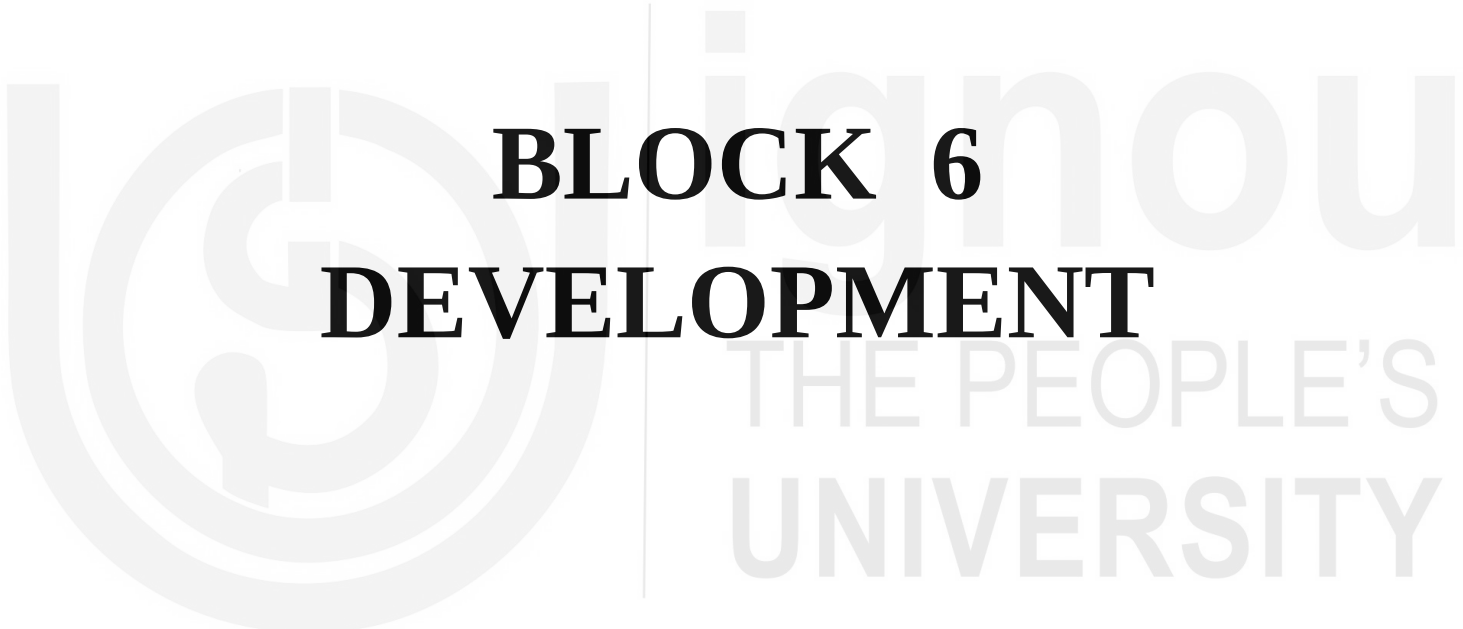


The background features a large, light gray watermark of the Open University logo, which includes a stylized 'U' and 'O' forming a circle, and the text 'Open University' and 'THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY' to its right.

BLOCK 6

DEVELOPMENT

BLOCK 6 INTRODUCTION

Block 6 deals with development in Northeast India. It has two units, i.e. 15 and 16. Unit 15 is about social and human development. It explains the meaning of development and the difference between social and human development and economic development. It also discusses developments in the states of Northeast India in terms of the achievements in educational and health parameters. Unit 14 is about economic development in Northeast India. It deals with the phases of economic development in the region and identifies the patterns of industrialisation, agricultural and development, and urbanisation patterns.



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UNIT 15 SOCIAL AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT*

Structure

- 15.0 Objectives
- 15.1 Introduction
- 15.2 Social and Human Development: Concepts
- 15.3 Background
- 15.4 Education
- 15.5 Health
- 15.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 15.7 References
- 15.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

15.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able:

- Explain the meaning of social and human development;
- Discuss the broad patterns of development in relation to education in Northeast India; and
- Elaborate upon the health system and delivery of health services in the region.

