

DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION AMONG THE TRIBES IN NORTH EASTERN INDIA

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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY



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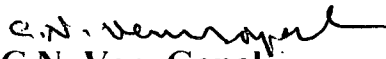



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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **Development and Education among the Tribes in North Eastern India** submitted by **Ms. Gladice Chinir** for the award of **Master of Philosophy** is an original work and has not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other university.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation for the award of the Master of Philosophy Degree of this university.


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CHAPTER I

CONCEPT AND THEORIES OF TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT

Development is usually conceived as an aspect of change that is desirable, broadly predicted or planned and administered or at least influenced by governmental action. It involves mobilisation of natural resources, augmentation of trained manpower, capital and technical know-how and their utilisation for attainment of socio-economic objectives. Development is also conceived a relative rather than fixed goal. It is a rate of change in a particular direction. Therefore, the fulfilment of a certain goal alone cannot be termed as development. In the ultimate analysis, it results in a sense of well-being among the members of the society.

Sociologically speaking, development should be looked upon as an organised activity with the aim of satisfying certain basic needs and to psychologically orient the tribals to adopt new skills, attitudes and lifestyles, so that they can build their inner strength, an appropriate social and cultural infra-structure to stand the pressures of the new situation and get the benefits from the new programmes and maintain higher levels¹. From this point of view development is a multidimensional process to progressively improve the social, cultural, economic and human conditions of the people all of which are vital sectors necessary for a balanced growth of the society

However, there is a need to assess critically the relevant

theoretical approaches to development. For classical evolutionists, such as Tylor, Spencer and Morgan, in the broad sweep of human history, an imminent process of evolutionary change was clearly discernible. They tried to understand development through its inner momentum or law of motion of probable future course of development. For Morgan and Taylor, the stages were, savagery, barbarism and civilisation. For Spencer the movement was from primitive simplicity to civilised complexity, incoherent homogeneity to coherent heterogeneity.

Marx too attempted to set-up an evolutionary scheme, although his theoretical approach and method diverged from the classical evolutionists. For him, the class struggle arising from the contradiction between the forces and the relations of production provided the impulse to development. The sequences of stages in historical development were primitive communism, ancient society, feudalism, capitalism and socialism.

The evolutionary conceptualisation of the stages of development came under attack from cultural relativists and from functionalists, who found their generalisations biased, and lacked in contextual specificity.

While evolutionism receded to the background, structural-functional studies of specific societies as autonomous systems came to the fore, and adaptive integration of the elements of the social system into each other and with the system as a whole became the central concern. Development was now viewed as a transition from a previous stage to a new

one such as from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity, status to contract, folk culture to urban community and tradition to modernity.

Talcot Parsons combining structural functionalism with evolutionism distinguished five stages of differentiation and integration (i) Primitive (ii) Advanced primitive and archaic (iii) Historic (iv) Seed bed (v) Modern. The first two together are designated as primitive and the next two, intermediate, with each stage representing certain "evolutionary universals", leading to a higher level adaptive integration of society than the preceding stage².

Parsons' structural- functionalism, with its elaborate classification of four functional pre-requisites of societies, six evolutionary universals, five pattern variables, differentiation, integration and adaptation, as principal mechanism of development, provided the main theoretical base for a number of theories of change and development in the developing societies. The Parsonian scheme placed special emphasis on autonomous, cumulative processes of growth and change within individual societies in the context of diffusion of evolutionary universals, advanced technology and other elements of culture. The crucial evolutionary test was not so much the growth of new specialised structures, but their adaptive integration without which there could be no development.

The Parsonian theoretical scheme thus reaffirmed the position of the industrialised West as the most advanced form of human societal development. Viewing societies as relatively autonomous systems, it

attributed their lack of development to their own failure to invent or acquire, through diffusion certain techno-economic, organizational or cultural elements found in advanced societies. Thus, it presented the developed countries as exemplars and pace-setters of development, in the fields of technology, technical training, trade, financial aid and cultural diffusion.

Economic anthropologists have increasingly begun to study the economic systems of primitive society. Raymond Firth has classified society into primitive, peasant and industrial. Primitive society implies a system of simple non-mechanical technology, with little or no innovation, directed to maintenance rather than increase of capital assets and with relatively low differentiation of economic roles of people in production, entrepreneurial and management functions.

Peasant economy is a system of small scale producers with a simple technology and equipment, often relying primarily for their subsistence on what they themselves produce. Industrial Society consists of individuals with a high degree of anonymity or impersonality in the economic situation. It is the magnitude and quality of their contribution to the economic process, irrespective of their personal status or position in the society that defines them rather than their total social characteristics³.

Firth feels that the concept used by economists in industrial society can be applied to primitive and peasant society. However, he says that one must examine the economic role of a person in a particular situation against his social role and against that of the system of

groups of which he is a member. According to George Dalton, a number of economic mechanisms practices, and processes - the use of money, external trade, division of labour, market places, debt, prices - occur both in Western economy and in the primitive, but to conclude that because both use them their organization, functioning or purpose in primitive economy must be essentially the same as the Western economy is not warranted. Karl Polanyi also points refers to the three forms of integration of economies - reciprocity, redistribution and exchange. He says that the classical economic theory is appropriate to the market (based on exchange) which is found only in contemporary Western society. Reciprocity is characteristic of tribal societies, while redistribution is characteristic of archaic societies such as Ancient Egypt and Babylonia.

COLONIAL INDIA AND NORTH - EAST INDIA :- The British people came in contact with the East Asian countries as a result of trade and economic exchange. They came as traders but ultimately became the rulers of most of these East Asian countries like India, Burma, Bhutan, Sri-Lanka, Nepal etc. The coming of the Britishers to India was an event of very great importance in the history of India, as it ultimately led to revolutionary changes in her destiny in the future.

The British ruled India for about 200 years. Such a long rule was bound to leave behind a rich legacy. The most important legacy of British rule in India was the unification of India. Undoubtedly, it was British imperialism which brought about the unification of the country and

enabled the people of India to think as one nation⁴. The present system of administration, legal system, democratic and parliamentary form of government, educational system, urbanization and industrialization of the country are all the legacy of British rule in India. As a result, the very face of Indian society underwent many changes. India was conquered many times prior to the coming of the British but those conquests had resulted in changes mainly political regimes. The British conquest of India was of a different type. The British brought about an agrarian revolution. They introduced individual ownership of land which undermined both the agrarian economy and the autonomy of India of the pre-British period. As a result of the British rule, the peasantry in India became very poor. The share claimed by the government as land revenue was quite high and impoverished the peasant. Similarly, a large number of old zamindars were ruined due to various land policy adopted by the British government in India. There was stagnation in agriculture and its subsequent deterioration.

The economic policy of the British government in India proved disastrous for the Indian people. The big Indian Industries as well as the village industries in India collapsed and India became an economic appendage of another country. Most of the handicraftsmen lost means of livelihood and were reduced to the level of starvation. Industrial development in India was slow and stunted and did not represent at all an industrial revolution. Even the limited development was not independent but was under

the control of foreign capital. The structure of industry was such as to make its further development dependent on Britain.

The British government controlled trade and industry purely with a view to foster British interests. Thus, the economic condition of India toward the last of the 19th century was miserable in the extreme. Finally, when the British government quit India in 1947, the huge task of developing the country fell upon the leaders of Independent India. Even after five decades of independence, India is still under the category of "under-developed" countries and is thus on its way to development.

The British came in contact with North-East India, when East India company acquired Diwani of Bengal in 1765. Parts of Goalpara district of Assam and Garo Hills district of Meghalaya were already included in the district of Rangpur of Bengal in 1765. However, the British did not show any interest in this region of the country upto early parts of nineteenth century due to their own reasons.

The pattern of annexation and consolidation of British rule in North East India varies from one area to another, it may be categorised into the following broad frames.

(a) The Ahom territory and the kingdoms of Raja Govinda chandra of cachar and that of Jaintia Raja Rajendra Singh were gradually annexed to the British India.

(b) British paramountcy gradually became more and more strong in Manipur, Tripura and Khasi sateisms. Gradually, the kings of Manipur, Tripura and Khasi sates acquired secondary status in their own areas.

(c) Administration was gradually established and law and order were restored in Naga hills, Lushai hills and other hill districts of the region.

(d) A large area of Arunachal Pradesh and Tuensang and Mon districts of Nagaland continued to be unadministered⁵.

It was after the early part of 19th century that the British began to take keen interest of this region. Due to its strategic location, and with a view to check entry of outsiders into this area, the British followed a separate policy. There were a number of reasons behind the policy of leaving the tribals of this region alone. The task of administration in the hill areas was difficult and costly. Secondly, it was considered desirable to keep away the tribals from possible interference. Thirdly, some of the British officers genuinely felt that left to themselves the tribal people would remain a happier lot. Thus, the areas included in the North East Frontier Agency were administered as 'excluded' and partially excluded'.

However, after Independence the policy was abandoned and a new policy of development and integration was initiated. The Constitution of India has made provisions for the welfare and upliftment of the tribal people throughout the country.

The term 'tribe' has been defined in many different ways. Winick's dictionary of anthropology has defined tribe as a, " social group usually with a

definite area, dialect, cultural homogeneity and unifying social organisations". However, there is no community in the world which could be considered as tribals in terms of the foregoing criteria. Definition of the term may be on historical, anthropological or on sociological context. Thus, defining tribe in terms of a single set of attribute is immensely difficult.

In India, the term 'tribe' is nowhere defined in the Constitution. The communities recognised as tribals under the provision of the constitution are known as Scheduled Tribes. Thus, Scheduled Tribe is an administrative political category created under Article 324 of the Constitution of India. This Article enables the President to specify not only tribes and tribal communities but even parts of groups within any tribe or tribal communities as belonging to the category of Scheduled Tribe.

In trying to specify Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Areas, many difficulties has arised. In this regard it is important to take into account some of the classification of Indian Tribes as given by some of the Indian sociologists and anthropologists. Vidhyarthi has classified the tribals as follows :-

- 1) Distinct tribal communities living in isolated regions.
- 2) Tribals living in rural areas and are dependent on agriculture and other allied occupation.
- 3) Semi-accultured tribals who have successfully blended their own cultural tradition with the neighbouring people and the situations.

4) Acculturated tribals who have accepted modern occupations in urban and industrial fields and have mixed to a great extent with the rest of the population.

5) Totally assimilated tribals, who have acquired a place in Hindu caste ladder, eg. the Bhumij, the Majli, the Khasa, the Raj Gond⁶ . etc.

S.C. Dube has given five fold classification of Indian tribes. They are:-

1) Aborigines living in seclusion comparatively uninfluenced by recent cultural contact.

2) Travel groups which have developed their association with neighbouring village folks, have modified their tribal economy, but which still retain their tribal identity and distinctive social organisation.

3) Tribes which retain their tribal organisation, not unlike distinctive caste organisation, but live in common villages mixed with other castes with sects and religious groups.

4) Tribes which have been forced to accept a degraded status of untouchables as a result of unhappy cultural contact.

5) Tribes enjoying high social status notwithstanding their tribal origin because they had a better economic status and political influence⁷.

Similarly, D.N. Majumdar and T.N. Madan have given four-fold economic types. Though these were not very rigidly defined categories :-

- 1) The food gatherers, mainly depending on forests.
- 2) Tribes having an economy between food gathering and primitive agriculture.
- 3) The Tribes of North East and middle India are mainly depending on some form of agriculture with forests produce as secondary support.
- 4) Those who are working in Industries especially the tribes in Bihar, Bengal and Assam.

