UG SO S4-03
(DSC/DSE)

FOUR YEAR BACHELOR'S DEGREE COURSE
(CBCS in Accordance with NEP 2020)

SEMESTER IV

SOCIOLOGY OF NORTHEAST INDIA

SOCIOLOGY

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KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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BACHELOR of ARTS
SOCIOLOGY OF NORTH EAST INDIA
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COURSE INTRODUCTION:

This Course is meant for the fifth semester students of Sociology of BA programme under the revised semester system of Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University. The course is titled *Sociology of Northeast India.* The northeastern region of India is diverse and this diversitry makes the region unique.There are certain features and concerns that are common to all the eight states of this region. In this course the learners will be able to learn about different aspect and concerns related to the Northeastern region in detail.

While going through this paper, you will notice that some boxes are put in the left hand or right hand side of the text. These boxes are meant to serve the purpose of in-text glossary for you. Again, you may find some boxes marked with: “LET US KNOW”. These boxes will provide you with some additional interesting and relevant information. The boxes marked with “ACTIVITY” will help you in making your learning more active and efficient. And, at the end of each section, you will get “CHECK YOUR PROGRESS” questions. These have been designed to self-check your progress of study. It will be better if you solve the problems put in these boxes immediately aftacser you go through the sections of the units and then match your answers with “ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS” given at the end of each unit.

UNIT 1: THE CONCEPT OF NORTHEAST 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 Northeastern states. The Northeastern region is stretched between 89.46

degree to 97.3 degree East Longitude and 21.57 degree to 29.3 degree North Latitude. The region occupies a strategic geo-political position due to its international boundaries with five foreign countries namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, China and Nepal. The whole region is connected with the rest of the country by a 22 kilometers land corridor through Siliguri in the Eastern State of West Bengal, which is referred to as the 'Chicken's Neck'. Comprising only 7.98 per cent of the country's geographical area, Northeast India is home to a total population of 45,772,188, with a density of 170 per sq.kms(as per the 2011 Census of India).

1.3 CONCEPT OF NORTHEAST INDIA IN ANCIENT TIMES

Northeast India in many of the ancient Hindu literature was known as 'Pragjyotisha' (a Sanskritised name meaning "City of Eastern Astrology") or Kamarupa. Edward Gait in *A History of Assam* states that the name Pragjyotishpur has a reputation as a land of magic and incantation.



LET US KNOW

Hiuen Tsang , was one of the first foreign travelers, who visited the then Kamarupa kingdom in the first half of the 7th century. His book 'Si-Yu-Ki' contains a detailed description of the city of Pragjyotispur.

In the *Ramayana* it is stated that the city of Pragjyotisha was built on a gold-crested mountain called Varaha. In the *Mahabharata*, Bhagadatta, the king of Pragjyotisha, was called Sailalaya (dwelling among the mountains) and it is also stated that his troops consisted of Kiratas, Chinas and dwellers of the sea-coast. Kirata was the generic name used to indicate Mongoloid people, and the name China was applied particularly to the Tibetans and the Bhutanese. The dwellers of the sea-coast were evidently the people living in the marshy regions of Sylhet, Mymensing 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 the Nowgong district. Further South of the Cachari kingdom was ruled

by the Jaintia kings. To the West of the Cacharis and of the Chutiya on the North, were a number of petty chiefs called Bhuiyas. The Ahoms annexed these kingdoms and incorporated within their own kingdom and built a new state in the plain area of the Brahmaputra valley which came to be known as 'Bor-Axom'.

The region has been the meeting ground of different people who migrated to the region from Southwest China or Southeast Asia via Burma at various points of history. The Tai-Ahoms of Assam and the Khasis of Meghalaya claimed to have migrated from Southeast Asia through Burma. The Kukis of Manipur, Nagaland, Assam and Tripura and the Mizos of Mizoram believe that they migrated from Southern China, while the Garos migrated from the southern side of central Tibet. Therefore, J.B. Fuller in his introduction to Alan Playfair's book *The Garos* (1909), wrote that, "The province of Assam at the far northeastern corner of India is a museum of nationalities."



ACTIVITY 1

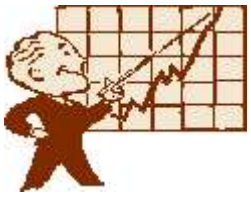
Find out the powerful and popular rulers who ruled the kingdoms in the region (such as the Cachari kingdom, the Chutia kingdom) before they were being annexed by the Ahoms.

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-A

Q1. Pragjyotishpur was also known as Kamarupa kingdom, named after

a) Lord Shiva b) Kamadeva

c) Ahom rulers d) all the above.

Q2. Ahoms entered Assam in

a) fifteen century b) sixteen century

c) thirteenth century d) fourteen century

1.4 CONCEPT OF NORTHEAST 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

colonial administration. But, Robert Reid in his book *History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam from 1883-1941* stated that what made the region a 'frontier' was also the nature of use of space by the people.

The colonial government introduced the provision of 'Inner Line' and 'Outer Line'. 'Inner Line' demarcated the territory being actually administered by the British in the Northeast while the 'Outer Line' demarcated the territory which lied beyond the British administration. In between the two lines was the area which the British considered its zone of influence. As stated by Robert Reid, the provision of 'inner' and 'outer' line was a functional attempt to territorialize the indigenous communities.



LET US KNOW

Prior to the formation of the state of Mizoram, it was known as Lushai Hills District.

Captain John Michell in the report 'North East Frontier of India' (1883) highlighted the colonial strategy to control the foothills along the north and south bank of the Brahmaputra, by transforming the foothills into tea plantations. These plantations were used as an avenue to charge the indigenous communities of the hills with violation of territorial lines, which was followed by a military expedition. Designing the foothills as militarily controlled routes of trade and commerce was seen as another method of taming the foothills. For instance, the Adi expedition, though being a punitive expedition, also aimed at collecting wide ranging information, and possibilities of opening up the foothills up to Tibet and China for trade and commerce.



LET US KNOW

After 1935, following recommendations of the Simon Commission, the Naga Hills, was declared as an 'Excluded Area'.

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

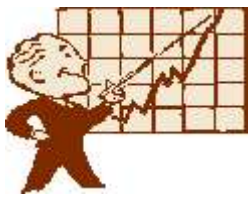
Mention the implications of the introduction of the provision of 'Inner Line' and 'Outer Line' during the colonial rule on the inhabitants of the Northeast region.

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-B

Q1.The Treaty of Yandaboo was signed in

a)1827 b)1826

c)1825 d)1829

1.5 CONCEPT OF NORTHEAST INDIA IN POST COLONIAL TIMES

With the partition of India in 1947, Assam became a constituent state of India. The district of Sylhet in Assam (excluding Karimganj sub-division) was given to East Pakistan (which later became Bangladesh) with the Sylhet Referendum held in 1946.The city of Shillong served as the capital of the Assam province created during British Rule. It remained as the capital of undivided Assam until the formation of the state of Meghalaya in 1972. Thereafter, the capital of Assam was shifted to Dispur.

In order to quell the various ethnic, cultural and political aspirations for self government among various tribal groups, new states were carved out of Assam. The notion was that such groups require representation in the democratic process and that once they have voice and representation in the parliamentary democracy, many of their problems would be abated.

Arunachal Pradesh was a Union Territory since 1972, and prior to that, it was known as NEFA. It got statehood on 20 February 1987. The Assam Reorganisation (Meghalaya) Act of 1969 provided Meghalaya, comprising the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills district and Garo Hills district, a semi-autonomous status which came into effect on April 2, 1970. Subsequently it became a full-fledged state of India on January 21, 1972. On 21 January 1972, the Union Territory of Mizoram came into being. After several years as a Union Territory, the Mizoram Peace Accord was signed on 30 June 1986 between the Mizo National Front (MNF) and the Union government, following which Mizoram became a federal state of India on 20 February 1987.

In July 1960, following a discussion between the then Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and leaders of the Naga People's Convention (NPC), a 16-point Agreement was arrived at, whereby the Government of India recognized the formation of Nagaland as a full-fledged state within the Union of India. On 1st December 1963, Nagaland became the 16th state of the Indian Union.

After liberation from the British, Manipur merged with India in 1949. It enjoyed the status of a Union Territory for about 25 years till 1972, when

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

movements. The autonomy movements in Assam have started with the premise that immense discrimination has been done to the people by the dominant group as well as the centre. For example, the movements launched by different ethnic groups such as the Bodo, Karbi, Dimasa-Kachari, Lalungs, Rabha Hassong etc expressed the fact. The apprehension of smaller indigenous communities of being outnumbered numerically and thereby turning them politically and culturally marginalized and irrelevant in their own land has been the root cause of intense xenophobic tendencies in the region. Thus, in the postcolonial India, the popular projection of northeast India has been that of a troubled frontier. This has happened despite the peace accords, development projects, special packages, and an overwhelming presence of security forces in the region. Because Indian state under the 'security paradigm' tends to treat the various social conflicts in the region more as 'law and order issue' and overlooks the existing ground realities.

Jairam Ramesh, in the article, 'Northeast India in a New Asia', stated that government policies towards Northeast India were based on 4 dominant paradigms and they are:

- Culture Paradigm: it was preponderant during 1950s and the 1960s. This paradigm in which Northeastern cultures viewed as exotic and endangered that needed to be protected.
- Security Paradigm: It came into prominence in the 1960s, probably after the Chinese invasion of 1962. After this invasion Northeast began to be seen as a strategically significant region not only in a geographical sense but in a larger geopolitical sense of India's role in East Asia and Southeast Asia.
- Politics Paradigm: Under this paradigm, during the early 1970s new states began to be formed in the region on the basis of the idea that once the diverse tribal cultures and diverse sub-nationalities get representation in the 'mainstream' democratic process', many of the problems associated with the region would tend to get nullified or minimized.

- 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

majority of Indians from outside northeast(i.e, the mainstream), the Northeast appears to be a distant region, which is more or less homogeneous in terms of culture, race and geography and overwhelmingly dominated by 'primitive' tribes with secessionist temperament.

Udayon Misra in his book *The Periphery Strikes Back: Challenges to the nation-state in Assam and Nagaland* (2000) calls India's north-east "an illusive construct". He points out that there exist many other differences among the various ethnic groups of the region which can hardly be included in one rubric. But by glossing over all such differences the mainstream India has constructed an image of Northeast India in which the region and its people come to fit the typical category of 'the other' for the rest of India.

Duncan McDuie-Ra, in the chapter 'Solidarity,Visibility and Vulnerability: 'Northeast' as a Racial Category in India' of the book *Northeast India* wrote that the 'Northeast' is a category constructed by the Indian state for the purposes of controlling, governing and applying extraordinary legal provisions to its rebellious eastern frontier. The category erases the diversity and complexity of the region, and locates the region in reference to India as an aggregation of different set of problems addressed through extraordinary legal and bureaucratic mechanisms. For instance, the Armed Forces Special Powers Act 1958, specialized ministries such as the Ministry of Development of North East Region.

While ethnic and tribal identities still hold tremendous power within the Northeast, shared identities are visible in the context of the dual connectivity, urbanization, out-migration and the increased publicity of racism, especially outside homeland. It is not just the shared negative experience of racism and discrimination, but shared attributes of the communities from Northeast that differentiate them from other communities in India. Thus, in contemporary time, a category, an identity of the 'North-easterner' is emerging which is constituted by shared places, neighborhoods, workplaces and in recognition of shared food habits.



ACTIVITY 3

1. What are the functions of the DONER Ministry.

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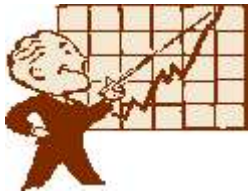
2. Write a note on India's Look East Policy.

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-C

Q1. North Eastern Council was formed in

a) 1971 b) 1970

c) 1965 d) 1961

2. 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.

- In the *Ramayana* it is stated that the city of Pragjyotisha was built on a gold-crested mountain called Varaha.
- In the *Mahabharata*, Bhagadatta, the king of Pragjyotisha, was called Sailalaya (dwelling among the mountains) and it is also stated that his troops consisted of Kiratas, Chinas and dwellers of the sea-coast.
- 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.
- With the partition of India in 1947, Assam became a constituent state of India.
- The concept of Northeast was formalized politically and the term became popular with the formation of the North Eastern Council (NEC) in 1971.



1.7 FURTHER READING

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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.

UNIT 2: LOCATION AND ECOLOGY OF NORTHEAST INDIA AND ASSAM IN PARTICULAR

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Learning Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 Location of N.E India

2.4 Boundaries of N.E India

2.5 Ecology of N.E India

2.6 Assam – Its Location and Ecology

2.7 Flora, Fauna and Rare Species of N.E India

2.8 Ecological Hotspots

2.9 Let Us Sum up

2.10 Further Reading

2.11 Answer to Check Your Progress

2.12 Model Questions

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- understand the ecology and location of northeast region
- understand about the ecological aspects
- understand the location and ecology of Assam
- describe the flora, fauna and rare species of the region
- get an idea of the ecological hotspots

2.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces you to the ecological variation in the northeast region of India which provides a broad view of the geographical location and the physiographical settings in the region. The important factors like – climate, rainfall, river system, flora and fauna and also the ecological hotspots are included under the subject matter. The state of Assam with its diverse nature of ecology is discussed in the unit.

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.

- Sikkim has its boundaries with China in the north, West Bengal in the south, Tibet and Bhutan in the east and Nepal in the west.



ACTIVITY 1

Discuss about the location of each of the northeast states

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2.5 ECOLOGY OF N.E INDIA

The northeast India as a whole has a diverse landscape. With its natural beauty and diversity, the northeast region has unique landmasses. The hills, mountains, plateaus, plains, rivers, valleys, wetlands, low lying areas along with marshy and swampy lands, charlands and riverine islands, etc are remarkable geographic features. According to data made by the India state of Forest Report 2015 the total forest cover of the region is 171,964sq km, which is 65.59% of its geographical area.

From the physiographical view, this region can be divided into certain units namely, the hilly region, the plateau region, the alluvial plains region, and the foothills. The hilly terrain covers most of the areas towards north, south, north-east and south-east. The Arunachal Himalaya runs almost east-west which forms a part of the greater Alpine Himalayan belt. Towards the extreme south there is are the Mizo-Lusai hills, while in Meghalaya there are Khasi- Jaintia and Garo hills which cover almost 80% of the hilly state. The plateau region covers most of the area of Meghalaya and a part of the Karbi-Anglong district of Assam. The piedmont zone is found along the foothills of the Naga-Patkai range towards south and the Himalayan range towards north. The Alluvial plains cover the entire state of Assam.

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. 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

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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

sisters. Sikkim came under the region of north east India in 2003 which had remained unattached with the seven sisters earlier.

Location - Assam lies between 24-28 degree N latitude and 90-96 degree E longitude. It shares borders with the countries of Bhutan and Bangladesh and is surrounded by the states of Arunachal Pradesh , Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Meghalaya. To the east of Assam lay Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur, to the west lay Bangladesh and Tripura, whereas Mizoram and Meghalaya lay to the south of Assam. The total land area of Assam is 78,523sq km.

Geographically Assam is divided into Brahmaputra valley in the north, Barak plain in the south, and Karbi Anglong and North Cachar hills divides the two regions. A major population of Assam resides in the vast Brahmaputra valley in the north. Based on the flow of the river, the state can be divided into two parts Upper Assam and Lower Assam. The southern zone or the Barak valley region of the state is an extension of the neighbouring country Bangladesh. The major districts of this area are Karimganj, Cachar and Hailakandi. Karbi Anglong, the central part of Assam, covers a total area of 10,434sq km. It is home to some major tribes like the Bodos, Kukis, Dimasas, Tiwas , Garos and Khasis.

Climate – With the tropical Monsoon Rainforest the state of Assam is a temperate region. It experiences heavy rainfall and humidity during summer. Summer starts in mid May till October. Winter lasts from late October to late February. The maximum temperature during summer rises up to about 35 to 38 degree Celsius. Rainfall occurs almost in all the seasons of the year.

The soil of Assam differs in different zones due to nature of topography, rainfall, cultivation,etc. It is of four categories viz, new alluvial; old alluvial; red loam and laterite. The soils of the north and south part of the Brahmaputra valley are formed by the alluvium transported by the river and its tributaries. There are a number of tropical rainforests in Assam. Moreover there are riverine grasslands, numerous wetlands and charlands. There are five National Parks situated in the region, namely, the Kaziranga National Park, the Orang National Park, the Dibru Saikhowa

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)

e) Mention the names of the oil refineries of Assam.

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f) What is jhum cultivation?

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ACTIVITY 3

Discuss on the agricultural practices of Assam

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ACTIVITY 4

Find out the climatic characteristics of Assam

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2.7 FLORA , FAUNA AND RARE SPECIES OF N.E INDIA

The north east region of India consisting both plains and hilly areas is famous for its greenery, abundance of flora and fauna of varied species. This region has 64% of the total geographical area under forest cover and it continues to be a forest surplus zone. There are 51 forest types found in this region, broadly classified into six major types –

- Tropical moist deciduous forests – are found in the states of Tripura, Meghalaya, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
- Tropical semi evergreen forests – are found in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Manipur.
- Tropical wet evergreen forests - are found in the Khasi and Jaintia hills.
- Sub tropical forests – are found in the states of Meghalaya and Mizoram.

- 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

of snakes are found in Assam, 34 in Manipur, and 92 in Arunachal Pradesh. 20 subspecies of lizards are found in Assam. The northeast region is reported to have 3624 species of insects. Over 689 species of butterflies are found in the state of Sikkim. The region records for having 64 species of amphibians. The Orang wildlife Sanctuary in Assam is the only known site for the Orang sticky frog. Out of the seven endemic bird areas in the country, two are found in the northeast region – the eastern Himalaya and the Assam plains. Arunachal Pradesh alone hosts for 760 species of bird.

The Brahmaputra valley of the northeast region with semi evergreen forests harbors India's largest elephant population, the world's largest population of one-horned rhinoceros, and tigers. Other threatened mammals include swamp deer, gaur, clouded leopard, pygmy hog, capped leaf monkey, Asiatic black bear and sloth bear. The Brahmaputra river also harbors the freshwater dolphin. The bird fauna is richer with more than 370 species and 2 species are near endemic in this valley. Other threatened species in the broadleaved forests of the northeast includes tiger, red panda, takin, serow, Assamese macaque, wild dog, black stripped weasel and Irrawady squirrel.

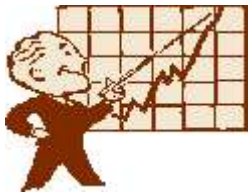


ACTIVITY 5

List the names of rare species of northeast India

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2

a) What are the types of forests found in the north east region? Discuss.

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

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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

Flying Frog and varied species of vertebrates; the Dibru Saikhowa National Park and Biosphere Reserve for habitat of more than 20 species of globally threatened vertebrates; North and East Karbi Anglong for conservation of landscape species; Garampani and Namboor Wildlife Sanctuary for conservation of landscape species; Manas Tiger Reserve for Pygmy hog, tiger, wild water buffalo, and Hispid Hare; Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary for Golden langur, Bengal florican, and four species of turtles; Lumding Endemic Bird Area for conservation of species of bird; Jatinga for Tawny breasted Wren Babbler and Upper Dihing for White winged Duck, White bellied Heron and Baikal Teal. In Manipur the hotspot covers Dzuko and Siroi areas for species of turtle and Hoolock Gibbon respectively. In Meghalaya it covers the cherranpunjee cliffs, gorges and sacred grooves for endemic species of frog and toad; khasi hills, Siju caves and Garo hills. In Nagaland, Itanki National Park, Maratlongiri and Dhansiri is endemic for landscape species. Lastly Sikkim has Khangchendzonha National Park and Maenam Wildlife Sanctuary under the eastern Himalaya hotspots.

The main reasons for the threat to the species in the biodiversity hotspots are habitat destruction, resource mismanagement, poaching and climatic changes. Most of the ecological reserves are remote and inaccessible. Activities such as logging of wood, increased agriculture, and increased human habitation have led to destruction of forests and pollution of rivers. These factors are causing reduction of species. Increased tourism without proper regulation has led to environmental disharmony. Large mammals such as tiger, rhinoceros and elephant are threatened due to rampant hunting and poaching. The exploitation of land and forest resources by humans along with hunting and trapping of animals and bird species for trading purposes created a threatened condition for the ecological hotspots.

Government has taken certain initiatives under State Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Action Plans for each state in the northeast region. Each of the states was individually provided with the necessary policies for the upliftment and development of the ecological sites. Biodiversity

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.

- This region has 64% of the total geographical area under forest cover and it continues to be a forest surplus zone.
- The northeast 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 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.



2.10 FURTHER READINGS

- Bareh, H.M. *Encyclopedia of North-East India-1, Arunachal Pradesh*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi,2001
- Saikia,Dr. Amorjit and Sen, *'Society in North East India'* (A socio economic and historical perspective), Brahmaputra offset. Dibrugarh, 2013
- Karlsson, B.G. *Unruly Hills : A Political Ecology of India's North-East.* 2011
- Pugh,B.M, *'A Common Perspective for North-East India*, Calcutta,1967
- Worah,S;Chatterjee,S and Dutta.P, *'Review of Biodiversity in North East India'* WWF, Delhi, march 2006



2.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No1: (a) False

(b) True

(c) False

(d) True

Ans to Q No1: (e) Digboi, Noonmati, Bongaigaon, Numaligarh.

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.

UNIT 3: PROCESS OF STATE FORMATION IN ASSAM

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1 Learning Objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Ahom Kingdom

3.4 Chieftainship

3.5 Annexation of Assam by the British

3.6 Creation of different states out of Assam

3.7 Let us sum up

3.8 Further Reading

3.9 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'

3.10 Model Questions

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This unit will enable the learners to understand the following aspects regarding the process of state formation in Assam.

- The Ahom Kingdom
- Chieftainship
- Annexation of Assam by the British
- Creation of different states out of Assam in the post-colonial period

3.2 INTRODUCTION

The process of state formation in Assam has had a long historical background. The state formation process in Assam began in the pre-colonial period around the 13th century with the advent of the Ahoms in Assam. Also, almost along the same time there could be seen illustrations of state formation among several tribal communities in Assam which have been discussed in the following account in this unit. These tribal kingdoms have been discussed in this unit under the heading 'Chieftainship'. It is interesting to note that the British formally entered Assam much later, only in 1826,

although it had interactions in the region from an earlier time. Further, in the colonial period there arose another interesting political assertion in Assam. It was in the form of demand for separate states. As a result of this, Assam was eventually divided into several other states.

3.3 The Ahom Kingdom

The Ahoms are generally considered to be one of the greatest rulers of Assam (erstwhile undivided Assam). The Ahoms came to Assam in the 13th century. The Ahoms, it is known, belong to the Shans of the Tai race. The Tais have been found in different regions of Asia where they are known by different names. For example, the Tais are known as Shan in Myanmar, Laos in Laos, Thai in Thailand, Dai in China, Tay-Thai in Vietnam, etc. Sukapha, born in Maulong, Burma, was the founder of the Ahom kingdom in Assam. Sukapha came to the Patkai hills of Assam from Burma in 1228 AD. It is known that Sukapha moved along the river Brahmaputra in different parts of Assam. He is known to have moved from Tipam (the first headquarters of the Ahoms) to Abhoipuri, to Nazira in Sibasagar, to Simalaguri and finally settled down in Charaideo in 1253 AD.

