.

Q20. Political institutions deal with the distribution of _____ in society.

Q21. What are the two factors to be kept in mind while analysing political institutions?

.....

.....

Q22. Define economic institutions

.....

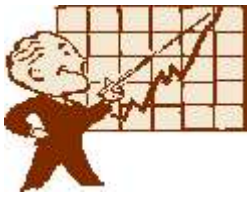
.....

Q23. Economic institutions can be termed to cater to the _____ of a community.

5.6 PREVALENCE OF SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AMONG TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

In India tribal population constitute 8.2% of total population, i.e. 85 million people according to the 2001 census. The tribes in India have been classified

North East India is the homeland of a large number of ethnic groups. These groups, belonging to different racial origin, came from different directions at different times. Thus, they carry with them a system of diverse socio-cultural traditions which will be discussed in the next section.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q24. What is Sahlins' definition of a tribe?

.....

.....

Q25. Who describes tribes to be a segmentary system?

.....

.....

Q26. Tribal societies are mostly very _____.

5.7 FAMILY, MARRIAGE AND KINSHIP TIES AMONG SAME OF THE TRIBAL GROUPS OF NORTH-EAST INDIA

The tribes of North East India are full of interesting rituals and customs. As such, even the marriage rituals in these states demonstrate the cultural diversity and beliefs of the tribal groups. David Mandelbaum points out that in tribal society, the principal links are based on kinship. Kinship is not simply a principle of social organization; it is also a principle of inheritance, division of labour and distribution of power and privileges. Most tribal societies possess a morality, religion and world view of their own, corresponding to their social relations.

The state of Meghalaya is home to three matrilineal tribes namely the Khasis, the Jaintias and the Garos. These are the major ethnic groups are the original inhabitants of the state. According to Barch, Khasi is a term which is given to various tribes and sub-tribes that inhabit the Khasi and Jaintia hills. The Khasis are further subdivided into four groups. The Khasi are uxorilocal. Among the Khasi tribe, the bridegroom is expected to stay with his wife and work with her. The youngest daughter in a household who

matrilineal but not matriarchal. In a matrilineal system of society the female is considered as the basis of hereditary. Hereditary is based on kinship with female line. Thus, clan affiliation among the Garos is determined decided on the basis of the mother.

Matrilineal system refers to the custom of marriage in which the groom has to leave his parental house after marriage and live in his wife's parental house. The woman continues to reside in her own locality even after marriage; as such this system is also known as matrilocal. However, in the matrilocal system, the groom i.e., the married man is not completely transferred to his wife's group and he retains his membership and authority in his own natal groups. In such system the right to inheritance of the property both movable and immoveable goes to the women. All property inherited or acquired after the marriage by her husband becomes the property of the wife. The right of inheritance is passed from mother to daughter according to the customary laws of inheritance. The descent of every individual is always traced from the mother alone. Matriliny permeates the whole society; the descent is matrilineal and inheritance is through female line. Thus, D.N. Majumdar observes that the Garo society to be the hallmark of matriliny.

Among the Rabhas, who reside in the foothills or in the plains of lower Assam, a change over from matriliny to patriliny has been reported. According to the census report of 1911, the descent was always traced amongst them along the female lines. However, in the present a tendency has emerged for a virilocal residence and inheritance to be derived through male lines. Further, marriage within seven degrees of relationship is prohibited and although the custom allows marriage with mother's brother's daughter, the educated section prefers to stay away from such practices.

Among the Lalungs, who reside in the hills of Karbi Anglong as well as in the plains, the practices of matrilineal and patrilineal systems have merged. The economic roles of this tribe differs in the hills and plain areas. There are two kinds of clans among the Lalung. One is based along the lines of common descent emerging from the mother and the other form is along the lines of territorial groupings which is generally organised under the leadership of chief or doloi of big villages. Traditionally marriage was uxorilocal. In the

agreed to pay. After settlement of these two propositions, the wedding day was fixed. The other types of marriage, namely, Tlandun (elopement) and Luhkhung were alternatives to the Lunjvar marriage form, when the marriage negotiation failed to produce an agreement between the parents. These forms of marriages were considered to be derogatory.

