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**ENCOUNTERING GLOBALIZATION IN THE HILL  
AREAS OF NORTH EAST INDIA**

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# Encountering Globalization in the Hill Areas of North East India

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## ABSTRACT

*Historical periodization is often an arduous task and that too for a region referred as North East India, where the primordial exists with the streaks of the postmodern. The paper attempts to understand the various phases of development in the North East along with identifying the important traits that characterized those phases. From the pre-colonial to the colonial phases and from the liberal constitutional to the post-structural one, the region and its people have undergone varied experiences, the manifestations of which have not been often properly understood by our nation builders. The communitarian ethos of the population groups and the usufruct nature of agricultural practices and resource management were often ascribed as 'backward' by our policy framers who are more attuned to the intricacies associated with 'volumes of production' compared to 'relations of production'. Again, when the statist construction of the nation by the Indian state confronts different narrations of nationhood in the region, the situation gets further complicated. In this regard, how North East India in general and the Hill areas in particular encounter with contemporary phase of globalization seems to be an interesting area of enquiry. Can there be reconciliation between the security and the economic aspiration of the nation state, the historical ethnic aspirations of the people and the windfall profit expectation of global capital? The future of the region perhaps hinges on the answers given to these queries.*

## INTRODUCTION

Contemporary phase of globalization has undoubtedly opened up new opportunities and widened the horizons for human civilization. But perhaps few would disagree if one reiterates that the process

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has simultaneously 'restricted' opportunities and limited the horizons for those who are unable to access its windfalls. The 'utopia' of globalization of ushering a conflict-free society arising out of a free market system transforms into a 'dystopia' for the ever increasing masses of marginalized people who are either denied, excluded or subordinated in the vortex of deprivation, which they also ascribe to globalization. The fact remains as to whether both these trends equally affect the nations and various population groups around the world; or, are there degrees of difference among them in terms of their stages of socio-economic development, endowments/ entitlements of resources, skills or related institutional factors? Existential realities suggest that contemporary globalization is a dialectical phenomenon of historic leaps and contra-leaps, where nations and population groups 'swim' and 'sink; albeit differently. The question therefore is to understand, analyze and interpret how 'they' are encountering it.

In the light of this framework the paper tries to identify the issues related with the tribal areas in their effort to encounter globalization. Are there any specific reasons associated with these areas which should be understood and analyzed in order to deal with this phenomenon? What are the broader characteristics of this contemporary phase for the North East that differ from the earlier eras? Do the term and concept associated with 'resource' have the same significance for industrial vis-à-vis tribal societies? The paper seeks to deal with these broader contours and the conflicts therein concerned with the tribal areas of the North East India in the context of globalization. In this regard, the much neglected yet vital 'land question' will be deliberated upon and the nuances attached with it shall be discussed briefly. The next section will highlight the salient features of the different phases of development of state formation and power structure in the North East and in its light try to analyze the changes either occurring or expected to occur in this region while encountering globalization.

## DEVELOPMENT PHASES AND ACCOMPANYING POWER STRUCTURE IN THE NORTH EAST

Prior to the advent of concurrent phase of globalization, the geographical entity termed as North East has been marked by distinct phases of development with accompanying power structures.

This process in itself may not seem to be much different from other areas of India's mainland but the short time frame within which the phases elapsed is certainly noteworthy. One may differ in terms of the terminologies related to each phase such as pre-colonial/ civilization, colonial/ imperial and post-colonial/ liberal constitutional, post-modern/ post-structural etc but there are broader agreement regarding the characteristics that marked these phases of development and state formation. We will try to highlight the salient features of each phase and in the subsequent sections try to collate them with the contemporary phase.

If one paints the pre-colonial phase of this region with one brush (which of course should be avoided) then certain broad traits emerge which seem to be an inseparable part of this era. It was a relatively closed system, which was primordial in nature bounded by clan/ kinship boundaries rather than territorial ones. The economy was subsistence based and political structures were self-contained. But with the passage of time the economy of surplus emerged in the valleys giving rise to greater political structures. The dichotomy between the wetlands/valleys and the usufruct/highlands became apparent thereafter with the interplay of other related factors. It is observed that the wetlands in the valleys generated surplus which created dominant ruling clans who tried to subjugate the hills where due to *jhumming* (shifting cultivation) generation of surplus (at the scale of the wetlands) was not possible. But the dominant clans in the wetlands maintained only a notional control over the highlanders, where the latter maintained their internal affairs through their own political institutions and customary laws and simultaneously maintained a tributary mode of relation with the plains. The ideological rationalization to this structure was provided through Hinduism, as an organized religion that got embedded in the plains of Assam, Manipur and Tripura during this phase. Thus there was a multiple authority structure in the region whereby the kinship based ethnic power structure prevailed in the highlands whereas the mendicant elements of organized Hinduism flourished in the plains.

Colonial rule is usually homogenizing in nature where the colonial state tries to impose an overarching homogeneity upon its subjects and resources. This process got initiated in India's North East but

there were certain special traits that marked the colonial rule in this region. Although the region was subjugated by the colonial state at different points of time there were certain differences between administering the plains and the hills. It is observed that in case of the highlanders, the heterogeneity of the traditional power structure was maintained as anthropological categories yet they ceased to be independent politico-economic categories. In other words, it was a 'structured-subordination' where the tribal themselves maintained their internal affairs with minimum interference but the chiefs and elites within their set-up were subordinated to the colonial interest. In terms of the access to the resources in these areas there was a sort of 'conservation-dissolution' principle where anything that served the 'private good interest' was preserved but if it went against this interest, it was dissolved. So in the colonial structure, the institution of chieftainship and associated management of resources prevailed to some extent yet the basic allegiance of the system was towards the colonial state rather than the community<sup>1</sup>. Any deviation in this arrangement was to be crushed by military might of the colonial power state. On the other, the integration of the people of the region in general and highlands in particular was facilitated by Christianity and Evangelization, which provided the ideological rationalization for the power structure. Moreover, the colonial-positivist jurisprudence introduced such arrangements related to property, its use and ownership right that was hitherto unknown in the region. Thus the institutions of *Ramrilekha*, *Gaon Bura* etc emerged with the Settlement Rights, Agreements and *Sanads* that influenced farreaching changes for the region.