15.1 INTRODUCTION

Social Sector Development in North-East India (2021), edited by Ashok Pankaj et al., discusses social sector development or human development in different states of Northeast India. Emphasising the people-centric approach development, the book argues that the strategic goal of development should be capital formation through social sector development of Northeast India. This requires course correction in the earlier approaches of development towards the region. That approach was driven by the consideration of the national security and territorial integrity of India. The book argues in favour of a shift in the development policy from the “top-down”, “infrastructure-focused to bottom-up to people-centric and social sector development focused” towards the region. The book also critiques the mainstream understating of India, which treats Northeast India as a homogeneous, geographic entity, ignoring its regional variations and socio-cultural and ethnic diversity. It is important because the tertiary sector is

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more dominant than the other sectors of the economy in the region. As you will read in unit 16, there are two sets of argument about the development of the region and the role of the centre in it. One set of arguments suggests that the centre has neglected the opinion of the people of the Northeast while formulating the policies about the region. The Other argument underlines that the centre has allocated a lot of funds to the region. But it does not reach the targeted groups because of its misuse. This unit discusses the broad patterns in the social and human development in Northeast India.

15.2 SOCIAL AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: THE CONCEPTS

Development is a broad phenomenon. It involves the following aspects, each of which perhaps has its specific scope and theories. It can be categorised in the following way:

1. The transition in the form of economic and social systems, e.g. from agriculture to industry or other sectors; the transition mode of production or phase in the progress of history through measures like land reforms such as the disintegration of the traditional agrarian and social systems, etc.
2. Development as welfarism, e.g., development through the welfare schemes for poverty alleviation; affirmative action for the welfare of marginalised communities such as the SCs, STs, OBCs, EWS (Economically Weaker Sections), women; and special provisions for the backward regions such as the Northeast India.
3. Sectoral/infrastructural development: roads (Expressways, highways); industrial development (Industrialization/ Special Economic Zones (SEZs): cluster-based industrialisation; educational institutions and health system, etc.

A complete picture of development can emerge only when all these aspects are integrated. Each notion of development mentioned above emphasises a specific aspect. However, they overlap and converge on certain common aspects of development. Development became a popular theme following World War II. Its meaning in Economics was different from the one in Sociology and Political Science. In Sociology, development implied the transformation of social relations and social institutions from one stage to another or traditional to modern. In Political Science, it implied changes in political institutions and processes from traditional to modern or democratic. In such changes both modernity and traditions were expected to impact each other. In economic development predominantly implied economic growth. However, with the blurring of boundaries between different disciplines, the notion of development now shares common features among different disciplines in social sciences. Due to the influence of Amartya Sen and Mehabub Ul Haq, the notion and scope of development has become wider from the late 1980s. Unlike the concept of growth that focuses on income, Amartya Sen's concept views development in terms of human capabilities. Human beings become capable of taking decisions

about their matters if they get the education and proper health service. The development of capability among the people enables to enjoy freedom (Dreze and Sen 1995; Sen 1999). Deprivation from education and health leads to deprivation of capabilities among people. It undermines their democratic rights. The capability approach influences the United Nation's Human Development Reports from 1989. Several state governments in India include health and education as important indices of development in their states. The capability approach of human development does not neglect the role of growth. It takes contingency of both growth and capabilities developed by the impact of education and delivery of health services. This unit looks at the development in Northeast India in relation to achievement about education and health.

15.3 BACKGROUND

Social and human development is related to the tertiary sector of the economy. The other sectors are agriculture and industry. In Northeast India, the tertiary sector accommodates salaried population in banking, insurance, transport, communication, public administration and other services such as health, education, sanitation, etc. As you have read in unit 3, other sectors of the economy such as industry and agriculture in the Northeast play a less effective role than the tertiary sector. The predominance of the tertiary sector underlines the role of education and health – the indicators of social and human development. This sector employs human resources available in the region as well as migrants from other regions of the country. Despite the predominance of the tertiary sector, the region lacks adequate avenues for employing a large section of the people. This has led to the migration of the indigenous communities from the region to other parts of the country. Out-migration from the Northeast was insignificant until the 1990s. It became a trend in the post-reform period. Many of the out-migrants from the Northeast to the other regions are educated. It implies two things: one, improvement in social development in terms of getting an education; two, lack of economic opportunities to accommodate the educated youth.