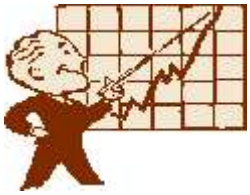
Sukapha, the first Ahom king, was not considered to be an invader because of the peaceful approach that he adopted towards the local people of Assam. Although, it is known that the Ahoms are known to be possessors of great knowledge of astrology, agriculture and cultivation, etc. which the local tribesmen lacked, yet Sukapha maintained friendly and cordial relations with the latter and he himself led the life of a common man. The local tribesmen therefore served the Ahoms with animals for cultivation, food, etc. which helped in the easy functioning of the Ahoms in the new kingdom. For example, the Mataks served as the fuel providers and keepers of the orchards, the Barahrs were know to be the woodcutters, cooks and keepers of the poultry, etc. The local tribesmen were rewarded in return in terms of the cordiality that the Ahoms shared with them and also the opportunities that Sukapha provided them which included the opportunity to join the army. The Ahoms are considered to be broadminded. Intermarriage between the

local tribes and the Ahoms is often considered to be a sign of the open mindedness of the Ahoms. For example, Suhunmung is known to have married a Manipuri princess, while the Ahom king Gadadhar married a Naga princess. However, while on the one hand, Sukapha is famous for his peaceful co-existence with the local tribes, on the other hand, it it is also known that Sukapha adopted the policy of force and conciliation against those tribes who challenged him. The rise and spread of the Ahoms in Assam was an indicator of the decreasing role and influence of the Aryans in Assam and the gradually increasing role of the Ahoms, and hence also indicating a growing contact of the region with the east and not the west.

The Ahom kingdom is known for its magnificent bureaucracy, administrative system and the well-built irrigation system. The magnificence of the Ahom administrative structure is often credited to the king Pratap Singha. He is known to have created several posts for appointing officers to take care of different departments of the royal administration. For example, the post of 'kataki' was created to look after the activities of the tribes. Two significant systems developed during the reign of Pratap Singha – the Paik system and the Posa system. Posa could be defined as a kind of payment (usually in the form of grains, cattle, etc.) that was to be paid to the hill dwelling tribes by the dwellers of the foothill villages. The purpose behind the Posa system was to ensure that the hill tribes would avoid creating plunder amongst the plain dwellers in search of resources.

The Paik system maintained that the male members of the society (approximately between 16-50 yrs of age) shall have to serve the state. These male members of the society were referred to as the 'paiks'. Three to four paiks were combined to form a 'got'. There were different types of paiks based on the different duties assigned to them. For example, the Dewaliya paiks were the ones who worked in the satras and the temples, the Kari paiks were the archers, etc. Further, in order to administer the paiks in terms of number, the Ahoms created several other posts like the 'Bora' was assigned to administer twenty paiks, the Hazarika was assigned to administer hundred paiks, etc.

The mighty Ahoms ruled in Assam for six hundred years. The Ahom reign is considered even today for its glory, might and the level of development in the areas of agriculture, irrigation, bureaucracy and management in particular amongst several other aspects. After centuries of its powerful reign, the Ahom kingdom eventually declined due to several managerial, administrative and political factors. One significant aspect that contributed towards the fall of the Ahoms is the military aspect. The military system of the Ahom, though well-built, began to grow old and backward in comparison to the technology and prowess of the Burmese and the British military systems. Further, there was also seen the absence of strong leaders and commanders. The Moamoria rebellion of 1769 further posed a serious challenge to the Ahoms with an aim to establish equality and freedom in the region. Thus all of these factors amalgamated to contribute significantly in the falling apart of the mighty Ahom kingdom.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1: When did the Ahoms come to Assam? Who was the first Ahom king?

Q2: What are the aspects for which the Ahoms were well-known?

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3.4 CHIEFTAINSHIP

The rule and might of the Ahoms have been discussed at length at various platforms. However, at the same time, there were a number of tribal chieftainships, out of which a few of them assume particular significance because of the strong and important political establishments that they had built. There were several significant tribal establishments in the pre-colonial period in Assam. Some of the important names amongst them are the Chutiyas, Kacharis, Jaintias and the Koches. The following briefly outlines the mentioned tribal political establishments of Assam of the pre-colonial period.

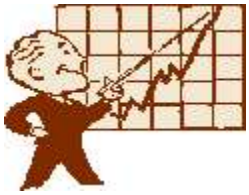
The Kacharis: The Kacharis are found in different parts of Assam and are known by different names in different places. Thus, while they are known as the Bodos in the Brahmaputra valley, they are known as the Dimasas in the North Cachar Hills. It was by the thirteenth century that the Kachari kingdom was established along the Dikhu and Kallang rivers in the south bank of the Brahmaputra river, the North Cachar track and the Dhansiri valley.

The Chutiyas: The Chutiyas are considered to be of Mongolian origin. They are speakers of the Bodo language. The territory of the Chutiyas stretched across the Sisi river in the west to the Brahmakund in the east, and from the Northern hills to the Burhi Dihing river. Sadiya housed the capital of the Chutiyas.

The Jaintias: Racially, the Jaintias are considered to belong to the Palea-Mongoloid group. They speak the Khasi language. The Jaintia Hills of the present day Meghalaya and the plains upto the Barak valley comprised of the Jaintia territory in those times.

The Koches: The Koch kingdom was founded by Biswa Singh and has been considered to be the most powerful kingdom of Lower Assam of those times. The Koches are also considered to be of the Mongoloid racial origin. However, they are known to have adopted the Hindu faith later.

In addition to these, several other tribes were found in Assam, like the Nagas, Khamptis, Daflas, Adis, etc. Although in the present day the different Naga tribes are largely found in the states of Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, but in those times many Naga tribes inhabited in the Dhansiri river valley of Assam, North Cachar, etc. The Daflas are popularly known as the Nyishis and were the habitants of the Darrang and the Lakhimpur districts of Assam. The Adis are also known as the Abors and resided in the Subansiri and the Dibang river valleys initially and later migrated to the Brahmaputra valley. The Khamptis, like the Ahoms, belonged to the Shans of Burma. They migrated from Burma and resided in Sadiya of Assam.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q3: Name a few tribal chieftainships that resided in Assam during the rule of the Ahoms.

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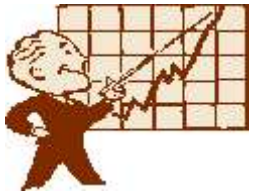
3.5 ANNEXATION OF ASSAM BY THE BRITISH

The formal entry of the British in Assam marks a significant event in the history of Assam as it was then followed by several social, political, economic and cultural changes in the region. Unlike most parts of the country, the formal entry of the British in Assam was much later, i.e. in the 19th century. The control of the British over Assam formally began in 1826. This began with the signing of the Treaty of Yandabo. This treaty marked the shift of control over Assam from Burma to the British. It is with the entry of the British in Assam that marks the formal decline of the Ahoms. However, it must be noted that British intervention in Assam can be traced back to Captain Thomas Welsh's expedition of 1792-94. Captain Welsh was sent to resolve a dispute between the Ahom king Gaurinath Simha and the son of the Darrang king, called Krishnarayanan. After resolving the issues, Captain Welsh started taking more interest in the affairs of the region and even began to intervene in the internal politico-administrative affairs of the region. Captain Welsh left in 1794.

The British had initially occupied Bengal and realized the possibility of Assam being the buffer zone between Burma and Bengal for easy administration and control by them. Thus the British realized the importance of driving away the Burmese from Assam. Interestingly, the British were initially appreciated for chasing away the Burmese and freeing the Assamese from the Burmese clutches. However, very soon the British began to annex the important regions of Assam and began to exercise more and more control

over the region. It was then that the real intentions and nature of the British were understood by the local people of Assam.

The British, in order to facilitate their administrative capabilities in the region, devised different methods and techniques. In this context, the Inner Line Permit and the Outer Line Permit must be discussed. The Inner Line Regulations were brought to effect in 1873. The Inner Line means a boundary line, the purpose of which is to regulate the interaction of the tribes with the British and also the movement and other activities of the tribes. Thus in order to cross the Inner Line the tribesmen had to take permission from the concerned authorities. The Inner Line was applicable to several districts namely, Kamrup, Darrang, Nagaon, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur and also the Khasi, Garo, Naga, Jaintia, Chittagong and Kachar Hills. The main purpose behind the introduction of the Inner Line was largely economic, i.e. issues like trade regulation, land transfer issue regulation, etc. It is interesting to note here that the Inner Line did not intend to control the movement of the hill tribes in the plain areas. Therefore the tribesmen of the hills could continue with the various activities irrespective of the restrictions posed by the Inner Line. Thus, as a result of the Inner Line, while on the one hand, the tribesmen were left undisturbed, on the other hand, they were also left out of developmental activities. The Outer Line has been defined as the imaginary boundary which lay beyond the Inner Line and which the British chose not to define or mark. The intention of the British behind this act was to be able to use that land as per their needs and interests in the future.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q4: Which treaty marked the beginning of British rule in Assam? When was it signed and between whom?

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3.6 CREATION OF DIFFERENT STATES OUT OF ASSAM

The above account has clearly demonstrated the political changes in Assam during the colonial period. It is interesting that in the post-colonial period Assam further saw several political upheavals which eventually resulted in the rise of several states out of the larger Assam. Assam had been witnessing several attempts to assert distinct identities by the local people. The earliest form of it was in the form of linguistic assertions by the Assamese. While language continued to play an important role, post colonial Assam also witnessed several tendencies by its people to attain separate statehood. Such tendencies were also manifested in violent forms through many insurgent groups that had gradually sprung up in the region in the search and demand for autonomy. While all of these factors played an important role in the division of Assam into several states, there was the idea of the government that the creation of separate states would also reduce the insurgency in the region. As a result, Assam was divided into several states in the post-colonial period.

The following account describes the rise of the new states out of the larger Assam.

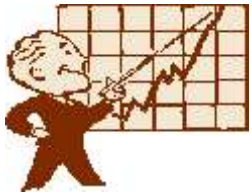
Nagaland: Nagaland was the first state which was carved out of Assam. It came into being in 1963. It was largely seen as a result of the insurgency movement of the Nagas. In 1975, in the Naga Hills, Tuensang Area was created which was eventually formed into the state of Nagaland in 1963.

Mizoram: The Mizo National Front carried out insurgency operations while demanding the creation of nation of the 'Zo' people. As a result of this, the Mizo Hills district was first formed into a union territory and gradually developed into a state in 1972.

Arunachal Pradesh: The creation of Arunachal Pradesh as a state was not the result of any separatist or insurgent tendencies in the region. The erstwhile North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) region became strategically very important because of its location in the border of India and China. Hence NEFA, which was created in 1954, was established as a union territory in

1972. Finally it was formed into a state in 1987.

Meghalaya: It can be seen that there were campaigns for a 'hill state' in Meghalaya. However, these campaigns cannot be considered to be the only reasons behind the formation of Meghalaya as a separate state. Nevertheless, Meghalaya was formed as a separate state comprising the Khasi Hills, the Jaintia Hills and the Garo Hills in 1972.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q5: Which were the states that were carved out of Assam in the post-colonial period?

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3.7 LET US SUM UP

- The Ahoms, belonging to the Shan group of the Tai race, came to Assam in 1228 AD, and established their first headquarters in Tipam.
- Sukapha was the first Ahom king who largely maintained friendly and cordial relations with the local tribes of the region.
- The Ahoms became well known for their bureaucratic system, irrigation system, managerial skills and agricultural practices.
- The 'Posa' and the 'Paik' systems are two examples of the elaborate administrative structures and capabilities of the Ahoms.
- The Ahom kingdom declined in the 19th century due to some political and military reasons.
- Several tribal chieftainships were also present in Assam during the rule of the Ahoms. The significant ones amongst them are the Kacharis, the Chutiyas, The Jaintias, and the Koches.
- The British rule in Assam formally began in 1828 with the signing of

the Treaty of Yandabo, although Captain Welsh's expedition of 1792 marked an informal intervention of the British in the affairs of Assam.

- The British were initially welcomed by the people in Assam. However with their increasing annexation policy they started losing goodwill from the people.
- The British, in order to facilitate their administrative control over the region devised different ways. The 'Inner Line' and the 'Outer Line' are two of the significant measures adopted by the British to ensure smooth administrative control over Assam.
- The post-colonial period in Assam witnessed several political assertions by different communities of the region. The aim behind such assertions was the demand for separate statehood.
- Eventually, Assam witnessed the creation of several states out of the larger state of Assam in the post-colonial period. The states that were created immediately as the result of these forces were Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya.



3.8 FURTHER READINGS

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3.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: 1228; Sukapha.

Ans to Q No 2: Bureaucratic system, irrigation system, managerial skills.

Ans to Q No 3: Kacharis, Jaintias, Koches, Chutiyas.

Ans to Q No 4: Treaty of Yandabo; 1826; British and the Burmese.

Ans to Q No 5: Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya.



3.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Short Questions (Answer within 150 words)

1. Explain the relation between the Ahoms and the local tribes during the rule of the Ahom king Sukapha.
2. Describe the 'Posa' and the Paik systems.

B. Long Questions (Answer within 300-500 words)

1. Give an account of the tribal chieftainships that existed in Assam alongside the Ahoms.
2. Explain the process of control and rule of Assam by the British using different administrative measures.
3. Explain how the idea of creation of several states emerged in the region of Assam in the post-colonial period.

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UNIT 4: STATE FORMATION DURING POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 Learning Objectives

4.2 Introduction

4.3 Formation of states in Northeast India post-independence

4.4 Reorganisation of states

4.5 Formation of different Autonomous Councils

4.6 Let Us Sum up

4.7 Futher Reading

4.8 Answers to Check your Progress

4.9 Model Questions

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- understand how different states were formed in Northeast in the post-independent period
- know about the formation of Autonomous councils

4.2 INTRODUCTION

We have discussed in the previous units how the concept of north east India emerged. In this unit we will discuss how different states of north east were formed during the post independence period.

4.3 FORMATION OF STATES IN NORTHEAST INDIA POST-INDEPENDENCE

After India attained independence, the nation formation and integration process faced severe crisis due to the history of separation, isolation and differences in socio-cultural practices of the people of Northeast from the rest of India. Here it must be mentioned that separation and isolation formed the core of British policy towards Northeast by forming excluded and partially

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.

After a long and hard struggle, the Government of India accepted their demand through a series of intermediate steps and the State of Nagaland came into existence in 1963, under the States re-organisation act of 1956 which briefly discussed below

4.4 REORGANIZATION OF STATES IN THE NORTH EAST INDIA

In the North-east India, under the State of Nagaland Act, 1962, the new State of Nagaland was formed with the effect from 1-2-1964, comprising the territory of the 'Naga Hills-Tuensang' Area which was previously a Tribal Areas under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, forming a part of the State of Assam. The formation of Nagaland opened the doors for demands for autonomy and nation-building among different ethnic groups in Northeast. In this way, under the same act the states of Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram were formed and they were granted statehood.

Meghalaya was formed in 1972. At the time of Indian independence in 1947, present day Meghalaya consisted of two districts and it enjoyed limited autonomy within the state of Assam. A movement for a separate Hill State began in 1960 after which the Assam Reorganisation Act of 1969 accorded an autonomous status to Meghalaya. The Act came into effect on 2 April 1970 and an autonomous state of Meghalaya was carved out of Assam. The autonomous state had a 37-member legislature in accordance with the Sixth schedule to the Indian constitution. But, Meghalaya as a full fledged state was created in 1972.

Earlier known as NEFA (North East Frontier Agency), Arunachal Pradesh became a state in 1987. It was established as a state in India on February 20, 1987. It was initially a Union Territory which was carved out of Assam.

In case of Mizoram, the Mizo organisations, including the Mizo Union, had long complained of inadequate treatments meted out by the then Assam Government to the Mizo inhabitants of the Lushai Hills and demanded a separate state for the Mizos. The Mizos were particularly dissatisfied with the government's inadequate response to the 1959–60 famine. The Mizo

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 26 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.

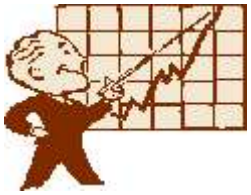


LET US KNOW

C category state were those states which were governed by a chief commissioner appointed by the president of India.

In the year 1947, with India gaining independence, Sikkim faced rejection of joining the Indian Union through a popular vote. Henceforth, Nehru agreed to give it the status of a protectorate state. Thus, it came under India's suzerainty which controlled its external affairs, defence, diplomacy as well as communications. However, it retained its administrative autonomy.

In 1975, the Prime Minister of Sikkim appealed to the Indian Parliament for Sikkim to become an Indian state. In April of the same year, the city of Gangtok was taken over by the Indian Army and the Chogyal's palace guards were taken over. Thereafter, a referendum was held in which overwhelming majority of voters supported abolishing the monarchy, approving union with India. On 16 May 1975, Sikkim became the 22nd state of the Indian Union.



.CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-A

Q1: Separation and isolation formed the core of British policy towards Northeast.(True/False)

Q2: The regional composition of the Northeast at the time of independence consisted only of the Assam plains of old Assam. (True/False)

Q3: Nagaland was the first state in NE to achieve statehood.(True/ False)



ACTIVITY 4

Find out more about how Arunachal Pradesh became a separate state.

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ACTIVITY 5

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

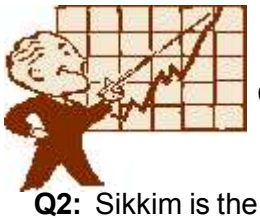
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Find out about the clauses under the Instrument of Accession signed for creating the state of Manipur.

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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)

4.5 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.

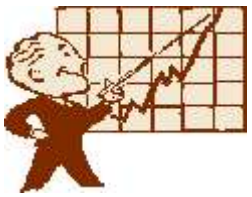
There are two types of Autonomous Councils in Northeast India based on the status granted by the Central and State Government. The first type includes those that are established by the Central Government under the Sixth Schedule while those of the second type are established by the State

Legislature.

Areas under the Sixth Schedule are located in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and Dima Hasao District Autonomous Council (DHAC) are located in Assam. BTC was formed on 10th February 2003. The area under its jurisdiction is officially called Bodoland Territorial Area Districts. BTAD consists of the four districts of Kokrajhar, Baksa, Udalguri and Chirang. KAAC was constituted on 23rd June 1952 with its headquarters in Diphu. DHAC was formed in the year 1970. It was earlier known as North Cacher Hills District.

In Meghalaya, there are the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council, Garo Hills Autonomous District Council and Jaintia Hills District Autonomous Council. The Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous Council belongs to Tripura. In Mizoram, there are Chakma Autonomous District Council, Mara Autonomous District Council and Lai Autonomous District Council.

Statutory Autonomous Councils are those councils which are established by the States through acts passed by the Legislative Assemblies. Assam and Manipur have such councils. They are: Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council, Lalung Autonomous Council, Mishing Autonomous Council, Thengal Kachari Hill Autonomous Council, Sonowal Kachari Autonomous Council and Deori Autonomous Council in Assam. In Manipur, there are Chandel Autonomous Council, Churachandpur Autonomous Council, Sadar Hills Autonomous District Council, Manipur North Autonomous district Council, Tamenglong Autonomous District Council and Ukhrul Autonomous District Council.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-C

Q1: North- East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas Committee was chaired by Gopinath Bardoloi. (True/False)

Q2: Statutory Autonomous Councils are those councils which are 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.

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4.6 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.



4.7 FURTHER READINGS

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- Inoue, Kyoko. *Integration of the Northeast: The State Formation Process.*



4.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No

A.	1)True		
B.	1) True	2) False	3)True
C.	1) True		
D.	1)True	2) False	
E.	1) True	2) False	
F.	1)True	2)False	



4.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions(Answer the questions within 150 words)

Q 1: Write a short note on autonomous councils in NE India.

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

Q 1: Write an essay on the process of states after independence.

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UNIT 5: DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF NORTH EAST INDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 Learning objectives

5.2 Introduction

5.3 Race

5.4 Linguistic diversity in northeast India

5.5 Religious Composition of the population in northeast India

5.6 Size of Population in northeast India

5.7 Density of Population

5.8 Sex Ratio

5.9 Rural-Urban Composition of Population

5.10 Birth and Death Rate

5.11 Literacy Rate

5.12 Let Us Sum up

5.13 Further Reading

5.14 Answers to Check Your Progress

5.15 Model Questions

5.1 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.

5.2 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

, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. The unique geographical characteristics of the region have helped in shaping the demographic features of the region. Demography is the study of the population of a particular area or region. Various indices such as size and density of population, birth and death rate, sex ratio, the incidences of disease etc. illustrates the changing structure of human population in a region. In this unit we will try to discuss some of these indices to understand the demographic structure of north east India.

5.3 RACE

Race is an important aspect which defines the demography of an area or a region. According to the Oxford dictionary of Sociology, racial grouping is based on physical/facial characteristics, color of the skin, eyes etc. People from diverse racial stock had migrated to the North eastern part of present day India in different periods of history. Different neoliths as well as linguistic evidences prove the immigration of Austroloid, Mongoloid, Negreto (Dravidian) and Indo-Aryan in different phases of history. Now let us briefly discuss about the people residing in different states of North East India:

- Assam: In Assam people from Mongoloid, Negreto and Indo-Aryan races can be found. However in context of Assam a strict division is not possible due to assimilation of different groups of people through the process of inter-marriage witnessed from time immemorial. At present the state resides 23 tribes and they can be divided into two major categories: plains and the hills tribe. The Bodo-Kacharis constitute the largest tribe in the state. Next to them, is the Mishing tribe followed by the Deories, Rabhas, Tiwas, Khamtis and Sonowal and all belong to the Mogoloid stock. The major hill tribes in the state are the Karbi/Mikir, Dimasa, Hmar, Hajong, Kuki etc who also belong to the Mongoloid stock. Apart from these tribal groups the state also resides non-tribal caste groups like the Brahmins, Kayasthas, Kalitas, Baishya, Nath, Bonia, Charal, Hira,Brittial, Kaiabarta, Jaloi, Keot, Kanti, Sut etc in the 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 parts of Meghalaya.

- Nagaland: The major tribes residing in Nagaland are the Naga and the Kuki-Chin groups. However both the groups are divided into over thirty diverse tribes. Both the two groups belong to the Mongoloid race and they speak different languages belonging to the Tibeto-Burman family of language. Some of the major tribes that are included within the Naga group are Ao, Angami, Lotha, Konyak, Chang, Rengma, Thangal, Thangkul, Zelianrong, Mao, Maram, Tarao and others. Some of the tribes that include within the Kuki-Chin group includes Gangte, Hmar, Thadou, Vaiphei, Zou, Chiru, Koiring, Kom, Chote, Lamgang and others.
- Manipur: Manipur is inhabited by three major communities/tribes and they are, the Meiteis, the Nagas and the Kuki-chin tribes. They all belong to the Mongoloid race. The Meiteis are located in the valley of Manipur. The Meiteis are divided into four sub-groups and they are Loi, Yaithibi, Thanga and Pangal. The Nagas and the Kuki-Chin reside in hill areas of Manipur. The Nagas of Manipur includes the Tangkhul, Zemei, Liangmei, Rongmei, Mao, Maram, Tarao. The Kuki-Chin tribes in Manipur includes the Gangte, Hmar, Paite, Thadaou, Moyan, Monsang, Aimol and Anal.
- Mizoram: Mizoram was earlier known as the Lushai hills. The term Mizo means the people of the hills. The Mizo label includes different tribes like the Lusei, Hmar, Paite, Pwai, Mara, Tlau, Ralte, Pang, Hualngo and the Baite. They all maintain their distinct identity but they all belong to the Chin-Zomi category of the Mongoloid race. There exists several theories associated to their origin and one of those is that they are the descendents of the lost tribe of Menashe which is one of the twelve tribes of Israel.
- Sikkim: The Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalese constitute the major communities residing in Sikkim. The original inhabitant of the state is believed to be the Lepchas. The Lepchas belong to the Mongoiloid race and their concentration is found in the north-central zone of Sikkim. The Bhutias comprise of the Sikkimese Bhutia 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.

5.4 LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN NORTHEAST 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.