Post-colonial Indian state has augmented germinating the seeds of inequality and differentiation which its colonial predecessors sowed but due to paucity of time was unable to reap fully. The difference was that now it was undertaken with the facade of liberal constitutionalism. The region due to its long international border has always been viewed through the prism of security and an ever looming threat perception haunted the Indian state from its inception. Moreover, the prevalence of unfamiliar politico-economic structures and a different socio-cultural milieu in the region and the repeated attempt by the nation-builders to understand the region with the

yardsticks of mainland complicated the situation further<sup>2</sup>. The statist construction of the nation by the Indian state was confronted by different narrations of nationhood in the region; North East therefore symbolized the 'rebel consciousnesses'. The elites, whom the British had already bestowed with untribal features, now fluctuated between the allurements of liberal constitutionalism of the Indian state and the rebel consciousness of the region, as their tribesmen went through the serious problem of coping up with the changed environment. Different tribes became attuned to reactive politics, which when acting as a countervailing force against the overarching homogenizing tendency of the Indian state became overwhelmingly identity based as well as territoriality based in nature. The ethnic-state became the backlash against the powerful nation-state. But the elites of these ethnic formations were unable to forge a pan-regional tribal identity as they remained entrapped within the precincts of micro-tribal formations. Pluralization of ethnicities weakened the ethnic mobilization and thereby the all-enveloping homogenizing force of the Indian state prevailed<sup>3</sup>. No amount of administrative arrangements, ranging from Autonomous Region to formation of new states could preserve the progressive elements embedded among the tribes of the region. Instead it created a new power structure where the erstwhile chiefs along with the power-brokers, bureaucrats and a section of the middle class usurped the community resources and muted any voice opposing them in the name of preserving exclusive cultural-identity. Thereby, the tribal masses of the region in general and the highlands in particular suffered from the same amount of deprivation, inequality and pauperization as their non-tribal counterparts while the state surged ahead with its spree of *nationalizing the non-space* and transforming these frontiers, termed as North East, into borders albeit through its avowed imperative of developmentalism.

Under this scenario, what lies ahead for this region in terms of dealing with globalization? While we will deal with the question of land and resources vis-à-vis globalization in the next section, here we try to identify the broader features associated with globalization briefly. Postmodernism deconstructs the concept of power from supra-legal sovereignty to multiplicity of agents, where 'power' shifts from the centralized state to multiple organizations of community

and civil society institutions which redefine and relocate the relations of power. Deconstruction of the centralized power structure yields to decentralization of power locations and therefore instead of one counter-hegemonic reaction there are multiplicities of micro-social movements namely gender, environment, minorities, tribals, indigenous peoples and other sections of the civil society. But there appears to be a contradiction between the issues related with institution and structure governing globalization<sup>4</sup>. While restructuring of the grand institution of the centralized nation-state happens through multiple locations of power and movements yet it appears that post-structural edifices seem to be toothless to the caprices of the global capital and its arms in their effort of appropriation of natural resources and accumulation of capital from the decentralized locations, in order to feed the process of globalization. In North East while the competitive demand for political autonomy may add to the process of locating power at the decentralized organs, which to many may seem to be a return to the bygone era of the *pristine institutions*. Nevertheless the same institutions due to their power structure succumb to the pressure of the hegemonic global capital and its effort for windfall gains through usurpation of community resources. Here, ethnic elites, by and large, facilitate the process of globalization by aligning with the global elites albeit as facilitators as they acted as compradors of the national bourgeoisie during the era of liberal constitutionalism<sup>5</sup>.

Now how does this power structure act under the dispensation of global capital? It is an emerging picture and this paper will try to highlight this issue vis-à-vis land relation in the region and highlands in particular. In the next section, we will deal with the various connotations attached with land in its historical perspective and then forward a prognosis of the changes associated with it at the present juncture.

#### **LAND AND ITS CHANGING CONNOTATION**

With a change in the structure of the economy the connotations attached with resources and resources use changes. This is apparent in case of land too where the values and perception related to land changes substantially. In this section we try to deal with this changing connotations and perceptions in the North East both in its historical perspective and contemporary reality.

One of the sources of the hiatus of perception concerning land between traditional and non-traditional societies is historico-epistemological. Broadly, there are two major perceptions related to land. According to one, land is simply a form of property that the individual-owner trades at will, while according to the other, the community has an interest in it and a sense of stewardship is always attached to land. According to the later concept, the real value of land can never be expressed in terms of market and this inability constitutes a fundamental difference between traditional and market economies in assigning importance to land and perceptions attached with it. It is observed that the traditional societies are more concerned with the products of land and not with land itself. To them, land is rarely valued for its accessibility to a market or production of marginal yield or rent. However, these aspects are inseparably linked with land among the non-traditional societies within the ambit of market economy<sup>6</sup>.

In a community-individual interface (which is also true in case of the tribes), property in land has a dual connotation. While on the one hand, devolution of property is from the community to the individual, the devolution itself is subject to the control of community, on the other. So in ontological terms, individual right (in whatever way) is subsumed within the community right since “no person or group can have property in anything except as it is acknowledged by the relevant community”<sup>7</sup> and therefore in this sense “property is never private”<sup>8</sup>. Again, property being an organic part of the social economy, any change in the economy brings about changes in property relations and this change in the community’s concept of property alters the economy. But how is property in land linked to the social economy? This linkage is established through a changed power structure that controls the political reins in a society<sup>9</sup>. Thereby, when the importance of land increases, political activity increases substantially. This brings about a change in the community to the connotation that it attaches to land and land based resources.

Land ownership patterns among the traditional tribal societies have been largely communal (although there were degrees of variation regarding the role of chief, ownership and management of their respective land) with few exceptions of individual ownership, mainly among limited number of tribes who practised terrace cultivation.

[See Table I & II]<sup>10</sup>. Under such a situation one may question, could there have been enough dislocation within the *loci* of social, economic and political realms during the pre-colonial era, which could have brought about a change regarding the connotation attached to land among the tribal societies in North East India? One might argue that there was some degree of lineage preference<sup>11</sup>, landlessness and slavery<sup>12</sup> within the somewhat egalitarian base in the region yet in the fairness of judgement it can be assumed that the existence of these aberrations were certainly not strong enough to entail changes regarding the community’s connotations attached to land. The practise of *jhumming* with primitive tools and instruments of production could not have risen to such a level which could bear the burden of an economically lazy class i.e. who do not take part in production but enjoy the fruits of it. Thus, although the internal organization of most of the tribal societies contained strong elements of an emerging landlord – serf relationship, the value attached to land was less likely to change substantially due to the interplay of endogenous factors<sup>13</sup>.

Things started to change with the advent of the colonial power. Although the British had little plans to colonialize the hills of north east yet in order to maintain their suzerainty, they thought of weaning over the traditional power elites including the chiefs by bestowing them with certain rights which were absent (or not prominent enough) during the pre-British era. This process was first attempted in the Khasi Hills since they were the first among all other hill tribes, to come under colonial administration and also showed more prominent signs of an emerging but nascent feudal order. The British administration in order to entrench its hold over these areas allowed the elites, including the chiefs to become authoritative which enabled them to usurp community land to be placed under plantation, permitted them to collect market tolls and also lease-out mining activities to outsiders, which helped the elites to amass substantial wealth. These *untribal* features corrupted the tribal elites of the Khasi society within a short period, which had wide ranging ramification for the community as a whole. So penetration of market forces, monetisation of the economy and increase in cash income opened up vistas whereby a major section of this newly acquired wealth was diverted as investments in land<sup>14</sup>. Thus, the connotation

of 'occupancy' attached to land got transformed into 'ownership' and it ceased to be a 'sacred' entity but became a commodity to earn profit in cash.