Expansion of education in Northeast India can be traced to the colonial period. Modern education began with the efforts of the Christina Missionaries in the colonial period. The missionaries were encouraged to impart education in mother tongues and developed Roman script for tribals. By the first half of the twentieth century, a small section of educated people had emerged among certain tribes of the Northeast - the Nagas, Khasis, Mizos, besides a middle class which emerged among the Assamese. They got educated in Shillong, Calcutta (Kolkata) or Gauhati (Guwahati). English education created a middle class that joined government jobs and also fought against the British. Plain tribals formed associations. In Assam, they formed the Tribal League in 1933. The tribals demanded the establishment of the school and educational institutions for the tribal areas. The tribals also started “venture schools” in Assam (Doley 2021: pp. 151-153). The educated people belonging to the Naga and Mizos articulated their demands for cultural and social autonomy before the Simon Commission. Some

tribal leaders from the Northeast, such as J.J.M. Nichols Roy along with other leaders, participated in the Constituent Assembly debates. In the post-Independence period, the establishment of educational institutions in the region enabled a large section of the people from the region to avail themselves of the educational facilities. The availability of the educational institutions was confined to main cities such as Shillong, Guwahati or some other cities. There has not been equitable growth of educational institutions in all states of the region. Jayashree Doley's study shows that education has resulted in mobility among the youth of *Mising* tribe in Assam. It gave rise to an educated middle class among different sections, including the tribe such as *Mising*. It has also led to the generation of class heterogeneity among them and a shift from traditional occupations. Education has made them capable of fighting for their rights (Doley 2021). Educated women, individually as well as, as part of civil society organisations, play decisive roles in collective mobilisation in the region.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

1) What is social and human development?

2) Trace the background of educational development in Northeast India.

15.4 EDUCATION

School education in terms of status, access, and outcomes has been discussed in the literature. A study by Saket Kushwaha et.al (2021) suggests differences in terms of the status of primary education across and within the states of Northeast India. The study observes that the socio-economic and geographic contexts have impacted the status of education in Northeast India. Because of the different geographic locations and socio-economic situations, the levels of achievement in education in different states have been different. Different levels are visible in relation to the following parameters: Accessibility of education through Gross Enrolment Number (GER), Net Enrolment Ratio (NER), Literacy rate, drop-out rate, etc.; supply-side factors such as the availability of the schools, pupil-teacher ratio; and differences in the outcome variables such as GER, NER, etc. It is acknowledged that the figures here are taken from the study of Kushwaha et al.

(2021). This study notes that according to the 2011 census, the literacy rate is highest in Mizoram (91.3), followed by Tripura (87.2 %), Sikkim (81.4 %), Nagaland (79.6%), Manipur (79.2 %), Meghalaya (74.4 %), Assam (72.2 %) and Arunachal Pradesh (65.4%). All India level literacy rate is 74.04 %. The states in Northeast India spend an increasing amount of per capita expenditure on education, sports, art and culture. It is highest in Sikkim, followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland for the years 2015-2016 to 2017-2018 (Kushwaha et.al., 2021, Tables 4.1, 4.3, 4.4). The less population of the state is positively associated with more expenditure on education, sports, art and culture. Performance in education in terms of outcome through variables such as Literacy Rate as per the 2011 census shows that Mizoram has the highest (91.3 %) literacy rate. It is followed by Tripura (87.2 %), Sikkim (81.4 %), Nagaland (79.6 %), Manipur (79.2%), Meghalaya (74.4%), Assam (72.2 %), and Arunachal Pradesh (65.4%) in an order (Kushwaha, et.al., 2021, Table 4.4). The remoteness of the state and it's being late starter are the reasons for low literacy outcomes in Arunachal Pradesh. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) shows "the ratio of the total number of children enrolled at a particular level of education, regardless of their age, to the total population of the age of that official group" (Kushwaha, et. al. 2021, p.103). In 2010-2011, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh states had over 200 GER in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Mizoram. Over the years, the GER has been declining in the states of the Northeast. The decrease in the GER indicates a decline in the overage at the primary level of education. The decline in the GER is considered to be an indication of good primary education. There are different levels of accessibility to school education. The hilly terrain and inaccessibility to schools affect the GER in states such as Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya. Accessibility of education is better in Assam (Kushwaha et.al 2021, pp. 103-104). Northeast India has seen an increase in the Net Enrolment Ratio (NET) over the years. The drop-out rate indicates the percentage of students who were unable to complete their school education. Except in three states of Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Sikkim, the drop-out rates at primary levels increased in the states of Northeast India between 2007-2008 and 2011-2012. Drop-out rates in classes 1-VIII and 1-X in the year 2011-12 were above the national level in Northeast India, except in Mizoram. The drop-out rate is high in Meghalaya, Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Nagaland. Tripura reports a drop-out rate equal to all India levels (Kushwaha, et.al 2021, p. 108).