India has one of the largest concentrations of tribal population in the world. However, the tribal situation in the country presents a mixed picture. Some areas have a high tribal concentration while others have no tribal population. According to the latest Census, the Scheduled Tribes which numbered 5.38 crores constitute about 7.85 percent of the total population of the country. Their main concentrations are in the central tribal belt in middle India and in the North East India.

The level of tribal economy is quite uneven though their economy is largely self-sufficient, unstructured and non-specialised. At one extreme there are tribal communities which are in the food gathering and hunting stage, and at the other extreme, they have become indistinguishable from the modern agricultural and industrial societies. Similarly, differences have arisen in their educational status. The tribals in the North East are far ahead of the general educational level in the country, but at the other end there are communities which are still at a pre-literate stage. A review of the

distribution of tribal population and their socio-economic condition indicates that the tribals are suffering from divergent problems.

The concept of development in tribal situation poses difficulties. Even a good definition of tribal development may undergo scrutiny. Sanders views tribal development as -

- 1) a movement which emphasises building up organisational structures.
- 2) a programme which emphasises collective activities.
- 3) as a method which emphasises certain achievable ends.
- 4) as a process which emphasises the psychological to economic and social consequences of goal implementation.
- 5) Institutionalisation of newly discovered skills and procedures leading to social change without completely breaking away from the past⁸.

Hence, the task of tribal development is defined as social and economic development of tribal people in a phased manner and time bound integrated area development, and ensuring a move towards the goal of equality and social justice.

The fundamental principles of tribal development which were laid down by late Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in this regard became the guiding force to the planners and administrators in the country. Nehru's view on tribal development were as follows :-

- 1) People should develop along lines of their own genius and there should be no imposition on them.

2) Tribal right in land and forest should be protected.

3) Attempts should be made to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development.

4) There should be no attempt to over-administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. The development must be in tune with their social and cultural institutions.

5) Results should be judged not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but by the quality of human life that is evolved.

In this context, many Commissions and study teams have also repeatedly emphasised the importance of above principle of tribal development. For instance, the Dhebar Commission (1961) defined the objective of development among tribals as "Advancement and integration of tribals". It is not to disturb the harmony of tribal life but simultaneously work for its advance. Further, the study team on tribal development (1969) pointed out that the aim of the policy on tribal development was to assist the tribals to progress both economically and socially and reach a standard of development, so as to fit them to take their place as useful citizens in the life of the general community on a footing of equality. This progress was to be achieved not by attempting to transform them overnight, but by fostering all that is good and beautiful in their culture, or in other words, by a process of growth which has its roots in their traditions. A sense of pride in their own heritage and a feeling of equality in place of the existing feeling of inferiority should be instilled.

Therefore, the basic issues in tribal development include not only economic development of tribals, but also the preservation of their ethnic identity, ecology, language, culture, style of living, traditional practices, political ideas etc. Tribals in India, geographically and culturally speaking, are at widely different stages of social as well as economic development; their problems differ from area to area and even within their own groups. The age old exploitation and repression of the tribals have cut them off from the main stream of socio-economic development of the country as a whole for a long period. This was the basic point which prompted the Indian Constitution makers to provide guarantees for the protection of the interests of the tribals.

The government of India, introduced extensive political and economic reforms in 1950 to improve tribal life. The Five Year Plans are intended to bring prosperity by the application of science and technology in all spheres of life. Thus, during The First Five Year Plan, the main programmes for tribal development were aimed at economic and educational development, improvement of communication, health facilities etc. In the Second Five Year Plan the emphasis was on economic development, agriculture, cottage industries, forest co-operatives etc. During the Third Five Year Plan, the priority was given again to economic uplift, education, health housing and communication schemes. The Fourth Five Year Plan came up with the idea of area development approach. The Fifth Five Year Plan gave birth to tribal sub-plan concept. The two policy adopted by Sub-Plan were, area development approach with focus on tribals and secondary, Family Oriented programme

for those tribals living in dispersed areas. In the Sixth Five Year Plan there was an emphasis on elimination of poverty and exploitation, upgradation of education etc. In the Seventh Five Year Plan the objective remained to be a judicious mix of area-cum family development, simultaneously paying attention to vulnerable section amongst the Scheduled Tribe.

It is a fact that a number of special provisions for the progress of the Tribal people and for safeguarding their interest have been included in the Indian constitution. In order to carry them out at a practical level, massive programmes of tribal development have been launched. In spite of all this tribal India depicts the persistence of a large number of problems. Many have still not been able to keep pace with other communities and other areas, especially in matters of economic development. As has been already said, the level of development among the tribals varies from community to community depending on their degree of isolation and the inaccessible nature of their areas. Thus, adequate and genuine identification of tribal problems, difficulties and requirements would help to bring about more fruitful change among them.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE :-

Since India gained its Independence Tribal Development had become a burning issue among the scholars, researchers, administrators, politicians etc. Most of the available literature on the subject focused on various aspects of tribal welfare and culture. *Primitive in India*(1963), by M.Banerjee; *Tribal situation in India* (1972), by K.Suresh Singh;

Some Indian Tribes (1973), by N.K. Bose; *Tribalism in India* (1978), by Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaj give a good account of various tribes and their culture.

Anthropologists, administrators and others have written much on the issues of Tribal Development. Therefore, an idea about Tribal Development can be had from these books such as *Development of Tribal Areas* (1965), by A. Aiyappan; *Tribal Welfare in India* (1969), by N.K. Bose; *Problems and Prospects of Tribal Development in India* (1973), by L.P. Vidhyarthi; *Tribal Development and its administration* (1981), by L.P. Vidhyarthi; *Problems of Tribal Development* (1974), by M.G. Kulkarni; *Pattern of Development for Tribal societies* (1975), by Christoph-Von Furher-Haimendorf; *Tribal Adminsitration and development* (1994), by S.G. Deogaonkar; *Tribes in Perspective* (1994), by B.K. Roy Burman. Besides these literature, there are reports of the working groups, expert committees and study groups on various aspects of Tribal Development which are helpful for further study and research. Periodicals like the Indian Journal of Public Administration; Journal of Community Development and Panchayati Raj Digest; Man in India; Indian Anthropologist; Kurukshetra and Vanyajati publish research papers and articles in the field of Tribal Development.

The history of tribal studies in North East India is quite old. There were works reported mainly by British officers, travellers, missionaries etc. Most of these studies however suffer from personal bias and other methodological grounds. Even today, empirical studies on the various

tribal people of North East India remain a rarity. After independence, a spurt of development activities was carried on by the Government of free India. Many scholars and administrators began to take a keen interest in studying the tribes of North East India.

The sources of data I have used in writing my dissertation are mainly from published books written by Anthropologists and Scholars. S.T. Das (1986) '*Tribal life in North East India*', lays emphasis upon the way of life of tribes which is directly determined by the environment and the queer beliefs of the tribes. He observes that there is no set pattern of socio-economic development of the tribes. They are purely and strictly agricultural people. S.M. Dubey (1977) '*North East India: A Sociological Study*', is based on seminar papers held in 1975. The Seminar was the first ever attempt at discussing the social structure, economic and political aspects of North East India from the sociological point of view. '*Tribal Situation in India*', edited by K.S. Singh (1972) also deals with the various aspects of tribal life in India, including the North East tribals.

B.L. Abbi (1984) in his book, '*North East Region Problems and Prospects of Development*', made an effort to ensure a balanced coverage of different states of North East India. The book highlighted the important problems pertaining to development of the region. Dr. V. Xaxa has also written on the overall trends of tribal development in the North Eastern region. Tiplut Nongbri has contributed on the social perspective of planning : The case of Meghalaya. Meghalaya is the only state in North East which has

matrilineal society. Nongbri points out the shortcomings of Government plans with regard to Meghalaya and its society.

Horam. M. has written mainly on the Nagas. His book (1990) *North East India : A Profile* , gives an account on the life of the Nagas and the social change that is taking place among them. Horam is of the opinion that the problems faced by the tribals of the North East is not economic but purely political. A.P. Sinha has also written on the tribes of North East, *Changing North East India* (1986), brings out the social , political and economic changes among the tribes.

Christianity and its impact among the tribes of North East India has been extensively studied by various scholars. Karotemprel (1984), Nag (1993), J.J. Roy Burman (1982) are few among them. Besides this literature I have also referred to Journal of North Eastern Council, Journal of North East India Council for Social Science Research, CENSUS OF INDIA and other reports and studies on the Tribes of North East India.

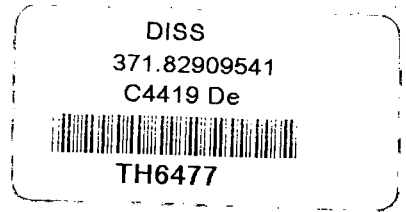
BRIEF DISCUSSION ON THE SUBSEQUENT CHAPTERS.

Chapter I deals with the concept of development and theoretical approaches to development. The theory of 'Tribal Development' in the Indian context is also briefly mentioned here. Chapter 2 deals with the socio-economic development among the tribals in North East India. The traditional occupation and the trade exchange between the tribals and non-tribals in the pre-independence period have been briefly highlighted. And in the

post-independence period, the policy and planning of the government and its subsequent impact upon the lives of tribals have been also mentioned. Chapter 3 is divided into Section I and Section II. Section I deals with the educational development among the North East tribals. The role of christianity has been highlighted, as the Missionaries were the Pioneers in introducing formal Western education in the region. Section II deals with the occupational change among the tribes of the North East. In the conclusion I have tried to co-relate Development and Education with reference to the tribes of the North East India and thereby draw some inferences from this study. I have also highlighted a few possible field of studies for future research in North Eastern India.

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CHAPTER 2

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF TRIBALS IN NORTH-EAST INDIA

The North Eastern part of India consists of seven states namely, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. Though this area is inhabited by different ethnic groups, which are having their distinctive structural cultural and linguistic identities, yet an age old process of social interaction has been going on among them, and the long course of human development and social dynamism have brought them together either in the forms of conflict or mutual goodwill and contact.

The North East constitutes a strategic region of India both by virtue of its location, surrounded by wide international borders and also because of its predominantly tribal population. The tribals of this region are its oldest inhabitants. The entire Sub Himalayan belt and other sides of the patkai range along the Naga Hills running through Manipur and Tripura upto the chittagong hill tracts where it merges into the Arkan range is inhabited by tribal people belonging to a number of groups and sub-groups each having its own distinct culture, way of life and language. They all belong to a common group called mongoloid. However, there is a wide variation in the social organization among the tribals of this region. But there are certain social features, which are common to all. The society is generally patrilineal, prominent examples of which are the Nagas, Mizos and other tribes of

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Arunachal and Assam. However, there is an exception in the case of the Khasis and the Garos of Meghalaya who are matrilineal. There is rarely any caste distinction in the tribal society although certain class distinctions do exist. The social groupings are primarily based on blood kinship and in some cases on locality. The village is the most important unit in the social set up. Because of closely knit family and community life, kinship plays a very important role in the social life of these people.

The social organization of the hill tribes of North East region is based on democratic structure. Any dispute or problem between two individuals or between two groups is decided by popular bodies at various levels starting from village council upwards. This is in spite of the fact that there are village chiefs and clan chiefs among some of the tribes. With some exceptions, the land generally belongs to the community. These traditional social institutions are still strong and vigorous among most of the tribes because the system is suited to their genius and needs. Mostly these tribes are endogamous groups.