What started in the *Khasi* Hills, particularly in its southern part, where the *Syiems* assumed the status of superior landlords albeit with the blessings of the colonial state was gradually unfolding in other areas too. In the Jaintia Hills after the rebellion of 1860 the position of the chiefs was legalised as landlords. In Garo Hills, the *Nokmas* were virtually made the proprietors of their respective domain by demarcating the boundaries and offering them the documents of possession. In the Lushai Hills the same was achieved by offering *Ramrilekhas*. In other words, even in the areas of customary communal tenure where *jhum* cultivation was practised there were some variations among land systems. While the *Khasi* system exhibited emerging feudalism on the other extreme, the *Mikir* system approximated to pure communal ownership<sup>15</sup>. Changes in the institution of chiefs brought changes in the power structure at varying degrees and the connotations attached to land also changed accordingly. While it helped the tribal elites, particularly the chief and his lineage to usurp community resources and concentrate land in their hands, on the other, landlessness also surfaced owing to transfer of these resources.

Did things change substantially during the post-colonial era? An impartial observation will suggest that things under the dispensation of liberal constitutionalism were not much different from their colonial predecessors. Of course, under the post-colonial set-up the tribals were provided the option 'to grow according to their own genius' through Schedules and various arrangements of Autonomous District Council and Village District Councils<sup>16</sup>. They were allowed to retain their customary laws and prohibited transfer of their land to non-tribals. It also reserved for the tribals the maximum number of seats in Legislative Assemblies and Parliament. But what has been the overall implication of these administrative apparatus on land relations, we examine this issue here briefly.

In hindsight, it seems obvious that these institutions adopted strange measures which had bizarre effects on the tribal societies and therefore land concentration and landlessness became more prominent under them, than in the colonial era. It is observed that

in the *Khasi* Hills the local *elaka* authorities aided with *patta*, indiscriminately leased-out *Ri Raid* land to both *Khasis* and non-*Khasis* for cultivation. Under these circumstances, people from outside the *Raid* grabbed land by means of *patta*. Ironically, those who lost land were people from the *Raid* whereas those who profited were from the towns<sup>17</sup>. It was not much different in the *Garo* villages, where a class of landed gentry, mainly absentee in nature emerged<sup>18</sup>. Similarly, in the spree of encouraging plantation, wide ranging changes were observed among the *Tangkhu* Nagas inhabiting the remote hills of Manipur. Land that was traditionally classified into five different categories started losing the community connotation as more and more community land was usurped by the emerging elites to further their effort of increasing the area under plantation. So as cash crops such as potato, maize, soyabean, millet, sesame, groundnut, plums, pears, orange, pineapple, banana along with variety of vegetables gained acreage, the transfer of community land became more prominent<sup>19</sup>.

Here it is noteworthy that among all these selected cases community land has been reclaimed citing the provisions of customary laws since the same permitted an individual (read family) to lay claim on community land if permanent changes were brought about in that piece of land. This alibi, which was traditionally permitted for a small piece of land (although the 'smallness' was unspecified) was utilized by the tribal elites to usurp community land either through the erection of fencing or other forms of upgradation, which were ascribed as permanent structures or improvements made on land. So the tribal elites facilitated the process of usurpation of community resources into their hands by selective interpretation of their law which was actually meant for a milieu rendering *usufruct* rights on land. Therefore the erstwhile temporary users now became *de facto* landowners. Moreover, these landowners (many among them) do not cultivate themselves but lease-out to others for cash crop cultivation and collect a land tax known as *loushan* or *luisha* from the cultivators. It is due to this fact that today, in areas like Ukhrul, Hundung, Phungyar and many other places, purchasing, leasing and mortgaging the community held land has become a common practice<sup>20</sup>. Concentration of land in fewer hands and the problem of rising landlessness among the tribal society have therefore become an alarming problem in the society of highlanders. These changes

along with the penetration of the market economy helped the tribal elites to graduate from the rudimentary 'class-in-itself' stage to the 'class-for-itself' stage. This certainly brought about a change in the power structure.

It is ironical that this change introduced in the tribal areas of the North East by the post-colonial state was questioned by various studies. It was found that "the new technology and strategy having been geared to goals of production, with secondary regard to social imperative have brought about a situation in which elements of disparity, instability and unrest are becoming conspicuous with the possibility of increase in tension".<sup>21</sup> Yet the policy framers did little either to change the ground situation or to reverse the trend. Similarly, the measures suggested by state level committees were also farfetched. These hardly suggested measures to tackle the twin problem of land concentration and landlessness. Although their Reports acknowledged the emerging problems related to land concentration in the tribal areas and suggested measures for land reform, the suggestions "instead of recognizing the rights and privileges of the tillers of the soil and identifying steps to improve their conditions by removing structural impediments seemed more interested in the measures suitable for rich and middle peasants who control substantial land in the name of customary laws and practices"<sup>22</sup>. Even recent field level data reveals that it is no longer surprising to come across a Garo or a Naga owning a thousand acres of land. Nowhere in these areas, customary practices would have permitted such a concentration of land, but new linkages have brought hitherto unknown phenomenon like absentee landlordism, realization of rent from land, share cropping, land mortgages, landlessness and so on<sup>23</sup>. Similar incidents are observed among the Karbis also. There are number of instances where enterprising individuals come together to form committees and then with the blessings of official agencies secure land deeds either from the headman or the Autonomous District Council. The results of these activities today are that 'an influential, educated and well connected Dimasa individual owns over 700 *bighas* of land in the name of homestead plantation'.<sup>24</sup> Similar situations have also been observed among the Aka's of West Kameng district<sup>25</sup> and Angami's in Nagaland<sup>26</sup> in recent studies.

There is another dimension related with the development model of the state. In order to win over the tribal people from *jhum* cultivation to settled cultivation applying yardsticks of mainland India, the propagators of development advocated wet rice cultivation and dairy farming, which also had farreaching consequences in these areas. Roy Barman remarks:

"...most of the states in the north-east have adopted programmes of extending wet rice cultivation and dairy farming in the hills. But in most of the hill areas where these programmes has been introduced, wet rice cultivation is generally done by migrant Hindu and Muslim peasants hailing at one time or the other from Bangladesh, similarly dairy farming in the hills is frequently dependent on Nepali labour. This is happening not because the hill men are lazy or unenterprising. But these operations are based on experiences passed down from generation to generation on crop planning and activities concerning crops in different stages by relating to soil type and water management, ethno-meteorology; animal behaviour in dairy farming, indigenous system of treatment of animal diseases and so on. Gender related social organisation of labour and time budgeting for various activities are involved..."<sup>27</sup>.