Nirmali Goswami's study (2021) of educational attainment in Assam reflecting the "gender gap" shows parents' growing interest in sending their daughters to schools. Their number and proportion is more in the government schools than in the private schools. The preference of parents' choice of schools for their daughters is influenced by the cost of education, security and discipline. In the absence of joint families, working-class women prefer to send their daughters to schools instead of keeping them at home. Sending them to schools provides them security which is not possible at home because they have to go to work. Some even send their daughters to private schools because of security considerations.

Some parents even think that sending their daughters to schools will teach them to learn discipline (Goswami 2021).

15.5 HEALTH

This section is based on the studies of Shushanta Kumar Nayak and Geling Modi (2021), and Surajit Deb (2021). Compared to other regions of India, Northeast India has a better life expectancy and better child mortality rate. According to the NFHS-4 (2015-2016), the states in the Northeast have achieved a fifty per cent immunisation rate of children. This is so despite the fact that the region has poor infrastructure, difficult geographical terrain. The region inherited diseases such as diarrhoea, Malaria, tuberculosis, etc., from the colonial period. When a country became independent, Northeast India had negligible health facilities. The delivery of the health system is affected by whether the population is concentrated or scattered in an area and the availability of doctors. The areas which have a smaller population to be covered by a health centre get better health services and facilities. Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya have a high Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Crude Death Rate (CDR). In Arunachal Pradesh, a single doctor serves a larger population than in Meghalaya. Arunachal Pradesh has scattered human settlements. It makes the delivery of health services difficult for the people. The scattered human settlement in Arunachal Pradesh and the lack of doctors in Meghalaya are the causes of a high IMR and CDR.

Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim have a low IMR. The lower population served by the doctors in Nagaland and Sikkim result in low IMR. In Nagaland, especially high female literacy rate along with a high number of doctors may be counted for low IMR. The IMR in Assam is the highest among the states in Northeast India, and it is above the national average. The principal reason for high IMR in Assam is linked to high risk in post-neonatal child care practices. Mizoram and Manipur have better health results. The main reason for this is high literacy rates and the “moderately better presence” of the doctors in these states. Overall, Northeast India has seen improvement in the delivery of health services over the years. But the health system still does not satisfy the health needs of the people in the region. People in the villages have to travel long distances to consult doctors. The health care system is available only in a few villages (Nayak and Modi 2021). Surajit Deb’s study (2021) examines the quality of health in terms of “anthropometric indicators” of malnourishment such as underweight, stunting, wasting and anaemic in Northeast India. The study notes that the states of Mizoram, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland have the lowest instances of underweight children. Some states have lower instances of child stunting, child wasting and anaemic or overweight children. The performance of states such as Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim has been spectacular in increasing child nutrition levels. The states of Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, and Tripura lag behind in relation to several indicators about child health. Overall, most states in Northeast India have performed better than at all India levels in relation to malnutrition indicators such as stunting, wasting and anaemia.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

1) Discuss the features of education development in Northeast India.

2) Explain the features of the development of the health system in Northeast India.

15.6 LET US SUM UP

Social and human development is about the development of capabilities among individuals to live their lives with dignity. Broadly, social and human development can be conceptualised as human development. This is possible by enabling people to lead a healthy and informed life. It is also about the relations among them. Healthy and knowledgeable persons are better able to debate their lives and critique the government's policies. They can contribute to the democratisation of society. Human development is different from economic development. The former is about the level of educational and health-related achievements, and the latter is about growth and sectoral development. Both focus on different aspects but are interrelated. Human development can be achieved if there is proper economic development in terms of the availability of employment opportunities, healthy and sufficient food, other needs of life, and a healthy environment. This, in turn, depends on the capability of the people to participate in a debate about the development of their life. Human development is measured by the level of the standard of health - IMR, CBR, CDR, etc., and educational achievements. The states of Northeast India lag the average national level of educational achievements. However, there are variations in the levels of human development in different states. Northeast India inherited certain diseases from the colonial period. Despite the constraints of regional backwardness and remoteness of villages from the main cities, the states in Northeast India have seen improvement in the health sector. However, there are variations with the states in terms of availability of health centres and the required number of doctors.