As regards the stratification of the tribal population, it differs from tribe to tribe. Broadly speaking, the traditional tribal stratification was based on three hierarchical categories :

- (a) Chiefs
- (b) Common people
- (c) Slaves

For instance, among the Khasis, Syiems(chiefs) and Lyngdoh(Priests) used to occupy a higher position than common man. Among the Mizos, Semas and Konyahs, Wancho, Tangsa, and Khamtis society was stratified into chiefs and the common men. Among the tribes of Arunachal, there was a class of slaves also. The tribal structure of the Angamis, the Adis and the Apajanis was relatively equalitarian and instead of chieftainship, village councils used to exert authority among them¹.

Modern political system like assembly or parliament were almost unknown to the tribals during the British days. Instead Family, Village, Clan, Caste, Tribe, Religion and Youth dormitories and village councils were main principle agencies of political socialization.

The scheduled tribes of North-East India can be broadly categorised into two broad divisions :- (1) Those who inhabit the hilly areas or the majority of the inhabitants of Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Nagaland and the inhabitants of the hilly districts of Assam, Manipur and Tripura. (2) The tribes living in the valley areas of Assam, mainly the tribes of the Brahmaputra valley. Though these two categories are based mainly on the geographical situation of the habitat, they also indicate differences in cultural characteristics. The tribals in the hills have mostly remained isolated till the time of the British occupation. In contrast, the tribes in the valley areas have been living with the other non-tribal communities since time immemorial.

Hence, there has been a great amount of cultural give and take between the tribes and neighbouring communities². The habitats of the hill tribes are completely separated from those of the habitats of other non-tribal communities. They are generally speaking self-reliant and have a strong community spirit. Their economy in the pre-British period was mainly village based, informal, entirely dependent on the immediate environment such as land, forests, water bodies and animal lives. It was technologically a simple society with little surplus and specialisation of duties. Their needs appeared to be extremely limited, they were satisfied with the produce of their Jhum fields. The forests played a very significant role in their lives because the forests provided a universe to them in which they hunted games, collected fruits, roots, herbs, tapped rubber juice and caught wild animals for games, trade and exchange. The dominant mode of exchange in their economy was barter of the goods. Coins were also known to them but not as common mode of exchange but used as ornaments³.

However, there has existed an age old trade and economic interaction between the plain people living in the great river valley of Brahmaputra, who practised settled agriculture and the tribals inhabiting the hills who were still dependant on hunting and gathering and practising Jhum cultivation. The commodities which the tribes sold can be classified into three types (1) the forest produce, resulting from the prevalent hunting and gathering activities. (2) special crops like cotton, potato and betel nuts introduced from

outside (3) minerals and metals like limestone, coal and smelted iron. The imports were chiefly foodstuffs and iron implements like swords, arrowheads, knives etc essential to the defence and farming needs⁴ .

Besides the economic interaction with the plain people of Assam, the hill tribals also had trade exchange with the bordering countries like Bhutan, Tibet, China, Burma and Bangladesh. For instance, the Bhutanese and the Arunachalies bartered pepper, elephant tusk etc for glass beads, cloth, salt, utensils and agricultural implements. Similarly the Garo hills, Khasi and Jaintia hills exchanged trade with the adjoining plains of East Bengal (Now Bangladesh). The trading between them was an equal exchange of goods and commodities from both sides. The Khasi-Jaintia exported coal, limestone, oranges, potatoes, timber fuel etc and imported coarse rice, dry fish⁵ etc. Likewise, the Mizo hills traded with Burma. But in the wake of partition of the country the free flow of goods between these hill tribals and the plains was disrupted, inflicting severe economic distress on the hill villages near the border.

Thus, we find that there has been a commercial rather than culture interaction between the hill tribes and their neighbouring non-tribal communities during the pre-independence day.

POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD : In post-partition period, the heavy immigration of displaced persons from East Pakistan swelled the population of the North Eastern region. Moreover, with the commencement of

the planned process of development in the early fifties, inflow of capital, labour, administration, managerial and other categories of personnel into the region took on a large scale. As a result, the population of North East India rose rapidly since Post Independence period. The Table below indicates the rise of population from the year 1981 to 1991.

POPULATION TRENDS IN NORTH EASTERN REGION

(TABLE I)

(Thousand Persons)

STATES	CENSUS		Increase in Percentage
	1981	1991	
ArunachalPradesh	632	858	35.86
Assam	19,897*	22,295	12.05
Manipur	1,421	1,827	23.56
Meghalaya	1,336	1,761	31.80
Mizoram	494	684	38.98
Nagaland	775	1,216	56.86
Tripura	2,053	2,745	33.69
All India	6,85,183 **	8,44,324 ***	23.23

* Projected

** Includes the projected figures of Assam where Census was not held.

*** Provisional

Source : Census of India 1991- Series-I

From the above table(I) we find that there has been a rapid increase in the population of the region from the year 1981-1991. Except for Assam, the rest of the North Eastern states show increase growth of population

above the increase growth of all India (23.23%). Among them, Nagaland has shown the highest increase rate with 56.86 per cent. Besides the immigration problem, the increase in the level of standard of living and fertility rate accounts for the high growth of population in the region.

It has been found that this region is blessed with abundant natural resources, favourable agro-climatic conditions, and an area which is sparsely populated (in comparison to other states of India); these are the enviable conditions for the development of any region. However, in spite of such favourable factors, this region is considered to be a backward area of the country in terms of economic development. Social scientists have tried to analyse the reasons for this anomalous situation and have attributed several reasons for this. Most of these link the causes with the specific regional problems of one sort or the other.

S.M. Dubey pointed out the factors responsible for the economic backwardness of this region as follows :-

- Ecological and geographical factors
- Lack of capital formation
- Low degree of urbanization
- Lack of infrastructure
- Lack of technical know how and trained manpower.

Dubey also points out that apart from the availability of capital natural resources, technical know-how, trained manpower and innovativeness,

economic development depends on socio-cultural condition, normative patterns, psychological motivation, new channels and methods of communication, modern institutional framework and effective organisational networks.

According to S.T. Das, the economic problems of scheduled tribes fall into two categories. The problems of the valley-dwelling tribes and the problems of the hill tribes. The economic problems of the valley-dwelling tribes are not different from the economic problems of the Indian peasantry in general, that is to say, landlessness, land alienation, indebtedness, fragmentation of holdings, backward agricultural practices etc. By contrast, the economic problems of the hill tribes are entirely different. Till very recently, the tribes were in a primitive stage of economy, the basic principle of which are production for consumption, no capital investment, use of excess wealth for enhancement of prestige, kin oriented economic co-operation.

In recent times, the hill tribes have suddenly become a part of the modern economy of the country, and the countrywide economic development has engulfed the tribes of North-East India. In the mean while entrepreneurs from comparatively advanced communities are taking advantage both of the economic infrastructure that has grown up in recent times and of the simplicity of the tribal people in these areas. Almost all the tribal people in North-East India are basically engagedⁱⁿ cultivation. The table(2) indicates the economic classification of North East India.

ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATION OF POPULATION 1991

(PROVISIONAL)

TABLE 2

(PERSONS)

STATE	CULTIVATOR	AGRICULTURE LABOUR	HOUSEHOLD INDUSTRY, REPAIRING ETC.	OTHER WORKERS	MARGINAL WORKERS
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	237,918	19,074	2,480	130,149	17,741
ASSAM	36,22,017	919,386	177,149	2,357,811	10,40,422
MANIPUR	389,690	633,50	48,350	181,056	75,756
MEGHALAYA	404,561	95,895	7151	211,598	38,913
MIZORAM	176,713	10,835	3,609	99,058	48,509
NAGALAND	344,666	23,889	7,649	128,975	32,135
TRIPURA	301,856	186,671	15,487	289,443	67,295

Source : CENSUS OF INDIA 1991 SERIES 1

The above table (2) indicates that the population of North East are mainly under the category of cultivators while agriculture labourer occupies second place.

Thus, the problem of economic development of the people of these areas is dependent on agricultural development. But the stumbling block in agricultural development in the hills is that most of the people in the hill areas are following a very primitive method of cultivation, known as shifting cultivation which has its inherent defects. It can be

considered to be adequate to satisfy the needs of a community in a primitive level of economy with undeveloped technology and very low density of population. But with the rapid growth of population in the hill areas of North-East, the problems of shifting cultivation has intensified. In some areas due to heavy pressure on land utilised for shifting cultivation, the yield has become insufficient even to fulfil the bare necessities. The population in such areas has tried to solve the problem in the following ways.

a)By reclaiming land for settled agriculture.

b)By attempting to utilise plots more or less permanently by growing perennial fruit-bearing plants like pineapple, betel, arecnut, oranges etc.

However, even in the areas where they have opened up land for permanent cultivation, shifting cultivation has persisted as a subsidiary method of cultivation.

On the industrial economy of the region, the colonial power set up certain industries in the region for their own gain and not for the benefit of the region. The industries they had set up, such as tea plantation, oil and other mineral extraction, mostly served their own interests. Hence, during the colonial period only a limited economic development took place and that too was confined to the tea and oil-producing areas of the Assam plains and to some mineral producing areas in the khasi hills of Meghalaya. In the rest of the hill areas, barring a few pockets, the traditional tribal economy of the primitive type as well as pastoral economy has persisted. Even now industries on a large

scale are yet to be started in the hill areas. All that exist are a few industries based on local raw materials set up in the small sectors like the sugar industry in Nagaland, handloom industry in Manipur, cement and plywood industries in Meghalaya and cement industry in Karbi- anglong of Assam. But all these industries require either State or Central assistance for their survival.

Despite the region's substantial resource base with large proven reserves of oil, coal, limestone, bamboo and good quality timber distributed over a wide area, the emphasis has been on cottage industries. Some cottage industries have been set up in the region like sericulture, handloom and handicrafts in Assam, Meghalaya and Nagaland, handicrafts and khadi in Tripura, handloom and handicrafts in Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram, handloom, sericulture, bamboo and cane articles in

Manipur⁶. However, large scale industrial development still lags behind.

The table below indicates the large scale industry in the North Eastern region.

**LARGE AND MEDIUM SCALE INDUSTRIES IN NORTH
EASTERN INDIA (AS ON 31ST MARCH 1991)**

TABLE (3)

STATE	NO.OF UNITS	PERCENTAGE
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	9	5.8
ASSAM	116	74.8
MANIPUR	6	3.9
MEGHALAYA	7	4.5
MIZORAM	0	0.0
NAGALAND	16	10.4
TRIPURA	1	0.6
TOTAL	155	100

Source : NISIET; GUWAHATI

The above table(3) indicates that Assam is the only state in the North Eastern region which has the highest number of large and medium scale industries (74.8%). Nagaland occupies second place with 10.4% but it is far behind Assam. Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Meghalaya occupies more or less the same position. Tripura and Mizoram are the least developed state in terms of large scale industries. Tripura rates 0.6% while Mizoram occupies the lowest rank with zero per cent.

Thus, the above table(3) indicates that except for Assam, rest of the other states lag behind in industrial development.