Lack of proper understanding of these issues has not only resulted in lopsided development but also given fillip to insurgency in the region. It is well known that although the non-tribals do not possess the legal right to own land in the tribal areas of the region yet due to their occupational skills (as mentioned above), they often become *de jure* owners since they cultivate a land for years together. Over the years these *de jure* owners try to extend their spree of cultivation to public/ unoccupied/ common lands as well, of course with the connivance of the local tribal power brokers. Under such circumstances, in the event of misunderstanding or petty skirmishes between the tribal and non-tribal over aspects unrelated to land, the situation boils down to the issue of 'identity-threat' for the tribal at the hand of the non-tribal and therefore securing the 'homeland' by regaining the land from the clutches of the *de jure* owners become the norm. It is interesting to note that the Fact Finding Report of Manab Adhikar Sangram Samity (MASS, a human rights group based in Assam) related to Karbi Anglong district of Assam points to this direction. Reporting what they observed in the field, they stated that it was but obvious that the Karbi youths in the district came under the influence of the Karbi insurgent groups with

the aim of driving out the non-tribal from their homeland and on the other, the non-tribal cultivators (mainly Hindi speaking population groups) informally looked to the Indian security personnel stationed in those areas as their protectors, as they shared common ethnic ties<sup>28</sup>. So a dictated top-down change in land utilization pattern imposed in milieus which do not possess the means to assimilate can often be a source of hiatus that might fuel insurgency activities in the region.

Again, it is worth mentioning that issues related to land have brought about identity-shifts among the tribes in the region during the post-colonial era. It is understood that traditionally both the Kuki and Naga tribes depend on communal land as their main source of livelihood although both have two different systems of control and management of communal land. Whereas the hereditary Kuki Chief controls the land, he allots fair share to each household for cultivation. On the other, in the Naga system the traditional village council controls the land and the chief is often elected where he may or may not be the heir of the preceding chief. Now, as mentioned earlier in this paper, during the colonial era, the Kuki chiefs were vested the ownership of land by the British to win over their support to the colonial flag and also for acting as buffer between the British and the warring Nagas. But in the post-colonial period (early 1950's), whereas chieftainship among the Mizo-Kuki group was abolished in Mizoram, the chiefs were thrown out by the commoners in Manipur. But during this phase no legislation for abolition of chieftainship was enacted till 1967. In the intervening period two contradictory legal pronouncements were made which had significant impact in the process of identity-shifts among the tribes. In early 1960 there was a judicial pronouncement which recognized communal ownership of land but in the same year Manipur Land and Land Reforms Act was introduced in Manipur through an Act of Parliament that did not recognise the community as a legal person. Under these contradictory pulls, in order to save the land from the hands of the Indian state, one strategy could have been to project the chief as the owner whereby an appeal can be made to the Government for compensation and the other strategy would have been to make it politically impossible for the government to take over the land. The smaller Kuki tribes adopted the later

strategy and shifted their ethnic self-definition to the Naga pole. Here one should not forget that this period coincided with the peak of Naga insurgency<sup>29</sup>.

Thus, the *modus operandi* adopted by the British to maintain their suzerainty over the tribals by wining over the chiefs/elites with rights over their community held resources has also been continued by the post-colonial state in an institutionalized way *albeit* with the sanctions under liberal constitutionalism and *developmentalism*. Under these circumstances how will this region encounter globalization? The next section deals with this issue in a nutshell.

## ENCOUNTERING GLOBALIZATION

Capitalism has an inherent tendency to subjugate the sectors external to its essence of working. But does it mean that the pre-capitalist sectors disappear and assimilate in an exclusive manner? There are debates regarding this process of capitalist accumulation and its likely aftermath. However, contemporary situation suggests that the interaction between these two sectors “may very well mean that a subjugated, pauperized pre-capitalist sector continues to linger on rather than the world becoming, overtime, more and more exclusively capitalist”<sup>30</sup>. The pre-capitalist and the semi-capitalist regions are needed for obtaining “markets, raw materials and labour power”<sup>31</sup>. Can the situation in India’s North East be collated with this viewpoint in order to understand how this region will encounter the various “push” and “pull” associated with globalization?

It is argued that with the “formation of Nagaland, statehood in North East became de-linked from the questions of either fiscal viability or of compatibility with the constitutional architecture of pan-Indian polity”<sup>31</sup>, the states in the region became more and more economically dependent upon the Union Government for their survival. Under such a situation, when the State seems to withdraw from its ameliorative roles particularly related to the social sector there will be more and more clamouring for the ‘diminishing pie’ of state expenditure that will add to the existing contradiction in the region. So, there will obviously be more and more mobilizations by different population groups either demanding Scheduled Tribe status or movements for autonomy, exclusive ethnic homelands and right to self-determination, in order to attract more share of the state



expenditure or to assert the frustration generated by the economic model.

Again, globalization involves fracturing of the economic integrity of a nation as each state will compete against the 'other' to attract foreign investment that in the changed environment becomes the index of economic growth. Not only will the 'states' be pitched against each other in this case but the extent of comparative concession that they grant to global capital will bear a big question mark. Under such a situation if the natural resources and the environment of the region are traded as concessions then the situation will be adversely affected. There may emerge another set of contradictions since the price of the commodities that these new *avatars* produce (after attaining huge subsidies both explicit and implicit) will be determined by world market where the individual states will have no role to play.

Development of distinct skills and competences are in many ways related to the historical patterns of occupational specializations. When, the economic paradigm changes, it requires communities to diversify into alternative or new occupations. The time and effort required for such transition is not only underestimated but more than often misinterpreted by our planners. The example of shifting cultivation is one such example, where the planners and their pen pushers have discouraged this practice using their mainland 'yardsticks' of production, yet *jhumming* as a 'way of life' and livelihood has continued unabated throughout the region. Beating the neo-classical drum of 'economic' rationality to the population groups who are more attuned to the paradigm of ethnic institutions has helped little. Neo-liberal globalization which is itself based on the neo-classical rationale of 'market' and 'efficiency' will surely aggravate the process further.

Moreover, due to restricted trade links in the region, particularly during the post-partition era, land (along with its resources beneath) happens to be the only 'capital' worth its name. Now, when there is an attempt of transition from tradition to modernity there will certainly be replacement of authority-based transactions to contract-based exchange relations. In this respect, allocation of property rights over land and other productive resources will be a matter of great concern. In case of the region, though it is true that there are

institutional arrangements that require the consent of the community for transfer of tribal land in practice due to a bizarre interpretation of these arrangements, particularly to suit the interest of the elites, the administration treats the *gaonburah* (village leader) as the owner and negotiates land deals only with him. Under such a situation the 'rules of the game' get distorted. Similarly, Common Property Resources plays an important role in the socio-cultural and economic life of the people but both in the Sixth Scheduled areas and non-Scheduled areas there are lot of controversies regarding the recognition of these resources. This will certainly aggravate the process of transfer of community resources to private hands. Although, one might argue that the process of replacement of authority-based exchange relations started during the colonial period, the present era of globalization will exert a qualitatively different and more ruthless pressure of exploitation and appropriation of resources in these regions than any other period in its memorable history. Lack of proper stock taking of the situation and inability to frame a proper institutional mechanism concerning the utilization of resources might generate further instability in the region. During the colonial era, the 'strategic' interest of the empire and the 'commercial' interest of the mercantile lobby became synonymous and so there was no conflict regarding the issue of exploitation of resources in these areas in general and the hills in particular. Whenever the people raised their voices of protest against colonial exploitation of resources, the colonial historians referred it as *resistance of the savages to the civilizing mission of the whites*. Things changed during the post-colonial era, where there was a confrontation between the state control/management of resources vis-à-vis community control/management of the same. In the contemporary era of globalization, it seems that the state-community confrontation will be less but will be accompanied with a clash of 'interests' of metropolitan capital and its local collaborators on one hand and the people's movement for preservation of resources and environment, on the other. Prof. Roy Burman<sup>33</sup> states that a situation seems destined to emerge, where crafty individuals belonging to the community itself, with the backing of the neo-colonial money power will occupy the position and promote green capitalism in these areas. This process of usurpation of resources by the elites of the traditional societies (as described in the previous section of this

paper), at the behest of 'metropolitan' capital, will surely add newer dimensions to the already flaming frontiers called the northeast.