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15.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Social and human development indicates the level of capability of people to be able to decide about their issues. It can be achieved by imparting education and health services to the people. Educated and healthy people can enjoy their democratic rights better. Social and human developments are indicated by the level of achievement of people in the fields of education and health.
- 2) Modern education in Northeast India can be traced to the colonial period. By the first half of the twentieth century, a section of educated people emerged among some tribal and the non-tribal communities in the region. They participated in the generation of political consciousness among their respective communities and articulating their concerns. However, the expansion of education was limited to certain cities. The expansion of education continued in the post-Independence period.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) There are different levels of educational achievements in the states of Northeast India in terms of status, access, and outcomes in schools. The difference indicated in the parameters such as accessibility of education through Gross Enrolment Number (GER), Net Enrolment Ratio (NER), Literacy rate, drop-out rate, etc.; supply-side factors like availability of the schools, pupil-teacher ratio; and differences in the outcome variables such as GER, NER, etc. According to the 2011 census, the literacy rate is highest in Mizoram (91.3%). The remoteness of the state, hilly terrain works as a limitation in the development of education in the region. Cost of education, security to girls, and discipline influence the decisions of working-class mothers' to send their daughters to schools in some particular areas. Education has also resulted in mobility and class divisions among the tribe, such as *Mising*.
- 2) Northeast India has a better life expectancy and better child mortality rate than other regions of the country. The states in the Northeast have achieved a fifty per cent immunisation rate of children. The concentration of population, availability of doctors impact the delivery of health services. There are differences in different states in relation to different parameters. For example, Arunachal Pradesh's scattered human settlement makes health service delivery difficult in the state. In Nagaland, high literacy among results in low IMR. Assam has high IMR because of high risk in post-neonatal child care practices

UNIT 16 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT*

Structure

- 16.0 Objectives
- 16.1 Introduction
- 16.2 Phases of Economic Development
- 16.3 Sectoral Development
 - 16.3.1 Industrialisation
 - 16.3.2 Agriculture
 - 16.3.3 Mizoram and Manipur
 - 16.3.3 Urbanisation
- 16.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 16.5 References
- 16.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

16.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the phases of development in Northeast India;
- Discuss the patterns in the development of the agriculture sector;
- Analyse the processes of industrialisation and urbanisation in the region.

16.1 INTRODUCTION

All states in the Northeast are endowed with natural resources – forests and minerals. The utilisation of the natural resources in terms of development of various sectors of the economy, agriculture, industry and manufacturing indicates the nature of development in the states of Northeast India. As mentioned in Unit 3, the tertiary sector dominates other sectors – agriculture, industry and manufacturing. There are also variations in developments of various sectors within and between the states of the region. Studies show there are different levels of development across the states of Northeast India in terms of industrialisation, utilisation of natural resources and infrastructure development. The plain areas or valleys are more developed than the hills (Sachdeva 2008). *Jhum* cultivation is the principal mode of agriculture in the tribal-dominated hill areas. The development of the states in Northeast India has always been associated with the central government's policies. During the colonial period, the

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policies towards the region were influenced by their administrative convenience and revenue needs. They introduced plantation economy and isolationist policies and made some areas “excluded” and partially included in the region. In the post-Independence period, special provisions were introduced in the Constitution to protect natural resources and the social and cultural identities of the indigenous people in the region.

Regarding the central government’s attitude about the development of the Northeast, there are two opposing arguments in the academic discourse. One set of argument underlines that a lot of funds has been allocated to develop the region. However, because of corruption, it does not reach the targeted groups. Again, due to the disturbed law and order problems, the funds are not adequately utilised. The policies of the centre towards the development of Northeast have been shaped in cultural approach. In this approach, economic development has been viewed in association with the cultural identities of the tribes in the region. Due to this approach, the role of bureaucratic arrangement in economic has been overemphasised. In this, development policies have been introduced through traditional cultural institutions without imposing new institutions in the region. According to this kind of argument, the states of Northeast India were not encouraged to channelise their potential in the areas of agriculture, handicraft, and hydroelectric power to become financially viable after being given initial protection. Their dependence on the centre did not let the states in the Northeast “develop their internal financial resources”. The central funds have been utilised in a routine manner. The presence of large scale public sector employment and negligible internal mobilisation of resources is a constraint on the economies of the states of the Northeast (Sachdeva 2008). The other set of arguments underlines that while devising the policies about the Northeast, the centre adopted a step-motherly attitude. It did not consider the opinions of the local people. The attitude was about all kinds of issues – economic and cultural (Baruah 2005, 1999; Hazarika 2000).