The Zou tribe of Manipur also practises what can be termed as bride price. The Zou belongs to the Kuki-Chin-Lushai group of Mongolian race which in turn is classified by historians under Sino-Tibetan families. Although, the rituals of the marriage and the bride price differs across different clans and areas, they still follow some form of general standard which both the bride and bridegroom's parents inherited, for instance the rituals associated with "Mou man" (where Mou stands for bride and man means price) and "Mou vanken" (where Vanken means the materials that the bride brought with her at the time of the marriage. Traditionally the Zou bride price is five mithuns including other items such as like hoe, rug, axe, basket with string among others.

The Zou usually follow the choice of marrying outside their clan (clan exogamy) and marrying within their tribes (tribe endogamy). But in some cases, there is no such kind of restriction unless if the boy and girl are not too close i.e. families or clan lineage. Widow re-marriage is allowed by custom but in actual practice it is not much prevalent. Generally the Zous practice monogamy. The tribe mostly follows what is termed as the patrilineal cross-cousin's marriage which is their first choice known as Neila. It is generally observed that the traditional marriage system of the Zou tribes is regulated either by (i) Tong Mou (Arranged marriage), (ii) Neila (Cross cousin Marriage), and (ii) Elopement Marriage. The above (i) and (ii) marriage practices were solemnised through a formal procedure without which no marriage is permitted. The first two forms are also known as Tong Mou (a bride selected by parent). Customarily marriages between parallel cousins are not permitted. Marriage process started with the parents of the boy or through their household council members which is called Palai (Agent).

In Tripura the traditional marriage practices demand that groom has to look after the family of his prospective bride if he wants to marry her.

of the matrilineal principle.

Q33. The _____ emerges as the most significant unit in Khasi kinship

Q34. The _____ tribe is one of the largest tribe of the North East Indian tribes.

Q35. _____ among the Garos is determined decided on the basis of the mother.

Q36. Who has the right to inheritance in a matrilocal system?

.....

.....

Q37. The women are regarded as the _____ to the wealth and the money in a Khasi family.

Q38. A marriage within seven degrees of relationship is prohibited among the _____.

Q39. Describe the two clans existing among the Lalungs?

.....

.....

Q40. The Dimasa tribe adheres allegiance to ____ clans.

Q41. Among the Dimasas, the property of the father (both movable and immovable) is inherited by the ____ equally.

Q42. What is marriage payment?

.....

.....

Q43. What are the 6 forms of marriage prevalent among the Mizos?

.....

.....

Q44. The Zou tribe of Manipur practice _____

Q45. The Zou usually follow the choice of marrying outside their _____ and marrying within their _____.

Q46. What are the traditional systems that regulate a Zou wedding?

.....

.....

that seeds are fertilised in the ground. They also involve themselves with activities such as fishing, hunting etc. In terms of industrial speciality, the Khasi tribe practises a wide variety of industrial arts. Articles for Cottage industry include cane and bamboo work, blacksmithing, tailoring, handloom weaving and spinning, cocoon rearing, stonecutting, brick making, jewellery making, pottery, iron smelting etc. Generally, the men folk perform the jhum agriculture and cattle rearing along with engaging in metal work and carpentry. Women weave cloth, deal with the items to be sold in the market by acting as vendors and play a major role in the process of socialisation of children. In terms of land, the Khasi tribe has four kinds of land – ka ri raj (crown lands); ka ri lyngdoh (priestly lands) ; ki shong (village lands for the production of thatching grass, firewood, etc.); and ki 'lawkyntang (sacred groves). Further, private land can be sub-divided into two types—ri-kur (land owned by a clan) and ri-kynti (land owned by families or acquired; it is inherited by a woman from her mother or is acquired by a man or a woman). The ancestral land is owned by a woman.

In terms of religion, the Khasi tribe believes in a creator god (U Blei Nong-thaw) who is considered to be feminine in gender (Ka lei Synshar). They invoke the goddess when sacrifices are made or when there is some trouble. The major spirits who are worshiped are Ulei Muluk (god of the state), Ulei Umtang (god of drinking water and cooking water), Ulei Longspah (god of wealth); and O Ryngkew or U Basa Shnong (tutelary deity of the village).