N.C. Das has highlighted some of the major deterrent factors to industrial growth of the North East region. According to him, the creation of the basic infrastructure viz; entrepreneurs, market accessibility,

transportation etc. is highly essential for planned industrial growth. The North Eastern region lack in such matters. Power is a basic prerequisite for Industrialisation. This region possess vast potential for generating power on a huge scale based on water, natural gas, coal and oil. In spite of this, the per capita power consumption of this region is extremely low. He also points out that one of the principal causes of poor industrial growth in the North East is the lack of adequate funds either from government or financial institutions including banks. A timely and adequate finance is the essence of financing of Industries. And finally, the low or primitive technology and inadequate trained manpower in the region act as deterrent in the industrial development. Hence, except for raw materials, almost all other factors needed for industrial development are non-existent.

Economic development is widely believed and underlined to be successful transformation of the structure of an economy. Shift of resources from agriculture to industry is the central feature of this transformation. This approach of balanced growth of both the industrial and primary sectors acquires high significance. In fact, the development in primary sector on one

hand and the industrial development on the other becomes a concomitant. Barua in an article has clearly expressed that 'agricultural development is absolutely necessary before one can think of any significant industrial development'. Industrialisation and agriculture in spite of being separate sectors of activities compliment each other⁷.

PLANNING AND POLICY OF NORTH EAST INDIA:-

In Independent India, the primary objective of the government's policy in regard of tribal people and tribal areas has been directed to the preservation of tribal culture and social customs from erosion, safeguarding of traditional occupations, protection from exploitation by more sophisticated groups and their economic and social development.

The problem of the development of tribal areas in the country is primarily linked with the backwardness of these areas, poverty of the tribal people and the concept of integration of tribals with the rest of the population. For promoting the welfare of Scheduled Tribes and raising the level of administration of tribal areas to the state level, Article 275 of the Constitution provides for grants-in-aid from the Consolidated Fund of India to states for the implementation of developmental programmes. The policy of the government has been to emphasise steps that prevent alienation of tribal land, ensure fairness in marketing, transaction of sale and purchase, avoid cheating by money lenders, liquor-vendors, contractors, freeing of bonded labour and their rehabilitation.

Provisions for tribal development has also been given by the government of India in all the Five Year Plans. The table (4) indicates the plan outlay in North East India.

PLAN OUTLAY IN NORTH EAST REGION

TABLE 4

(Rupees In Crores)

STATE	FIFTH FIVE YEAR PLAN (1974-79)	SIXTH PLAN(1980-85)	SEVENTH PLAN (1985-90)
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	63.30	212.00	400.00
ASSAM	473.80	1115.00	2100.00
MANIPUR	92.86	240.00	430.00
MEGHALAYA	89.53	235.00	440.00
MIZORAM	46.59	130.00	260.00
NAGALAND	83.63	210.00	400.00
TRIPURA	69.68	245.00	440.00

Source : Planning Commission

The above Table (4) indicates that there has been substantial increase in the Plan-outlay for North Easter regions from the Fifth Five Year Plan to Seventh Five Year Plan. Assam has been allotted the highest amount of Rs.2,100 crores in the Seventh Plan which is an increase of 53.09%

from the Sixth Five Year Plan. Assam has the highest population in the region. Next to Assam, Tripura has been allotted Rs.440.06 crores, an increase of 55.68% from the Sixth Plan. Manipur has Rs.430.00 crores with an increase of 53.48%, Meghalaya with Rs.440.00 crores, an increase of 53.49%, Nagaland has Rs.400.00 crores, an increase of 52.50%, Arunachal Pradesh Rs.400.00 crores, an increase of 50.30% and Mizoram Rs.260.00 crores, an increase of 50.00%. Mizoram is the least populated area of the region. Thus, we find that there has been an increase of 50% and above in the allocation of money from the Sixth Five Year Plan to Seventh Five Year Plan of the region.

The need for a perspective plan with definite strategy of bringing the North east region to a comparable stage of development with the rest of the country was highlighted by the planning commission's working groups on the development of the North-Eastern region during the seventh five year plan.

The terms of references of the working group were to work out a strategy for accelerated development of the North Eastern Region during the seventh plan, consistent with ecological, socio-cultural and other special conditions of the region, and to suggest definite programmes in identified sectors of development and about their co-ordination and effective implementation. The planning commission has also in January 1983 constituted four other working groups for the North-Eastern region on

personal policy, legal system, community participation and supplies, services and works, respectively.

The report of the working groups have marked a number of special features as a unique document in the field of regional planning in the North-Eastern region. The most outstanding feature of the document is its broad analysis of the resource endowment of the region, its infra-structural deficiencies and the various shortcomings hitherto unnoticed.

The working group reviewed the pattern of investment and trend of development in the North East during the Fifth Five Year Plan in general and the Sixth Plan in particular. Highest priority was given during the fifth plan to irrigation, flood control and power. Agriculture and allied sectors came next, followed by social and community services, transport and communication and industries and minerals. Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura assigned highest priority to Agriculture and allied activities, while Assam and Manipur accorded priorities to irrigation, flood control and power. Major allocation in the Arunachal Pradesh plan outlay was made for transport and communication, while Nagaland gave top priority to social and community services. The Sixth Five Year Plan had the basic objective of removing poverty for the North Eastern region. Highest priority during the sixth plan was also accorded to irrigation, flood control and power. Among the constituent units Assam accorded highest priority in the sixth plan to irrigation, flood control and power providing an outlay of Rs.559 crores, while Manipur, Meghalaya,

Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura accorded highest priority to social and community services. Arunachal Pradesh assigned highest priority to transport and communication. The working group, while reviewing the on-going schemes, noted some general deficiencies in respect of lack of information about the manner of implementation of the plan schemes. The working group noted that since most of the areas of the North East have difficult terrains, it is necessary that proper guidelines for the selection and location of projects should be given to the executing agencies in time to avoid cost and time over-run.

Among the other handicaps pointed by the working group are (a) lack of separate guidelines in respect of national programme considering the peculiar situation in the North East (b) non-utilisation of traditional system of community participation in development process and (c) Lack of definite national criteria for determining deficiencies in order to fix a time frame for making up the back-log. The group also felt that the basic task before the region in accordance with the national objective are (a) attainment of self-sufficiency in food, higher level of social consumption particularly in education, health, nutrition, sanitation, water supply, reduction in transport bottleneck, industrial development and generation of productive employment, and ecological and environment considerations.

The group was of the opinion that greater emphasis should be laid on rural electrification and also larger utilisation of renewable resources of energy during the seventh plan.

The group recommended a policy for food grain production in the region to make it self-sufficient, and a type of specialisation in which the sparsely populated areas in the hills would concentrate more on growing animal products and horticulture, while the densely populated areas of the plains would grow food-grains. Thus, having reviewed the planning and the geographical situation of the North Eastern region, the working group identified a few priority sectors for development of the region and suggested a total investment of Rs.11410 crores during the 7th Plan including an outlay of Rs.4564 crores for six priority sectors like food-grains production, road, forest development, water supply, primary education and rural health. Another amount of Rs.1388 was also recommended by the working group for taking up schemes like Railways, Inland water and post and telecommunication services under the central plan.

Let us have a look on the Seventh Five Year Plan Outlay for North Eastern Region.

SEVENTH FIVE YEAR PLAN (1985-90) OUTLAY

TABLE 5

Rs. in Crores

SECTOR	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	ASSAM	MANIPUR	MEGHA- LAYA	MIZO- RAM	NAGA- LAND	TRIPU- RA
Agriculture & Allied Service	86.55	394.25	67.95	81.58	51.90	88.75	97.75
Co-operatives	5.50	35.60	3.00	5.45	2.20	2.50	6.00
Irrigation and flood control	62.90	820.50	114.42	83.10	36.70	48.80	96.00
Industry and Minerals	9.75	103.10	24.30	19.35	13.35	28.20	16.25
Transport and Communication	127.15	162.20	71.50	80.00	58.35	98.50	52.00
Social and community service	104.95	500.75	126.87	122.72	82.40	105.45	162.00
Economic service	1.95	7.00	8.96	7.55	8.10	7.70	2.79
General service	1.05	57.10	10.50	28.55	6.80	11.45	4.40
Unlocated service	0.20	15.10	2.50	11.70	0.20	8.80	2.50
Total	400.00	2100.00	430.00	440.00	260.00	400.00	440.00

SOURCE : North Eastern Council Secretariat, Shillong

From the above table(5) we find that the Seventh Five Year Plan Outlay followed the pattern of the Sixth Five Year Plan Outlay in a

more or less same manner. The total outlay in the Seventh Five Year Plan was Rs.4,470 crore, an increase of 53.37% from the Sixth Plan which had a total outlay of Rs.2323 crore. Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura gave top priority to social and community services. Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura gave irrigation and Flood control second priority, while Mizoram and Nagaland gave transport and communication second priority.

The North East region of India had practically no development before 1950. Realising the problems of of this region, the Government of India constituted a regional body known as The North Eastern Council (N.E.C.) in 1972, to end the socio-economic tensions and accelerate the pace of progress. Its main objective is to provide a forum for the constituent units to discuss their common problems, and to formulate developmental schemes to bring about an integrated economic development. It identifies the common problems of the region, formulates specific projects and suggests the implementation of schemes through specified agencies. But the council has no executive functions. It merely acts as an advisory body. Moreover, the states in North East India are at liberty to be or not to be members of the North East Council.

Functions of the NEC as laid down under the North Eastern Council Act are :-

(1) The council shall be an advisory body and may discuss any matter in which, some or all of the states represented in that council have a common

interest and advise the Central Government and the government of each state concerned as to the action to be taken on any such matter

(2) The Council shall make assessments of the regions resource potentials, industrial surveys and preparation of data base for development planning.

(3) Development of infra-structure specially roads, bridges and power.

(4) Improvement and development of agriculture and allied activities.

(5) Manpower development and planning.

(6) Industrialisation and

(7) The council shall review from time to time the measures taken by the states represented in the council for the maintenance of security and public order therein and recommend to the government of the states concerned further measures necessary in this regard.

The North Eastern Council was established to co-ordinate regional plan for the development of both the tribals and non-tribal regions. And the concept of regional planning has no conflict with state authority. For, though the overall development plan relating to the infrastructure and soil-use pattern will be formulated by the NEC, the projects and schemes falling within the area of each state will be executed and administered by the respective state governments. As the NEC is an advisory body, most of its effective decisions would be achieved through consensus of opinion of all the members.

The different members of the NEC have their respective state planning boards or planning departments which draw up Five Year Plan and Annual Plans for their respective states and get them approved by the Planning Commission at the Centre. Further, the N.E.C. functions as a link not only between the different political units of the council, but also between the state planning boards and the planning commission. Thus, the establishment of the North-Eastern Council has been a significant step in the administrative management of the North-Eastern region. The NEC has come to be recognised as an effective regional planning authority, and its counsel and recommendation form a very significant component of the total development effort in the area.

The NEC has succeeded in bringing about some development of the basic infrastructure in the region and some co-ordination in the approaches to development. But the level of infra-structural development is still far from enough for promoting balanced development of industries, agriculture and other productive activities. Whatever development is being achieved is sectorally unbalanced and therefore cannot be sustained. Moreover, the North-East council deals with a broad or macro-level development. It has the same approach of development for the whole region and both for tribal and non-tribals. As a result, the tribal groups have not derived much benefit from such a broad frame of development. P.S. Datta is of the opinion that NEC cannot play a qualitative role in the "tribal development" of the North East. He

points out that the programmes and policies of NEC will benefit only a crafty section of the tribal societies while the majority will continue to remain poor⁸.