PV Narasingha Rao’s government introduced the Look East Policy in the 1990s. Its main focus was to develop economic and political ties with the South and East Asian countries by linking road linkage through “Eastern Gates of India”. However, the Northeastern states had little room in participating in regional forums such as Mekong Ganga Cooperation Forum or BIMSTEC (Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand Economic Cooperation). Even the meetings for public diplomacy, e.g., for holding Regional Economic Cooperation, the meeting took place in Delhi, not in Guwahati or Shillong (Baruah, 2005, pp.225-226). In order to make it more action-oriented, the Look East Policy was renamed Act East Policy by the Narendra Modi government in 2014. It is also argued that the centre’s policies have largely been guided by security considerations rather than the social and economic development of the region. Even the formulation of the Look East Policy was not uninfluenced by the pattern.

16.2 PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

For the sake of discussion, we can divide the evolution of economic development in Northeast India into three phases: phase one, roughly from the 1950s-till 1972; phase two, from 1972 till the 1990s; and the third phase - the post-liberalisation phase. The first phase one was dominated by the Nehruvian model of development, followed after the Independence. In this phase, the state was given a dominant role in carrying out the development under the premise that the market would increase inequalities. The state was expected to reduce the inequalities. With reference to Northeast India, however, development was not the main focus of the policies about the Northeast. The centre's policies were oriented towards nation-building: dealing with insurgencies, the question of political autonomies, resulting in the reorganisation of Assam. The second phase was characterised by reorganisation of Assam - formation of the states of Meghalaya, Tripura, Manipur; for Union Territories of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram (which became states in 1987, and merger of Sikkim in 1975, and creation of North Eastern Council (NEC) in 1972. During this period, development became a focus of state policies and academic discourse. In the third phase, i.e., the phase of economic reforms or post-liberalisation phase, the centre sought to give more institutional and policy incentives for the development of Northeast India. As you have read in unit 5, states of Northeast India have been categorised as "Special Category States" according to the recommendation of the fifth Finance Commission from 1969. All states of Northeast India are categorised "Special Category States". This entitles them to central assistance and tax breaks. Under this category, several schemes have been introduced for providing help to the region. Under this category, the states of Northeast India get central assistance – 90 per cent grant and 10 per cent loan. Incentives have been provided for development through industrial licensing, concessional finance, investment subsidies, the establishment of growth centres, and freight equalisation of some industrial inputs. In 1996, Prime Minister Deve Gowda directed the central government departments to earmark 10 per cent of their budget for the programmes related to the Northeast. If the amount was not utilised to meet the target, the unutilised fund was pooled in the "non-lapsable central pool of resources. It could be reutilised (Sachdeva 2008: p. 293).

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

1) Narrate the arguments which are related to the development of Northeast India.

- 2) Discuss the phases of development of Northeast India.

16.3 SECTORAL DEVELOPMENT

The states of Northeast India lag behind the national level development. The gap between the regional and national growth rates has widened in the post-liberalisation phase. According to Gulshan Sachdeva's calculation, the average growth rate in the 1980s and 1990s was 4.4 in the 1980s as against 3.6 in the 1990s (at constant 1993-94 prices). It was lower than the national average in both decades – 5.5 in the 1980s and 5.8 in the 1990s. The decline in the growth rate varied in different states: Assam with the lowest growth, and Tripura and Nagaland with the highest growth rate (Sachdeva 2008: Figure 15.2, p. 290). Skewed avenues for employment and rising aspirations have become perennial features of the economy in the Northeast. This section discusses industrialisation, agricultural development and urbanisation with some examples from Northeast India. The second AGP (1996-2002) in Assam began with bad economic conditions in the state. The state's per capita income was lower than many states in India. The second AGP government made development part of its agenda. It introduced policies for the development of industry, infrastructure and agriculture.