The Garo society has never been governed by the established forms of governments of the modern times. The society had both structural and functional forces which regulated the conduct of the people. The customs that had developed over a period of time formed the code of law which is followed by the whole community. This code of law can be categorised into three divisions- Asimalja, Dakmalja and Nima. Asimalja forms the moral principles which forbid a Garo person from involving in any misdeed. The Dakmalja consists of a wide variety of moral rules, religious, civil and criminal laws, marriage laws, land laws, laws of inheritance etc. And an individual who violates these codes is punished. It is in accordance of with the

Thadous who have also the concept of heaven and hell. They have also the deity of the house called Indoi (a counterpart of the Meitei Sanamahi having a larger connotation). The Koms also have Iuroi, a household god. They also believe in two deities, viz., Pathien (Supreme God), and his brother Lungiei, both of whom live in heaven. The Vaipheis also believe in Pathein and Indoi as the guardian spirit of every household, besides the various spirits who are equally worshipped and feared. The Chakpa communities of the valley of Manipur, located at such places as Shekmai, Phayeng, Leimaram and Andro (called scheduled castes), believe in the sky-god and other spirits, as manifested in their distinctive Lai Haraoba festivals. They still take wine and meat, unlike the Vaishnava counterpart and are supposed to preserve traditional culture of the Manipuris. Christianity was introduced in Manipur in the early part of the 20th century. More than 70 percent of the entire population in the hills has adopted Christianity as of now. The Purums talk about Sanamahi (Meitei God) and the Hindu Krishna as their God.

Among the Naga tribe, Christianity has taken root however, it has not overpowered the traditional religious beliefs. There are a number of deities who are invoked , out of which a few notable ones are- Kenopfu (the creator god); Rutzeh (the giver of sudden death); Maweno (god of fruitfulness); Telepfu (a mischievous god) ; Tsuko and Dzurawu (husband and wife dwarf gods presiding over wild animals); Metsimo (guardian of the gate leading to paradise) ; Tekhu-rho (god of tigers) ; and Ayepi (a god who lives in Angami houses and brings prosperity). Among the Angami tribe, the religious practices is centred around a series of eleven gennas (magico religious ceremonies accompanied by behavioural restrictions binding upon community and/or Individual) which is performed during the entire year. These practices are also connected to agricultural events and thereby affect the daily life of the community.

Another small tribe which exists in Assam are is the Fakial tribe. They have an approximate population of about only two thousand and mainly reside in Margherita, Naharkotia, Nonglai, Lidu, Long gaon etc. There are a number of sub-clans among this tribe such as the Thamung, maan, Hai Thumten etc. In terms of religion, the Fakials mainly follow Buddhism and as such all



5.10 LET US SUM UP

- A functionalist view understands social institutions as a complex set of social norms, beliefs, values and role relationship that arise in response to the needs of society.
- Family can be termed as the most 'natural' social entity.
- The forms of marriage can be identified on the basis of the number of partners and rules governing who can marry whom.
- Endogamy and exogamy are in reference to certain kinship units, such as, clan, caste and racial, ethnic or religious groupings.
- Kin who are related through "blood" are termed as consanguinal kin and the kin related through marriage are called affines.
- The social institution of religion has been subject of study and reflection for a long time.
- Power and authority are of utmost importance while analysing political institutions.
- Economy as an institution keeps on changing.
- According to the 2001 Census, in India the tribes constitute 8.2% of total population, i.e. 85 million people.
- The state of Meghalaya is home to three matrilineal tribes namely the Khasis, the Jaintias and the Garos.
- The kinship system which forms an integral part in Khasi society involves different sets of obligations and duties relating to paternal kin (Kha) and maternal kin (Kur).
- The Garo society is matrilineal in nature and structure.
- The economic roles of the Lalung tribe differ in the hills and plain areas.
- The Dimasa tribe owes allegiance to two clans. In case of man, the primary affiliation is with the patri-clan (sengfong) and secondary affiliation is with the matri-clan (jaddi).
- Puandum is a traditional rug given in a Mizo wedding which is wrapped around the body of the groom on his death.