It is a known fact that a number of measures and programme have been undertaken to transform the life of the people of North East India. Official and non-official agencies as well as scholars working in the field have no doubt recognised the peculiarities of the situation, but they attach exaggerated importance to the topographical and ecological factors of backwardness, throwing the whole question of institutional transformation into the background.

The fundamental objective of planned development in India since independence has been to transform a backward colonial system into a developed modern industrial one. The Five Year Plans have undertaken this challenge in their own right and every region in the country has felt their long term impact. In this context the changing scenario in the North East today is no different from the rest of the country

Though the region came under the overall influence of the colonial system, except for tea plantation, no strong linkages were established with the market outside. The people's limited participation in the crucial economic activities further restricted their fusion with the main currents of development. The tribals thus remained in the orbit of the capitalist and continued to lead a life of relative independence in spite of their poverty and destitution. The situation has changed remarkably after Independence and

numerous special measures have been suggested for the socio-economic advancement of the tribal people. However, the most curious aspect of this development is an obvious contradiction between the stated objective and adopted strategy for the region. While both the national and regional planning agencies have consistently taken cognisance of the specificities of the North-Eastern situation, they have invariably failed to chalk out an alternative plan, which could develop the people without damaging their ecological setting and cognitive reality.

Looking at the emerging trends in the North East, it can be said that the seeds of inequality have already been sown by the numerous programmes launched in the region. These have started destroying the traditional socio-economic arrangement without creating a just and prosperous order. According to M.N. Karna, this path of development has killed the initiative of the people in general and has led to the growth of what may be called a 'sponsored society' It has brought about the disintegration and decay of indigenous industries by introducing commercialisation in the economy⁹. For instance, in agriculture the emphasis has been laid on changing from shifting to settled agriculture, use of new technology, irrigation facilities and high yielding variety of seeds and fertilisers. Emphasis has been also laid on income generating activities like horticulture, animal husbandry, social forestry etc. Unfortunately however, no attention has been paid to unravel the nature and context of development and social transformation that this perspective tries to

bring about. This has resulted in creating certain groups or strata in the tribal society who were benefited and form the major vehicle of change and development. Secondly, these are further reinforced by the objectives of production which lay emphasis on production for market and profit. For instance cultivation of commercial and plantation crops such as potato, jute, coffee tea etc. Thirdly, this being the major thrust of development, work, education, medical and social facilities have become commodities to be purchased in the market. This strategy adopted for tribal development has led to a gradual increase in the privatisation of land capital productivity and market orientation. But such economic development and the underlying socio-economic arrangement may not necessarily be in tune with the spirit and genuine needs of the people. Over the past few years a class of contractors, merchants, traders and business men have grown in the region and their assets have multiplied manifold. But whatever their investment in the region, it has not enhanced long term social and economic development¹⁰. The crucial element in such developmental measures has been a shift from what M.N. Karna calls the "primitive independence" to "complete dependence". Most programmes have met the requirements of a handful of people, who could align themselves with the dominant groups from outside. The emerging middle class among the tribals is naturally gaining more from the development programmes, because the benefits cannot easily percolate to the poorer section in the existing framework of planning.

The most distressing distortion has taken place in the tenure system of community land. The government agencies are critical about the practice of communal ownership. Instead of designing a strategy that could promote welfare without destroying such an egalitarian practice, they advocate a change from community to individual ownership both in agricultural and forest lands. In the village, communal ownership of land has been steadily eroding and the land and assets are being privatised by those who wield power and authority over them.

Promotion of balanced regional development has been a long term stated objective of planning in India. This concern has led to several special area development programmes for certain categories of backward areas such as the Integrated Hill Area Programme, the Integrated Programme of Dry Farming, the Drought Prone Areas Programme, the Desert Development programmes, the Tribal sub-plans etc. In spite of these programmes and several other central schemes of concessional finance, capital subsidy and transport subsidy on industrial investment, imbalances in development have not significantly lessened. Not all the seven sisters of the North East are developing at the same rate. Many units being late starters in development, lag behind others. There are also inter-tribal inter-district and rural-urban variations within each unit. This backwardness has long-term consequences for the social organisation of the people. It demonstrates a growing stratification among the tribals in terms of economic privileges and political power.

The tribal communities of the North-East are in the midst of a profound socio-economic transformation. Therefore, a conscious and deliberate attempt has to be made to guide it. Government agencies alone cannot do it: the decisions have to be taken by the community itself and the agents of change have to operate within this framework. Since different zones of North East are inhabited by different tribal groups this uneven development has accelerated social inequality along the ethnic or tribal life.

In the choice of policies for the economic development of the hill areas, the social issues in the adoption of one or the other of these policies are of great importance. According to B.K. Roy Burman the policy for economic development of the tribals has to take care of two important aspects (a) removal of general backwardness of these people as a whole with the object of bringing them at par with others; and (b) meeting the specific needs and growth requirements of particular tribal groups within the larger tribal community. Since there is a wide range of variations in economic standard and stage of growth, a uniform programme may not lead to the advancement of all the tribal groups at the same time and to the same level.

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CHAPTER 3

SECTION 1

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Durkheim considers education as a social institution that functionally promotes consensus and social integration in new generations through the cultivation of those personal qualities that can further it as a social process. According to S.M. Dubey, education will help in the socialization of child and the development of human personality, social mobility, occupational change and the rise ^{of} professions. Strumiliu, young, Schultz, and Donisou have also pointed out that education may increase productivity and economic development¹.

The tribal areas in the North-East India have undergone fast political administrative change after independence; consequently, the provisions in the constitutions have been amended from time to time.

According to the National committee on the development of backward class (1981), the strategy for tribal development should underline measures for building the inner strength of the community so that they are able to face as quickly as possible the new system on terms of equality. In this framework, education and health service were given a high priority in the development profile of the tribal areas. They were to be accepted not only as

necessary investments for faster economic growth, but also as an effective protective device during the transitional phase.

At the request of the Ministry of Education and culture, Government of India, the Anthropological Survey of India took up the responsibility of assessing the nature and degree of spread of education among the tribal people in India. It undertook a study of fifty selected Scheduled Tribe communities from different parts of the country. The report was compiled and edited by Das Gupta and Danda in 1984. It was found that in spite of the wide range of socio-economic backgrounds that these tribes represent, there were certain common features regarding their educational problems. Some of the more important common problems among them are as follows.

(a) Though primary education is within the easy reach in many areas, secondary schools are not that widespread to be within easy reach of most of the villages.

(b) A communication gap exists between the teacher and student on the one hand, and the text books and the students' mental preparation to receive anything from them on the other hand, specially at the primary stage.

(c) The bulk of the literates come from the age-group of 8-15 which means that the spread of education is rather a recent phenomenon.

(d) A general demand for residential schools has been made from many tribal corners.

(e) There is also a reluctance among the tribal people in the remote areas to send their wards to educational institutions, owing to shyness.

(f) High frequency of dropouts every year due to lack of awareness about the significance of formal education is conspicuous. (Das Gupta and Danda 1984)

According to M.S.Gore, the sociological analysis of any concrete system of education can be organised into two dimensions (i) the relationship between the educational system and the other segments of the social system. (ii) The system of education itself. However, the discussions on these two cannot always be neatly separated. Sociologists start their analysis of the relationship between different segments of a social system by assuming that these different segments such as kinship, religion, political organization, education etc. are mutually related. Therefore, they cannot function in entirely discrete ways independently of each other. Thus, in a study of the inter-relationship between the system of education and other aspects of the social system, the sociologist seeks to ascertain the specific function or functions performed by the system of education, and the nature of functional and dysfunctional consequences that it may have for one or other aspect of the larger system².

In the educational development of the North East India, the credit goes to the Christian missionaries. In the nineteenth century, the Christian missionaries came to this part of the region to spread the Gospel of Christ. And as part of their evangelisation, they started imparting education and civilising these primitive tribes of North East. As a result in the last one century, North East India has witnessed a large scale proselytization into Christianity

among the hill tribes. According to 1981 Census, 88.46 per cent of the tribals in Mizoram, 88.45 per cent of the tribals in Nagaland, 94.7 per cent of tribals in Manipur and 66.32 per cent of the tribals in Meghalaya are Christians. It is only in Arunachal that most of the tribes continue to follow their traditional faiths, as only 4.28 per cent of them are Christians in the state.

The influence of Christianity in the field of education becomes manifested as one compares the percentage of literacy rate in the different states of North East India. The missionaries were the first to open up schools and introduced Western education. Moreover, most of the tribes in the region got their spoken language reduced to writing with certain modifications for the use in their literature. The Christian education has done much to increase the literacy rate in the region. Indeed, education is a major input in the furtherance of the socio-economic development of any society or community. The introduction of Western education has had a profound effect on the tribal life of North East India. Almost all the recent changes in their social, cultural and political life are attributed by various scholars to the influence of Christianity.

According to S.M.Dubey, an analysis of the socio-cultural life of these tribes will show that there is a positive correlation between Christianity and high percentage of literacy and modernisation. Dubey has also described the impact of Christianity by applying Srinivas' concept of Westernisation and Sanskritisation to the study and extent of change in the tribes of North East India. Most of the Nagas, Khasis and Mizos professing

Christianity are relatively literate and educated and they have been Westernised in their dress and lifestyle. By contrast, Mikirs, Kacharis, Bodos and Miris have adopted Hindu rituals and customs and have been Sanskritized. The Sanskritized tribes have less literacy and their way of life, economy and occupational structure are still traditional.

Let us now have look at the literacy rate of North Eastern states of India. The table(6) shows the below shows the state-wise comparative statement of literacy rate for the year 1981 and 1991.

**LITERACY RATE OF NORTH EASTERN STATES FOR THE YEAR
1981 TO 1991**

(TABLE 6)

STATES	(1981)			(1991)		
	PERSONS	MALE	FEMALE	PERSONS	MALE	FEMALE
Arunachal Pradesh	25.54	35.11	14.01	41.59	51.45	29.69
Assam	N.A.*	N.A.*	N.A.*	52.89	61.87	43.03
Manipur	49.65	64.15	34.67	59.89	71.63	47.60
Meghalaya	42.05	46.65	37.17	49.10	53.12	44.85
Mizoram	74.01	78.88	68.61	22.27	85.61	78.60
Nagaland	50.28	58.58	40.30	61.65	67.62	54.75
Tripura	50.10	61.49	38.01	60.44	70.58	49.65

Sources : Statistical data base for literacy (final population and literacy - 1991, National institute of adult education 1993)

N.A. : Not Applicable

* : Excludes Assam where 1981 Census was not held.

From the above table (6), we see that in Arunachal Pradesh, the literacy rate increased from 1981 to 1991 by 16.05 per cent, male

16.34 per cent and Female 15.68 per cent. The state has many tribes which are further divided into sub tribes or groups speaking different dialects. The existence of a large number of languages and dialects is one of the main constraints in the way of successful implementation of literacy programme. Hindi and English have been adopted as the language of the state. Moreover, the society has patriarchal family. The women have a secondary status. They are considered useful to the family since their contribution to household chores and cultivation of fields are immense. Therefore, they are not encouraged to go to schools. However, with state's march towards female literacy programme there has been an increase from 14.01 per cent in 1981 to 29.69 per cent in 1991. This is itself an indication of progress in female literacy.