LET US KNOW

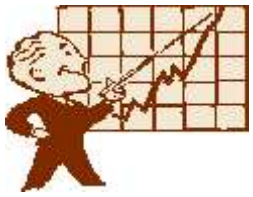
Official Languages :

State	Official languages
Arunachal Pradesh	Hindi, English
Assam	Assamese, Bengali, Bodo
Manipur	Meiteilon
Meghalaya	Khasi , Garo , English
Mizoram	Mizo, English
Nagaland	English
Sikkim	Nepali, English
Tripura	Bengali, Kokborok

5.5 RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION IN NORTHEAST INDIA

Religion is another important aspect to understand the population of a region. As per the census report of 2001 the number of people following Christianity is very high in the northeastern part of India. In Nagaland 90 percent of the population practice Christianity followed by Mizoram with 87 percent of the population practicing Christianity, then comes Meghalaya with70.3 percent of the population following Christianity, then comes Manipur with 34 percent of people following Christianity and Arunachal Pradesh recorded 18.7 percent of the population following Christianity. Another huge segment of the population in the region follows Hinduism. It is predominant in Tripura with 85.6 percent of the population practicing Hinduism followed by Assam, where 64.9 percent of the population practice Hinduism, Sikkim (60.9%), Manipur (46%), and Arunachal Pradesh (34.6%). The concentration of Muslim is highest in Assam (30.9%) followed by Manipur (8.8%) and Tripura (8%). Typically, the Buddhists are largest in Sikkim (28%), followed by Arunachal Pradesh

(13%). Though 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?

.....

5.6 SIZE OF POPULATION IN NORTHEAST 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.

Table 5.1: Population of North east India from 1971 to 2011 (in thousands)

State	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Arunachal Pradesh	468	632	865	1098	1383
Assam	14625	18041	22414	26656	31169
Manipur	1073	1421	1837	2294	2722
Meghalaya	1012	1336	1775	2319	2964
Mizoram	332	494	690	889	1091
Nagaland	516	775	1210	1990	1981
Sikkim	210	316	406	541	608
Tripura	1556	2053	2757	3199	3671
NE total	19792	25788	31954	38986	45588
India	548160	68339	846303	10287337	1210193

Source: Census of India 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011

The decadal growth rate ever since 1971- 81 census shows, except for Assam, the growth rate of population in all the north eastern states is higher than the national average of 24.66. Tripura recorded the highest growth rate (50.77 percent) followed by Nagaland (50.05 percent) in 1971-81. In the next decade (i.e. 1981-91), Assam has reported the lowest growth rate of population (24.24 percent) but higher than the national average of 23.85 percent. During the period 1981-91 to 1991-2001, Nagaland recorded the highest growth rate of 56.08 percent and 64.46 percent consecutively. Except Assam and Sikkim all other states have recorded growth rate of population higher than the national level of 21.54 percent in 1991-2001. It is worth noting that Nagaland is the only state which records negative growth rate of -0.47 per cent during the period between 2001 and 2011, while other states like Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya and Mizoram exhibit higher growth rate exceeding national figure of 17.64 per cent. This clearly shows that most of the states record the growth rate larger than the national average which could be a major concern in this region in the coming years.

5.7 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 (5.2)below reflects the density of population in different states in Northeast India.

Table 5.2 Density of population in North east India

State/Country	2001	2011
Arunachal Pradesh	13	17
Assam	340	397
Manipur	103	122
Meghalaya	103	132
Mizoram	43	52
Nagaland	120	119
Sikkim	76	86
Tripura	305	350
NER	151	174
India	324	382

Source: Census of India, 2001 and 2011

5.8 SEX RATIO

Sex ratio is another significant demographic indicator to study population. A balanced sex ratio indicates a healthy sign of a population composition. It indicates the status of women in the society concerned. In this aspect North Eastern states showed an improved sex ratio during last decade as the census report indicates that the sex ratio has raised from 937 in 2001 to 956 in 2011. In both the decades, North eastern region witnessed a higher sex ratio compared to the sex ratio of the nation total (table 5.3). Thus, it is noticed that the picture of Northeast region has not been bad overall in so far as sex ratio is concerned.

TABLE : 5.3 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

5.9 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

the eight states Mizoram is recorded as the highest urbanized state in the region. In this aspect, the share urban population in Assam is least since 1981. Thus, the population and economy in Northeast India indicates an inclination towards rural areas. In other words inadequacy of many urban amenities characterizes the region.

Table 5.4 reflects the rural-urban share of population in northeast India (in percentage) over the years.

State	1981	1991	2001	2011
Arunachal Pradesh	6.56	12.80	20.75	22.67
Assam	NA	11.10	12.90	14.08
Manipur	26.42	27.52	26.28	30.21
Meghalaya	18.07	18.60	19.58	20.08
Mizoram	24.67	46.10	49.63	51.51
Nagaland	15.52	17.21	17.23	28.97
Sikkim	16.14	9.10	11.07	24.97
Tripura	10.99	15.30	17.06	26.18
NE Total	16.74	13.83	15.66	18.36
India	23.34	23.71	27.82	31.16

SOURCE: CENSUS OF INDIA, 1981, 1991, 2001 AND 2011.

*NA- NOT AVAILABLE

5.10 BIRTH AND DEATH RATE

Birth rate and mortality rates are the two key demographic features which can greatly affect the population dynamics of a region. According to the Sample Registration System of the Registrar General of India, the birth rates in the States of the north eastern region is relatively lower

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 5.4 depicts the birth and the death rate in the northeastern states since 1981.

Table 5.5

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

Source: Family Welfare Statistics in India 2012, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

*NA- Not available

5.11 LITERACY RATE

Socio-economic development of any region is highly dependent on the level of educational attainment. Literacy rate is considered as one of the important aspects among other educational indicators. Education largely contributes towards improving the quality of life in a society. In comparison to rest of India, literacy rate in the northeastern states is much better. Throughout both the decades, 2001 and 2011, literacy rate in the region has been above the national average. Among the eight states in northeast India, in the year 2001 Mizoram recorded the highest literacy rate of 88.80 percent. On the other hand Arunachal Pradesh recorded a literacy rate of 54.34 percent which is the lowest among all the states. Apart from Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya also recorded a lower literacy rate lower than the national average of 64.83 percent. After a decade the census report that was made official in 2011 revealed that literacy rate of the two States namely, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam, was recorded to be lower than the national figure of about 74 percent of literacy. But Mizoram continued to record the highest literacy rate of 91.58 percent followed by Tripura (87.75 percent), Sikkim (82.20 percent), Nagaland (80.11 percent), Manipur (79.85 percent) and Meghalaya (75.48 percent). In other words most of the states in north east fared well in terms of literacy .For details refer table 5.6

Table 5.6 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.



5.12 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.

- Different neoliths as well as linguistic evidences prove the immigration of Austroloid, Mongoloid, Negreto (Dravidian) and Indo-Aryan in different phases of history.
- People in a region can also be identified or grouped on the basis of the language.North east India had experienced migration from different parts of the world in different waves.
- Accordingly social groups belonging diverse linguistic groups can be found. Some of the major linguistic groups are Sino-Tibetan/ Tibeto-Burman/Tai-Kadai, Austro-Asiatic and Indo-Aryan.
- The concentration of people practicing Christianity is higher in the northeastern region.
- The density of population in the region is lower than rest of India.
- The urban growth in the region is lower in comparison to the rest of India.
- The region has been experiencing a balanced sex ratio.
- The literacy rate in the region is found to be encouraging.



5.13 FURTHER READING

- Das, N.K. 2015. *North East India : A Profile*. Critical Avest: New Delhi.
- George Abraham Grierson. (reprint2005). *Linguistic Survey of India : Tibeto-Burman Family. Vol 3.* Low Price Publication : New Delhi.
- *Srivastava S.C."Demographic profile of North east India" Mittal Publication.*
- *Nath A.N. "Demographic changes among the scheduled tribes",* 1982, *B.R. Publishing,Delhi.*

5.14 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No

(A) 2. True

(B) Meiteilon

(D) 4. Tripura

(E) 1. Bodo

5.15 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.

UNIT 6: SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AMONG THE MAJOR TRIBAL GROUPS OF THE NORTH EASTERN STATES

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Learning Objective

6.2 Introduction

6.3 Meaning of Social institution

6.4 Defining Some Basic Concepts - Family, Kinship and Marriage

6.5 Defining the concepts of Religion, Economy and Polity

6.6 Prevalence of social institutions among tribal communities

6.7 Family, marriage and kinship system among same of the tribal communities

6.8 Religion, Economy and Polity system among same of the tribal communities

6.9 Conclusion

6.10 Let Us Sum up

6.11 Further Reading

6.12 Answers to check your progress

6.13 Model Questions

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- understand what social institutions are.
- understand about different kinds of social institutions

6.2 INTRODUCTION

An institution generally works according to the rules that are established or at least acknowledged by law or by custom. The regular and continuous operations of the institutions cannot be understood without taking those rules into account. Institutions impose constraints on individuals and also provide them with opportunities. An institution can also be viewed as an end in itself. In fact people have viewed marriage, family, kinship, religion, economy and polity and state or even education as an end in itself. In this unit we will learn

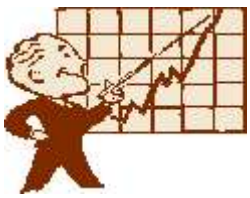
about the social institution found among some of the tribal groups of Northeast India in detail.

6.3 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 _____.

Q2. How does Jonathan Turner define social institutions?

.....

.....

Q3. Anthony Giddens states that Institutions by definition are the more _____ of social life.

Q4. What is the functionalist understanding of social institutions?

.....

.....

Q5. What are the three dimensions that social institutions constitute off?

.....

.....

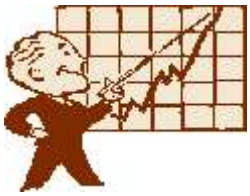
6.4 DEFINING SOME BASIC CONCEPTS - FAMILY, KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE

● **Family**

Family can be termed as the most 'natural' social entity. No other social institution appears to be more universal and unchanging than family. Over many decades, sociology and social anthropology have conducted studies across different cultures which show that the social institutions of family, marriage and kinship are important for all societies. However they differ in terms of character in different societies. Those studies also point out that the family (the private sphere) is linked to economic, political, cultural and educational (the public) spheres. According to the functionalists the family performs important tasks and contributes to society's basic needs and helps perpetuate social order.

India has a central debate about the shift from nuclear family to joint families. Nuclear families have always existed in India particularly among deprived castes and classes. Sociologist A.M. Shah remarks that in post-independent India the joint family has steadily increased. According to him the contributing factor for it is the increasing life expectancy in India. However, studies have also shown that diverse family forms are found in different societies. With regard to the rule of residence, some societies are matrilocal

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 in polygamy an individual can have more than one partner. Even where

polygamy is permitted, in actual practice, monogamy is more widely prevalent. In many societies, individuals are allowed to marry again on the death of their spouse or after divorce. Such monogamous marriages are termed serial monogamy.

The choice of choosing a partner varies in all societies. At times, the choice is made by parents/relatives while in some other societies individuals are relatively free to choose their own mates. Some societies have subtle restrictions while some societies have more rigid and explicitly defined rules regarding marriage. The forms of marriage based on rules governing eligibility/ ineligibility of mates is classified as endogamy and exogamy. In endogamy an individual has to get married within a culturally defined group of which they are already a member, as for example, within the same caste. In exogamy an individual has to get married outside of their own group. Endogamy and exogamy are in reference to certain kinship units, such as, clan, caste and racial, ethnic or religious groupings. In certain parts of north India, exogamy is practised in some villages. Village exogamy was mainly practiced to get the daughters married off to villages which were far away from their homes. It was believed that such an arrangement would result in an easy transition for the bride and she would be able to adjust in her new household without any interference from her kinsmen.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q10. The system of marriage in fact reveals an astonishing variety of ____ and ____.

Q11. Define Monogamy and Polygamy?

.....

.....

Q12. What is serial monogamy?

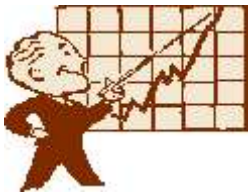
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Q13. Endogamy and exogamy are in reference to certain ____ such as, ___, caste and racial, ____or religious groupings

● **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?

.....

.....

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

● **Religion**

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

for a long time. The norms of religion along with formulating a level of influence also determine social understanding. Sociological understanding conducts empirical studies of how religions actually function in society and its relationship to other institutions and also puts to use a comparative method. Further, it also examines the religious beliefs, practices and institutions with relation to other aspects of society and culture. The empirical method means that the sociologist does not have a judgemental approach to religious phenomena. The comparative method is important because in a sense it brings all societies on a same level with each other. It helps to study without bias and prejudice. The sociological perspective explains that religious life can be made intelligible only by relating it to domestic life, economic life and political life.

Religion exists in all known societies; nevertheless the religious beliefs and practices can vary in accordance to culture. All religions seem to share some characteristics like a set of symbols, rituals or ceremonies; a community of believers etc. The rituals associated with religion are very diverse. But all religions also involve ceremonials practised collectively by believers. Regular ceremonials normally occur in special places —churches, mosques, temples, shrines.

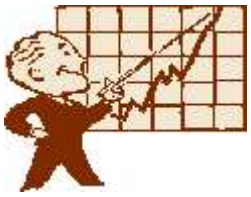
When religion is studied from a sociological perspective, one also has to ponder upon the relationship of religion with other social institutions. Religion has had a very close relationship with power and politics. For instance, earlier there have been religious movements for social change, for instance the various anti-caste movements were launched against gender discrimination. Along with being a matter of private belief, religion also forms an important part of the public character of an individual. This public character of religion has an important role to play on other institutions of society.

Economy and Polity

Politics functions as a significant social institution. Political institutions deal with the distribution of power in society. Power and authority are of utmost importance while analysing political institutions. Power is when one

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.

6.6 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

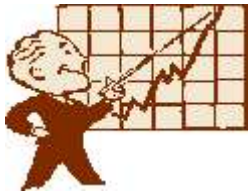
in accordance to their permanent and acquired traits. Further, in terms of size, the tribes range between seven million to less than 100 persons (in Andaman and Nicobar Islands). The biggest tribes are the Gonds, Bhils, Santhals, Oraons, Minas, Bodos and Mundas.

Sahlins defines tribe as, "a segmental organization. It is composed of a number of equivalent, unspecialised multifamily groups, each the structural duplicate of the other: a tribe is a congeries of equal kin group blocs". According to Andre Betteille, a tribe can be best described as a segmentary system where there is an 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. Further, Morgan saw tribal society to have social but no political organisation. Tribal societies/ communities and the state have co- existed and shared a complementarily relationship since long.

Generally, tribal communities are small in scale and are restricted in the spatial and temporal range of their social, legal and political relations. Along with it they possess a moral, religious and world view of corresponding dimensions. Further, tribal societies also demonstrate remarkable economy of design and have a compactness and self –sufficiency. This level of consistency and self- sufficiency is acquired by close and sometimes unilateral, connections that exist between tribal institutions or principles of social organisations. There is a corresponding unity and coherence in tribal values that are intimately related to social institutions and are endowed with an intensity characteristic of all closed systems. Tribal societies are mostly very ethnocentric.

At present, governance is of utmost important for the state. Although, the notion of governance varies according to different people, one common understanding of it is the decision making process as well as the process of implementation of those decisions. Thus, there is involvement of different structure for this smooth functioning of governance- which involves both formal as well as informal actors. As such, the traditional social institutions of tribal communities also have a claim for incorporation of local structures in the issues of governance.

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 _____.

6.7 FAMILY, MARRIAGE AND KINSHIP TIES AMONG SAME OF THE TRIBAL GROUPS OF NORTHEAST 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 is also called as Ka Khadduh inherits the property. Among both the Khasis

and the Jaintias, a system called Pykam existed, which was synonymous with inheritance by 'will'. In a khasi household, the mother's brother holds the position of authority over the ancestral household.

In Meghalaya among the Khasi tribe, the wedding system is also unique in every aspect. Marriages are officiated only after a formal engagement and it takes place at the bride's home. The rings are exchanged in bags of betel nuts. After the marriage, the groom shifts to the bride's place i.e. her ancestral home. The women are regarded as the key holders to the wealth and the money in the family. The couple takes on the bride's mothers name as their official surname.

While trying to examine the concept of Khasi matriliny, it is important to understand certain social conditions prevalent in the Khasi society, the practices which are universally and traditionally followed by the society. The Khasis follow the matrilineal principle of descent, residence and inheritance in accordance to which the child is the birth right of the mother. The child takes the social group of the mother. The clan or 'Kur' is the largest divisions in the society on the basis of the matrilineal principle. A 'kur' is an exogamous unit and every member is a kin of every other person of the same clan. As such, every member belonging to the same 'Kur' refer to each other collectively as 'Shi Kur' or kin belonging to a single 'kur'. The basis of this form of kinship is the belief that they have all descended from a common ancestress. The Khasi 'iing' (family) emerges as the most significant unit in Khasi kinship. Etymologically, the word 'iing' refers both to the dwelling unit and the members of the immediate family who are descended from a common ancestress. According to this conception, the 'iing' is not only a residential unit within which the mundane tasks of production, consumption and reproduction are affected, it is also the centre of family rituals from which non-kin members (i.e., non-consanguine) are excluded. 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 tribe is one of the largest tribe of the North East Indian tribes. The Garo society is matrilineal in nature and structure. The Garo society is 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 hills, the lalungs still practice the matrilineal system of inheritance; however

in the plains there has been a subtle change and sons inherit the property instead of the daughters.

The Dimasa tribe adheres 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). The rule is reverse in case of women. Marriage is neo-local concept among the Dimasas. Among the Dimasas, the property of the father (both movable and immovable) is inherited by the sons equally. However, there is no restriction on inheritance of fathers' property by daughters also. Thus, on the death of a father who has no son, the property passes on to the daughter. The property possessed by mothers such as ornaments, clothes, money etc. is shared among daughters and the son has no share in it.

In Mizoram, marriage is considered to be a contract, dissoluble at the will of the contracting parties. There is the custom of marriage payment prevalent among the mizo tribe, which involves payment of a certain amount of money to the bride's family. After the consent of the girl's family, the boy settles a price for the settlement of the marriage. The marriage is solemnised in a church and the bride gives a traditional rug or a Puandum to the groom which is wrapped around the body of the groom on his death. The Mizos have the following types of marriage -

1) Lungvar
2) Luhkhung
3) Tlandun
4) Riahbuk thingfawm
5) Tawnsabawp
6) Fan

The usual pattern followed and culturally approved was Lungvar while the other types of marriage were, though acceptable but only under certain circumstances. As mentioned above, the actual marriage was preceded by negotiations between the members of the boy's family called Palai and the girl's parents. There are two propositions that need to be kept in mind- the willingness of the girl and the price which the suitor or boy's family has 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.

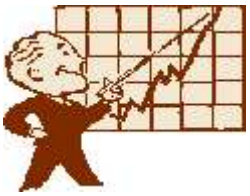
The Zou usually follow the choice of marrying outside their clan (clan exogamy) and marrying within their tribes (tribe endogamy). But in some cases, there is no such kind of restriction unless if the boy and girl are not too close i.e. families or clan lineage. Widow re-marriage is allowed by custom 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. Accordingly, the boy shifts to the house of the girl and works hard to prove

his ability to care for her family. A stipulated time period for this is agreed upon mutually and this period varies between six months to one year. The purpose of the custom is to assess the potential of the groom.

In Arunachal Pradesh there are 3 distinct forms of marriage which are practiced in the society. The first kind is where marriage is conducted through negotiation or Aaw Long Aaw. The second and the third forms of marriages are marriage by eloping or Thok no ho Chaii and marriage by capture or Aan Shieo Aaaww. In Aaw Long Aaw the groom's parents welcome the bride to their home by offering Hopha (sugar) and Ban Moya (plate full of blooms). Generally, the negotiated forms of marriages are supervised by a middleman who is called as Chow Pachaw. The Heijapot ceremony signifies the formal engagement of the bride and the groom.

In Nagaland different tribes have different customs and rituals. With the exception of Konyak chiefs the tribes of the same clan do not inter marry. The Angami tribe members strangle a fowl prior to the declaration of marriage. The Mongsen tribal members send the couple on a trading journey for 20 days in which they have to conduct successful trade in order to sanctify their marriage. The Sema tribe is polygamous and one wife is given the status of a head wife. The Lothas and Changs also follow polygamy.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q27. David Mandelbaum points out that in tribal society, the principal links are based on _____.

Q28. The state of Meghalaya is home to three matrilineal tribes- the ___, the ____ and the ____.

Q29. The Khasi are subdivided into_____ groups.

Q30. Who inherits the property in a khasi household?

31. The Khasis follow the _____ principle of descent, residence and inheritance.

Q32. The _____ is the largest divisions in the society on the basis 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?

.....

.....

Q47. What are the 3 forms of marriage prevalent in Arunachal?

.....

.....

Q48. Who supervises over the negotiated marriages in Arunachal?

.....

.....

Q49. The _____ceremony signifies the formal engagement of the bride and the groom.

Q50. With the exception of _____ the tribals of the same clan do not inter marry.

6.8 RELIGION, ECONOMY AND POLITY SYSTEM AMONG SAME OF THE TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

The economy of a tribe is a projection of the tribal society and showcases the function of production and distribution among the tribal communities which is governed by the bonds of kinship. Among the tribes family is the unit of production with little specialisation and division of labour. The ideal state of the economy can be described as self- sufficient, although of a subsistent level.

Along with economy, religion also forms an important part of society and is also linked to other social institutions such culture, marriage system and family among others. The religious symbols and rituals are mostly incorporated along with the culture of the society. Let us discuss about the relegion, economy and polity as practised among some of the tribes in the Northeast India.

If we are to observe the Khasi tribe, cultivation is their major subsistence activity and the family farm forms the basic unit of operation for production of crops. The Khasi tribe are is multi-occupational and as such the economy is market-based. The crops are produced for process of consumption and trade. Four types of land are used for cultivation—forest; wet paddy land (hali or pynthor); homestead land (ka 'dew kyper); and high grass land (ka ri lum or ka ri phlang). Generally, jhum cultivation is followed and for that this method, forest land is cleared and trees are cut down and burned and after

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 Iei 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

'Dakmalja' that the inheritance is based along matrilineal lines among the Garo tribe. The religious rule of the Garo tribe includes rule of observation of the days of public sacrifice. On this day, the population of a village offers gratitude to the deities for all the benefits bestowed upon them and also offers prayer for a better future. It is compulsory for all the residents to participate in some affair and everyone is expected to perform customary rites. Women have no role to play in religious ceremony. The Garo tribe subsists by slash-and-burn cultivation. Each Garo family acts as a self-contained economic unit. They indulge in weaving of dokmande (a kind of cloth) which is used for commercial purposes as well as for personal use. Apart, from that pottery is another form of occupation which is confined to few families who either sell it or barter it. Land for shifting cultivation is owned by the clan. Each village has a traditionally demarcated area of its own termed as **adok**. The area is subdivided into plots and then they are used for cultivation in a cyclical order.

In Manipur, larger population has increasingly become Christians. Manipur has 29 scheduled tribes. The major tribes are Kabui (a composite group under the style of Zeliangrong) Mao and Tangkhul under the Naga group and Paite, Kom, Hmar, Vaiphei, Thadou, Gante and Zou belonging broadly to the Kuki group. The Kabuis believe in a multiple of Gods and Goddesses, local deities and spirits and also in a Supreme God, Ra-Gang (King of Gods) whose abode is in Heaven and who is immortal and eternal. They have got their priests(referred to as Molls), and other diviners of various attainments. The Tangkhuls worship a number of deities and are fond of songs for all their activities- religious and secular. Blood sacrifice is the main means of propitiation and exorcism in the case of the Paities who believes in spirits- both good and evil. They have priests and other spirit-media and believe in existence of after-death, with the spirits on the way to Pailgal, guarded by a female spirit (sahnu). The Koms believe in spirits and other natural forces and also in ancestor worship. To the Koms, the comb is considered sacred. The Hmars believe in a supreme Deity called Pathien (creator of all beings), and worship the spirits - good and evil- of the mountains, the rock and the rivers. The belief in a Supreme God is also shared by 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

of their population obey and preach the preachments of Panch sheel and Osto Sheel. This tribe is strictly against animal slaughter. As far as occupation is considered, the Fakials practice agriculture. The female members of this tribe are experts in weaving and the male members practice pottery, wooden and bamboo artifacts among others.