5.11 FURTHER READING

1. Adcock, R. Bevir, M., and Stimson, S. 2006, Historicizing the new institutionalisms. *In Modern Political Science: Anglo American Exchanges since 1880*, (eds.) R. Andock, M. Bevir, and S.Stinson, NJ: Princeton University Press.
2. Ansari, Mahmood, Tribal Economies in Assam: A Study of Northeastern India, MPRA Paper No. 51890, available at https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/51890/.
3. *Britannica*, *India*. Vol.6, Encyclopaedia Britannica Private Ltd, New Delhi, pp.145-155.
4. Béteille, André, "The concept of tribe with special reference to India", *European Journal of Sociology,* Vol. 27, No. 2, 1986, and pp: 297-318.
5. Judd, Charles. H, "The Nature of Social Institutions", *Social Forces*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 1931, pp: 1-4.
6. S, Clegg. 1990. *Modern Organisations: Organisation Studies in a Postmodern World*, London: Sage
7. Shah, A.M, 1998, *Family in India: Critical Essays*. Hyderabad: Orient Longman.
8. Singh, Yogendra, 1993, *Social Change in India: Crisis and Resilience,* New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications.
9. Uberoi, Patricia, 1994*, Family Kinship and Marriage in India*, Calcutta: OUP.



5.12 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No:

1. Institutions also impose constraints on individuals and provide them with opportunities.
2. Jonathan Turner defines social institution as a complex of positions, roles, norms and values lodged in particular types of social structures and organising relatively stable patterns of human activity with respect to fundamental problems in producing life-sustaining resources, in

18. All religions seem to share some characteristics like a set of symbols, rituals, and a community of believers.
19. Religion has had a very close relationship with power and politics.
20. Political institutions deal with the distribution of power in society.
21. The two factors that need to be kept in mind while analysing political institutions are power and authority.
22. Economic institutions can be termed as well established structures or arrangements within the culture or the society for instance specific system for property rights, customary tipping etc.
23. Economic institutions can be termed to cater to the survival needs of a community.
24. According to Sahlins tribe is "a segmental organization. It is composed of a number of equivalent, unspecialized multifamily groups, each the structural duplicate of the other: a tribe is a congeries of equal kin group blocs".
25. Andre Betteille emphasises that tribes can best be described as a segmentary system where there is existence of a particular type of clan system and lineage structure, which is most fully developed among the Arabs, however is also found in parts of sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere.
26. Tribal societies are mostly very ethnocentric.
27. David Mandelbaum points out that in tribal society, the principal links are based on kinship.
28. The state of Meghalaya is home to three matrilineal tribes- the Khasis, the Jaintias and the Garos.
29. The Khasi are subdivided into four groups.
30. The youngest daughter in a khasi household who is also called as Ka Khadduh inherits the property.
31. The Khasis follow the matrilineal principle of descent, residence and inheritance.
32. The clan or '*Kur*' is the largest divisions in the society on the basis of the matrilineal principle.
33. The Khasi '*iing*' (family) emerges as the most significant unit in Khasi kinship

49. The Heijapot ceremony signifies the formal engagement of the bride and the groom.
50. With the exception of Konyak chiefs the tribals of the same clan do not inter marry.
51. Cultivation is the major subsistence activity of the Khasis.
52. The four types of land used for cultivation by the Khasis are forest; wet paddy land (hali or pynthor) ; homestead land (ka 'dew kyper); and high grass land (ka ri lum or ka ri phlang).
53. The ancestral land of Khasis is owned by a woman.
54. The three categories of code of law on the basis of which a Garo society is governed are *Asimalja, Dakmalja* and *Nima.*
55. Each Garo family acts as a self-contained economic unit.
56. Manipur has 29 scheduled tribes.
57. There are a number of sub-clans among the Fakial tribe such as the Thamung, maan, Hai Thumten etc.



5.13 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer the questions within 150 words)

Q 1: State the meaning of social institution.

Q 2: State or difference between matriliny and matriarchy?

Long Questions (Answer the questions within 300-500 words)

Q 1: Explain Religion as a social institution.

Q 2: Write a note on the institution of marriage.

Q 3: Describe the family system and marriage forms of the Khasi and Garo tribes of Meghalaya.

Q 4: Describe the forms of marriage practiced among the Mizos.

Q 5: Write a note on Khasi economy.

*** ***** ***

the process of immigration continued even in the Post-Colonial Period. We shall also discuss the consequences of immigration on the society, economy and polity of the region.