In Manipur, there has been a 10.24 per cent increase in the literacy rate. Manipur consists of different ethnic groups such as Meithes, Muslims, Nagas and Kukies. The Nagas and Kukies belong to the scheduled tribe with their total population of 34.4 per cent (1991 census). In terms of economic and education the tribals are more backward than the non-tribals.

Meghalaya consists of three tribes viz, Khasi, Jaintia, and the Garo tribes. The literacy as indicated by the table shows 7.05 per cent increase from 1981 to 1991. There has been an increase in male literacy by 6.47 and female 7.68 per cent.

Mizoram is the highest literate state of North East India. The increase of literacy rate from 1981 to 1991 of the total population is by 8.26 per cent; male 6.73 per cent and female 9.99 per cent. The increase in

literacy rate of Mizoram has been attributed to church or Christian organisation and other voluntary organisations. The major tribes together constitute a Mizo tribe.

In Nagaland, one sees an increase in the literacy rate of the total population by 11.37 per cent; male 9.04 per cent and female 14.37 per cent. The major tribes of Nagaland are Angami, Ao, Sema, Zeliang, Konyak, Rengma, Chakesang etc. All these tribes have their own dialects. In spite of the language problems in the state, the literacy rate is commendable. This may be perhaps due to the enrolment of all children in the age group of 6-14 years, and the incentives provided for compulsory attendance.

The growth of literacy in Tripura has been rather spectacular. One can see a definite increase in the literacy rate by 10.34 per cent; male 9.09% and female 11.64 per cent. The official language is Bengali and the tribal language is also taken as the second language.

Thus, we see that there has been a rapid development in the literacy rate among the tribals of North East India in the last two or three decades. But the literacy programme in the region continues to be the main problem. The average illiterate adult has no attraction for literacy. The large scale unemployment is a big de-motivating factor. The usual question posed by him is " will I get a job?" The desire for learning depends on the satisfaction of individuals' primary and basic needs (food, shelter, clothing). Therefore, to motivate the learners the 'national literacy movement' document has very rightly mentioned that interest in it can be aroused if the programme is of direct

relevance to the learner. It should result in the economic betterment through learning of new skills³.

Dropout is one of the major problems in India; most of the students, specially in the hill states of the North East region of India, leave their school without completing the whole course. According to the survey conducted by a group on literacy survey in the North Eastern region of India 1994, there are three main reasons for giving up the school education on the way. These are poverty, helping parents and failure in the examination.

Dropout of school children in the states of Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh.

(TABLE 7)

Reasons of Dropout (%)

STATE	Poverty	Helping parents	Failure in examination	Average % of Dropouts
Meghalaya	74	14	8	32
Mizoram	3	-	2	2.5
Arunachal Pradesh	32	25	36	31

source : Literacy survey in the North Eastern region of India. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. NEHU, Shillong 1994

The Table(7) above indicates poverty as the reason of dropouts, is highest in Meghalaya, followed by Arunachal Pradesh and it is the least in Mizoram.

Much has been emphasised on the contribution of Christian missionaries in the field of education among the tribes of North East India. But their impact on the economic system has not been significant. As pointed out by J.J.Roy Burman, the Christian missionaries have not done much to improve the level of technology of the tribal communities. Majority of the people yet continue to thrive on agriculture and hunting and gathering for their livelihood. The age old shifting cultivation or slash and burn cultivation

dominate the agriculture practices. He observes that even if there have been some changes of late by the growth of the tertiary sector, such development cannot be ascribed to the intervention of the evangelists to any significant extent. Increase in literacy rate has not solved the economic problem of the people. In fact, it has created the probable of unemployment.

The Mizos have made rapid progress in literacy, but it is mainly within the sphere of non-technical and non-scientific education. According to Nag the system of education so designed by the missionaries was non-science and non-technical education⁴.

Let us have a look at the various educational institutions available in North East India.

Number of Educational Institutions (as on September 1990)

Table(8)

Institution	Arunachal Pradesh	Assam	Manipur	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Nagaland	Tripura
University	1	3	1	1	*	*	1
Board of Secondary Education	—	2	1	1	1	1	1
Art/Science/Commerce College	4	213	31	23	13	15	13
Engg. College	—	3	—	—	—	—	1
Medical College	—	3	1	—	—	—	—

Agriculture College	—	2	1	—	—	1	—
Veterinary College	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Teacher Trg. College	—	9	3	1	1	1	1
High Schools	68	3,065	400	303	202	147	306
Primary Schools	1,122	78,876	3,226	4,163	1,109	1,287	2,083
Teacher Trg. School	—	32	2	10	2	3	2
Polytechnics	2	7	1	1	1	1	1
Technical & Industrial School	2	27	19	3	1	3	3

* Campus of NEHU at Nagaland and Mizoram

Source : Selected Educational Statistics, 1990-91; Ministry of Human Resource & Development India, New Delhi.

The above table(8) indicates that besides primary schools, High schools and Art/Science and commerce college, the other educational institutions are almost non-existent in the North Easter Region. The states of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland do not have a single technical or professional institutions, such as Engineering, Medical, Agriculture and veterinary college. While Tripura has just one engineering

college and one Teacher Training college. Assam has three Engineering college, three Medical colleges, two Agriculture colleges, one Veterinary college, nine Teacher Training college, thirty two Teachers Training school, seven polytechnics and twenty seven Technical and Industrial school. Manipur has one Medical college, one Agricultural college, three Teacher Training college, two Teacher Training school, one polytechnic and nineteen Technical and Industrial school. Thus Assam has the highest number of educational institutions both in terms of general and Technical institutions. Arunachal Pradesh has the least number of institutions, with just one University, four Art/Science and Commerce college, sixty eight High schools, one thousand and one hundred and twenty two primary schools, Two Polytechnics and Two Technical and Industrial School.

The Table(9) below indicates the enrolment of students in different stages/classes.

(P.T.O.)

ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS BY STAGES/CLASSES

Table(9)

Stages/ Classes	Arunachal Pradesh	Assam	Manipur	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Nagaland	Tripura
Ph.D/M.Phil	-	226	78	78	-	-	-
M.A.	50	2,680	644	596	36	20	237
M.Sc	-	1,214	453	157	-	18	94
M.Com	-	532	76	24	-	6	96
B.A	1,375	71,369	13,260	4,281	1,733	2,307	6,206
B.Sc	58	21,241	5,440	1,160	186	251	1,748
B.Com	90	8,522	680	513	112	408	1,750
M.B.B.S	-	1,996	408	-	-	-	-
Polytechnic	-	2,960	324	265	225	301	90
High School (IX & X)	10,771	4,05,728	46,700	47,633	16,229	20,863	50,624
Primary School	1,12,197	35,50,085	2,64,589	2,42,570	1,20,300	1,45,410	4,02,034

Source : Selected Educational Statistics 1990-91, Ministry of human Resource Development, Govt. Of India, New Delhi

The table above indicates the maximum enrolment of students in primary and high schools. The seven states in the table(9) show a poor enrolment in technical and professional education. Assam has 1,996 number of students enrolled in MBBS, while Manipur has 480 number of students enrolled in MBBS. Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura

have no enrolment in MBBS. The reason could be that these states do not have medical college. The students have to go either to Assam, Manipur or other states to enroll themselves in the medical college. The Table(9) also indicates that there are higher number of students in Art subject than in science subject. Thus, the Table(9) itself shown the acute shortage of Technical and Professional education in the North Eastern region. The acute scarcity of technical personal in the region have created problems. Persons from other states are appointed in key posts and this gradually has added to social tension. Also the crucial works of rural development can rarely be expected to be done effectively by outsiders.

IMPACT OF EDUCATION : The impact of education has been felt by almost all the tribes of North East India. Before the coming of Christian missionaries, education among the hill tribes was both primitive and informal. There was no school. Educational activities were conducted within the family and social circles; knowledge was imparted through actual contact or practical demonstration and participation in the domestic social and religious life of the people⁵. The introduction of Western education and efforts made by missionaries and government brought to them not only high literacy but also an awareness of their rights and self interest.

Among the Nagas in Nagaland, after statehood was obtained, aptitude for change and motivation was highly noticed. The basic need of education was felt by all sections and tribes. Therefore, government and private schools were opened, colleges were established upto under-graduate level in arts, science and commerce. As a result, the literacy rate of Nagaland

has increased since 1960s. According to Jogamaya saikia, education brings changes mostly among the youth. They do not like to be confined within the limits of tradition and mores, but want to be little more exposed to the modern world. When educated people start adopting new habits and practise them in day to day life, it is the youngsters who naturally follow them. As a result, the social institutions like marriage, religion etc are changing. The traditional marriage feasts common among the Nagas are decreasing. The dress pattern, music, art, crafts, food habits are also changing. Moreover, the educated Nagas seek livelihood by seeking government or salaried jobs only⁶.

Horam (1977) points out that Christianity proved beneficial for the Nagas in countless ways such as removal of superstition, introduction of schools and hospitals, cleanliness and a turning away from head-hunting and such other things. Besides, with the advent of new values augmented by education, there has been changes effecting family, clans, village etc. Horam points out that among the Tangkhul Naga custom, the eldest son is enjoined upon to provide for the old parents. But these days, the sons are lacking in that filial duty which was characteristic of Tangkhul society. These individual tendencies are a recent development and these are the direct cause of weakening family ties. Clan is another binding factor among the Nagas; today, the importance of the clan is waning. The educated youth find it hard to take order and advice from the uneducated elders, who they feel still live in the past and hence cannot relate to the present⁷. Moreover, these days the church and fellow church members are the new centres of loyalty. The importance of clan

relationship began declining with the introduction of Christianity⁸. One thing, however, which has never changed is the practice of marriages based on clan exogamy. With regard to village ties, the educated Nagas have lost contact or retain only fragile links with them. They are no longer interested in cultivation and therefore even an ordinary matriculate and graduate look for white collar jobs.

Sengupta (1994) also notes that with the spread of Christianity there began to emerge a middle class that controls education, government, literature, commerce and trade, technical and medical education⁹.

The middle class, especially in a tribal society like in North-East India has been a major agent of social change. Due to education, they become the most innovative, creative, and articulate group in tribal society. This middle class became the leaders in the development of language and literature, infusing new ideas in religion and also became instrumental in bringing about political and revivalist movement. (Datta Roy 1983)

According to Khrieleno Terhuja, the increased contact of Angami Naga with with modern civilization have brought about assimilation of both evil and good elements in modern life. The forces of change are the contacts with other faiths, culture, education, better facilities of communication and technology and government policies. A most significant progress is in the educational sphere. It is the desire of all parents to send their children to schools. The scale of value has changed to such an extent that a man would rather give a good education to his children than spend the amount on

traditional community feasts. The educational elite is easily absorbed with various careers with better incomes. With more money people buy more imported goods. The impact of modern contacts have led the animist Angami to turn away from his ancient faith. The observance of rigid traditional customs and ceremonial taboos has become lax especially among the educated people. There is a tendency among the Angamis to identify Christianity with education and teetotalism. It is regarded as fashionable to get education and become a Christian because majority of the educated are Christian. The impact of education, modernity is creating a spiritual vacuum in the society at all levels.

Whatever the services rendered to the Nagas by the Missionaries, they condemned the Naga food, festivals, dress, ornaments, religious beliefs, communal institutions and mode of living as primitive. As a result, the Christian Naga refrained from participating in the feasts of Merit and boys and girls ceased to attend their Morungs or dormitories. With the end of head-hunting and discontinuance of the Morungs and community feasts by the Christian Nagas by and large, the art of wood carving and textiles lost all scope and incentives. The disappearance and continuance of such important social and communal institution were followed by the emergence of a spirit of 'new individualism'. The spread of Christian religion and occupation mobility gave scope for inter-tribal marriages and marriages with non-Naga. Such inter-marriages have eroded family and communal ties to a great extent¹⁰.