6.9 CONCLUSION

Social institutions can be best termed as patterned arrangements and networks which caters to the everyday needs of the members of a society. The functioning of social institutions is to a large extent dependent upon the acceptance of such institutions by the members of a group or the society. The existence of social institutions is necessary in a society because they order and structure the way an individual functions in a society. Thus, in a way they work as the backbone of a society and help the society/group/ community to achieve fulfillment in all terms be it be economic, academic or political.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q51. _____ is the major subsistence activity of the Khasis.

Q52. What are the four types of land used for cultivation by Khasis?

.....

53. The ancestral land of Khasis is owned by a_____.

54. What are the three categories of code of law on the basis of which a Garo society is governed?

.....

.....

55. Each Garo family acts as a _____ unit.

56. Manipur has _____ tribes.

57. Name some sub-clans of Fakial Tribe.

.....

.....



6.10 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.

- The Mizos have six forms of marriage—Lungvar, Luhkhung, Tlandun, Riahbuk thingfawm, Tawnsabawp and Fan
- The Zou tribe of Manipur also practises what can be termed as bride price.
- The Zou usually follow the choice of marrying outside their clan (clan exogamy) and marrying within their tribes (tribe endogamy).
- The Zous practice monogamy
- In Arunachal, the Heijapot ceremony signifies the formal engagement of the bride and the groom.
- The Mongsen tribal members in Nagaland send the couple on a trading journey for 20 days.
- Among the Nagas, with the exception of Konyak chiefs the tribals of the same clan do not inter marry
- The economy of the tribe is a projection of the tribal society and showcases the function of production and distribution of the tribal communities which are governed by the bonds of kinship.
- The Khasi tribe are multi-occupational and as such the economy is market-based.
- The Garo society has never been governed by the established forms of governments of the modern times.
- In Manipur, larger population have increasingly become Christians.
- Christianity has taken root among the Naga tribe however, it has not overpowered the traditional religious beliefs.
- Social institutions can be best termed as patterned arrangements and networks which caters to the everyday needs of the members of a society.
- The existence of social institutions is necessary in a society because they order and structure the way an individual functions in a society.



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6.12 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 reproducing individuals, and in sustaining viable societal structures within a given environment.

3. Anthony Giddens states that Institutions by definition are the more enduring features of social life.
4. The 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.
5. Social institutions constitute of three dimensions -structure, function and culture
6. Family can be termed as the most natural social entity.
7. According to the functionalists the family performs important tasks and contribute to society's basic needs and helps perpetuate social order.
8. According to A.M. Shah in post-independent India the joint family has steadily increased due to the increasing life expectancy in India.
9. In patrilocal families, the married couple reside with the man's parents whereas in a matrilocal family setup, the newly married couple stays with the woman's parents.
10. The system of marriage in fact reveals an astonishing variety of modes and customs.
11. Monogamy restricts the individual to one partner at a time while in polygamy an individual can have more than one partner.
12. Serial Monogamy can be defined as the process where an individual can remarry after the death of their spouse or after a divorce.
13. Endogamy and exogamy are in reference to certain kinship units such as, clan, caste and racial, ethnic or religious groupings
14. Family is a group of individuals connected by kinship connections.
15. . Kinship connections are associations or relations formed between individuals ~~which~~ and they are established either through means of marriage or through descent.
16. The family of birth is called family of orientation and the family in which a person is married is called the family of procreation.

17. The kin who are connected through blood are termed as consanguinal kin and the kin connected through marriage are termed as affines.
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
34. The Garo tribe is one of the largest tribe of the North East Indian tribes.
35. Clan affiliation among the Garos is determined decided on the basis of the mother.
36. In a matrilocal system, the right to inheritance of the property both movable and immoveable goes to the women.
37. The women are regarded as the key holders to the wealth and the money in a Khasi family.
38. A marriage within seven degrees of relationship is prohibited among the Rabhas.
39. There are two kinds of clans among the Lalung. One is based along the lines of common descent emerging from the original 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.
40. The Dimasa tribe adheres allegiance to two clans.
41. Among the Dimasas, the property of the father (both movable and immovable) is inherited by the sons equally.
42. There is the custom of marriage payment prevalent among the mizo tribe, which involves payment of a certain amount of money to the bride's family.
43. The mizos have 6 forms of marriages namely- Lungvar, Luhkhung, Tlandun, Riahbuk thingfawm, Tawnsabawp and Fan
44. The Zou tribe of Manipur practice bride price.
45. The Zou usually follow the choice of marrying outside their clan (clan exogamy) and marrying within their tribes (tribe endogamy).
46. 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.
47. In Arunachal Pradesh there are 3 distinct forms of marriage which are practiced in the society. The first kind is where marriage is conducted through negotiation or Aaw Long Aaw. The second and the third forms of marriages are marriage by eloping or Thok no ho Chaii and marriage by capture or Aan Shieo Aaaww.

48. In Arunachal, the negotiated norms of marriages are supervised by a middleman who is called as Chow Pachaw.
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.



6.13 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.

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UNIT 7: IMMIGRATION TO NORTHEAST INDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning Objectives

7.2 Introduction

7.3 Immigration in the Colonial Period

7.4 Immigration in the Post-Colonial Period

7.5 Consequences of Immigration

7.6 Let Us Sum Up

7.7 Further Reading

7.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

7.9 Model Questions

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- know how colonial rulers gave impetus to immigration
- identify the different immigrant groups that came into the region
- understand the intensity of immigration in the Post-Colonial Period
- explain the consequences of immigration.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

Northeast India is an abode of numerous groups and communities. It is well-known for its demographic diversity as people of diverse religion, caste, language, and culture are co-habiting in this region. Different groups of people have come from different parts of the country and outside at different points of time and contributed to the cultural variety of the region. Since the Northeastern region shares international borders with countries like Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, Bhutan and Nepal, it has become the hub for the immigrants. Hardly any other region in the country has witnessed such massive and incessant influx of immigrants. Assam and Tripura are the worst suffers of immigration. In this unit we shall discuss how Colonial rulers paved the way for the immigrant groups to enter into the region; and how

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.

7.3 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

believed to have come from kanauj to this region. So we see that immigration is not a recent phenomenon or solely a Colonial phenomenon. But immigration then was on a very limited scale.

The advent of Colonialists and their aim of maximizing revenue however accelerated the process of immigration to the region. Prior to the advent of the Colonialists, Assam was scarcely populated, with abundant uninhabited land. The Colonialist sensed the golden opportunity to exploit the resources of the region and thereby opened it up for the immigrants to come, work and contribute to their 'treasure house'. They found the land favourable for tea cultivation and this discovery marked the beginning of significant socio economic transformation in Assam. The possibility of large scale tea production lured the Britishers to invest on tea plantations. Forests were being subsequently replaced by tea gardens. To meet the need for labourers in the tea gardens, the Colonialists brought people from outside the State to work in the Plantations as they could not convince the local people to work in the tea gardens. This demand for labour in tea plantations was the first major reason behind immigration to Assam. The Santhal, Mundas, Oraons, Kharias, Gonds and other tribal groups from Orissa and Bihar were the first to come and work in the tea plantations. They did not come voluntarily but were forcefully brought by the Colonial rulers for a contractual period of time. However, after the end of the contract period as they did not have any means of returning back to their home, they started settling here. Today they are usually referred to as Chah Janajati or the Adivasi community.

The Hindu Bengalis often renowned as the Babus who came from East Bengal were also one of the early immigrant groups treading into the region. They were educated and had the knowledge of English. They came here to work as clerks, supervisors etc in government offices, courts, and later in the tea plantations.

Another group who came here are the Marwaris, a commercial caste from Rajasthan. Even before the advent of the British, the Marwaris had their business enterprises in Western Assam and with no competitors, they gradually monopolised business or trade and commerce. The coming up of tea plantations further encouraged their movement into the region. They

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.

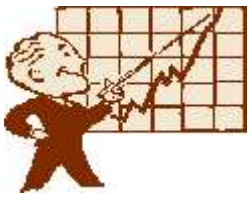
The Nepalis immigrated into the region in the twentieth century and are primarily engaged in the milk business or trading milk. The Nepalese and the Assamese have been sharing an amicable relation and the Indo-Nepalese Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 1950, which accords almost same legal rights to Nepalese 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

aspirations. Construction of infrastructure such as laying of rail and road networks to connect the nascent economic hubs with the nearest ports in the then Calcutta and Chittagong also contributed its bit towards influx of migrants. Assam, especially its plain areas, being the most favorable zone of the Colonialists due to its resource richness, became the worst victim their immigration policy. The intensity of immigration was so alarming in Assam that policies like 'Line system' had to be devised to safeguard the indigenous population of districts like Barpeta and then Undivided Nagaon, where settlement of immigrants was enormous and worrisome. The demographic change ushered in by the British led industrialization of the region led to major cultural, economic and social change, which became a source of antagonism between the locals and the outsiders-the reverberations of which are felt in the region till date.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. When did Assam came under the British rule?

.....

.....

Q2. Name any two communities who were among the firsts to come and work in the Tea Plantations of Assam.

.....

.....

Q3. What occupation did the Hindu-Bengali immigrant groups take up in Assam?

.....

.....

Q4. When was theIndo-Nepalese Treaty of Peace and Friendship signed?

.....

.....

7.4 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.

Leaving aside migration from other countries, the Northeastern region continued to face migration from the other parts of India. There was continuous influx of people from Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, UP and Rajasthan especially in the early decades of independence. But despite these, what was most worrisome was the rising numbers of Muslim migrants from Bangladesh to the Northeastern region. Their ever-increasing numerical strength has brought about a drastic shift to the demographic scenario of the region. This has resulted in a feeling of insecurity among the indigenous people of the region especially Assam and thereby led to antagonisms and conflicts and widening the gap between the indigenous and the outsiders. Further the Bangladeshi immigration issue has become a major concern in the post-colonial period because of its huge impact not only on the socio economic setting of the region but also in the political domain. The severity of the issue of illegal immigration from Bangladesh led to the historic Assam Movement.

7.5 CONSEQUENCES OF IMMIGRATION

From the above discussion, we have seen that different groups of people belonging to different socio cultural backgrounds have come to the region at different points of time. Therefore, there has been a continuous process of interaction, assimilation, integration among the different communities. The region can be described as a cultural hub, which embraces different cultural groups each having their own cultural heritage. The different immigrant groups have contributed to the economy of the region in different ways. For example, some have worked for the tea plantations while some others are in the service sectors etc. Some aspects of the economy have come under the monopoly or dominance of different groups. For example, the business sector hasbeen mostly controlled by the Marwaris. The Barbers and Cobblers are mostly from Bihar. Thus we see that the immigrantgroups have been controlling or are dominant in one segment of the economy or the other. This has created a sense of economic deprivation for the local people.

Immigration of different communities was not confined only to the colonial

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.



7.6 LET US SUM UP

- Northeast is an abode of numerous groups and communities. Different groups of people have come from different parts of the country and outside at different points of time and contributed to the cultural variety of the region.
- Since the North-eastern region shares international borders with countries like Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, Bhutan and Nepal, it has become the hub for the immigrants.
- Assam and Tripura are the worst suffers of immigration.
- The colonial rule brought several changes to the region like introducing the modern bureaucratic system of administration, new system of land revenue and taxation etc. It 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. But immigration then was on a very limited scale.
- The advent of Colonialists and their aim of maximizing revenue however accelerated the process of immigration to the region.
- In the colonial period numerous communities came from outside to work in the tea plantations, administration, agriculture and other fields.
- The enormous migration that took place in the colonial period led to a drastic change not only in the demographic structure but also in the socio economic scenario of the region.
- Migration was however not confined to the colonial period only. It continued in the Post Colonial period as well and that process is persistent till today.
- It is well known to us that in the post colonial period there has been constant movement of people from Bangladesh and this has resulted

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



7.7 FURTHER READING

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7.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Assam came under the rule of the British by the treaty of Yandaboo in 1826.

Ans to Q No 2: The Santhals and Mundas were among the firsts to come and work in the Tea Plantations of Assam.

Ans to Q No 3: Since the Hindu Bengalis were educated and had the knowledge of English, they took up various government jobs such as clerks, supervisors etc

Ans to Q No 4: The Indo-Nepalese Treaty of Peace and Friendship was signed in the year 1950.



7.9 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.

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UNIT 8: ETHNIC IDENTITY IN NORTH-EAST INDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning Objectives

8.2 Introduction

8.3 Ethnic and Ethnicity

- 8.3.1 Meaning and Characteristics of Ethnic groups
- 8.3.2 Meaning and Characteristics of Ethnicity
- 8.3.3 Approaches to the study of Ethnicity
- 8.3.4 Ethnic Identity

8.4 Inter Community Relation within North East Region of India

- 8.4.1 Assam in Pre British Era
  - 8.4.1.1 Tribal and Foreign Relations
- 8.4.2 British Era
  - 8.4.2.1 The relationship with immigrant communities
  - 8.4.2.2 The Relationship between Nagas and Kukis
- 8.4.3 Independence Era
  - 8.4.3.1 The Relationship between Nagas and Kukis

8.5 The changing Nature of Inter Community Relation among North East Region of India

8.6 Ethnic Conflict in North East India

- 8.6.1 Government Policy
- 8.6.2 Foreign Policy Imperatives

8.7 Let us sum up

8.8 Further Reading

8.9 Answer to check your progress

8.10 Model questions

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to –

- know about the Meaning and Characteristics of Ethnicity.
- explain the scenario of inter-community relations in North-east India.

- understand the causes of the changing nature of inter-community relationship among the ethnic groups of North-east India.
- know about the root causes of ethnic conflict in North-east India.

8.2 INTRODUCTION

The North-eastern region represents India's most complex landscape with multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious societal context. It is a land of lovely woods and trees, of clustering fruits and of groves dense with trees and sounds of silence. The North-eastern region of India is a splendidly vibrant region which is situated in the eastern part of the sub-Himalayan zone. The region compromises of lofty mountainous terrain and moderately high hills and river-fed valleys. At present the eight states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya and Sikkim are regarded as constituting the North-east India. Surrounded by five Countries, this region is connected with the rest of India through a narrow thirty kilometer corridor located in northern Bengal. Different ethnic groups inhabiting this region have been pressing either for the creation of separate states on the basis of their lingo-cultural identities or for special constitutional safeguards of their respective identities.

"What is your ethnicity?" This is a question that is fairly important in many parts of the world. The United States, like many countries, finds this question to be substantial enough to include on the national census. It is a question we are all familiar with, but do we know what is really being asked here? An ethnic group is a population with shared genetic and cultural traits, making them distinct from other populations because of these traits. If you think that sounds somewhat vague, you are right. Ethnicity is important to us, but that does not necessarily mean that it is easy to define. Let us learn more about the concept in the subsequent sections.

8.3 ETHNIC AND ETHNICITY

8.3.1 Meaning and Characteristics of Ethnic group

Ethnic group is a group whose members have same or all of the following characteristics.

- Share a sense of common right.
- Claim a common and distinctive history and destiny.
- Possess one or more dimensions of collective cultural individuality.
- Feel a sense of unique solidarity.

So, an Ethnic group is defined as "any hereditary group with shared values, style of life and symbol of identity and consciousness of kind".

The word 'Ethnic' became popular in the post war period and during1960s and 1970s, when Regionalism Movements in Western Europe and the Black Movement in the United States became prominent. However, the English term 'ethnic' was in usage since the middles ages and in the New Testament it was employed as a synonym of 'gentile', implying the non-Christian and non-Jewish pagans. Different scholars are using it to mean 'a group of people with shared characteristics', however, the use of this term in the modern sense has been varied. For some this would indicate the immigrant community or the minority within a larger social structure while for some others it would encompass every community with a common culture and history, as Everett C. Hughes (1970) declares "we are all ethnic".

The term 'ethnic' is a derivative of the Greek term 'ethnos'. Ethnos in classical Greek described the undifferentiated groups of animals and warriors and also as Aristotle used it to mean the foreign and barbarian nations. From being used to denote the 'non- structured, tribal, peripheral people' in classical Greek it came to be used specifically for the non- Christian and non-Hebrews during the Middles ages. It was used for indicating religious otherness. However, its application changed even when the meaning continued to be the same. During the times of the Ottoman empire when the orthodox Christians became the most prominent religious other, the term 'ethnos' came to be employed by the Greeks to refer to themselves.

Later, during the emergence of modern nationalism among the Greeks in the early nineteenth century, the term ethnos came to be seen as a 'quintessentially self-realising, self-defining entity'. 'Ethnic' the English derivative of the term 'ethnos' simultaneously changed in its usage and upon gaining popularity in social sciences in last century its application has become broad enough to indicate all groupings with shared culture and history.

In 1996, Hutchinson and Smith in the book *'Ethnicity'* has laid down the six features of an ethnic group/ethnie and each may have all or some of these features in varying degrees.

- A *common proper name*, to identify and express the 'essence' of the community.
- A myth of *common ancestry*, a myth rather than a fact, a myth that includes the idea of a common origin in time and place and that gives an 'ethnie' a sense of fictive kinship. (Ethnie is a French equivalent of 'ethnic group')
- *Shared historical memories*, or better, shared memories of a common past or pasts, including heroes, events, and their commemoration.
- One or more *elements of common culture*, which need not be specified but normally include religion, customs, or language.
- A *link with a homeland*, not necessarily its physical occupation by the ethnie, only its symbolic attachment to the ancestral land, as with diaspora people.
- A *sense of solidarity* on the part of at least some sections of the ethnie's population.

The term ethnic group was also used by some in contradistinction to Race, which is often seen in biological terms. Members of an ethnic group may be identified in terms of racial attributes but they may also share other cultural characteristics such as religion, occupation, language or politics. Ethnic group should also be distinguished from social classes. Ethnic groups are therefore fluid in composition and

subject to changes in definition. New Ethnic groups are constantly being formed as populations which move between countries. Indians in Britain, for example constitute an ethnic group although as individuals they would be seen to be members of quite different groups/categories in terms of caste and language. The concept of ethnicity is particularly important when it forms the basis for social discrimination.

8.3.2 Meaning and Characteristics of Ethnicity

The term 'Ethnicity' first appeared in English language in 1953 and it is a derivative of the term 'ethnic'. The term 'Ethnicity' came to be used as an analytical category coinciding with the increasing demand by the groups that are culturally different from the dominant majority of the State.

In India, during the 1950s and 1960s there was a phenomenon that could be seen as 'ethnic' as per present usage of the term. Linguistic Movements in many states are the most prominent example. Urmila Phadnis states that linguistic ethnicity has revolved around three issues. These are-

- Language as a basis of territorial redistribution of state boundaries.
- The issues of official language or the language of the state business and administration.
- Language as a medium of instruction in education.

Ethnicity is a complex phenomenon. The task of the theoretician is to outline at least what can be said to be the essential dimension of this phenomenon and to indicate the directions of their possible variations.

The meaning of ethnicity depends on the meaning of several other concepts, particularly those of ethnic group and ethnic identity. It refers to ethnicity as the collective phenomenon.

Ethnicity as an analytical concept includes an implicit reference to both collective and individual aspects of the phenomenon.

Ethnicity is socially constructed and subjectively defined by a combination of aspects related to a group's ancestry, cultural customs, language, religion, national identity, kinship networks and even physical appearance.

8.3.3 Approaches to the study of Ethnicity

As the phenomenon of 'ethnicity' is very varied and complex, different approaches have been adopted by scholars to understand the process. There are mainly three approaches to the study of Ethnicity. The first one is the "Primordialist Approach" the second one is "Instrumentalist Approach" and the third one is "Constructivist Approach".

The most prominent scholar of the Primordialist Approach is Clifford Geertz. He argues that attachments to blood, religion, speech and custom are seen to have an ineffable and at times over powering coerciveness in and of them. The participants tend to perceive these as exterior, coercive and 'given'. He states these to be primodial attachments. Primordiality is a quality that the individuals attribute to these kinds of ties. Geertz suggests that the drive for an efficient, dynamic modern state interact with the other great drive for personal identity, which is based on "Primordial ties". Primordialism as an approach had to face criticisms for lacking explanatory power in addressing ethnic dynamics. However, it enables us to comprehend the nature of attachment that participants of a group can have towards the other members of, as well as, to their group/community.

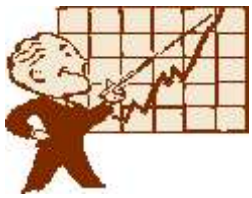
On the other hand, the "Instrumentalist" treats ethnicity as a social, political and cultural resource for different interest and status groups. One version focuses on elite composition for resources and suggests that the manipulation of symbols is vital for gaining the support of the masses and in achieving political goals. Another version examines elite strategies of maximizing preference in terms of individually rational choice in given situations.

The "Constructivists" looks into the historical dynamics and

fluidity of ethnic groups. They seek to explore and explain the emergence of ethnic groups and the factors behind these. They highlight how a common history of a group may emerge in a particular context and the members of whom may eventually claim to belong to one ethnic group or others may label them as one ethnic group. Likewise, fusion and fissiparous tendencies of human collectivity that assume a course of emergence, divisions and disappearance comprise the focus of the constructivist perspective. It holds that social formations are constructed by human agency in a structural and dynamic context. The role of power, boundary making, labelling, 'choice' of framing ethnic markers, etc. constitute the axis of analysis. This approach has been widely adopted to explain the ethnic relations and ethnic assertions.

8.3.4 Ethnic Identity

The growth of the spirit of ethnicity among various groups leads to the aspiration for a distinct identity for themselves. Generally, ethnic groups with a small population face competition for subsistence from the larger groups and tend to suffer from a state of identity crisis. This identity crisis of ethnic groups impel them to resort to various sort of ethnic movements demanding either autonomy or separation from the larger groups so that they can preserve their distinct identity and also manage their own affairs without interference from the larger groups.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. State the name of one of the prominent scholars of the primordialist approach.

.....

.....

Q2. In which year the term 'Ethnicity' was used for the first time in English language.

.....

8.4 INTER COMMUNITY RELATION WITHIN NORTH EAST REGION OF INDIA

India is inhabited by multiple ethnic groups who profess different religions, speak different languages, and follow customs and traditions which are different from one another. Since the pre British era, the ethnic groups of NE India co-habituated and assimilated with each other. However, since independence, the emerging political dynamics of this region had led to the emergence of leaders from these ethnic groups who have been very critical towards the policies of the Indian State and have resisted the nation building process. There have been several such groups that have often fought to maintain their traditional self governing institutions, their languages, their cultures, political institutions and drawing the internal boundaries. To achieve this they have demanded autonomy in the form of demanding seperate state. Apart from this conflict with the Indian state, the relation among ethnic groups of the region has been of a hostile nature owing to sharing of resources and conflicting claims.

8.4.1 Assam in Pre British Era

The society and culture of the Brahmaputra Valley is heterogonous. The different ethnic groups immigrated to Assam at different points of time and they came to this region from both its eastern and western frontiers. The Ahom is one of the major communities of Assam. They established their territory in Upper Brahmaputra Valley in 13th century and ruled for more than six hundred years. The Ahoms arrived with their own culture and customs but in course of time they amalgamated with the culture of the other ethnic communities and also caused the amalgamation of the different ethnic groups in Assam particularly in eastern and central part of Assam. It is observed that before the coming of the Ahoms to the Brahmaputra Valley, there were various small tribal kingdoms in the eastern part of the valley such as that of theChutiyas, Kacharis, Moran and Borahi and in the western part was the Kamrupa kingdom. The

Ahom king Sukapha first subjugated two local tribes, i.e. the Moran and Borahis through the policy of goodwill and friendship. Through marriage alliance king Sukapha and his followers' could establish kinship relation with them. Gradually, the Ahoms subjugated one by one the local tribes of Brahmaputra Valley and some of them were appointed in the offices of Ahom administration. As a result many tribes like Moran, Borahi, Chutiyas, Kacharis were assimilated with the Ahom social organization. They used terms like Chutiya-Ahom, Moran-Ahom, Borahi-Ahom and Kachari-Ahom. Ahoms started the process of Ahomnisation.