6.3 IMMIGRATION IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD

The British Colonizers annexed Assam much later as compared to the rest of India. Assam came under the rule of the British by the treaty of Yandaboo in 1826. The British initially occupied the Brahmaputra, Barak and the Surma Valleys and then captured Upper Assam which was under the Ahom kingdom, seized Muttock kingdom, incorporated the kingdom of Cachar into Assam by 1850; the Khasi Hills in 1833; the Jaintia Hills in 1835; the Garo Hills in 1869 and later the Naga Hills and the Lushai Hills as well as the tribes like the Daflas, the Abors, the Akas, the Mishimis and other tribes who now part of the state of Arunachal Pradesh.

Several changes were initiated by the colonial rulers like introducing the modern bureaucratic system of administration, new system of land revenue and taxation etc. All these completely transformed the system of administration in the region. Further the Colonial rulers not only brought changes in administration and land revenue policies, but also brought a massive change in the socio-economic and demographic set up of the region by welcoming different groups to come and settle here. It is however not true that immigration started only during the Colonial period. Almost all groups inhabiting the region have come from different places at different points of time in history. The Ahoms, too entered Assam through its eastern border from upper Burma in 1228 AD, established their rule and dominated the Brahmaputra valley for almost six centuries. Though initially the natives resisted the Ahoms, yet finally they succeeded in establishing its authority and supremacy. Their contact with the natives strengthened to the extent that they even entered into marital relations with them, embracing local customs, practices and language. Gradually the process of adopting Hinduism or Hinduaisation gained momentum from the sixteenth century. This also resulted in the expansion of the Ahom state towards the western parts of the Brahmaputra Valley. Like the Ahoms, the Brahmins are also

then started to set up grocery shops near the plantations to supply rations. However they did not restrict themselves only to selling groceries, they also indulged themselves in lending money to the locals. The monopoly of the Marwaris in business is predominant till today as they continue to be the major trading community in the region even in the present time.

The Nepalis immigrated into the region in the twentieth century and are primarily engaged in the milk business or trading milk. The Nepalese and the Assamese have been sharing an amicable relation and the Indo-Nepalese Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 1950, which accords almost same legal rights to Nepalese as Indians, has further facilitated their stay here. They have accommodatedwell the Assamese culture and customs in their way of life and have also made contributions to the Assamese culture and society.

Further with their wasteland settlement rules and 'grow more food campaign', they welcomed many immigrants, having expertise in Commercial agriculture, especially from East Bengal to settle in the wastelands. The land hungry peasants of Muslim descent from east Bengal came in large numbers and thus occupied a major share of land in the State. Thus Assam gradually became flooded with numerous groups of people coming from outside the region.

During the Colonial era migration was mostly confined to the plains of Assam as it was the prime business center for the Colonialists. The rest of the region i.e the princely state of Manipur, the present day Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram and parts of Arunachal Pradesh and even the hills of Assam largely remained unattractive to the immigrants. Only a few Nepali grazers moved into these areas in search of livelihood. Tripura however is an exception to this. It witnessed a massive inflow of people of East Bengali Origin much before the independence. The intensity of immigration to Tripura was such that the migrants comprised of 29.8 percent of its population in 1931.

From the above discussion it is clear that in a bid to exploit the vast natural resources like tea, oil and coal, the British pushed the area into a demographic turmoil. The Colonial Regime welcomed influx of people into the region to accentuate its revenue and to fulfill its economic and business

6.4 IMMIGRATION IN THE POST COLONIAL PERIOD

Immigration didnot end with the British rule but continued unabated even in the Post-Colonial period. The early decades of independence witnessed an alarming rate of migration to the region. The majority of immigrants comprised of people of East Bengal Origin. Few others such as the Deshwalis entered into Assam from Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh in the post-colonial period. They have been working here as construction workers, thella or rickshaw pullers, barbers, and cobblers, etc. However influx of migrants were no longer confined to the Plains of Assam and Tripura in the post-colonial period as was the case during the colonial regime. They moved into the other parts of the region as well.

The Chakmas and Hajongs of erstwhile East Pakistan too comprise of a major group of immigrants coming to the Northeast in the Post-colonial period. They left their native land in early 1960's and entered the erstwhile Lushai hills district of Assam, the present day Mizoram. Some of them settled in Lushai hills while others were given settlement by the Indian Government in NEFA, present day Arunachal Pradesh, which otherwise had very less population. This resulted in tremendous growth of population in the then NEFA and now Arunachal Pradesh and the number of immigrants doubled within a decade.