A.C. Sinha points out that the middle class which had emerged among the Nagas was inextricably linked with the spread of western education, and rise of profession ranging from teaching to law, to medicine¹¹.

According to Laltanpuia (1993) education had greatly affected the Mizo traditional way of life and change their outlook to a great extent. Thereby paving the way for a new lease of life of the Mizo society. This has brought in new concepts new values and new ideas in the minds of the common people. With the growth of a number of beneficiaries of Christianity and education the people's aspiration for evolving new power equation started gaining momentum. This ultimately led to the emergent of educated elites who were mainly from salaried jobs, professionals, trade and commerce. They wanted freedom from the Chief which was finally abolished under the Acquisition of Chiefs Rights Act of 1954. In this way, the educated elites, having political consciousness, not only endeavoured to abolish the institution of chieftanship, but also contributed lots in the re-structuration of the entire social structure of the Mizos¹².

S.M. Dubey has indicated the relationship between education and social change by analysing a tribal Christian village in Mizo hill districts with a non-Christian village in Mikir hills of Assam. He found that in the Mizo village, the percentage of literacy was 41.7% and the value of education was felt not only by the literates but even by the illiterates. The villagers were found smart and hard working and show their readiness to take up new occupation. The flexible character of society was to a large extent an

outcome of literacy. On the other hand, in the Mikir village, it was found that not a single villager could read and write and none felt the need or realise the value of education. The village was found backward and the socio-economic condition almost static. Thus, he found that education brings about change in a society. However, Dubey has clarified that social change is a complex phenomenon and it may be caused and shaped by diverse factors. Even among the tribes of the North East India, apart from education, improvement in the modes of transport and communication, land reform, modern political movements, Christianity and democratic experiments etc, may be regarded as equally important agents as well as indices of change. In fact, more empirical studies are needed to show a clearer picture of social change brought about by education among the tribes.

A.P. Sinha has observed that the role of family is still maintained, even with technological and educational changes that are taking place among the tribes of North East India. He pointed out that among the Khasis, the new opportunities for employment were utilised equally by both educated men and women. This did not result change in the status of men in the matrilineal society of Khasi. As such, technological change in Meghalaya did not influence the status of the Khasi males.

In Arunachal, Sinha observed that the educated Gallong youths wanted to discard polyandry and marriage payment of bride price. But the community leaders did not favoured it. They argued that in Arunachal the Gallong had been able to achieve most rapid progress in education and in

creating of modern trading enterprises because of these two customs. Polyandry allowed a bright boy to receive encouragement and help from all persons classified as his fathers. Heavy bride-price provided the motivation for taking up entrepreneurial role to the upcoming Gallong youth. Thus, among the Khasi and gallong tribes technological change have not influenced the role of a family.

Sinha also observed the role of family upon education among the Naga and Mizo society. He observed that the students from Nagaland and Mizoram who were studying in the colleges at Shillong or in the University eagerly await the completion of their studies. They were in a hurry to complete their studies and return home at the earliest, so that they can take some employment and start earning. These students felt that it was their social responsibility to start earning at the earliest so that they in turn can send their younger brother or sister to Shillong for study.

The implication of this has been in a way negative for the Naga or the Mizo society. The immediate result of this is that in each of these societies i.e., the Nagas or Mizo, the level of education was rising very high. This can be taken as indicative of progress. On the other hand, it has also resulted in a quantitative rise in the educational level. In Mizoram it has been revealed that the educational performance of Mizo teachers have been rather low. Thus, what we need to understand is that, it is not deficiency in motivation towards education but that the traditional values of family are still maintained and this check full impact of education on society¹³.

SECTION 2

S.M.Dubey conducted a study on the tribal student of Assam Medical college in order to find out the nature and extent of occupational mobility among the tribes of North East India. He observed from his study that the pattern of occupation change is from tribal occupation to modern occupation in the generation of father and from business and government service to professions in the generation of the respondents.

Education has indeed made an impact upon occupation of the tribal population. The younger generation after receiving their education no longer want to follow the traditional form of occupation i.e., agriculture. Instead they seek for salaried jobs and most favourably governmental services. It has been observed that there is a great lack of entrepreneurs among the tribes of North East India. According to Lianzela(1994) the Mizos have a great liking for white collar jobs. The educated people, instead of starting their own enterprise or industry would generally look for jobs in government offices. Moreover, the majority of the people in Mizoram do not have saving habit. In this type of society no rapid development can be expected. No investment is possible without saving and no development can take place without significant investment¹⁴. However, one should bear in mind that there are various social and economic factors behind the reasons for lack of entrepreneurship and saving among the tribals of North Eastern region.

For instance, in Meghalaya, all the three major groups the Khasi, the Jaintia and the Garo are governed by the matrilineal principle of descent and inheritance. This principle has a deep effect on the status of men in the matrilineal society of Meghalaya. Its deeper impact is felt on their economic position which virtually gets uprooted with the change of residence from the mother's to the bride. The impact is worst among the illiterate and unskilled who are engaged in cultivation or in other small-scale activities like business and trade which revolve around the family. That is why in Meghalaya the men, especially those who have had some education and training, flock to government offices for employment in return for a fixed monthly salary rather than setting up their own industrial or entrepreneurial activity. This is because industrial activity involves capital investment and co-operative of family members or business partners, which could not be met under the existing condition of matrilineal system of descent and inheritance¹⁵.

A pilot survey was conducted in the three states of North East viz, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh under the project director Dr.(Mrs) Bilorosis Lyndem Laso in 1994. The Table below indicates the occupational structure and monthly income among the three states as reported by survey team.

Occupational Structure and their monthly income of Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh

Table (10)

STATE	Occupation%				Average Monthly Income of a family
	Agri-culture	Business	Govt. service	Others	
Meghalaya	63.4	5.2	15.8	15.6	1734
Mizoram	51	19	21	9	2607
Arunachal Pradesh	56	8	2	32	2000

Source : Centre for Adult and Continuing Education, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong 1994.

By comparing the three states in their occupational structure and monthly income, ~~we find~~ we find that agriculture practise is still predominant among the three states. Meghalaya has the highest agriculture practise with 63.4%, while Mizoram has 51% and Arunachal Pradesh with 56%. The Percentage of Government service (21%) and Business (19%) are higher in Mizoram than in Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. That is why, probably the average monthly income of a family in Mizoram state is Rs.2607 and it is higher than the other two states.

Thus, we find there has been no basic change in the occupational structure during the last three decades. There has been, of course, a slight decline in the proportion engaged in agriculture and a small use in that engaged in industries and services. But it must be noted here that the pace of

this change is very slow. The progress in industrial and service sectors is not big enough to produce any significant impression on the agriculture progress; it is not adequate to make available the required resources for developing industries and services.

It is true that large investment in industries, since 1951 has provided some opportunities of employment in the country, but on this front the region is miserably poor. There is, of course, expansion in trade, transport and service sector due to government expenditure in various activities, but it has not made any significant impact on the occupational pattern. If we accept the thesis that economic progress of a region is accompanied by a shift in working population from primary to secondary and ultimately to tertiary sector, then the North-East is not positively on the road to economic progress (A.K. Agarwal 1987 :84)

There is an urgent need for economic development in the region which requires a change in the occupational structure. Therefore, it becomes essential to transfer a large part of the workers from the agricultural sector to the industrial and service sectors. Since productivity per head in industries and services is generally higher than in agriculture, such transfer of workers from low to high productivity sector will result in higher national productivity per head, resulting in an increase in total production. Besides, there will be a diversification in economic activities.

At present, coupled with many problems such as increasing number of job seekers, inability of non-agricultural sector to absorb

new labour force, inadequate investment and low level of technology, it seems very difficult to expand industrial and service sectors so fast as to absorb new entrants and also to absorb labour thrown out of agriculture. Thus, it becomes essential to expand the industrial and service sectors to a maximum possible extent, so that new entrants in the labour force and unemployed persons may be absorbed as much as possible.

Another emerging problem is the increase in unemployment among the educated. Let us look at the unemployment rate through the data available at employment exchange. While analysing the data of employment exchanges as an indicator of unemployment, the following points need to be kept in view (a) the data, by and large, cover urban areas, as only a small part of rural unemployment is reflected in it; (b) many of the employed persons also get their names registered with the employment exchanges to get better jobs; and (c) quite a large number of unemployed do not get themselves registered with the employment exchanges considering it to be quite futile, since it is largely believed that these exchanges hardly help the unemployed to secure jobs. Despite all these limitations and shortcomings we shall depend on these figures for one reason or the other. An idea of the extent of the problem of unemployment among educated job-seekers and non-educated persons can be had from the following table.

Number of Job-seekers on the live register of employment exchanges as on 30th June 1984.

(Table 11)

STATE	Below matric	Matric	Hr.Sec.	Graduate	post graduate	Total
Assam	251.9 (52.6)	149.8 (31.2)	44.5 (9.2)	31.9 (6.7)	1.2 (0.3)	479.3 (100.0)
Manipur	90.2 (50.0)	60.5 (33.5)	15.3 (8.5)	13.4 (7.4)	1.1 (0.6)	180.5 (100.0)
Meghalaya	7.4 (60.2)	3.3 (26.8)	0.8 (6.5)	0.7 (5.7)	0.1 (0.8)	12.3 (100.0)
Mizoram	12.5 (69.1)	4.1 (22.7)	0.7 (3.9)	0.8 (4.4)	0.1 (0.6)	18.1 (100.0)
Nagaland	10.4 (88.9)	0.9 (7.7)	0.2 (1.7)	0.2 (1.7)	\$	11.7 (100.0)
Tripura	45.4 (52.5)	19.0 (22.0)	16.7 (19.3)	5.2 (6.0)	0.2 (0.2)	86.5 (100.0)
Total	417.8 (53.0)	237.6 (30.1)	78.2 (9.9)	52.2 (6.6)	2.7 (0.4)	788.4 (100.0)
All-India	11046.6 (48.3)	6809.8 (29.8)	2944.1 (12.9)	1859.9 (8.1)	208.3 (0.9)	22868.7 (100.0)

\$- figures less than 50

Figures in brackets represent percentage of unemployed in a particular group to total unemployed

Source : PTI Economic situation, 15 May 1984

It is evident from the above table that the number of job-seekers in the region constitute 3.4 per cent of the total unemployed in the country. Among the educated job-seekers the proportion of matriculates is very high contributing 64.1 per cent as against 57.6 per cent for all-India. The proportion of intermediate passed remained 21.1 per cent of graduate 14.1 per cent, and post-graduate 0.7 per cent in the region, as against corresponding figures of 24.9 per cent, 15.7 per cent and 1.8 per cent for all India. It highlights that the majority of job-seekers in the region try to get employment just after matriculation. The tendency of unemployment is also noticed at the level of intermediate passed and graduates, but not in the same proportion as we find it at the all-India level.

Let us now have a look at the employment in the organised sector in North East India.