Property rights in the northeast particularly among the highlanders and the traditional societies are in a state of continuous flux, where traditional local authority structure has eroded and the vacuum so created has not been replaced by new authority structures. In this regard, it is interesting to re-consider the case of land markets in the Hill areas of the region e.g. in Mizoram the number of pass holders (without heritable and transferable rights) far outweigh the number of settlement holders holding land under permanent cultivation, which restricts the size of the land market. It is only in case of non-farm lands i.e. trade and house sites the numbers of settlement holders are much greater than pass holders that indicate a fast growing urban land market. Similarly, among the Garos, all Hill land are *A'khing* (clan) land and out of the total land (7697 sq.km.) only 314 sq.km. (4.08 percent) is under permanent cultivation, which again indicates the narrow size of the land market<sup>34</sup>. But there is another side to this aspect, where it is observed that there are large scale lease markets that operate in the region particularly among the Khasi dominated areas of Meghalaya. Way back in 1976-77, the World Agricultural Census, estimated the total leased area in the state at 22,930 hectare, out of which 57.04 percent was wholly leased and the rest partly leased holdings<sup>35</sup>. Tenancy is governed by customary law which varies from clan to clan and in the absence of a proper tenancy law; the tenants (who in many cases are non-tribal migrants from outside the state) are in all likelihood ejected at the will of the land owner. This also gives rise to various intermediaries in land as is common in the plain areas of the region.

The logic of globalization based on neo-classical paradigm deals with situations in which all features of commodity are fully known to everybody. But problems arise (about the existence of competitive equilibrium) when this logic is extended to situations in which states of nature are uncertain and information incomplete. Even for the sake of argument, if we assume that the equilibria exist, can it be a Pareto-efficient one<sup>36</sup>? Under such a situation how will the forces of globalization deal with the issue of land market in the tribal areas of the North East which is not only limited but also ripe with market

imperfections? Will it lead through market successes or market failures?

This transitional flux is ideally suited for monopoly capital (both domestic and global) under the dispensation of globalization to exploit the resources of the region, to suit their design of profit maximization without caring for the people or the environment surrounding them. Only forging new types of institutions to accommodate the changes in the power structure will not lead to management of resources on an equitable, efficient and sustainable manner. How deftly the institutions reflect the communitarian ethos of the people embedded in their traditions while initiating development will ultimately have a decisive impact on peace and stability in this region?<sup>37</sup>

## IN LIEU OF CONCLUSION

In all likelihood, globalization for North East India seems to have a *Janus* face. On one hand, the Indian state has started to look beyond the 'security' dimension associated with this region during the entire process of post-colonial nation building but while doing so 'it' seems to further the economic imperative by utilizing the cultural affinities of the people of the region with their ethnic counterparts beyond the international borders. The *Look East Policy* seems to be a policy document in this direction<sup>30</sup>. Apparently, the outlook appears to be 'pregnant with opportunities' for this otherwise land-locked region but if one wishes to juxtapose it with the various realities of the region, certain trends seems to emanate e.g. can the 'constructed' borders be only regarded as gateways for trade and commerce; to what extent the cultural 'affinities' can be used for acceptability and saleability of products of this region; can the ethno-space of the region be made fully compatible with the superimposed variant of economic-space.

For any dispassionate analyst it will seem apparent that "tribals are no longer tribals in classical understanding of Sociology, Anthropology or mode of production yardstick of Economics. They have been reduced to just another politico-administrative category. Relations of production among the tribals of North East are no different from that among the non-tribals surrounding them"<sup>39</sup>. Internal differentiation among them is perhaps as acute as the non-tribals

because we, as policy makers have adopted such policies which actually suited the emerging *haves* of the tribal societies at the cost of the emerging *have-nots*. But there are seldom any references about acute internal differentiation plaguing the tribal societies today as the dispossessed are mobilized mainly for the ubiquitous cultural exclusivist issues thrust upon them by the elites within these population groups. So, while the state falls short of addressing the causes that enhances the emerging internal differentiation within the tribal societies, the same 'state' wants to utilize their cultural symbols to further its agenda of international trade. Can this continue in a compatible fashion?

The Look East Policy primarily aimed at prioritizing India's role as a global power in the post-Cold War era. It is attempted through trade by emphasizing the market interest. State policies are geared towards global financial players, so that they are attracted for foreign direct investments in India. The policy advocates for India's forward market integration with the immediate South and South East Asian regions, an opportunity that was suddenly lost (particularly by the North East) during the post-partition period. To attain this desired objective the cultural affinities of the people in the North East and its immediate neighbors were sought to be highlighted, which it is believed would augment the economic imperative of trade promotion. But in reality since the cultural affinity of the people in the region and their proximate neighbors became trade policy assets, it remain entrapped within the precincts of state rather than embedded within the society and therefore fall short of delivering the expected dividends.

The desired forward market integration of the region with South East Asia as envisaged in the Policy has been sought to be implemented through connectivity and infrastructure development but ground reality suggest that this is inseparably linked with security environment of the region at large. So rather than trade, trade-related securitization is often found to occupy the center stage at all the regional forums associated with the region.

The complementarity assumption between regional trade and global trade needs to be demystified and analyzed properly. It is observed that both in the Indo-China and Indo-Myanmar borders brisk business is done not with *in-situ* produced industrial goods from the North

Eastern region<sup>40</sup> but from those produced either in mainland India and/or outside India. So although it is a truism that the region is richly endowed with natural resources and has huge potential, North East has yet to make a mark in the regional trade other than acting as a conduit in the entire process.

On the other, lack of common market denies the producers in the region of the benefits of minimizing the cost of production and shifting resources to more efficient products. Similarly, inter-state movement of people is highly problematic considering the problem of influx associated with the region. Moreover, the uneven levels of development, limited taxation power of the states and lack of connectivity in the region pose threats towards proper economic development and participation in regional trade.

Domestic reforms in laws, regulations and institutions got limited to liberalization of quantitative restrictions and high subsidization policies of the states. This resulted in restriction of North East and its products to international competition, on one hand and on the other did not expand regional integration which hampered the growth of common market at both the intra-state and inter-state levels. So trade creation as thought about in the Look East Policy is yet to materialize.