Manipur did not face massive influx of migrants as compared to the other parts of the region. Nevertheless, it too could not escape immigration even though it was on a limited scale. Moreh in Manipur has become a home to the descendants of the uprooted Tamil migrants. This influx of Tamil migrants have resulted in the rise in the number immigrants in 1971.

Mizoram too became the shelter for thousands of migrants belonging to the Chin community who were compelled to leave their native place due to the rampant ethnic, political and religious persecution by the Burmese military regime. They fled from their home and settled in neighboring Manipur between 1988 and mid-1990s.

The Tibetans comprise of another group of migrants who have left their native land to settle in the Northeastern region. Their reason behind migration is also persecution.

period. Further, there has been continuous movement of people especially of the Muslim descent from Bangladesh and their numerical strength is accelerating at a high pace. We also witness people from different parts of the country moving into the region for jobs etc...

Further, as immigration has been a continuous process in the post colonial period, especially by the Bangladeshis, there has been a growing threat of the local people being outnumbered by the outsiders. The people from Bangladesh under certain political patronage have been constantly coming into the region and have managed to occupyland in Assam, be it government land, forests, agricultural land, or common property resources etc. This has created a fear of economic and cultural marginalisation among the indigenous people leading to conflicts and antagonism between the local people including tribal groups and immigrants. The ethnic violence, for example, in Kokrajar District is an outcome of the continuous influx and land grabbing activity of the immigrants.

The immigrants have also been playing a significant role in the political arena of the region.This is seen as a big threat by the local people as they fear that they may have to suffer consequences detrimental to their interest if the immigrant group start dictating their terms in the state politics.

Thus we see that there have been several changes in the region due to immigration. The demographic composition has been altered almost every decade with new groups coming in or new members from the already existing groups coming to settle in the region. The level of tolerance and acceptance of the local people towards the immigrant groups seems to vary. Initially they were hostile to the Hindu Bengalis from East Bengal but in the post colonial period the continuous and excessive movement of the people of Muslim descent from Bangladesh has generated tensions and conflicts. However, despite the fact that there have been problems due to immigration, it must be appreciated that the region has always been a home to different communities who have also contributed sufficiently to the cultural variety of the region and this is the beauty of the region.

in numerous conflicts and threat to the identity of the indigenous people of the region.

- During the Colonial era migration was mostly confined to the plains of Assam as it was the prime business center for the Colonialists.
- The rest of the region i.e the princely state of Manipur, the present day Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram and parts of Arunachal Pradesh and even the hills of Assam largely remained unattractive to the immigrants. Only a few Nepali grazers moved into these areas in search of livelihood.
- Tripura however is an exception to this. It witnessed a massive inflow of people of East Bengali Origin much before the independence.
- Immigration did not end with the British rule but continued unabated even in the Post-Colonial period. The early decades of independence witnessed an alarming rate of migration to the region.
- The influx of migrants were no longer confined to the Plains of Assam and Tripura in the post-colonial period as was the case during the colonial regime. They moved into the other parts of the region as well.
- As immigration has been a continuous process in the post-colonial period, especially by the Bangladeshis, there has been a growing threat of the local people being outnumbered by the outsiders
- The people from Bangladesh under certain political patronage have been constantly coming into the region and have managed to occupy land in Assam, be it government land, forests, agricultural land, or common property resources etc. This has created a fear of economic and cultural marginalisation among the indigenous people leading to conflicts and antagonism between the local people including tribal groups and immigrants.
- The demographic composition has been altered almost every decade with new groups coming in or new members from the already existing groups coming to settle in the region.



6.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q1. Did immigration to Northeast begin only in the Colonial Period?

Q2. Why was immigration in the Colonial period mostly confined to Assam?

Q3. Write briefly about the different immigrant groups that came to the region in the Colonial Period.

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q1. 'North-eastern region of India is a home to numerous immigrant groups and communities'. Discuss.

Q2. Discuss the process of immigration during the colonial and post colonial period.

Q3. Explain the changes in the region brought about by immigration.

*** ***** ***