**Establishment and Employment in the organised sector in N.E.R
(as on 01.01.88)**

(Table 12)

STATES	Establishment (nos.)			Employment (nos.)		
	Public Sector	Private Sector	Total	Public Sector	Private Sector	Total
Assam	4,606	1,654	6,260	453.0	492.2	945.2
Manipur	502	20	522	48.3	0.4	48.7
Meghalaya	613	136	749	56.3	4.6	60.8
Mizoram	437	16	453	27.1	1.2	28.3
-Nagaland	587	111	698	66.0	1.6	67.7
Tripura	177	242	419	80.7	9.0	89.7

Source : Employment Review Oct-Dec, 1988

The table(12) indicates that within the organised sector, the public sector accounts for a little more than the private sector for employment in Assam, whereas for the rest of the units in the region the public sector is the only sector, which provides employment to more than 90 per cent within the organised sector. Another interesting feature is the contribution of government administration which accounts for more than half and even two-third of the public sector employment. Mizoram with the highest literacy rate among the North East states is facing the problem of unemployment in a big way, specially for those seeking clerical jobs or similar other cadres in the government, semi-government and private offices. As a consequence of universal primary education and low rates of drop out, the incidence of unemployment is higher among the educated, particularly among the matriculates. This phenomenon is explained in part by the widened scope for vertical mobility and the -resulting increase in the number of matriculates. But what is equally relevant is that employment opportunities for the educated do not seem to have been expanding at a rate fast enough to catch up with the increase in the number of educated. There has been no basic shift in the occupational structure with the increase in literacy. The economy is still predominantly agrarian in character. Emphasis has been laid on the expansion of general education rather than on professional and technical education. Thus, general education need a qualitative improvement particularly in science and mathematics in order to make learning relevant to the needs of the society.

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CONCLUSION

In today's world especially with the increase in scientific knowledge and technology, education has become synonymous with development. However, the present education system places a high value on academic and intellectual excellence. It does not impart the skills, we need for getting the best placements in society in terms of employment and economic benefits. Education is the most important factor for social change. It assists the society in achieving its goals.

In the previous chapters, we dealt with the socio-economic and educational development among the tribes of North Eastern India. Chapter 2 brought out, that the tribal economy is quite different from the economy of the people of the plains. The tribal economy is characterised by communal ownership of land, customary laws, and group action in various forms, shifting cultivation and its concomitant effects on productivity, standard of living etc. More than four decades of economic planning did not bring about any fundamental change in the socio-economic structure of the region. Agriculture still predominates in the economy, contributing a substantial proportion of the state income and engaging about three-fourth of the

population. The region has not yet achieved a real breakthrough in agricultural development. The 'green revolution' which has brought agricultural prosperity in many parts of the country in the recent years, is yet to take place in the North East region.

The industrial sector also failed to show any good results. there are immense potentialities for industrialisation in this region based on mineral, chemical, forest, agricultural and livestock resources. But the progress so far made has been very modest. The few industries established are mostly cottage based. The region lags far behind in large scale industrialisation. Table (3) indicated that the medium and large industries are mainly found in the state of Assam while the rest of states have less than ten in number. Mizoram has no medium or large scale industry. This indicates the uneven development in the Industrial sector of the North Eastern region. There are many factors behind the slow rate of industrialisation of the region, such as geographical isolation, inadequate provisions of finances transport bottlenecks and above all, a bold and capable local entrepreneurship.

The role of economic planning in the process of development of the region is inadequate. The total plan investment in the region in comparison to the percentage of the rest of India is very low, considering the relative backwardness of the North East. Moreover, the state plannings suffer

from many limitations. Some of which are ; insufficient data-base, absence of appropriate regional objectives of plans, absence of a perspective plan, inadequate participation plan, inadequate participation of the people and the absence of a real micro-level planning etc. Thus, even after decades of economic planning, the relative backwardness of the people and the region has remained.

Promotion of balanced regional development has been a long term stated objective of planning in India. However, the programmes and schemes adopted by the government for the development of the tribal population, have benefited only a handful of people. The more resourceful families get the bigger share of inputs distributed by the government agencies and so are in a position to use them to a greater advantage. Thus, the emerging middle class among the tribals is naturally gaining more from the development programmes because the benefits cannot easily reach the poorer sections in the existing frame-work of planning. Also, if as a result of planning there is premature destruction of their (tribal)traditional economy at the same time a lack of preparation of the manpower to appropriate the employment opportunities that may be offered, it may lead to disappointed and frustration.

In chapter 3, we have looked into the educational development among the tribes of North East India. It has been accepted that the Missionaries were pioneers in introducing formal education among them. As a

result, Christianity and education are inter-linked in bringing about social and cultural change among the tribes of North East India. Pugh B.M. had pointed out that these social and cultural change among the tribes due to their contact with the West was very superficial. These changes were most noticeable in the matters of dress, of religious persuasion or beliefs, sports and recreation, home life, social custom, in their attitude towards different forms of labour and to life in general. He pointed out that today there are government officers penetrating every nook and corner of these hills. Their impact on the urban and rural societies, therefore, has been more extensive and intensive than in the days of the British rule.

In recent times, there has been a rapid increase in the literacy rate of the tribals of North East India. Table (6) shows that Mizoram has the highest literacy rate of 82.27(1991 Census) followed by Nagaland (61.65%); Tripura (60.44%); Manipur (59.89%); Assam (52.89%); Meghalaya (49.10%) and Arunachal Pradesh (41.59%). Except for Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh, the other states have higher literacy rates than the all India's (52.11%). However, if we look at the Table (9) we find that most of the enrolment by classes are in general education or humanities subject. There are very few students enrolled for science, technical and professional courses. This

has resulted in an acute shortage of technical and professional personnel among the tribes of the North East.

Education helps to liberate the mind of man and enables him to give up prejudices and to accept modernisation. However, the stereotyped pattern of school and college education, as found in the North Eastern region, will not help. The spread of such education is capable of only increasing the number of unemployed among the educated sections. In fact the problem of educated unemployment has already taken place among the tribes leading to discontentment and frustration among them. Therefore stress should be put on work-oriented and professional courses.

Education has indeed made its impact upon the tribes of North East. The educated youths no longer want to follow their traditional occupation i.e., agriculture. Most of them look out for salaried jobs, the government services. The Government administration provides for about two-third of the public sector employment. However, employment opportunities for the educated do not seem to be expanding at a rate fast enough to catch up with the increased number of educated people. At the same time, the government administration cannot create more jobs to absorb all the unemployed. Besides the government services there should be other kind of services to meet the growing unemployment of the region. Our way of meeting this need is to give

general education, a qualitative improvement, particularly in science and mathematics in order to make learning relevant to the needs of the society.

When we co-relate development and education among the tribes in the North Eastern region, we find that in terms of socio-economic development, the tribals lag far behind the non-tribals. But in terms of education or literacy rate, they rate higher in percentage terms. Education has brought about development among the tribals of the North East to some extent. As a result of education many of the tribals have started taking up white collar jobs or government service. This has led to a better standard of living in terms of housing, health, sanitation etc. Education has also led to a change in attitude towards life in general. Most of the tribes have given up their barbaric ways of living such as, head-hunting, inter-village feuds etc, which were prevalent among them. It has also made them more aware and open to the various programmes and policy's adopted by the government for their development. Moreover the educated few help their community to bring about social change among them.

The development among the tribals of the North East^{is} at a very slow pace. Even after four decades of economic planning, the tribes of North East have still remained relatively backward. Moreover, development among these tribes have not taken place evenly. There are inter-regional and

inter-tribal disparity in terms of their developmental and educational achievements.

Therefore, it can be concluded that, while education is taking place at a fast rate, development has been very modest. This has resulted in growing unemployment, especially among the educated sections and has also led to discontentment and social tension in the region. In order to have model of plans or programmes for North East India, we have to take into consideration the social, economic and political context of the region. Moreover, it would be a poor social policy to plan and execute programmes without any provision for their evaluation. Evaluation consists of assessing how well a programme is carried out and measuring its impact.

A brief look at the other tribal communities of India in term of their development and education would serve for healthy comparison. Naik's study on the 'Impact of education among the Bhils' revealed that the economically well-off section of the Bhil society gets the maximum educational benefits. The children of the upper crust of the Bhil society that is, the Bhilala farmers, the patels and zamindars have been able to go to school and take advantage of the scholarships or hostel facilities made available to them by the government. Whereas, the poorer sections of the Bhil society find it difficult to spare a child for education as their service is required in other economic

pursuits. He has also pointed out that education has had little influence as far as the social life of the Bhils is concerned. At the same time, he noted that with the increase of education, a new leadership was emerging where the younger educated are gaining ground and becoming more popular.

Sachchidananda pointed that most of the tribals who are at the secondary schools and at universities do not go back to work in their villages, but look for employment outside. Consequently, the number of tribals in government services or in professions like teaching, medicine and law has been rapidly increasing year after year. With the growth of education, unemployment among the educated tribals has been mounting fast. Again the growth of education also leads to the emergence of middle class among the tribals of Bihar.

Shah and patel found a considerable inter-tribal variation in the educational attainment of Scheduled Tribes residing in the tribal sub plan areas of Gujarat. For instance tribes like the Dhodias and Chaudharies are far above the average level, while the Varlis, Rathwas, Dublas and Katwalias are far below the average level of educational development of tribals in general.

Therefore, we find that there are certain common features between the tribes of North East and the other tribes of India in their levels of developmental and educational attainment.

SUGGESTION ON FUTURE RESEARCH TOPICS IN NORTH EAST INDIA

In the light of the economic situation prevailing in the North Eastern region and the rising aspiration and expectation of the people to attain better standard of living, there is great necessity of research on the various problems of the North Eastern economy. Especially studies with regard to the tribal economy the main features of tribal economy ownership pattern, the tribal economy in transition interaction with mainstream economy, generation of black money and its economic impact, exploring the possibilities of adopting co-operating firming in the tribal areas in the background of the communal ownership of land etc. A study of the economic inter-dependence among the various units of North East India in the process of a co-ordinated economic development of the region. Problem of poverty and social justice : the important areas of research in this field are extent of poverty in the rural and urban areas, causes of progressive pauperisation of the people and the critical evaluation of the specific programmes of eradicating poverty like minimum needs programme, Indian Rural Development programme, National Rural employment programme etc. A study can be done on the slow progress of industrialisation in spite of abundant resources, major impediments and the positive factors that determine the location of industrial projects etc.

The various potential areas of research on the problems of agricultural development such as, causes of the sluggish growth of agricultural sector, land reform measures and changes in organisation, role of new technology of production, changes in cropping pattern, problem of finance, irrigation etc.

Planning and Development strategy in North East India is also a very important area of economic research. The study in this field should make a critical assessment of the planning and development strategy so far followed in the region. Moreover, other priority areas of research in this field are saving and investment habits of capital output ratio, micro-level planning and participation of the people in the planning process at the grass root level.

However, there are various problems which are encountered in conducting social science research in the North Eastern region. Some of the main problems are lack of motivation and interest. Research comes very low in the priority pattern of the products of University and educational institutions. Securing a job is the primary aim after getting a post-graduate degree. Another hindrance for research work which involves time and financial resources is general economic condition of the scholars in this region. There is extreme paucity of research grants available in this region from the U.G.C., ICSSR, State governments etc in comparison with the number of potential research scholars.

The paucity of source materials or basic data also acts as a great deterrent to socio-economic research in the region. And finally the absence of a full-fledged and well-equipped centre or institute of social science research in the region has slowed down the pace of quality of research work in the region. Such an Institute or centre could have provided necessary facilities for research on various aspects of socio-economic life of the region.

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