Again, considering the region only from the rationale of economic imperatives and trading either from or through it by harping upon the cultural affinities of its people with their ethnic counterparts across the border surely will have wider implications, which policy framers from mainland India may seldom take into consideration. Many tribes inhabiting this region have migrated from different parts of South and South East Asia and have still maintained ethnic ties with their counterparts at varying degrees. There are many tribes who were separated from one another by international boundaries. In such a scenario, when the entire North East is already ripe with insurgencies of various hues and cries, it may not seem to be a day dream, if the ethnic groups aspire to mobilize for an 'extended' ethnic homeland. In that case *deterritorialization* and subsequent *reterritorialization* of space will not be a far cry. Consequently, repression and coercion of the state machineries of the concerned nation-states will increase, which will add to the existing societal dislocation among the tribal societies of the region. So, economic space *sans* ethnic space will perhaps fall short of its desired goal<sup>41</sup>.

Thus, the contemporary phase of globalization for the people in North East in general and tribal population in particular will not be a *windfall in platter*. Of course, the new rich and the elites among the tribes or the non-tribes will thrive by aligning themselves with global capital and there will be more concentration of wealth and simultaneous dispossession of the masses, as well. Under such a situation, the predicament remains as to how the security and economic aspirations of the nation-state, the historical ethnic aspirations of the people and the windfall profit expectation of the global capital will be reconciled.

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### NOTES & REFERENCES

1. The British policy towards the tribe was mainly motivated by twin principles, namely subjugating the tribes against raids and securing the pathways for trade through the ethno-space that the tribe occupied. The formulation of the Kuki Policy is an example in this direction. Settling the migrant Kuki tribes as buffer between the warring Nagas on one hand and the Lushais on the other exemplifies this aspect. In order to suit the purpose, the institution of chieftainship was modeled in such a way that best suited the colonial interest. The traditional chieftainship system was added with territorial chiefs because it suited the colonial territorialization of space. So clan chiefs (*Inpipu*) now co-existed with territorial chiefs (*Hausapu*). It was similar among various other tribes in the region during the colonial era.
2. The creation of Schedules was debated in the twilight of colonial rule and formed the basis of Nehruvian policy of tribal welfare. The Nehruvian view was essentially that the economic life of the tribals had to be upgraded and modernized even as the culture needed protection. This view was influenced by the ideas of the British anthropologist, Verrier Elwin ... The colonial origins of this policy and the twist and turns in the position of Indian National Congress can be seen as the debate progressed from 1935 to 1950. In 1935, the supporters of these Schedules considered the relationship between tribes and peasants to be exploitative in character. They argued that

segregation of these people was the most effective way of modernizing them. Nationalist anthropologists and Congressmen contested these assertions, arguing that the basis of the creation of the excluded areas was completely unfounded. Stressing the development of an overwhelming Indian identity, the Congress felt that these provisions celebrated cultural primitivism and were roadblocks in the nation-building process.

The advent of independence saw an unusual twist in the debate; the Congress that was earlier arguing for assimilation and opposing segregation now started arguing in favour of the creation of the Schedules. The main reason for this was that the new nation required the forging of an identity that respected cultural pluralism. 'National integration' rather than 'assimilation' had become the buzzword of the new Congress government, which recognized that it had been unable to reflect the aspirations of tribals during anti-imperialist struggle. Therefore it was natural that the integration of tribals into the national mainstream would be slow, and that they would have to be treated with tolerance and empathy. Hence, the Schedules continued. For a detailed analysis see Prasad, Archana, *Environmentalism and the Left* (New Delhi: Leftword, 2004)

3. Ray, Asok, Kumar, "Traditional Power Structure of North East India: Some Reflections", in Dutta Ray, Basudeb & Ray, Asok, Kumar, (eds.) *Dynamics of Power Relations In Tribal Societies Of North East India* (New Delhi: Om Publications, 2006), pp.91-114
4. "Editorial Notes" in Dutta Ray, Basudeb & Ray, Asok, Kumar, (eds.) *Dynamics of Power Relations In Tribal Societies Of North East India* (New Delhi: Om Publications, 2006), pp-11-45
5. Chakraborty, Gorky, "Conflict of Contours: The Changing Power Structures in the Traditional Tribal Societies of North East India", in Dutta Ray, Basudeb & Ray, Asok, Kumar, (eds.) *Dynamics of Power Relations In Tribal Societies Of North East India* (New Delhi: Om Publications, 2006), pp.67-89
6. An elaborate analysis on this issue is presented in Herskovits, Melville, J., *Economic Anthropology: The Economic Life of Primitive Peoples* (New Delhi: Eurasia Publishing House, 1964), particularly in the chapter titled "Land Tenure"
7. Taylor, J, F, A, "The Masks of Society" as quoted by Shaffer, James, Duncan, Property, Market Structure and Efficiency accessed at <http://www.msu.edu/user/scmid/Shaffer-prop.pdf>
8. *Ibid*
9. Commons, J, R, "Legal Foundations of Capitalism" as quoted by

Shaffer, James, Duncan, Property, Market Structure and Efficiency accessed at <http://www.msu.edu/user/scmid/Shaffer-prop.pdf>

10. From Table-I it is understood that land ownership patterns among the traditional tribal societies have largely been communal with few exceptions of individual ownership, mainly among limited number of tribes who practised terrace cultivation. In some tribes e.g. the Kukis, the chief was the owner of all land who distributed it among various households for cultivation. On the other, in case of Naga tribes, the community was bestowed with ownership rights. Again in case of the Mizos, the *Lal* or the chief owned the land and also collected *Fathang* or tax from the cultivators of his tribe. So although the material base of production among these tribes was similar yet there were some modifications among them, regarding the role of chief, ownership and management of their respective land.  
Similarly, from Table-II it can be ascertained that the traditional tribal societies of the north east had self-governing institutions of their own. There were similarities as well as differences among these institutions. The Dimasa-Kachari had the institution of *Khunang / Dillik*, the Garos had *Nokma*, the Khasis had *Syiem*, the Lushai's had *Lal*, the Konyak Nagas had *Ang*, the Angami Nagas had *Phichh-U*, the Tangkhul Nagas had *Awunga*, the Reangs had *Kami Kachhkaio*, the Jamatias had *Luku / Chokdiri*, the Kukis had *Sangalthong*, the Adi's had *Kebang*, the Northern Monpas had *Tsorgen* and so on. There were certain differences in terms of ownership of land, payment of tribute to the chiefs as well as with matters related to succession.
11. For details of lineage and its importance in land and other resource utilization pattern among the Khasis and the Garos see Datta, P, S, *India's North East: A Study in Transition* (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 1992), particularly the chapter titled "A Case for Immediate Legislative Measures for Land Reforms in Meghalaya", pp.56-82
12. Some analysis regarding the existence of landlessness, slavery etc. in pre-colonial Khasi society and its contradiction with tribal egalitarianism and customary law is dealt with in, Sen, Soumen, "Land as Property: Its Significance in the Traditional Society and Polity in Khasi and Jaintia Hills", in Dutta, B. B. and Karna, M. N. (eds.), *Land Relations in North East India* (New Delhi: Peoples Publishing House, 1987), pp.92-99
13. Datta, P, S, "Seventy Third Amendement And Relevance Of Traditional Self Governing Institutions Of The Highlander Societies Of North East", presented at a workshop on *Traditional Self Governing Institutions Among the Hill Tribal Population Groups Of North East*