The Ahoms abandoned their tribal dialects in favour of Assamese and the Rabhas, Kacharis and other tribes had followed their example. Gradually the Ahoms were influenced by the Brahmanical cult of Hindu religion which came to secure royal patronage during the region of Sudangpha or Bamuni Konwar in 1397. Sudangpha appointed a Brahman as advisor in the Ahom Royal court and he was also the first Ahom king to adopt the coronation of 'Singarigharutha' by Brahmanical rites as well as Ahom rites. This also enabled the Ahoms to legitimize their rule in the valley. Thereafter, Hindu temples came to be constructed within the kingdom and this boosted the hinduisation process. Through this process Ahom created the integration among the people of Brahmaputra valley, both tribal and non-tribal groups. Hinduisation also led to another process which is called inclusion. During the Ahom period some Muslims who had entered Assam in the early 13th century and later as migrants had made their residence in Assam and emerged as a community although they were of heterogeneous origin. Later on, the king of Gaur sent an expedition to Assam and in the battle of Hatbor and Dui Muni Sila of Silghat in 1532 AD, the Muslim invaders were repulsed by the Ahoms and their General Turbaq was killed. In that battle the Ahoms captured 900 Muslim soldiers. Later, these prisoners settled in different parts of Assam, married local Assamese Hindu girls and became an integral part of the society and emerged as a distinct community known as

Moria and practiced bell metal and brass work as traditional occupation.

8.4.2 Tribal and Foreign Relations

The policy of Ahom rulers towards the frontier tribes varied from time to time according to the exigencies of the political situation. In the each early phase, these 'proud conquerors' followed a policy of slow but steady penetration occasionally attended with revolting cruelties. To terrorize the Naga, Sukapha 'caused many of them killed and roasted and compelled their relatives to eat their flesh'. Those period of foreign wars demanded active help and cooperation from the neighboring tribes and chiefs. The aggressive policy of earlier years had to be replaced by one of conciliation.

The Daflas in the north were allowed by the same monarch the right of levying posa in specified areas of the district of Darrang under which Assamese paiks known as bahateahs. They were bound to serve the hillmen with their requirement of personal service and produce. Apart from this Pratap Simha constructed a fort at Daflagarh in the east of Tezpur to check their oppressive acts on Assamese ryots.

The reign of Rudra Simha witnessed not only the subjugation of Kachari and Jayantia kingdoms but also the establishment of friendly commercial relations with the most important Khasi State of Khairam and Khyrim. It was again during the time of Rudra Simha that diplomatic relations were first established with Tripura with the intention of extending his sphere of influence throughout Bengal and Eastern India as a part of his wider scheme of fighting the Mughals.

8.4.3 Colonial Era

During the last phase of the Ahom rule some internal conflict such as the Moamoriya rebellion and external aggression like the Burmese invasion weakened the political power of the Ahoms and British east India Company got the opportunity to extend their rule in

Assam. After the Treaty of Yandaboo was signed in 26th February 1826, Britishers annexed Assam and incorporated Assam into the Bengal presidency. This period is also known as the modern period of Assam history. The Treaty not only ended the political power of the Ahom kingdom but also lost prestige and sovereignty. After the Treaty, all the tribal and non tribal groups of NE India came under the umbrella of British Administration.

During this era, inter-community relationship among the NE Indian tribal and non tribal groups turned into a mechanical and formal one. The British rule changed the population composition in Assam. The Britishers brought in large number of immigrants to the province of Assam from different parts of India. The British began to cultivate tea in Assam and for the growth of tea industry they brought labor from Orissa, Jharkhand and West Bengal etc. They also brought Indian collaborators like the Marwari business man and English educated Bengali clerks, doctors and lawyers with them. They submerged hill territories like Naga Hills, Lusai Hills, Garo Hills, Khasi Hills, Jayantiya Hills with Assam. Thus the population composition and community relationships were changed with the entry of newly immigrated groups.

8.4.2.1 The relationship with immigrant communities

The term “immigrant community” is problematic, since only the first generation can be accurately described as immigrants. British rule stimulated the Marwari businessman, Nepali grazer, Bengali-Muslim peasant and their middle-class Hindu counterpart to move towards the Brahmaputra valley. Thus, among the major communities whose ancestors immigrated to North East India during the British period are the Muslim peasants of Bengali descent, Hindu Bengalis, Marwaris, Nepalis and the Tea labor community. Around that time there was also the emigration of Punjabi Sikhs to Assam and which evolved into a community presently concentrated in Nagaon and Guwahati.

The workers in the tea plantations constitute the oldest of Assam's immigrant groups who immigrated during the modern period. Recruitment of the workers for the tea plantations from outside Assam began in the nineteenth century and continued until 1960. They were recruited from among tribal groups such as Santhal, Mundas, Oraongs, Kharias, Gonds, Khonds, Kisang. Most of those recruited to work in tea plantations over the years settled in Assam at the end of the contract period. Some left tea plantations and tried making a living by settling in the surrounding agricultural lands before the expiration of their labor contracts. There are different linguistic elements in Assam's tea garden labor community. Yet very few people of the tea labor community today speak any of these languages and dialects. Most of the tea garden labor community speaks a patois that is called Sadani or "Garden baat". There is often intermarriage among them. There are a few Assamese literary and cultural figures belonging to this community.

The migration of Hindu Bengalis to Assam began in the earliest days of colonial rule. Historically the immigrants of Hindu Bengali origin settled in urban areas and took up jobs in the modern sector in the British administration. Later this has been a more persistent source of conflict in Assam. However their presence in Assam in was not always a source of resentment given Calcutta's status as the Capital of British India. The Bengali language, culture and fashions were imitated by a section of the Assamese students who studied in Calcutta.

Another visible immigrant community in Assam is the "Marwaris", a term that strictly refers to a commercial caste from Rajasthan. The Marwaris played a major role in Assam's transition in the nineteenth century from a largely non-monetized economy to a market economy. The earlier Marwaris came to Assam along with the British and in the absence of competition from a local trading class; they soon dominated the region's trade and commerce.

Immigration thus began as a consequence of the colonial

conquest. Once Assam became a part of British India, it came to be perceived as a part of the pan-Indian economic space. Colonial policymakers saw Assam as a land frontier that needed more settlers and activity. Therefore they designed policies to encourage immigration.

8.4.2.2 The Relationship between Nagas and Kukis

The sources on the Naga-Kuki relations are limited. A variety of sources on the relationship between Nagas and Kukis came to be available only with the advent of British rulers and Christian missionaries. Prior to British colonialism in northeast India traces of references could be found in the Royal Chronicle of Manipur, Buranji of Ahom and Royal Chronicle of Tepperah, etc. The ethnic groups were known for their headhunting habits and war like activities. The wars and raids conducted by them were inter-region, inter-tribe and inter-village in nature. However, this does not mean that there was no peace.

With the advent of British rule and Christianity such violence gradually decreased as they strictly banned the violent practices and felons were severely punished by the rulers. A.K. Ray says that 'traditional antagonistic relationship was exploited by the British in their frontier policy of peace and defense and they used the Kukis against the Nagas and the Lushais for this purpose'. These narratives suggest that the Raja of Manipur and the British rulers used these tribes against each other to serve their own interests, which was a policy of "Divide and Rule". In the first half of the 20th century the Nagas and Kukis revolted against their Colonial power.

In the earlier days the peace treaties were made between the warring villages or communities and they observed the peace treaty for the fear of curses and loss of dignity for the offender village. P.K. Thekho narrated how the Nagas came to have a peace treaty-

- When fighting went for a prolonged period and the two parties were exhausted then they proposed a peace treaty.

- When the two villagers or communities' war came to an end, the defeated village or community proposed for peace. The weaker group would offer spear, wine and meat to the stronger. If the stronger village killed any of the weaker villagers, the stronger village would be perished.
- In the case of equal strength of the warring villages or communities, they exchanged spear, wine and meat. They ate and drank together.

Here an attempt is made to understand the relationship betweenNagas and Kukis through their relations in the Naga National Council Movement, which traces its root to the Naga Club of 1918 in the Naga Hills. After the formation of the first organization of the Nagas, the Nagas and Kukis raised their voices against the Colonial power. The Naga Club encompassed members of various Naga tribes and the Kukis in the Naga Hills. The Kukis also played a vital role in the Naga National Council Movement. On 10th January 1929, when Naga Club's delegation submitted memorandum to Royal Commissions led by Sir John Simon also called as 'Simon Commission', they demanded the Nagas to be left alone and to let them determine their own future. ShirLengjang Kuki was one of the twenty delegations that submitted memorandum to the Simon Commission. After the formation of first Naga political organization Naga National Council (NNC), late Seikhohen Kuki and Jankhosei Kuki represented the Kuki tribe of Naga Hills as a full-fledged member of Naga National Council. Despite the clash with the Nagas, a section of Kukis always worked together with the Nagas to achieve Naga sovereignty. The Kukis joined the Naga underground movement since the beginning of NNC's armed wing Federal Government of Nagaland.

8.4.3 Post Colonial era

India achieved independence at the cost of partition on August 15th 1947. Partition of the country led to redrawing the territorial boundaries of the country. After independence the process of modernization took place in Assam. The Community Development Programmes and Panchayati Raj Institutions were developed, and education centers were established in the different parts of Assam, both in rural and urban areas. The people of Northeast India were connected with the other people in the different parts of the country and participated in national politics also. Urbanization took place in Northeastern region and this process changed the social-structure, life-style and way of life among the people of Northeast India.

In post colonial period because of the partition of the country and transfer of Sylhet to Pakistan, the Hindu Bengalis from East Bengal migrated to Assam. According to H. Srikanth "Assam suffered the trauma of partition after independence. The Assamese leaders felt the partition as a blessing that the immigration would come to an end with the partition".

8.5 THE CHANGING NATURE OF INTER COMMUNITY RELATION AMONG ETHNIC GROUPS OF NORTH EAST REGION

The historical connections among the traditional tribes in the Northeast who largely belong to Tibeto-Burman Mongoloid stock are closer to Southeast Asia than to South Asia. They are linguistically, culturally and ethnically related while distinct from those of the other states of India. The changing nature of inter-community relationship among the ethnic groups of Northeast can be viewed through the lens of the claims posed by the various ethnic groups over land and its resources and fear of losing out in the state's policies of allocation of the resources which started soon after the independence of the country. These changes can be observed through the process of identity crises, language tangle, lack of employment opportunity, attitude of

Assamese people, sluggish administration process and so on.

Assertions of ethnic identity is one of the key factor of the changed relationship among the various ethnic groups. It culminated in the demand and recognition of separate states in North East India. For instance, the Mizos had got Mizoram, Khasi, Jayantia and Garo got Meghalaya, Nagas have got Nagaland and so on.

Language tangle is one of the most critical and sensitive problems of North East India. After independence, the Assamese speaking people sought to make Assamese as the official language of Assam and this was perceived by several ethnic communities as an imposition of Assamese language upon the non-Assamese speaking people including the indigenous tribal people. As a consequence there were bitter clashes between the Assamese speaking people on one hand the tribal and other linguistic groups.

This hegemonic linguistic assertion of the Assamese speaking people is one of the key factors of the transformation of the prevailing relationship between the ethnic groups of NE India.

After independence and the state reorganisation in this region, there was a continuation of inter-ethnic conflict in Northeast India which resulted in the demand for separate state. These demands include the demand for Nagalim by NSCN, demand for soverignity by ULFA, Kamatapur by AKRASU, Bodoland by ABSU and NDFB, a separate state by KarbiAnglong,Dimaland by KLNLF formally UPDS and Garoland in Meghalaya to name a few. The demand for separate statehood sees no end at present time. With coming to power of each new government, the different groups demanding greater autonomy strengthens their demands by taking up many programs like dharna, andolan, strike, etc. Each group pressurizes the government to fulfill their demands.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q3. During whose reign Kachari and Jayantia Kingdoms were subjugated?

.....

.....

Q4. In which year General Turbaq was killed?

.....

.....

8.6 ETHNIC CONFLICT IN NORTH EAST INDIA

Decentralization of power is the basic principle of federal structure. India is a country where state power structure is federal in nature but unitary in spirit. During the time of independence, the makers of the Indian Constitution were worried about the factors affecting the unity of India. Therefore they provided with some features of a unitary state which was a hope to prevent any secessionist tendency. Owing to this, power sharing between the center and the state was advocated. In Northeast India, cultural and geographical heterogeneity has aggravated this tension and the demand for smaller states becomes a pressing issue in Indian politics. Owing to reorganization of states, the number of states in Northeast India had gone up to eight which earlier included only Assam, the princely states of Manipur and Tripura and the North Eastern Frontier Province (NEFA).

The violent form of conflict in the region of Northeast India has been an all-pervasive phenomenon and it has not only affected the territory and sovereignty of the Indian state but also the life of the people living in the region in incomprehensive and inexplicable terms.

8.6.1 Government Policy

The Indian Government's past and ongoing processes of national integration, state-building and democratic consolidation have further aggravated the conflict scenario in the region. The eight states compromising the Northeast is populated by nearly 40 million

inhabitants, who vary in language, race, tribe, caste, religion, and regional heritage. Therefore most often the clubbing of all these states under the tag of Northeast has tended to have a homogenizing effect with its own set of implications for policy formulation and implementation. The political administrative arrangements made by the center also served as factor of inter-ethnic/community conflict. The Arms Force Special Power Act shows the inability and reluctance of the governments to solve the conflict with adequate political measures. The AFSPA was passed on 18th August 1958 as a short term measure to allow the Army to counter the armed separatist movement in the Naga Hills. It was a part of the bundle of provisions passed by the central government to retain control over the Naga areas in which the Naga Nationalist Council demanded further autonomy rights. AFSPA, however violates provisions of international human rights law including the right to life, right to be protected from arbitrary arrest and detention and the right to be free from torture and cruelty.

Conflict in the region is further compounded by complex political and economic issues such as struggle over natural resources, migration related issues, displacement and social exclusion and so on. According to Dr. Clemens Spiess "the politics of identity lay at the heart of the bigger part of the current conflict constellations in the Northeast".

8.6.2 Foreign Policy Imperatives

India's 'Look East Policy' which was formulated in 1991 as a part of India's economic liberalization was a foreign economic policy initiative towards South East Asia. The Northeast is geographically situated between mainland India in South Asia and the South East Asia. The region's diverse natural resources, rich bio-diversity and enormous hydro-electrical potential among others could also help to overcome the widespread feeling of backwardness among the inhabitants of the Northeast. But an argument gaining ground resides

on the fear and perception of threat perceived by the people of this region that the impact of increased introduction of market imperatives in the traditional society of the region would have irreversible impact on the people's culture and life and it would also lead to increased settlement of mainland people in the Northeast.



8.7 LET US SUM UP

- The term 'Ethnicity' came to be used as an analytical categories coinciding with the increasing demand by the groups that are culturally different from the dominant majority of the State.
- Ethnicity is socially constructed and subjectively defined by a combination of aspects related to a group's ancestry, cultural customs, language, religion, national identity, kinship networks and even physical appearance.
- There are mainly two approaches to the study of Ethnicity. The first one is the "Primordialist Approach" and the second one is "Instrumentalist Approach".
- North-East India has made a huge contribution to the presence of multiple ethnic identities in the country. Since the pre British era, the inhabited multiple ethnic groups of NE India co-habituated and assimilated with the each other groups.
- The relationship between Nagas and Kukis came to be available only with the advent of British rulers and Christianity.
- In Northeastern region the community conflict was shared through the cultural and geographical heterogeneity which make the demand for smaller states a pressing issue in Indian politics.



8.8 FURTHER READING

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- Baruah Sanjib (1999) Indian Against Itself, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- Fenton, Steve (2003) Ethnicity, Polity; Cambridge.
- Gohain U.N. (1942) Assam Under the Ahoms, D.K. fine Art Press; Delhi.
- Sengupta Sarthak (ed.2002) Tribal Studies in North East India, Mittal publications; New Delhi.



8.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Chifford Geertz.

Ans to Q No 2: 1953

Ans to Q No 3: Rudra Sinha

Ans to Q No 4: 1532AD.



8.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer within 150 words)

Q 1: What is the meaning of Ethnicity?

Q 2: State the meaning of Ethnic group?

Q 3: What do you understand by Ethnic identity?

Long Questions (Answer within 300 - 500 words)

Q 1: Discuss inter-community relationship during the Ahom period.

Q 2: Write an essay on inter-community relationship in British period.

Q 3: What has been the nature of inter-community relationship after India's Independence.

Q 4: Explain the various issues of ethnic conflict in Assam.

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UNIT 9: AUTONOMY MOVEMENT IN ASSAM

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1 Learning Objectives

9.2 Introduction

9.3 Meaning

- 9.3.1 Meaning of Autonomy
- 9.3.2 Meaning of Sixth Schedule
- 9.3.3 Demand for sixth schedule

9.4 The Bodo Movement

- 9.4.1 The phases of Bodo Movement

9.5 Kamatapur Movement

- 9.5.1 The demands of Kamatapur Movement

9.6 Karbi Movement

- 9.6.1 Genesis of ethnic identity question among the Karbis
- 9.6.2 Demand for autonomy in Karbi Anglong

9.7 Let us sum up

9.8 Further Readings

9.9 Answer to check your progress

9.10 Model Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you would be able to :-

- know about the meaning of Autonomy and Sixth Schedule.
- know about different autonomous and separate statehood Movements in Nort East India.

9.2 INTRODUCTION

The Northeastern part of India in general and Assam in particular have witnessed a series of ethnic movements relating to the autonomous or separate statehood. Since independence, Assam has been experiencing several peaceful and violent movements. As a result of these movements,

Assam has experienced reorganisation several times leading to the drastic reduction in size. In this unit we will discuss about three autonomy movements witnessed by Assam.

9.3 MEANING

In North-East India, the hill and plain tribal population predominate in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Sikkim and some are also found in Assam. Most of these ethnic groups have been agitating to preserve their distinct identity and protect their rights. The question of distinct ethnic identity and the fear of their annexation or assimilation with the larger groups have been the prime factors responsible for most of the ethnic movements of the region.

9.3.1 Meaning of Autonomy

Autonomy means self governing process and the word is derived from a Greek word which means independent. The concept of "autonomy" has come to assume a place of great importance in recent discussions. In governmental parlance, autonomy refers to self governance. Autonomy is a key concept that has a important space in different fields of Philosophy. In Moral Philosophy, autonomy refers to subjecting oneself to objective moral law.

Since the writings of Immanual Kant, autonomy has become nearly synonymous with human dignity and an imminent value in any system which purports to take seriously respect for persons.

In *How to Make Good Decisions and Be Right All the Time*, philosopher Lain King developed an 'Autonomy Principal' which he defines as "Let people choose for themselves, unless we know their interest better than they can".

9.3.2 Meaning of Sixth Schedule

The Constitution of India makes special provision for the administration of the tribal dominated areas in four states viz. Assam,

Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. As per Article 244 and the Sixth Schedule, these areas are called “Tribal Areas”.

The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India is based on the recommendations of the North East Frontier Tribal and Excluded Areas Sub-committee, popularly known as Bordoloi Sub-committee under the chairmanship of Gopinath Bordoloi, the then chief minister of Assam. The Bordoloi Sub-committee studied the existing administrative setup in the hill areas of the North East India with a view of setting up of an autonomous body for the administration of the hill areas.

9.4 BODO MOVEMENT

The Bodos constitute the large group of the plain tribes in Assam. They have their own distinct history and socio-cultural practices based on the basic principles of co-operation, collective efforts, mutual understanding, love, respect, etc. Over a period of time, the British rule and the advent of missionaries brought about changes in the Bodo society.

The Bodo Movement has been the most stringent tribal movement in contemporary Assam. This movement had seeded in the colonial times but intensified into a radical political, cultural and extremist assertion in the 1980s. The Bodo movement draws its sources from the ostensible feeling of discrimination, deprivation, and injustice experienced by the Bodo community in Assam.

9.4.1 The phases of Bodo Movement

The Bodo movement since its inception has taken different trajectories from the demand for more electoral inclusion to the demand for a separate state and further to the secessionist movement spearheaded by the insurgent groups. The aim and purpose of this autonomy movement is not only to bring change in the existing system but also to augment legitimate expressions of aspirations by the people having a distinct culture, tradition and

common pattern of living. Let us try to understand the different phases of Bodo movement.

- The phase of political awakening (1933-1952):

During this phase the Bodo leadership propagated the idea of Bodoland through the assumption that political autonomy will remove the deprivation experienced by them. The first phase commenced with the formal organisation of the Bodo polity with the Bodos feeling the need for a political party that would represent their interests. This phase is also considered as the phase of political awakening that lasted from 1933 to 1952. A memorandum to the Indian Statutory Commission was submitted in the 1929 by the Bodo community of Goalpara and the "Kachari Juvak Sanmilon" demanding political power. Subsequently, the All Assam Plains Tribal league (AAPTL) was formed in 1933 as a political party under the leadership of Rupnath Barhma Brahma. The main objective of this party was to protect the identities and interests of the "tribal people" of Assam.

- The phase of language and script issue (1952-1967):

The feeling of nationalism attitude among the educated Bodos grew with the formation of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS) in 1952, which submitted a memorandum to the Assam Chief Minister Bishnuram Medhi for the introduction of Bodo Medium schools in 1953. The movement during this time focused on the assertion of linguistic identity due to the threat posed by the dominant Assamese community with the introduction of the Assam official Bill, 1960. The phase had achieved the introduction of Bodo language as the medium of instruction in schools in Bodo dominated area in 1963.

- The phase of demand for political autonomy (1967-1986):

After the quest for linguistic identity the movement had taken a huge leap and for the first time had demanded an arrangement for autonomy. But assurance given by Congress Party to the Tribal League, to protect tribal rights and land was not codified in its true sense. This led to the formation of the Plain Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) in 27th February, 1967. Its aim was to demand a Union

Territory called "Udayachal" in Bodo dominated areas. The All Bodo Students Union was also formed on 15th February, 1967 at a time when the Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi proposed to reorganise the state of Assam on 13th January, 1967. The PTCA had taken the front seat in the movement during this phase with the whole hearted support of the ABSU.

- The phase of demand for separate state (1987-1992):

From 1987, ABSU withdrew the support of the PTCA and took central stage in the movement. The ABSU under the leadership of the late Upendra Nath Brahma launched vigorous mass movements on 2nd March, 1987 with a series of political demands, the most resounding was the demand for a separate state of Bodoland.

Consequently, with the demand for a separate state, the nation had witnessed the rise of an insurgent group, the Bodoland Security Force on October 3, 1986. The demand for a sovereign state had become a strong contender for the movement for autonomy which led to the signing of the Bodo Accord on February 20, 1993 and the formation of Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC). Terrorist activities heightened as the BAC was thought to have no constitutional validity. In the period that followed, the Bodo region became an arena of violence.

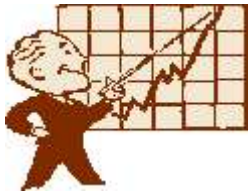
- The post accord phase (1993-2003):

The Bodo Accord of 1993 failed to meet the expectation of the Bodos and large scale agitation had started due to the ambiguities in the territorial boundary of the BAC. From 1994 onwards, the BdSF (Bodo Security Force) resorted to extreme violence which resulted in the worsening of the situation, negating the primary objectives of the Bodo Accord. The ethnic cleansing carried out by the armed outfit had led to communal riots in September and October 1993 leading to the death of many and rendering many people homeless. The BdSF was renamed as National Democratic Front of Bodoland and another armed outfit called the Bodoland Liberation Tigers rises rose in 1995 due to ideological difference with the NDFB which led to the

fight and killing among the two armed groups.