*India*, organized by ISCD, Guwahati sponsored by Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, August 29-31, 1994

14. It is observed that with the increasing nature of authoritarianism of the tribal elites due to the sanction of the colonial administrators, more and more communal land were brought under private jurisdiction i.e. *Ri-Raid* land was usurped by showing them as *Ri-Kynti* land to enhance private earnings. On the other, with the introduction of horticulture in these lands, landlessness increased as those who earlier had access to these community lands were denied the same. So cash income of these usurpers increased substantially at the cost of their fellow folks. On the other hand, with the establishment of the suzerainty of the British over the Khasi Hills, trade and commerce received major impetus and consequently, the earnings from market tolls extracted by the *Syiems* of Khyrim, Mylliam and Sohra in particular increased manifold, which also generated enough cash in the hand of these elites. Moreover, in the Khasi Hills land was leased-in by outsiders for mining that also has been a source of rising cash income of these elites. The increased cash income was mainly invested in land and the *Ri-Raid* lands and the vast stretches of the unsurveyed "wastes" were tacitly transformed into *Ri-Kynti* lands. The *Syiem*, *Daloi* and the *Wahdedars* along with other state dignitaries were transformed into the biggest of landlords. The Khasi State was virtually an estate, *inter se*, of the landlords. Thus land was no longer needed for subsistence farming but for earning cash profits. This has been widely discussed in Misra, Bani Prasanna, "Society and Politics in the Hill Areas of North East India", in Dutta Ray, B. (ed.), *The Emergence and Role of Middle Class in North East India* (New Delhi: Uppal Publishing House, 1983), pp.13-35
15. Saha, Niranjan, "Land Systems and Agricultural Development in the Hills of North-East India", in Dutta, B. B. and Karna, M. N. (eds.), *Land Relations in North East India* (New Delhi: Peoples Publishing House, 1987), p.20
16. The legacy of the colonial administration in the north east started with the Treaty of Yandaboo in 1826. Since then various parts of the region have witnessed the extension of colonial rule at different points of time. From the onset, these areas have been separated, in terms of administration, from other areas of mainland India. In 1874, the separate identity of these areas was legitimized by the Scheduled District Act and a separate administrative set-up was mooted for the same. Thereafter, the concept of 'Backward Tracts' in Government of India Act, 1919, the 'Excluded Areas' and 'Partially Excluded Areas'

under the Government of India Act, 1935 maintained the separateness of this region. The hill tribes of north-east came under the preview of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India whereas other tribal areas were governed / administered under the Fifth Schedule.

17. Sen, Soumen, "Land as Property: Its Significance in the Traditional Society and Polity in Khasi and Jaintia Hills", in Dutta, B. B. and Karna, M. N. (eds.), *Land Relations in North East India* (New Delhi: Peoples Publishing House, 1987), pp.92-99
18. Majumdar, D. N., "The Emerging Middle Class Among the Garos", in Dutta Ray, B. (ed.), *The Emergence and Role of Middle Class in North East India* (New Delhi : Uppal Publishing House, 1983), pp.181-91
19. Ruivah, Khashim, "Land Ownership and Its Problems among the Tangkhul Nagas", in Dutta, B. B. and Karna, M. N. (eds.), *Land Relations in North East India* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1987), pp.54-64
20. *Ibid*
21. Karna, M,N, "Agrarian Studies in North-East India", in Dutta, B. B. and Karna, M. N. (eds.), *Land Relations in North East India* (New Delhi: Peoples Publishing House, 1987), p.5. In this regard number of other studies has found similar cases of land concentration and landlessness among the tribals of North East India, particularly the Khasi-Jayantias of Meghalaya. Prominent among these studies includes Vincent, Kaushal, *Socio-Economic Study of Bhilymbong* (Madras: C.L.C, 1979), Mathew, T and Nair, M.K.S, *Tribal Mode of Production (in Meghalaya) in Transition* (Shillong: Department of Economics, NEHU, 1983), *mimeo*, Dutta, B.B and Datta, P.S, "Land Holding Pattern Among the Khasi-Jayantias: The Tradition and Deviation" in Bordoloi, B.N, (ed.) *Alienation of Tribal Land and Indebtedness* (Gauhati: Tribal Research Institute, 1986), pp. 149-56, Datta, P.S, "Emerging Differentiation in a Traditional Tribal Economy", *Social Research*, Vol.4, No. 3-4, July-December, 1984, pp.1-7
22. *Ibid*
23. Karna, M, N, "The Agrarian Scene", *Seminar*, No.366, February, 1990, pp.30-38
24. Barbora, Sanjay, as quoted in "Citizens and Denizens", in Baruah, Sanjib, *Durable Disorder: Understanding the Politics of North East India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp.48-61
25. Fernandes, Walter and Bharali, Gita, "The Socio-Economic Situation of Some Tribes of Bishnupur and Palizi" as quoted by Pereira, Melville, "Globalization and Changing Land Relations in North East India",

presented at *Impact of Globalization on North East*, Himalayan Research Institute, March 10-11, 2005

26. D'Souza Alphonsus and Christina Kekhrieseno, "Social Change in North East India: A Comparative Study of Three Tribes" as quoted by Pereira, Melville, "Globalization and Changing Land Relations in North East India", presented at *Impact of Globalization on North East*, Himalayan Research Institute, March 10-11, 2005
27. As quoted in "An Interview with Prof. B.K. Roy Barman", in Datta, P.S., *North East As I See It* (New Delhi: Omsons Publications, 1994), pp.48-61
28. *And Quiet Flows The Kopili* (Guwahati: Manab Adhikar Sangram Samity, 2002)
29. Roy Burman, B. K., 'Demographic Profile of the hill areas of North East India', in Sengupta, Sarthak, (ed.), *Tribal Studies in North East India* (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2002), pp. 1-20
30. Rosa Luxemburg has argued about this aspect in her "Theory of Collapse" which she developed in contradiction with Eduard Bernstein. For further details see, Patanik, Prabhat, *The Retreat To Unfreedom: Essays on the Emerging World Order* (New Delhi: Tulika, 2003) particularly the chapter titled "On the Pitfalls of Bourgeois Internationalism", pp.3-18
31. *Ibid*
32. Baruah, Sanjib, "Nationalizing Space: Cosmetic Federalism and the Politics of Development" in Baruah, Sanjib, *Durable Disorder: Understanding the Politics of North East India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp.33-58
33. As quoted in "An Interview with Prof. B.K. Roy Barman", in Datta, P.S., *North East As I See It* (New Delhi: Omsons Publications, 1994), 48-61
34. Land in the hill areas of North East is generally governed by the customary laws of the concerned tribes. But these customs are far from static since they keep on changing with the internal dynamics of change in a particular society (customary laws related to land are no exception to this phenomenon). But these changes seldom take place in a uniform pattern. Until and unless these changes become dominant, which again takes a considerably long time, they rarely become a part of the legal framework. Now considering the impulse of globalization and its advocacy by various state agencies, one wonders how market led growth can influence the process positively when there is a limited market for land in the Hill areas of the North East. For a detailed analysis see, Das, Gurudas, "Land in the Hills

of North-east India: Factor Immobility Vs. Market-led Growth”, in Thomas, C. Joshua (ed.), *Polity & Economy: Agenda for Contemporary North East India* (New Delhi: Regency Publication, 2005), pp.125-36

35. *Ibid*
36. In this regards it is interesting to have an insight from Prof. Amiya Kumar Bagchi. He states “capitalist colonialism works by introducing and exploiting markets. But the structure of colonial power is essentially political and not just a passive reflection of imperatives dictated by an impersonal market. Hence, market failures – deliberately engineered or systematically generated – are as much a component of the working system as market successes”. For an insight see, Bagchi, Kumar, Amiya, *Colonialism and Indian Economy: Collected Essays* (New Delhi: OUP, 2010), particularly the chapter titled “Market, Market Failures, and the Transformation of Authority, Property, and Bondage in Colonial India”, pp.241-263
37. Chakraborty, Gorky, “Economic Policy and the North East: Looking Beyond Neo-classical Praxis”, in Deb, B, J, *et. al*, (eds.) *Globalization and North East* (New Delhi: Concept, 2008), pp.171-86
38. The Indian Prime Minister emphasized that “...affinity in the cultural background will make our products acceptable and saleable once the connectivity is improved...” Singh, Manmohon, “Northeast 2020”, *Yojana*, December 2005
39. It is interesting to note that the term “tribe” is also under a flux and a clear cut framework for identifying “tribes” with specific parameters is nothing but an evolving process. It should be noted that during the last couple of years two drafts of the National Tribal Policy have been released by two different Central governments with conflicting, if not contradictory, contents particularly pertaining to the issues related to “definition”, “assimilation”, “mainstream” etc to name a few. For a contemporary analysis, see Srivastava, Vinay, Kumar, “Concept of ‘Tribe’ in the Draft National Tribal Policy”, *Economic & Political Weekly*, December 13-19, 2008, Vol. XLIII, No. 50, pp.29-35
40. Over the period of 1980-81 to 1997-98, the share of manufacturing has been declining significantly at the rate of (-) 1.55 percent per annum for the North East India. In that case it is necessary to question the commodity basket with which the region will trade with to fit into the dictum of the much hyped *Look East Policy*. For a detailed analysis see Baruah, Alokesh, “History, Trade and Development “in Baruah, Alokesh, (ed.), *India’s North-East:*

*Development Issues in A Historical Perspective* (New Delhi: Manohar & Centre De Sciences Humaines, 2005), pp.424-47

41. Das, Samir, Kumar, “Between South and Southeast Asia: Recasting India’s Northeast in the Age of Globalization”, in Ray, Asok, Kumar and Chakraborty, Satyabrata, (eds.), *Society, Politics and Development in North East India: Essays in Memory of Dr. Basudeb Datta Ray* (New Delhi: Concept, 2008), pp.149-65

## GLOSSARY

- |    |            |                         |
|----|------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | A'khing    | Clan (Garo)             |
| 2. | Gaon Bura  | Village Chief           |
| 3. | Jhumming   | Shifting Cultivation    |
| 4. | Nokma      | Chief (Garo)            |
| 5. | Ramrilekha | Boundary Papers         |
| 6. | Ri-Kyinti  | Individual Land (Khasi) |
| 7. | Ri-Raid    | Communal Land (Khasi)   |
| 8. | Syiem      | Chief (Khasi)           |

**Table-I**  
**LAND OWNERSHIP PATTERN AMONG SELECT TRIBES OF NORTH EAST INDIA**

Sl. No.	Tribe	State	Ownership pattern	Chief	Tax (if any)
1	Sema	Nagaland	Communal		—
2	Angami	Nagaland	Individual	<i>Pehuma</i>	—
3	Mizo	Mizoram	Chief's Land	<i>Lal</i>	<i>Fathang</i>
4	Thadou	Manipur	Chief's Land	Chief	—
5	Tangkhul Naga	Manipur	Communal (Jhum Land) Individual (Terrace Land)	<i>Awunga</i>	—
6	Garo	Meghalaya	Clan	<i>Nokma</i>	—
7	Khasi	Meghalaya	Ri-Raid (Communal) Ri-Kynti (Individual)	<i>Syiem</i>	—
8	Jaintia	Meghalaya	Communal	<i>Raja / Daloi</i>	—
9	Riang	Tripura	Chief's	<i>Huklai Chaudhury</i>	House Tax
10	Jamatias	Tripura	Chief's	<i>Chokdiri</i>	House Tax

**Table-II**  
**TRADITIONAL POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS AMONG SELECT TRIBES IN NORTH EAST INDIA**

Sl. No.	Tribe	State	Designation	Succession
1	Dimasa-Kachari	Assam	<i>Khunang / Dilik / Haffiasko</i>	Hereditary (at times)
2	Tangkhul Naga	Manipur	<i>Awunga</i>	Hereditary
3	Hmar	Mizoram	<i>Lal</i>	Not hereditary
4	Mizo	Mizoram	<i>Lal (Sailo Lineage)</i>	Hereditary
5	Paite	Manipur	Chief	Hereditary
6	Garo	Meghalaya	<i>Nokma</i>	Not clear
7	Khasi	Meghalaya	<i>Syiem</i>	Not clear
8	Jaintias	Meghalaya	<i>Syiem / Rajah</i>	Hereditary
9	Angami Naga	Nagaland	<i>Pehuma</i>	Hereditary (at times)
10	Konyak Naga	Nagaland	<i>Ang</i>	Hereditary
11	Chakma	Tripura	<i>Maharaja</i>	Hereditary
12	Nocte	Arunachal Pradesh	Chief	Hereditary

**Table-III**  
**TOTAL POPULATION, SCHEDULE TRIBES AND THEIR PROPORTION TO TOTAL POULATION IN NORTH EAST INDIA**

State	Total Population	Scheduled Tribes (ST) Population	Proportion of ST population
Arunachal Pradesh	1097968	705158	64.2
Assam	26655528	3308570	12.4
Manipur	2166788	741141	34.2
Meghalaya	2318822	1992862	85.9
Mizoram	888573	839310	94.5
Nagaland	1990036	1774026	89.1
Tripura	3199203	993426	31.1

Source: *Primary Census Abstract, Census of India 2001*