Violence continued with the fighting among the armed groups and with the state forces. The second Bodo Accord was signed in 2003 between the BLT and the state government with the former refraining the arms struggle. The second Bodo Accord created the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) under modified provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. Subsequently, the BTC was compromised of four districts viz. Kokrajhar, Baksa, Chirang and Udalguri. The four districts are now known as the Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD).

The Bodo Movement is a complex one which withnessed transition from one phase to another and change in demands and leadership. The Bodo Movement can fit into the categories of movements for separate statehood, insurgent movements and cultural rights movements. The demand for autonomy was mainly the driven by the desires for self-determination and the feeling of step-motherly treatment of the state government in terms of allocation of resources and funds.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. Who is the author of the book, 'How to make good decisions and be right all the time'?

.....

.....

9.5 KAMATAPUR MOVEMENT

According to Rupkumar Barman it was due to the colonial subjugation that Rajbonshis began to lose their identity. In 1874 the British Indian Government created a new Chief Commissioners Province known as "Assam" by incorporating a portion of Rangpur district (Goalpara) and Kamrup district which once were parts of the Koch Kingdom. This politics and territorial fragmentation of the Rajbonshi community actually initiated

their present day identity crisis. The British Government had identified Rajbonshis as Koch. Therefore, agitation began after they were designated as a low tribe or a low caste by the official census report. The claim of the Rajbonshis to be enumerated as Kshatriya but not Koch began to take the shape of a movement at the time of the census of 1891. They pressed the Government through persistent agitation that:

- The Rajbonshis be recorded separately from the Koch
- The Rajbonshis be recognised as Kshatriyas by decent.

The autonomy movement launched by the Koch Rajbonshi people of Assam is known as Kamatapur Movement. The central argument of Kamatapur Movement is that the Rajbonshi people of Assam are the indigenous people of this region and therefore this region originally belongs to the Kamatapuris. Historically, the Koch Rajbonshi people of Assam had rich culture, language, tradition and distinct identity during the rule of Koch Kings. But after independence, especially with the merging of their land with the state of Assam and West Bengal, they have gradually lost their distinct culture, language and identity in the melting pot of Assamese society. The most vital factors for the deteriorated condition of the rich Rajbonshi community are due to the land reform policy. The aim of the land reform policy was to improve the economic condition of the rural poor. But through this policy, the Koch Rajbonshi people of Assam are not benefited, rather their land has been transferred to the new migrants. The new migrants are the Bengali Hindus and Muslims, who had migrated to the Koch region from present Bangladesh. Therefore, under development of this region that they inhabit and other ethnic causes mainly due to the loss of land and non availability of employment opportunities have given the birth to the Kamatapur Movement which is based on the demand for a separate Kamatapur state since the mid and late 1990s with the formation of All Assam Koch Rajbonshi Student Union (AAKRSU) in 7th January.

9.5.1 The demands of Kamatapur Movement

Though the demand for the Kamatapur State had been there in both West Bengal and Assam since the 1990s it came into limelight only after the Royal Bhutan Army attacked the hideout of Kamatapur

Liberation Organization (KLO) situated in Bhutan in the month of December, 2003. The movement saw another momentum in 2005, when thousands of members of the Greater Cooch Behar Peoples' Association challenged the Left Government of West Bengal through their indefinite hunger strike and mass agitation in their demand for a separate Cooch Behar State.

The demands of Kamatapur inform us that there are Nationalisms within Nationalism. Here the challenge is not to counter the Pan Indian Nationalism but to find a way to accommodate this Nationalism (Koch Rajbanshi) with existing in the Indian Nationalism. Kamatapur is just not a movement for territorial reorganisation nor is it a movement for economic development. The Kamatapur movement today speaks in many idioms. There are cultural demands that seek recognition, moderate political demands that seek political autonomy and also more militant political cultural demands that find expression in the idiom of violence. By considering all these factors the Koch Rajbonshis of Assam have been carrying out a democratic movement under the name of Kamatapur movement. Some of their demands are noted below:

- Demand for the formation of separate Kamatapur State comprising six districts of North Bengal namely Cooch Behar, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, North Dinajpur, South dinajpur and Malda and some districts of Assam namely Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Goalpara, Borpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup, Morigaon, Darrang, Sonitpur upto Lakhimpur distrist of Assam which they once had to lose.
- Inclusion of Kamatapuri or Koch Rajbonshi language under the Eight Schedule of Indian constitution and recognition of their language as state language of Assam.
- Reserved quota for the Kamatapuris with 70% of overall reservation for recruitment in both Government as well as Non-Government sector.
- Reservation of seats for the Rajbonshis in Educational and Technical Institute for their higher education.

- Recognition of Vishwa Mahabir Chilarai's birthday of Maghi Purnima as state holiday by the Government of West Bengal and Assam and also to name a portion of National Highway (Siliguri to Cooch Behar) in memory of this hero of Kamatapur.
- Koch Rajbonshi leaders also demand for the establishment of Maharaj Naranarayan Cultural Complex and Research Centre in the undivided Goalpara district. They have argued that Koch Rajbonshis had a rich language and cultural heritage. But due to lack of patronage from the Government and Civil Society, it has not gained due recognition.

9.6 KARBI MOVEMENT

The Karbis are formally known as the Mikirs. They are the major community of the district of Karbi Anglong. They constitute the third largest Tribal Community in Assam after the Bodos and the Mishings. Ethnically, they belong to the Indo-Mongoloid race and linguistically to the Tibeto-Burman family languages.

The Karbi Hill, politically known as Karbi Anglong is one of the two hills district of present Assam, the other being the North Cachar Hills (presently known as Dima Hasao). At the beginning in 1951, when the districts were carved out, they were known as the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills. In 1952, both the Karbis and Dimasas were granted autonomy in the form of separate District Councils under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian constitution. The present Karbi Anglong at that time was a sub division, namely, the Mikir Hills and this was further renamed as Mikir Hill District in the year 1971 by separating North Cachar district from it. Since 1976, the name of the district was changed to Karbi Anglong. Again in 1995, the Union Government by granting more powers to the Autonomous District Council upgraded it to Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC).

9.6.1 Genesis of ethnic identity question among the Karbis

As in other hill areas of the then Assam, the ethnic identity

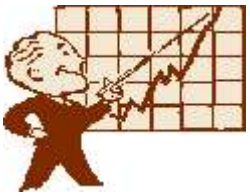
question among the Karbis began to take shape even prior to the independence of the country when a section of the educated Karbis formed the Karbi Adarbar. It is the first national organisation of the Karbis in 1946 to put forward the demand for the creation of a separate district for the ethnic group. It may be mentioned that the Karbis were given representation to the legislature for the first time by the Government of India Act of 1935. The prime motto of the Karbi Adarbar was to unite the hitherto scattered Karbi inhabited areas in to a single political entity to preserve the separate ethnic identity of the tribe. It was because of the organised movement led by the Karbi Adarbar, the Karbis were given a district of their own in 1951 and a district council in the following year. The immediate reason for the sudden spurt of the demand for a separate state for the hill tribes of the then Assam can be traced to the ethnic identity question of the hill tribes who considered the "Official Language Act 1960" passed by the Assam Legislature Assembly as a threat to their separate ethnic existence.

9.6.2 Demand for autonomy in Karbi Anglong

The ethnic identity question was primarily responsible for the demand for autonomy in the hill areas of the then Assam. As in the other hill areas of the undivided Assam, the Mikir Hills also demanded for a separate hill state. By that time, the Karbi Adarbar was in full control of the District Council at Diphu. Although the Mikir Hills District unit of the APHLC (All Party Hills Leader Conference) was formed much later in 1965. Only a number of important Karbi leaders joined the APHLC and intensified the movement for the hill state. Some of the Karbi leaders who associated themselves with the APHLC from its very inception included David Long Ingti, John Ingti Kathar, Moniram Langneh, and Raidang Ingti, etc. The above mentioned Karbi leaders were the former members of the Karbi Adarbar. Raidang Ingti was a member of Mikir Hills District Council at that time. He took active role in organising the APHLC in the Mikir Hills. He was even the a part of

the twelve members APHLC delegation that met Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India in November 1960, to press for the creation of a separate hill state.

The question of ethnic identity crisis of the Karbi once again found prominence in the politics of the district after the AGP government under the leadership of Profulla Kumar Mahanta that assumed power in the state in 1985. Some of the ultra nationalist policies followed by the AGP government were responsible for creating doubt among the tribal population in different parts of Assam including in Karbi Anglong and N.C. Hills. The AGP government had introduced the Assamese language as a compulsory "Third Language" in 1986 and also introduced a new Language Policy, making mandatory the knowledge of Assamese for all recruited in government services. Particularly these two moves of the AGP government created mass discontentment among the ethnic groups of the region which in a way led to the intensification of autonomy demand in the hill districts. A cross section of people, elderly politician and student leaders of the region were agitated over the policies of the AGP government. In the backdrop of such discontent among the people of the hill district, the Congress leaders of Karbi Anglong and N.C. Hills decided to strengthen the autonomous state movement in the region. In this regard a meeting was convened at Haflong on 6th March 1986 in which a new organisation called Central Autonomous State Demands Committee (CASDC) was formed comprising the leaders from both the hill districts. Immediately after its formation, the CASDC leadership decided to pressurise the central government for the creation of an autonomous state for Karbi Anglong and N.C. Hills.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q2. In which year Karbi Anglong was granted the status of Autonomous District Councils?

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.....

Q3. Mention any four districts demanded for the formation of Kamatapur.

.....



9.7 LET US SUM UP

- Autonomy means self governing process and the words is derived from a Greek word which means independent.
- The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India is based on the recommendations of the North East Frontier Tribal and Excluded Areas Sub-committee, popularly known as the Bordoloi Sub-committee.
- The aim and purpose of this autonomy movement is not only to bring change in the existing system but also to augment legitimate expressions of aspirations by the people having a distinct culture, tradition and common pattern of living.
- The Kamatapur movement pressed the Government through persistent agitation that:
  i. The Rajbonshis be recorded separately from the Koch
  ii. The Rajbonshis be recognised as Kshatriyas by decent.



9.8 FURTHER READINGS

- Dutta P.S. (ed 1993) Autonomy Movements in Assam, vol-1, Cosmos publications; New Delhi.
- George S. Jacob (1989) The Demand for Autonomy/ Statehood in

N.C. Hills and Karbi Anglong: An Overview in B.C. Bhuyan (ed.) "Political Development in the North East"; New Delhi.

- Rao MSA (2002) Social Movements in India, Manohar Publishers and distributiors; New Delhi.
- Shah Ghanashyam (1990) Social Movements in India, Sage publications; New Delhi.
- Sengupta Sarthak (ed.2002) Tribal Studies in North East India, Mittal publications; New Delhi.



9.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Lain King.

Ans to Q No 2: 1995

Ans to Q No 3: Coach Bihar, Nalbari, Malda and Dhubri.



9.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer within 150 words)

Q 1: What is meant by autonomy.

Q 2: Discribe the first phase of Bodo movement.

Long Questions (Answer within 300 - 500 words)

Q 1: Write an essay on the Karbi Movement.

Q 2: Write an essay on inter-community relationship.

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UNIT 10: INSURGENCY IN NORTHEAST INDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning Objectives

10.2 Introduction

10.3 Insurgency in Northeast India: Origin and Development

10.4Insurgency and Postcolonial period

10.5 Major Insurgent Groups in Northeast India

10.6 Let us Sum Up

10.7 Further Readings

10.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

10.9 Model Questions

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- explain the origins and development of insurgency in Northeast India.
- understand the political processes at work in Northeast India.
- identify the major insurgent groups in Northeast India.
- conceptualize the role of the state and ethnicity vis-à-vis militias.

10.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to the problem of insurgency in Northeast India. Even after seven decades of India's independence, insurgency has remained an ever-persisting problem in this part of the country. Popular imagination of Northeast India as a volatile and unstable region has somewhat attenuated owing to the growing political visibility of the region outside the lens of India's security concern, as the development paradigm has taken over. This does not discount the fact that much of these imaginations are still dated and stereotypical. The racial trope invoked while clubbing the Northeasterners into a homogenized category is testimony to it. A prime reason for the negativity and misunderstanding that is lashed out towards Northeast India are the recurrent armed conflicts that embroil this territory.

In this unit, you will learn about the origin and development of insurgency in Northeast India, the politics of state-making and its connection with the growth of insurgencies, and about some of the major insurgent groups from this region.



LET US KNOW

State-making: Extending the political reach of the government at the centre by institutionalizing the spaces in the frontier zones.

10.3 INSURGENCY IN NORTHEAST INDIA: ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

The roots of insurgency in Northeast India have manifold connections with the history and geography of the region. Before the colonial state made inroads into this region, a relationship of friendship and familiarity largely prevailed among its people. There was constant and continuous crisscrossing across the geographical boundaries that resulted in the creation of numerous oral narratives of human encounter. Thus, ethnic ties transcended political boundaries imposed by the British regime upon what they considered a 'hinterland'—large swathes of unexplored terrain inhabited by people aloof from the notion of civilization. With later developments like the demarcation of boundaries through administrative categories like hills, plains, inner line, outer line, frontier, trans-frontier, reserves etc., inter-ethnic tensions got heightened. Earlier, friction between the different ethnic communities was confined mostly to the overlapping of spatial domains. Once the boundary-making exercises caught pace, the ethnic ties of friendship weakened for the worse. Thus, the first seeds of identity politics were sown. Boundaries were drawn up arbitrarily to convert an entire geography into a frontier zone.

For the British, nothing was more important than marking their presence and legitimacy over a huge geographical expanse through territorial demarcation. What they saw in the Northeastern region of India was an immense economic potential, which they decided to tap before anyone else

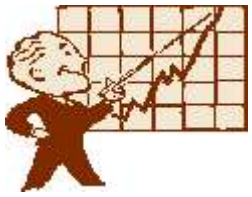
given the fact that the region acted as an international crossroad. What followed next was a series of meticulous exercises aimed at transforming the crossroad into a colonial 'resource' frontier. New routes were created and traditional routes were cleared to make way for increased surveillance of indigenous communities. Cartographic expeditions under the supervision of Political Officers or Agents were carried out into the deep reaches of the territory. There are instances of officers heaving insults to Naga people demanding at gunpoint that they carry their luggage and provisions during these expeditions. When plantations were opened and were subsequently extended up to the foothills, restrictions on the movement of people ensued as traditional routes were brought under the jurisdiction of the British. This is just one of the many examples by which the British appropriated the territory and enacted policies in their favor. An implicit feeling of hostility was brewing in the native population against the settlers, for the British were in a mission to annex every inch of the land, even those that served as traditional hunting grounds for the tribesmen. At the same time, Christianity was fed to them as a sort of civilizing grace. The colonial framework that was adopted for Northeast India by the British was inherently capitalist in design and exploitative in nature. The genesis of armed struggles in Northeast India dates back to colonial times, when events like the Kuki Rebellion of 1917 broke out against forceful colonial labour corps. Gradually discontented woes swept the entire landscape and the indigenous communities came to be fuelled by antipathy towards the British. As such, anti-colonial attacks were mounted on the British such as those in Kohima and Khonoma. The final result of the battles might have favored the British, but the spirit of resentment and anger in the so-called 'savage' could not be crushed.

The haunting presence of a colonial past hindered the all-embracing acceptance of belonging to an Indian nation-state when the baton of power traded places. In the elected political representatives from the Indian mainland, Northeastern people saw a rebirth of the British. Although the actors have changed, the people see the postcolonial state as bequeathing the same colonial legacy. To provide for the workforce during the expansion of railroad into and within this territory and also an informal labour force to till the wastelands, hordes of labourers were brought in from Mymensingh,

Sylhet, Rangpur—now in Bangladesh. Migrants from the Chota Nagpur Belt were moved in to work for the tea plantations. Hence, there prevailed a climate of loss—of territories, of homelands, of spaces—to outsiders. The same could be said to have applied in the postcolonial era. Scholars have argued that today the colonial frontier is conceived primarily as a postcolonial 'borderland'. The logic of 'violence against violence' has been the mainstay of postcolonial politics in the region. Time and again the loyalty of the people inhabiting this region has been questioned, on grounds of the assumption that they could forge alliances with enemy states. The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), a counter insurgency measure resting in the hands of the Indian nation-state has been employed to tame this suspect loyalty by use of force and bestowing politico-legal impunity to its stakeholders. Renaming of territories like the ones in Arunachal Pradesh with 'Indianized/ Sanskritized' varieties has furthered the incorporation of the multitude of ethnic communities into the fold of the singular category of Northeast India. Much of the insurgent movements have stemmed from such drills, as animated responses. On a side note, development projects in Northeast India never took place until very recently. The region has been ravaged by a high degree of poverty and unemployment. Coupled with these, there is a sense of emotional disconnect with the entity of mainland India. There also have been allegations of negligence on the part of the Indian nation to bring about growth and prosperity in this region. Those among the citizens who were disillusioned with the political machinations took to arms to protect the interests of the 'sons of the soil' and remove the non-native from the land. These are briefly the causal factors that led to the growth of insurgency in Northeast India. Subir Bhaumik, a journalist of international repute, has classified the types of insurgencies in Northeast India under the following categories :

- Insurgencies that are secessionist in aspirations.
- Insurgencies crying a separatist rhetoric but having autonomist aspirations, and thus can be co-opted.
- Insurgencies having separatist overtones but ultimately co-opted by the Indian state through sustained negotiations.

- Insurgencies with trans-regional dimensions that sought or found allies in mainland India.
- Insurgencies with pronounced autonomist aspirations aligned with tribal and ethnic concerns.
- Insurgencies that work as proxies of more powerful groups.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. In which year the Kukis rebelled against the British for the first time.

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.....

Q2. Name two places from where labourers were brought to till the wastelands in North east India.

.....

.....



ACTIVITY 1

1. Trace the origins of insurgency in Northeast India.

.....

.....

2. Determine some of the causal factors responsible for the growth of insurgency in Northeast India.

.....

.....

10.4 INSURGENCY AND POSTCOLONIAL POLITICS IN NORTHEAST INDIA

From 1947 up until the 1960s, there was a drive by the government at the centre to reconfigure the geography of Northeast, for purposes of administration and control. Four states were carved out from Assam—Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Mizoram. On the other hand, the princely states of Manipur and Tripura too became a part of Northeast

India. Accordingly, the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution was enacted to provide special provisions to people from the tribal belts.Political autonomy of these areas was a necessary trade-off to achieve the integration of hill people with those from the plains. This was the most significant reason for instituting the Sixth Schedule. People inhabiting these areas were clubbed under the category of 'Mongoloid fringe' that all the more justified their incorporation into the pan-Indian ethos, as a means to correct their primordial allegiances. All of these exercises were aimed at constructing a nationalized space in the Northeast so as to achieve its political and economic integration with the rest of the country. State presence in the border areas had to be made strong, as the geographical landmass of Northeast India shared its boundaries with China, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. The security paradigm springs into action here. SanjibBaruah calls the maintenance of such a regional order as 'cosmetic federalism'. Under such a framework, security and development were coterminous with each other. The power of the Centre over the Northeastern states was overarching and the Centre always took the key decisions. Hence, it was not a true form of federalism. It enabled the Indian state to make inroads into the region which was mostly outside the domain of federal governance. On top of that, indigenous communities began to see immigration—both external and internal, as a threat to the ethnic composition of Northeast India. There have been repeated calls for making Assam a tribal state to ascertain constitutional safeguards and land rights, against encroachment by immigrants. Under such a backdrop, insurgency grew out of popular resentment, of which most groups were composed of ethnic militias. People from Northeast India were subjected to the binding nature of citizenship and governance. Citizen-centric policies were kept on the back foot and military actors were instituted at the helm of civil life. To quell the demands for recognition and movements towards assertion of identities, military generals were appointed as governors, who also engaged themselves in scholarly pursuits to generate an alternative discourse for peace and stability. The agenda was of containment of uprisings. However, such operations failed to alter the deplorable conditions of life, and in some cases entered into a nexus with the militias by means of soft power. Strategies of counter insurgency, as opposed to its intended

objectives of ameliorating the problem of insurgency instead beefed it up. General conditions of poverty and unemployment also stymied the counter insurgency operations and more and more youths got recruited into these militias seeing the prospects of money raised through extortion demands. All in all, insurgency in Northeast India is deeply intertwined with the kind of political programmes practiced by the state, which is more interventionist and short-termed than well-defined and sustainable.



ACTIVITY 1

1. What was the key reason that led to the incorporation of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution?

   .....

   .....

2. What do you understand by the term 'cosmetic federalism'?

   .....

   .....

10.5 MAJOR INSURGENT GROUPS OF NORTHEAST INDIA

- **Nagaland**

The state of Nagaland has been home to one of the longest running insurgencies in the world, now bifurcated into a dyadic factional division. There was a long-standing demand for secession of Nagaland from the Indian Union citing its geographical, cultural, and emotional distance from India, and Nehru's apathy towards respecting the Naga way of life. When petitions and public say were sidelined, the Naga National Council formed (NNC) a parallel government in 1954 and began to conduct armed attacks on the Indian state. The ideologue of this insurgent uprising was an Angami Naga named Zapu Phizo. The NNC was a pro-independence organisation that demanded sovereignty for the Naga people. It mainly resorted to guerilla tactics and received training from the erstwhile East Pakistan. When counter insurgency measures were tightened on the NNC during the 70s, there was internal discord within the organisation. The NNC faction situated in Burma

thought of the mainstream NNC group as fostering traitors (Cline, 2006). In 1980, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) was formed under the leadership of Isak Cwu and Thuengaling Muivah. This group further split along tribal lines into two opposing groups—the NSCN(IM) led by Isak and Muivah and the NSCN(K) led by S.S. Khaplang. These factions agreed to a compromise by raising demands of a Greater Nagaland (Nagalim) in return for a loss of sovereignty. Both the groups are now in a ceasefire agreement with the Indian government.

- **Assam**

The most formidable insurgent force in Assam is the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA). It formed against the backdrop of the issue of illegal immigration that was raised during the Assam Movement. ULFA was formed on 7th April 1979. Riding on the backs of the immigrant issue, it pressed demands for the independence of Assam. ULFA was involved in a series of high-profile kidnappings of businessman, tea estate owners, and a Soviet engineer. The rise of ULFA was a variant of Assamese sub-nationalism. It started out as a political force but soon distanced itself from its political roots to take the militant turn. ULFA found endorsement in the Assamese collective imagination, which is reflected by the fact that in one particular year MaghBihu celebrations were held in a sombre manner to protest the military operations against the ULFA cadres. The public endorsement of ULFA has waned ever since it got its hands red with the blood of innocent children and women at the Dhemaji Blasts of 2004.The Peoples' Consultative Group (PCG) formed to carry forward peace talks with the central government on behalf of the ULFA. Later, a pro-talk group emerged from the ranks of the 28th Battalion to negotiate the peace talks.

Another major insurgent group from Assam is the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), which splited from the Bodo Security Force (BSF) formed on 3rd October 1986. The demands of this group have been that of a sovereign homeland in the form of Bodoland, the establishment of a democratic society, and the use of the Roman script for the Bodo language in lieu of the Devanagiri script. There was another Bodo insurgent group

operating under the banner of Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) that was short-lived and got neutralized with the establishment of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). The NDFB perpetrated multiple attacks on other tribes and communities, thus fanning the flames of the inter-ethnic clashes across the state. It was severely reprimanded by all sections of the society during the blast in Ganeshguri Flyover on 30th October 2008.

- **Mizoram**

The Mizo National Front (MNF) was the main insurgent group of Mizoram, formed in the year 1961. The demands of the MNF were almost similar with the NDFB. However, peace negotiations took flight early on and the movement was suppressed long before it could have caused substantial damage. An agreement was signed between the two camps in 1986 and the MNF publicly gave up the demand for Mizoram's sovereignty. Many militants were co-opted to the various wings of the government and were given good positions.

- **Manipur**

Manipur is home to a number of insurgent groups. Some of the significant ones among them are: United National Liberation Front (UNLF), People's Liberation Army (PLA), and Peoples' Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK). These Meitei insurgent groups worked in unison with those from neighboring Nagaland and Mizoram, coordinating their maneuvers while launching offensives against the Indian state. Because of the hill-valley divide that is so conspicuous in Manipur, there emerged ethnic militias from the hills too—like the Kuki National Army (KNA). The KNA have crossed paths with NSCN (IM) for the latter's aggression in hill areas.

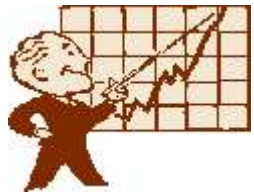
- **Tripura**

Tripura's indigenous communities have been at the mercy of immigrants from outside who settled there in huge numbers and reduced the original Tripuri people to a paltry 28.5% of the population by 1981. Being able to makes sense of their minority status in their own homeland, the Tripuri

Volunteer Force (TVF) which later became the Tripura National Volunteers Force (TNVF) went on a massacring spree killing hundreds of Bengali people. This group, led by Bijoy Hrangkhawl later entered into a ceasefire agreement with the government. Those cadres who refused to surrender went on to form the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF). The ATTF however suppressed its revolutionary zeal in order to bring lasting stability to the region, which is why it aligned itself with the left-front government.

Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh

In both these states, the intensity of insurgent operations was in a diminutive form. The prominent low-intensity insurgency campaigners in these states were: in Meghalaya—the Hynniewtrep NationalLiberation Council (HNLC), and in Arunachal Pradesh—the Arunachal Dragon Force (ADF), and the Arunachal Peoples Liberation Army (APLA).



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q3. ULFA (Pro-talk) emerged from a faction of the 28th Battalion. (True/False).

Q4. The KNA is a Meitei insurgent group. (True/False).



ACTIVITY 1

Find out the powerful and popular rule

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10.6 LET US SUM UP

- In this unit, you have learnt about how insurgency originated and developed through across time in Northeast India. You also learnt about some of the major insurgent groups of Northeast India.

- The British started to draw arbitrary boundaries in this region in order to transform it into a resource frontier.
- The Indian nation-state wanted to make sure that ethnic ties coincide with the political boundaries and does not transcend them.
- Postcolonial politics in Northeast India has been a combination of development, security and counterinsurgency measures.
- All the major insurgent groups emerged under the same socio-political climate of marginalization and political invisibility.
- The peace negotiations by the various insurgent groups have had varying degrees of success.



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10.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: 1917

Ans to Q No 2: Sylhat, Rangpur

Ans to Q No 3: True

Ans to Q No 4: False

10.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer within 150 words)

Q 1: Write about the insurgency in Manipur.

Q 2: What are the different types of insurgencies found in Northeast India?

Long Questions (Answer within 300 -500 words)

Q 1: Explain the notion of 'cosmetic federalism' with respect to postcolonial politics in Northeast India.

Q 2: Why have counter insurgency measures by the Indian government not achieved much success in bringing about peace in Northeast India?

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UNIT 11 : LAND RELATIONS IN NORTHEAST INDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

11.1 Learning Objectives

11.2 Introduction

11.3 Land Tenure

11.4 Categories of Land Tenure

11.5 Land Relations in Northeast India

11.6 Let Us Sum Up

11.7 Further Reading

11.8 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

11.9 Model Questions

11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to, understand the concept of Land relations in generals, with specific focus on land relations in Northeast India, land holding patterns and the agrarian structure. Focus is also on understanding the process of changes in Land Relations among the hill tribes of the region.

11.2 INTRODUCTION

At the onset, it is important to understand that land ownership can be permanent or for a pre-determined period. Therefore, the institution of occupancy gives rise to a convention of land relations different from ownership. These can be categorised as permanent tenancy, tenancy for a fixed period of time, or even tenancy at will. It is imperative to note that different types of land relations are closely associated to the type of agriculture.

Herein, it comes vital to understand, the connotation of an agrarian structure. The term agrarian structure signifies a framework of social associations in which all agricultural undertakings such as production, marketing, and consumption are carried out. The organization or the structure of social associationsregulates how and by whom land is cultivated, which

variety of crops can be produced and for what purpose, how food and agricultural revenues can be disseminated, and in what manner or in what conditions the agrarian segment is connected to the remaining of economy of a society. Note, that in an agrarian country like India, wherein the majority of population still dwells in villages and are directly or indirectly connected with agriculture the primary means of livelihood, dominations over ownership of land and rural resources continue along with caste-based discrimination and subjugation. The control over land, credit and markets are in the hands with a few individuals causing a social developmentcategorized by a stiff class structure connected to land and land relations. Additionally, the agrarian relations in India have been manifested by numerous struggles of the oppressed class.

11.3 LAND TENURE

Land tenure is the association, legally or customarily defined, among people, as individuals or groups, in connection to their land. Herein, it is pertinent to mention that, “land” is used here to as an encompassing term for other natural resources like water and trees.) Take note that, and tenure is an establishment, i.e., rules devised by societies to control behaviour. Rules of tenure outline how property rights to land are to be apportionedinside societies. Such rules describe how admittance is approved to rights to use, control, and land transfer, along withaccompanying responsibilities and limitations. In simple terms, land tenure systems regulates who can utilize what resources for what period of time, and under what circumstances.

Land tenure is an important part of social, political and economic structures. It is multi-dimensional, bringing into play social, technical, economic, institutional, legal and political aspects that are often ignored but must be taken into account. Land tenure relationships may be well-defined and enforceable in a formal court of law or through customary structures in a community. Alternatively, they may be relatively poorly defined with ambiguities open to exploitation.

Land tenure therefore, comprises a network of interconnecting interests. Some of these include:

- **Overriding interests:** this implies that an independent power (for instance, a nation or community has the authorities to assign or reassignland through confiscation, etc.)
- **Overlapping interests:** when several parties are allocated different rights to the same parcel of land (e.g., one party may have lease rights, another may have a right of way, etc.)
- **Complementary interests:** note, when diverse parties share the similar interest in the same plot of land (for example, when members of a group share common privileges to grazing land, etc.)
- **Competing interests:** this suggests that when diverse parties challenge the same benefits in the same plot (for instance when two parties autonomously claim privileges to private use of a plot of agricultural land. Land disputes ascend from contending claims.)

11.4 CATEGORIES OF LAND TENURE

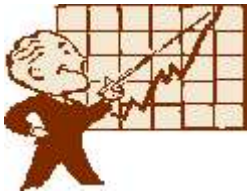
Note that land tenure is often categorised as:

- Private: the allocation of rights to a private party who could be an individual, a married couple, group of people, or corporate organisationsuch as a profitablebusiness or non-profit organization. For instance, inside a community, different families may have privateprivileges to residential plots, agricultural plotsor some trees. While in the process, other members of the same community can be debarred from consuming these properties without the approval of those who hold the privileges.
- Communal: the privileges of commons may existinside a community where each member has the authority to use self-sufficiently the properties of the community. For instance, members of a community may have the authority for cattle grazing on a shared pasture.
- Open access: specific rights are not assigned to anyone and no-one can be excluded. This typically includes marine tenure where access

to the high seas is generally open to anyone; it may include rangelands, forests, etc, where there may be free access to the resources for all. (An important difference between open access and communal systems is that under a communal system non-members of the community are excluded from using the common areas.)

- State: On the other hand, property rights that are allocated to certain authority in the public domain. For instance, in certain countries, forest lands fall under the directive of the state, whether at a central or decentralized level of administration.

Based on the above given below are few questions that will help you recapitulate the introductory part of this unit.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. What do you understand by land tenure?

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Q2. What is meant by an agrarian society?

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Q3. What are the different categories of land tenure?

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Q4. What is land administration?

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Q5. Define tenure security.

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Having discussed, the overview on land relations in general, the focus now shifts to Northeast India. Herein the attempt will be to get an outline of the land relations in the region, which has a majority of tribal populace.

11.5 LAND RELATIONS IN NORTHEAST INDIA

The north eastern part of India is principallyoccupied by two groups of people: 1) the tribal people of the mongoloid origin, mainlyinhabiting the mountainous area of the region, 2) the Indo- Aryan group dwelling in the valleys. The region has a cosmopolitan temperament, with inhabitants who have come to inhabit the region at different points in time in history. There has definitelybeen an interchange of ideas and cultures, and in the course of time a society with a comparatively syncretic culture has developed.

In the content of land relations in the region it is important to note that, with the invasion of the region in 1826, the British East India Company got a footing in the area'spolitical management. Consequently,after bringing the region under their political dominion, the British administrationintroduced a fresh political strategy of dividing the region on administrative grounds into a) hill and b) plain areas. "The hill areas were separated into two categories based on their level of development and accessibility: Excluded Areas, and Partially Excluded Areas. The British put restrictions on people from the plains entering both classifications of hill areas and on purchasing or owning land there" (Fernandes and Barbora, 2008).

Note, when India became free, tribal leaders from the region claimed that the state safeguard their culture, identity and provisions. The Fathers of the Indian Constitution developed and combined varied strategies for the tribes of the region. As a result, politically, the region has a multiplicity of administrative constructions. Furthermore, the administrative structureof the region as a whole varies in vital ways from that which exists in the rest of the country.

The Constitution provides special provisions under the Fifth and Sixth Schedules for the management of the Scheduled or Tribal Areas. The Sixth Schedule is applicable to the tribal areas in the Hills of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and the Fifth Schedule, to the scheduled areas in the remaining of the country. But, the hill areas of Manipur occupied by the tribes, and those which the plains tribes of Assam inhabit are not covered by the provisions of either schedule. Note that, Nagaland is administered by Article 371A, where

it is specified: “Notwithstanding anything in this constitution – no Act of Parliament in respect of (i) religious or social practices of the Nagas; (ii) Naga customary law procedure; (iii) administration of civil and criminal justice; and (iv) ownership of land and its resources shallapply to the state of Nagaland.” Akin to this,protections are made for the state of Mizoram under Article 371G and for the tribal population of Manipur under Article 371C. Arunachal Pradesh enjoys certain provisionsof the States coming under the Sixth Schedule do (Fernandes and Barbora, 2008).

- **Assam**

At this juncture it is pertinent to note, unlike the rest of the subcontinent, Assam retained several elements of the tribal economy well into the 19th century. Post the British annexation the scenariosteadilytransformed. Post the turn ofthe 20th century, the alteration was more radical as therevenue abstraction of the colonial rule congregated with the rent and profit motivations of the local landlords and merchant wealth respectively. Supply of labour was expedited through immigration. The new system of complex of production was nevertheless not influential in bringing in amassing of productive capital. Production evolved by outspreading the agrarian boundary. Growing pressure on the land led to the enlargementof the ranks of landless labourers and tenant cultivators. Additional,emblems of subcontinental semi-feudalism such as moneylending, interweaved transactions and extensive reach of market became a prevalent practice. It thus resulted, in the production mode of the regionspeedily became one with the remaining of British India. A nuanced understanding of the modern state of Assam cannot impedeinvestigation of the tidal waves of men and money from over a century ago.

- **Meghalaya**

In the case of the state of Meghalaya, the system of land tenure and land ownership is very multifaceted. The system comprises of two authorities i) the traditional and ii) non-traditional institutions. The traditional organizationsoperate on the basis of indigenous customary laws and customswhich have not yet been collated and are founded on customs and

treaties practiced by the people since ancient times. As time passed, with the adoption of the Constitution of India, the Sixth Schedule presented the structure for the formation of the Autonomous District Councils in the tribal areas of India. Subsequently, the Autonomous District Councils were founded in the state of Meghalaya. The Autonomous District Councils, alongside, the State, forms the non-traditional organizations to administer the land related matters. It is seen that people still,choose customary laws (under the leadership and authority of the traditional establishments) to continue, quotingconservation of the native culture and heritage as the key reason. On the other hand, noticeable changes in land use pattern has been witnessed, where people are opting in for profitable farming with the jhum cultivation being substituted with settled cultivation.

- **Arunachal Pradesh**

In case of Arunachal Pradesh, it was on March 12, that the Arunachal Pradesh (Land Settlement and Records) (Amendment) Bill, 2018, was passed by the state Assembly. The Bill bestows ownership of land for the first time on the citizens of the state. Formerly, under the Arunachal Pradesh (Land Settlement and Records) Act of 2000, inhabitants of the state did not have entitlement to land titles. The lone document the native population received to stake entitlement to a portion of land was a “land possession certificate”,allotted by the deputy commissioner of a district. The allotment is subject to thesanction by the forest department along with the village council. However, actual ownership continued to be vested with the state. The amendment thus, enables people with lawful land ownership certificates, whereby, owners of their land and permit them to lease it for up to 33 years. At end of this timeframe, the lease can be stretched for another 33 years.Note, that the land tenure system in Arunachal Pradesh, so far, has often been manifested by inconsistencies. Like other states of the North East, Arunachal Pradesh is the abode to numerous Scheduled Tribe. Each tribe has its individual customary laws, abiding by which it commonlyadministers daily businesses, including land transactions. Conversely, in contrast to other tribal states and tribal majority areas in the

North East, the Constitution does not present legal sanctity to this structure of local authority by customary laws in Arunachal Pradesh. Yet, the tribe's people of the state continue to give preeminence to customary laws. In most circumstances, the state government abstains from interfering. As social scientist Walter Fernandes states, "in theory the formal law applies but in practice the customary law holds sway

- **Manipur**

The Manipur Land Reform and Land Revenue Act, 1960 is applicable to the entire valley but is applicable only to aninsignificant portion of the hill area. Over the years, the state government of Manipur has endeavored to legislate numerous land laws with some amendments like the New Land Use Policy, 2014. Herein, it is pertinent to mention that, each time the state government endeavors to do so, it restores ethnic polarisation and increasedskirmishes within the state. Note that, the introduction of any legislation such as land tenure in the hill areas is perceived with mistrust and ruminates being disparaging to tribal land ownership system,founded on traditional customary laws. Popular sensitivity is that, such a law will erode the customary polity but also downgrade the tribal's and isolate them from their tenure and possession of the land.

- **Tripura**

The tribal's of Tripura present a different picture. Research has shown that the tribal's of the state face a severedifficulty of landlessness. The underlyingcausesrecognized are the internal organization, and the flow of immigrant populace from 1947 to 1971 from the erstwhile East Pakistan (present day Bangladesh). In earlier times, tribal villages had some form of sharedland ownership that was acknowledged by the Raja (king) of Tripura. Everyvillage had a chief who relished customary rights of control on the village and its individuals. People paid taxes to the raja through the village chief. It was in the year1886, the law of 'Landlord and Tenant' was approved by the autonomous state of Tripura. The law contained all the rudiments of changingcommunal land into individual property, implying private tenure of land. The individuals who profited from the law were the Bengali settlers

and the tribal chiefs. The second cause, is the rehabilitation scheme of the state. The state supportedacquisition scheme assisted in obtaining land for the colony scheme, under which it assimilated 26,101 hectares and apportionedthat land to the immigrants from Bangladesh. “Over a period of time, the immigrant settlers further accelerated the process of expropriation of the lands of the tribal farmers” (Bhattacharyya 1988).

- **Nagaland**

Dissimilarfrom the Western perception of land which is grounded on the utility of the object for human development, while the Naga’s recognize it to be much beyond the object utility but life itself. Naga’s consider land is a gift, bestowed by nature, which is to be shared by all. For them the presence of their God is demonstrated through the land itself.Therefore, they feel a profound sense of mystic, spiritual, and familial affection with the land, so much so that their complete socio-cultural and economic life rotates round the land to which they belong. Thus, as per Naga convention it is the common property that clamps the utmost significance and not the individuals. Consequently, most of the land in Nagaland belongs to the community and it is deemed to outrageous and reprehensiblefor a community, clan, family or individual concerned in case any ancestral or individual land is sold or transferred to others.Land ownership in Naga areas can be categorized as follows: i) common village land- every Naga village has definite portions of the village land, demarked as common village land possessed by the whole village and under the authority of the village. ii) Clan land¬- clans have a definite plot of land over which they have complete privileges and ownership inside the village. iii) Lineage land- land owned by a family based on lineage and kin group. iv) Individual land- in this case sale or relocation of land from one individual to another or from one clan to another is permitted within the village approved standards. On the other hand, selling of land outside the village is forbidden with calamitous consequences.

- **Mizoram**

The customary system of land administration in Mizoram was positioned around the village and grounded on the principle of communal land

management. The Village Chief was customarilyconsidered as the outright proprietor of all lands inside his territorial jurisdiction and he was liable for distribution and administration of land within the village. The ordinarily practiced form of agriculture in Mizoram was shifting cultivation, which was locally known asjhum. Through the course of enormous political, social and economic evolution between the 1950s and 1970s, Mizoram sustained with the laws it inbred from its days as the Mizo District. From the time Mizoram was raised to a Union Territory and to statehood, no new land laws were sanctioned and the numeroussimultaneous land laws were not reconciled, which frequentlyfashionedcircumstances of indistinctness. To make up for this void in the legal framework, in 2013, the state of Mizoram sanctioned the new Mizoram (Land Revenue) Act, 2013 and the Mizoram (Land Revenue) Rules, 2013. This Code revoked all preceding legislations governing land allotment, management and land revenue.

- **Sikkim**

In 1975 when Sikkim became an Indian state, the first step taken by the government was the elimination of mediators. Consequently, it made the provision of land rights to the landless rudders, imposed ceiling laws of landholding, dissemination of surplus land and fortification of occupancy rights through statutes like the Sikkim Cultivators Protection Act (1975), the Sikkim Agricultural Land Ceiling and Reforms Act (1978), and the Sikkim Land (Requisition and Acquisition) Act 1978. Land tenure of the nativeLepchas and Bhutias, which were sheltered earlier by the revenue order no 1 of 1917, continued to be so post the unification of Sikkim with India because of the tribal status of these two ethnic communities.



11.6 LET US SUM UP

- In summation it is imperative to understand that, land, particularly for the tribals, has persisted as the single most significant physicalownership.

- "Land as a territory plays an important role in shaping thecultural and ethnic identity.

  Their mode of livelihood has led them to develop asymbiotic relationship with their environment and also evolve culture, customs,practices and social control mechanism meant to ensure their sustainable use" (Fernandes2003: 246).
- From the above the following points come to the fore. In the hills of north east approximately two systems of land tenure existing simultaneously: (a) community tenure of land in regions where shifting cultivation is still in trend(b) individual possession of land which is moveable only amongst members of local tribal community.



11.7 FURTHER READING

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11.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Land tenure is the association, whether legally or customarily demarcated, among people, as individuals or groups, in relation to land.

Ans to Q No 2: An agrarian society is any civilization whose economy is grounded on producing and sustaining crops and farmland.

Ans to Q No 3: Land tenure is often classified as Private, Communal, Open Access and State.

Ans to Q No 4: Land administration is defined as the manner in which the rules of land tenure are applied and made functional.

Ans to Q No 5: Tenure security is defined as the certainty that a person's privileges to land will be acknowledged by others and sheltered in cases of definite contests.



11.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer within 150 words)

1) Write a note on the connection between land relations and types of agriculture.
2) Elucidate how land is important in a tribal society?

B) Long Questions (Answer within 300-500 words)

1) Write an essay on the genesis and evolution of the existing pattern of land tenure system in Northeast India.
2) Discuss with the help of relevant examples the economic implications of the land tenure system.

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UNIT 12: ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN NORTH EAST INDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

12.1 Learning objectives

12.2 Introduction

12.3 Economic problems of NE India

12.3.1 Unemployment

12.3.2 Infrastructure

12.3.3 Industrialization

12.4 Lets sum up

12.5 Further reading

12.6 Answers to check your progress

12.7 Model questions

12.1 LEARNING OBJCTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to-

- recognize the economic problems of NE India
- understand causes of these economic problems
- understand different factors of unemployment in Ne India
- understand infrastructural growth and development of NE India
- understand major causes of industrial underdevelopment and its implications

12.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces you to the economic problems of NE India. North-East is comprised of 8 states. Though all the 8 states have cultural, linguistic differences, it can be said that colonial history and social interaction of the people have given rise to common problems within this region. Thus Problems related to economy, development, exploitation can be seen through a common framework.

12.3 ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

It has been argued that economic problems of this region have historical roots. Colonial history and exploitations have had long lasting impact on its economic infrastructures. Even after independence from colonial rule, specter of colonial history is still following its economic sectors. In spite of having natural resources, economic development of this region is lagging behind the overall development of the country. Economic underdevelopment of this region has multiple factors and causes. All these have been discussed in the following sections.

12.3.1 Unemployment

Unemployment is the situation of actively looking for employment but not being currently employed. Unemployment can be regarded as a huge economic problem. Unemployment can also be regarded as a major social problem because it can lead to other social disasters. In every state a person should get employment according to his/her merit and qualification. Ensuring a decent job according to ones qualification is the prime responsibility of any state. But it has been seen that, in every country unemployment become a visible content. North East India is not indifferent to this. According to employment and unemployment survey 2012-13, conducted by Ministry of labour and employment, unemployment rate among people in the north eastern states are more than the national average. North eastern states like Assam, Manipur, and Arunachal are facing huge unemployment problems. It leads to some other social evils like terrorism, crime and suicide, which will be discussed later. Before understanding social consequences of unemployment, we must know its causes

Causes of unemployment: According to the report published by the ministry of the development of the north east region (DONER), northeastern states have net unemployment rate of 12 per cent. North eastern state Tripura reported India's highest unemployment rate,

25.2 %. Unemployment in this region can be regarded as one of the most alarming threat to country's overall economy.

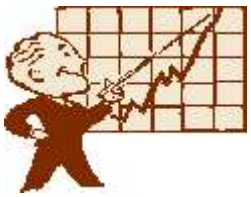
In north east India we can trace multiple causes of unemployment, these are discussed below

- **Colonial exploitation-** North east India was under British-colonial rule for almost 150 years. Though different developmental programmes were initiated by the British, it has been brought to light that their main intention was to export the raw materials. Exploitation of natural resources by the British administration has made hindrance towards economic development in the post independence period.
- **Remoteness-** Geographical remoteness from mainland India is another reason for unemployment in North east India. It has been argued by different scholars that due to geographical remoteness, economic development of this region was undermined by the policy makers of mainland India. Major industries were not been developed in this region in spite of having natural resources and congenial environment. Even after having potentiality in oil and tea sectors, proper initiatives had not been taken by the government to mobilize the youth in it.
- **Corruption-** corruption, Nepotism and red-tapism are another reason for unemployment in North east India. According to different scholars corruption and nepotism by bureaucrats and political leaders have checked the process of economic development in north east India. Funds allocated by the centre were not evenly distributed among the states. On the other hand corruption in public sector jobs has made a hindrance towards inclusion of meritorious students in government jobs. In the context of Assam, recent scams of APSC (Assam Public Service Commission) are a clear example of showing how corruption makes hindrance towards inclusion of capable and qualified students.
- **Terrorism-** North east can be regarded as a hub of terrorist

groups. Decades of economic and political exploitation have been articulated through different insurgent groups and terrorist outfits. Regular ambush, abduction, extortion demands have decreased the chances of establishing new industries in the region. Violent activities of terrorist outfits like ULFA, NDFB, NSCN, PLA etc have made hindrance towards setting up new industries in the region. It is note worthy that terrorism and unemployment have reciprocal relations. Terrorism can be regarded as a consequence of unemployment which further contributes to unemployment. Economic development and industrialization cannot be achieved without proper development of law and order. In North east region, terrorist activities have almost collapsed the law and order situation which ingrained fear among the investors to invest in the region.

- **Transportation -** Geographical remoteness of this region is corresponded by pathetic road connectivity. Though in recent times, some initiatives have been taken yet poor road connectivity and communication of the north-east India can be regarded as major problem towards industrialization and economic development. All these lead to increase in number of unemployment.
- **Employment regeneration -** Even after almost 70 years of independence, proper initiatives were not taken to regenerate employment through introduction of new sectors and new skills. State policies are hovering around traditional and conventional sectors. In this way limited number of government sector could not deal with increase in number of unemployment in the North eastern region.
- **Lack of entrepreneurial skills -** In the era of globalization too much dependence on government sector jobs cannot be accepted as a good exercise. Entrepreneurial skills followed by the ideas of establishing start ups can be an alternative solution to the problems of unemployment. In north east India

mass awareness regarding running a start up business or development of entrepreneurial skills have not been developed, this leads to making people more dependent on public sector jobs only.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. For how many years North-East India was under British rule?

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Q2. Mention two causes of unemployment in North east India.

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.....



ACTIVITY 1

What kind of measures should be taken by the government to deal with unemployment related problems? Discuss.

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Consequences of unemployment: problem of unemployment brings different consequences. Different social evils are the product of unemployment. Unemployment has economic, social and political consequences. These consequences are discussed below

- **Terrorism-** As it has been already mentioned that unemployment have reciprocal relationship with terrorism, it can be said that Terrorist activities are the consequences of unemployment. In states like Manipur, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Assam we can see increasing number of terrorist activities due to increased rate of unemployment. Unemployed educated

youths of this region are gradually fascinated towards terrorist activities because they have seen less chances of getting government jobs. Corruption and nepotism in government job have made them hopeless. On the other hand lack of infrastructure and industrialization has made a huge hindrance towards regeneration of private jobs. Thus they have seen that terrorism followed by abduction; extortion etc can be a profitable business for them to have a decent life style. It has been observed that after 1980s, terrorism becomes a profitable industry in the north east region.

- **Poverty:** poverty can also be regarded as another consequence of unemployment, when the chances of getting private and government jobs become less it leads to dire economic conditions.
- **Crime-** unemployment can lead to criminal activities. Unemployment can instigate people to indulge in criminal activities. Social insecurity and frustration carried by unemployment can instigate people to engross in criminal activities. According to different scholars, increase amount of crimes like robbery, drug dealing, child trafficking, flesh trade etc have direct relation with unemployment.
- **Social insecurity, suicide-** It has been observed that unemployment can bring social insecurity and mental agonies. When people understand his/her self as capable human being, who is capable of doing decent jobs but unable to get it due to corruption or red tapism and nepotism, a sense of frustration and social insecurity gradually emerge in his/her mind . It can lead to deviant social behavior, crimes or suicide.
- **Migration-** In north east India, out migration of youths to other parts of the country is very significantly increasing. Lack of proper infrastructure, prevailing conditions of unemployment and socio-political conditions of the region have inculcated the belief within the youths of this region that economic stereotypes

of this region will never be changed. This belief leads to increase number of out migration of the youths. A huge portion of youths of this region are migrated to Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore for seeking jobs in the private farms.



ACTIVITY 2

Find out the main reasons of increasing terrorist activities in North East India

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ACTIVITY 3

Do you think unemployment is an economic problem? Why?

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.....

12.3.2 Infrastructure

According to Purusottam Nayak, in his paper titled, "Infrastructure: its development and impact on agriculture in north-east India", an inclusive definition of infrastructure is, certain facilities and services rendered to the society on which the structure of the economy largely depends. As it is multidimensional and multipurpose in nature it is accepted as a complementary sector and a boom to other sectors of the economy by creating external economies. Because of its long gestation period and huge establishment and maintenance cost it is generally financed by the government without having any profit motive.

Development of a region depends very much on the availability of its infrastructural facilities. The development of agriculture and industry depends solely on its infrastructure. Without having a strong infrastructural base a region within a country cannot develop its economy. In that context according to P k Dhar, a renowned economist

of Assam, the more important and difficult job in the development process of the country is to provide the basic infrastructural facilities. These infrastructural facilities include various economic and social overhead viz., energy (coal, oil, and electricity), irrigation, transportation and communication, banking, finance, insurance, science and technology and other social overheads like education, health, and hygiene.

Agriculture provides livelihood to 70% of the region's population. In Mizoram, around 51% of the population lives in rural areas and is dependent on agriculture. The figure in Sikkim is high at 89%. However, the pattern of agricultural growth has remained uneven across regions. The states continue to be net importers of food grains even for their own consumption. Though agriculture is the main source of livelihood here but it has been observed that Limited amount of land is available for agriculture. The region has a forest cover of more than 66.1% (ranging from 35.3% in Assam to 90.7% in Mizoram) against the national average of 21.1%. Apart from paddy, rubber, sugarcane, tea etc are cultivated in the region.

Tripura is the chief production hub of rubber. It has been declared as the 'second rubber capital of India' right after Kerala by the Indian Rubber Board. The NE states also produce a substantial percentage of bamboo, accounting for 65% of India's production value and 20% of the global production value. Mizoram alone contributes to around 40% of the country's bamboo production. In agricultural sectors different problems can be observed. Fragmented land holdings by small and marginal farmers which dominate the landholding pattern in the north east is uneconomical. The region has low proportion of irrigated area and investment in building irrigation capacity has been insufficient and ineffective. The use of agricultural inputs in the north east is also low compared to the rest of the country. Fertilizers used per hectare during 2010-11 were negligible in the region, especially in Nagaland (2.35 kg), Arunachal Pradesh (3.01 kg); and between 13 kg in Meghalaya and 63 kg in Assam compared to the national average

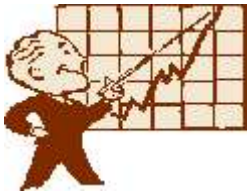
of 135.27 kg per hectare. Also the share of agriculture in total electricity used is just under 1% in all the north-eastern states, except Tripura (7.41%), as against the national average of 20.43%.

Proper development of road and railway connectivity can enhance the chances of economic development. 2578 k.m of total rail length and 1.74 lakh k.m road length is very less in compare to average development of rail and road connectivity of the country. In North east India rail connectivity is not much enthusiastic. One reason for the underdevelopment of railway connectivity is the hilly terrain of this reason. But underdevelopment of railway connectivity had negative impact on its industrialization and economic development. In 12th 5th year plan, a grant of 4500 crore rupees per annum had been promised to be granted. Allocation of such funds has made a little change in railway connectivity. According to the report published in conference of chief ministers of north eastern region, in 12th 5 year plan mentioned that 13 national projects of railway had been successfully implemented in north east. It created a little change in railway connectivity which has an impact on recent development of industrial activities.

In case of airways states in the north eastern region is well connected by air transport conducting regular flights to all major cities in the country. The states also owns several small airstrips for military and private purposes. The region currently has two international airports, 1) Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi international Airport 2)Bir international airport. In Arunachal and Sikkim airport is under construction. Apart from that Assam, Meghalaya Nagaland Manipur and Mizoram have domestic airport too. Though waterways connectivity can be seen in case of Brahmaputra and Barak River it can be argued that water transport infrastructure is not developed in the region. In case of tourism, water ways connectivity can be instrumental factor for change but ignorance on waterways connectivity and transport make a hindrance towards development of tourism as industry in the region.

For any industrial and economic development, infrastructures like those of power and electricity are very important. Earlier in case of power and electricity we cannot say that north eastern region had an advantage. But recent development of hydropower projects has made a significant change. According to the report published by the DONER ministry 3 north eastern states, Sikkim, Tripura and Mizoram became power-surplus state. According to the DONER ministry report 16 hydropower projects is are under construction in the region which includes lower Subansiri project, Kameng project, Umtru hydropower project, Turial project of Mizoram, etc. According to this report completion of these projects will ensure 5576 mw power. Though it has significant impact on prospect industrial development, it has created wider environmental problems too.

For industrial development, educational infrastructure and skill development are essential. In case of north east, several central and state universities, engineering and medical institutions are developed. But development of technical institutes and higher educational-skill base institutes are not up to the mark. Development of IITS, IIMS, NITS are not significant in the region. It is noteworthy that without proper development of skills and entrepreneurial abilities proper industrial development cannot be achieved.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q3. How many international airports does the north-eastern region has?

.....

Q4. How many hydro power projects has been constructed in the north-eastern region?

.....

.....



ACTIVITY 4

1) Find out the names of major hydropower projects completed in the north eastern region

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.....



ACTIVITY 5

Discuss the impact of hydropower projects on environment?

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ACTIVITY 6

Do you think infrastructural development in the north eastern region is convincing?

.....

.....



LET US KNOW

DONER means Ministry for Development of Northeast India. It is a nodal department of central government to deal with the matters related to the socio-economic development of the north eastern states. It was established in 2001.

12.3.3 Industrialization-

According to encyclopedia of Britannica, industrialization is the process of converting to a socio-economic order in which industry is dominant. In north east India though we have seen the immense potentiality for industrial development yet due to some reasons such developments have not been taken place. Tea and oil can be regarded as two important industries of North East. Tea industry in Assam accounts for nearly 53% all India's production. On the other hand oil

industry has a historical context In Assam. Assam has Asia's largest Oil refinery in Digboi. In spite of having all such resources industrial development have not been taken place convincingly. In tea sector problems of small tea planters and medium tea planters were not adequately addressed by the governments. There has been a huge ongoing debate on quality of the tea products in North East. In Oil sectors proposed auctions of oil fields in Assam showed huge loss of ONGC and Assam petro chemicals limited. In case of silk industry, a village of Assam, Sualkuchi got its prominence due to the presence of cottage industry. It has been regarded as Manchester of Assam. Meghalaya has a strong reservoir of lime stones, granite which is a potential source of cement industry. In case of bamboo industry and handloom, Manipur and Tripura have huge potentialities. As it has been already discussed, rubber production has another potential in North eastern region. Bamboo production in Sikkim can also be a potential industrial development. In case of tourism it has been observed that scenic beauty of Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Gangtok, etc. have attracted tourist of the different countries, special festivals like Hornbill festival, Tawang festival, Ambubachi mela have attracted tourists from different parts of the world. Presence of the rivers like the Brahmaputra, the Barak, the Kaladan, etc, presence of world's largest and smallest river islands, presence of the places of highest rainfall, cleanliest village of Asia has made northeast one of the important destinations for the tourist. In spite of having all such facilities tourism industry has not been developed up to the mark in the region.

Main reasons for this underdevelopment are:

- Colonial oppression and exploitation
- Post-independent negligence followed by unequal distribution of resources.
- Corruption
- Underdevelopment of infrastructure

- Insurgency and violence
- Lack of proper industrial policies for North east.
- Lack of entrepreneurial skills of the inhabitants.
- Idleness and lack of strong commitment by the people and government. It has been seen that lack of commitment and dedication on the part of the people become a major hindrance towards industrial growth.
- Illegal migration and its pressure on economy. Illegal migration has exerted extra pressure on economy.

It can be argued that implementation of proper industrial policy, development of infrastructure, entrepreneurial skills, allotment of large grants, employment of marketing strategies, arrangement of peace talks with insurgents groups can enhance the chances of northeast to be shaped as an industrial zone.



12.4 LET US SUM UP

- DONER ministry and government of India have taken initiatives to develop industrial conditions of the region.
- Agriculture, road and railway infrastructure development, air connectivity, skill development initiatives have been taken up by the governments.
- Recently a programme called “Advantage Assam” has been launched in Assam to attract investors. As part of this programme more than 200 MOUs of worth rupees 100000 crore were signed. As part of that TATA group has come up to build cancer hospitals in Assam.
- Industrial development is further ensured by declaring Guwahati and Shillong as part of 100 smart cities project.
- Peace talks with ULFA, NSCN,NNC,KLNF,NDFB(R) etc are important leap towards creation of peaceful environment, which will emancipate industrial growth further.



12.5 FURTHER READING

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12.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: 150 year

Ans to Q No 2: colonial exploitation, remotive

Ans to Q No 3: 2

Ans to Q No 4: 16



12.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer with 150 words)

Q 1: Mention two consequences of unemployment.

Q 2: Mention two causes of underdevelopment of the industrial sector.

Long Questions (Answer with 300 - 500 words)

Q 1: Discuss the main factors of un-employment in North-east India.

Q 2: Do you think infrastructural development of North East India is sufficient to have industrial development?

Q 3: What are the consequences of unemployment in NE India?

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UNIT 13: DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHEAST INDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

13.1 Learning Objectives

13.2 Introduction

13.3 Development in Northeast India

13.4 North Eastern Council and its significance

13.5 The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region

13.6 Look East Policy and Northeast India

13.7 Let Us Sum up

13.8 Further Readings

13.9 Answers to Check your Progress

13.10 Model Questions

13.1 LEARNING OBJCTIVES

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

- explain the significance of North Eastern Council
- learn about the Ministry Development of North Eastern Region
- conceptualise the idea of Look East Policy and its relevance to Northeast India

13.2 INTRODUCTION

Over the years development of the northeastern region in India has been one of the major concerns. Towards this end the North eastern council (NEC) and the Ministry of Development of the North Eastern Region (MDONER) has played a major role. In this unit we will disscuss about the role of NEC and MDONER in details.

13.3 DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHEAST INDIA

Development in Northeast India has been mainly based on security concerns and thus the centre's state-centric approach has kept the region mostly underdeveloped and isolated.

The discourse of development here has taken the shape of nationalising a frontier space. Northeast India as a conceptual category has been mostly seen as a frontier region. The security-driven concern has led to the emergence of small, dependent states which form autonomous units of the Indian federal polity. Here comes in the idea of 'logic of developmentalism' which is believed to be deep-rooted in the Indian state's various institutes, with the goal of nationalising space. The centre's approach to development in this region is thus seen as the everyday control over this frontier space. The region's governmental infrastructure has been crucially redesigned and re-oriented with the formal institutional apparatus of Indian state governments. The notion of underdevelopment in the context of Northeast India is very common as through it, the necessity of development in the region becomes self-evident. As Sachs comments, development is much more than just a socio-economic endeavour and that it is a perception which models reality as well as a myth that comforts societies.

However, the development of the region can be understood as federal only in a cosmetic sense, as the central government still continues to exercise dominant control over the region's decision-making as well as the road to development. With the authority and capacity of the centre to determine the region's political developments, it has been possible for its penetration into the remote areas of the region to embrace them within its fold of developmentalism. Such control is also manifested through process like the planning, designing and financing the region's development projects where the centre plays a major role. The Ministry of DoNER is a manifestation of such influencing efforts which no other region of the country has such a presence in New Delhi.

While discussing the issue of development in Northeast India, it is also necessary to discuss about the status of human development in the region. It is important to mention that the scenario is not very different from the nation as a whole. Although the region witnessed improvements in the last decade of the twentieth century, it still lacks behind in many aspects for example, literacy and health. Also, contrary to popular perception, the status of women in the region is questionable as there is seen a great amount of gender disparity. In fact, it has been very high in Tripura and Assam



ACTIVITY 1

Answer the following:

1) What is the logic of developmentalism associated with?

.....

.....

2) What is cosmetic federalism?

.....

.....

13.4 NORTH EASTERN COUNCIL AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

North Eastern Council is a statutory body and a nodal agency for the socio-economic development of the North Eastern Region. It consists of the Governors and Chief Ministers of all the eight states of the Northeast, including Sikkim, apart from the Chairman and three Members who are nominated by the President of India. Constituted in 1971 by a parliamentary act, the council has been playing a significant role in setting forth a dynamic and rigorous form of economic development in the region. It is listed as one of the associate organisations of the Ministry of DONER. It comprises as its members the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. Its headquarters is located in Shillong, Meghalaya. It has both balanced development and security as its twin objectives. It played an instrumental role in the preparation of North Eastern Region Vision 2020 which is basically a road map for implementation of goal-oriented schemes and activities. It implements its projects through State and Central Government Agencies.

As Northeast India has a strategic location for facilitating all forms of major economic activities, the council has enabled better prospects for the same, for instance, by making inter-state connectivity in the regions better. By doing so, it has removed all possible inter-regional barriers of the region, paving the way for the region's development. It formulates proposals for securing the balanced development of the region and in matters pertaining

to common interest of the area. An instance of its remarkable achievements is the Perspective Plan 2001 prepared at the council's initiative. It has been taking into consideration the Road Transport and Highways for the development of road infrastructure in the region. It has also constantly contributed to the consolidation of airport infrastructure in the region for which major airports of the region have been taken up by it in collaboration with the Airport Authority of India. The council was made the Regional Planning Body for the region in the year 2002; till then it was an advisory body. It is significantly funded by the Central Government.

The NER Vision 2020 was brought by the council, accepted and signed by all its members in its 56th Plenary on 13th May 2008. On the 13th of June 2018, the Union Cabinet approved the nomination of the home minister as the ex-officio chairman of NEC and the Minister of State (Independent Charge) as the council's vice chairman. This happened as the Centre decided to bring the North Eastern Council under the direct control of the Home Ministry, which was till now chaired by the DoNER Minister.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. The North Eastern Council consists of the Governers and Chief Ministers of all eight states of the Northeast. (True/False)

Q2. The NEC is listed as one of the associate organisations of the Ministry of DoNER. (True/False)

Q3. On the 13th of June 2018, the Union Cabinet approved the nomination of the home minister as the ex-oficio chairman of NEC and the Minister of State (Independent Charge) as the council's vice chairman. (True/False)

13.5 THE MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION

Established in the year 2001 as the Department of DoNER (Development of North Eastern region), it got upgraded to ministry of the Indian Union in May 2004 as The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, better known as MDoNER. As a nodal department under the Central Government

which it dealt with the crucial matters and issues of development of the eight Northeastern states of India, pertaining to socio-economic parameters. It takes responsibilities for matters pertaining to the planning, execution and monitoring of development schemes and projects in the NE region. It received the status of a full-fledged ministry only in the year 2004. The Minister of DoNER is assisted by Union Secretary and other Joint Secretaries. Concerned mainly about the infrastructural advancement and development of Northeast India, it functions as the facilitator of capacity-building process, advocacy and coordination with the Central Ministries and the State Governments of the NE states. By doing so, it functions as a mediator between the Central Departments and the State Governments of the North Eastern Region in regard to economic progress. Areas of concern include providing minimum services, triggering economic competitions in the market thus enabling an environment for private investment, ensuring peace and harmony in the region etc. The Ministry has played an active role in the region's economic development. The ministry has different organisations that function under it: 1) Northeast Council 2) North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd. 3) The Sikkim Mining Corporation Limited. 4) North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Limited 5) North Eastern Handlooms and Handicrafts Development Corporation.



ACTIVITY 2

Find out some of the important projects undertaken by the DoNER Ministry.

.....

13.6 LOOK EAST POLICY AND NORTHEAST INDIA

The historic partition of the country had put the region of northeast India in a condition of extreme isolation. In fact, B.G Verghese describes the region as South Asia's third landlocked 'state' with Bhutan and Nepal (Baruah, 2007). As such, its economy faced a severe setback post partition with the loss of connectivity and market access. The advent of Western dominance over sea routes and global trade was the root cause of the region's long term isolation from its neighbourhood. Adding fuel to the fire was the British

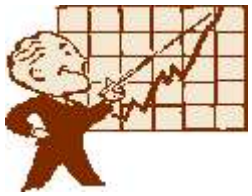
dominance over the region and its decision to draw lines between the hills and plains, to treat Myanmar as a frontier and to put inter-regional trade barriers. The idea of regional cooperation and regional groupings historically saw manifestation with the end of Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. It resulted in the establishment of interdependence between countries as well as economic and trade issues which saw increasing importance compared to political and military ones. There grew a realisation among many nation states that one's own welfare was highly influenced by the well-being of the region it is located in.

The Look East Policy of India was launched in the year 1991 during the government led by P.V Narasimha Rao. It aims at establishing crucial economic and strategic relations with Southeast Asian nations in order to ensure a strong foothold of India as a regional power. All subsequent governments have expressed their support for it. It is necessary here to state that India has always had friendly and supportive relations with the Southeast Asian nations. For example, it shares a great cultural relationship with countries like Cambodia, Singapore, Vietnam, etc. The policy aims at renewing political understanding with ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) member states. It enables enhanced and progressive economic interactions covering in its purview different fields like science, technology, tourism, trade, culture etc, with the different Southeast Asian nations. We can see how India has been making serious efforts for getting an entry into the trading blocs of the region like the ASEAN and the APEC(Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation). These efforts are additionally being fruitful owing to India's geographical proximity to Southeast Asia. It is also believed to have potential of solving the problems of insurgency, migration and drug trafficking in the region through regional cooperation. The policy began to pay off in 2002 with the meeting of the ASEAN heads of government and the Indian Prime Minister in a summit meeting in Cambodia. There were a number of bi-lateral and multi-lateral agreements that provide the foundation for India's growing relations with Southeast Asia, for example, BIMSTEC (Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand Economic Cooperation).

The northeast region of India is a storehouse of abundant natural resources with great developmental potential. However, it still has not been

harnessed and also, a sense of discomfort grew in the wake of independence with the advent of profound economic and political changes. However, the question of national development in recent times has seen the inclusion of the question of the development of this region. Such development is believed to accelerate India's relations with other countries. In this context, the Look East Policy becomes important as India has given a new dimension to it by building partnership with ASEAN countries, keeping the economic and security interests of Northeast India into account. Growth and development in Northeast India thus was started to be seen as dependent on India's commercial exchanges with Southeast Asia.

The Modi government took forward the idea and implemented its own formula of Act East Policy in order to build and improve its relation with ASEAN and East Asian countries. The opening up of the region of Northeast India was seen as a step to control or eliminate the insurgency problem in the region. The Northeast emerged as the frontier and as the region bridging the gap between mainland India and other Southeast Asian nations. As already mentioned, increased rail and air connectivity, border trade, etc. has led to the idea that the fortune of the Northeast seems to be intricately tied to the Look East Policy.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q4. The idea of regional cooperation and regional groupings historically saw manifestation with the end of Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. (True/ False)

Q5. The Look East Policy was launched during Manmohan Singh's rule. (True/ False)



ACTIVITY 3

Find out the countries which are members of ASEAN.

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.....



13.7 LET US SUM UP

- In this unit, you have learnt how the idea of development can be understood in the context of Northeast India.
- Development in Northeast India has been mainly based on security concerns and thus the centre's state-centric approach has kept the region mostly underdeveloped and isolated. The discourse of development here has taken the shape of nationalising a frontier space.
- The 'logic of developmentalism' is believed to be deep-rooted in the Indian state's various institutes, with the goal of nationalising space in the backdrop. The centre's approach to development in this region has thus seen its everyday control over this frontier space.
- Through this chapter, you have also learnt about the role and significance of the North Eastern Council, that it was constituted in the year 1971 through a parliamentary act. Its headquarters are located in Shillong, Meghalaya. It has both balanced development and security as its twin objectives.
- Established in the year 2001 as the Department of DoNER (Development of North Eastern region), DoNER got upgraded to ministry of the Indian Union in May 2004 as The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, better known as MDoNER. It received the status of a full-fledged ministry only in the year 2004. The Minister of DoNER is assisted by Union Secretary and other Joint Secretaries. It is concerned mainly about the infrastructural advancement and development of Northeast India. It functions as the facilitator of capacity-building process, advocacy and coordination with the Central Ministries and the State Governments of the NE states.
- The Look East Policy of India was launched in the year 1991 during the government led by P.V Narasimha Rao. It aims at establishing crucial economic and strategic relations with Southeast Asian nations in order to ensure a strong foothold of India as a regional power.
- It becomes important as India has given a new dimension to it by building partnership with ASEAN countries, keeping the economic and

security interests of Northeast India into account.

- The Modi government took forward the idea and implemented its own formula of Act East Policy in order to build and improve its relation with ASEAN and East Asian countries.



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13.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: True

Ans to Q No 2: True

Ans to Q No 3: True

Ans to Q No 4: True

Ans to Q No 5: False



13.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer within 150 words)

Q 1: Mention Describe the significance of NEC.

Long Questions (Answer within 300 - 500 words)

Q 1: Discuss about the role and functions of the Ministry of DoNER.

Q 2: Explain the significance of Look East Policy in the context of Northeast India.

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