16.3.1 Industrialisation

Following the introduction of reforms in India in the 1990s, the states got freedom from the restriction to take the initiative to develop their economies. The central government announced a new industrial policy. The North East Council (NEC) prepared a road map for the development of the region. Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), and Federation of Industries for Northeast Region (FINER) took initiatives to invest in the region (Sachdeva 2008). Based on Arun K. Jana's analysis of the development policies of the second AGP government (1996-2001), we can identify some features of the development of this government's development policies (Jana 2011). The second AGP government announced the industrial policy for Assam in 1997. Earlier, industrial policies were announced by the Assam governments in 1982, 1986 and 1991. The policy aimed at creating employment opportunities and utilise the raw material and human resources in the state. The basic thrust of this policy was to:

- 1) Create opportunities for making use of a maximum of available resources - raw material and human resources for industrialisation in the state;
- 2) Provide a competitive environment for investors for industrialisation from the region, other parts of the country and from abroad;
- 3) Ensure the incentives given by the central and state governments benefit everyone in time;

- 4) Give special attention to some areas in the process of deindustrialisation, such as developing local skill and entrepreneurial abilities; developing women entrepreneurs; creating employment opportunities; growth of export-oriented units, the revival of sick units, focusing on the development of hills and less developed areas (Jana 2011).

The Assam Vision Document 2025

The second AGP government sought to develop infrastructure, which is necessary for industrialisation. For the revival of industries, the government prepared the Assam Vision 2025 Document. The objectives of the Vision Document were: to make the Assam's social and economic indicators of development at par with other parts of the country; it justified the need for sectoral development because of the low contribution of the primary sector to the state's productivity (NSDP), and low per capita income in the state. The objectives of the Vision were to be achieved through the partnership between the private sector and the government. It is not easy to see the success of this industry (Jana 2011).

16.3.2 Agriculture

The growth of agriculture in Assam has been very low. The pattern of land distribution is one of the reasons for the low productivity in agriculture. Between the 1980s-1990s, agriculture grew at the rate of 2.1 per cent, and it slowed down to 1.6 per cent in the 1990s (Assam Human Development Report 2003, in Jana 2011, p. 120). The AGP did not adequately emphasise the importance of agriculture in its manifesto in the 1996 elections. However, the AGP government included it in its 2025 Vision Document. The vision document proposed a strategy of direct intervention for poverty alleviation and minimise unemployment. It was to be done through the development of "human resources". This would be possible by available educational infrastructure, nutritional welfare activities, and upliftment of backward communities. However, despite an emphasis on agriculture in the vision document, agriculture did not grow on expected lines. There have been fluctuations in the growth of agriculture during and after the policies of the AGP government. Agricultural productivity increased in the second half of the 1990s but declined after that. But the chief minister claimed self-sufficiency in food production (Jana 2011: p. 121). Encroachment of government land has been an issue in the development relating to agriculture in Assam. Traditionally, the encroachers on the land are seen to be immigrants from Bangladesh.

According to Sanjib Baruah, while traditionally encroachment was done by immigrants, it is also done by the people who have been displaced due to erosion of their land. Displaced by erosion, they encroach on whichever land is available, including the government land. The encroachers are not only descendants of migrants but indigenous tribal communities. The BJP government in Assam, led by Hemanta Biswa Sarma, seeks to introduce a development project in the land of the Garukhuti area of Sipajhar from which encroachers are evicted. It has

identified evictable encroached areas for introducing Development Projects. The government formed a committee of legislators to lead an initiative for development and allied activities. The government identified a group of farmers as part of a Multipurpose Agricultural Produce Organisation to initiate forestation activities (Baruah 2021).

16.3.3 Mizoram and Manipur

The inflow of cash from central agencies without a parallel mechanism for its absorption has created pathologies in Mizoram. A lot of funds have been allotted in the Central Pool of Lapsable Resources alone for the development of the Northeast region: Rs. 60, 000 million in May 2004 (*Newslink*, Aizawl editorial 24 May 2004, quoted in Hassan 2008: p. 159). A few rich have grasped a large proportion of money spent on luxury items. This has led to “a skewed development of the economy”. The NSDP of Mizoram has been consistently lower than the national average. But its per capita consumption has been higher than the national average (Hassan 2008: p. 159). Development projects have failed to meet their objectives in Manipur. All development projects have been stalled due to the interference of the militants. The militants demand a certain amount of funds needed for development. Construction of flyover in Imphal was delayed because of such demand. Militant groups demand money from small-traders, barbers, low ranking government officers. The absence of formally recorded rights in the land has acted as a barrier to investment in productive enterprises. Politicians, senior bureaucrats and militants appropriate the funds meant for public goods. There exists “the legitimacy deficit” of the state agencies and actors. A large amount of subsidised fertilisers for farmers was diversified into the private market (Hassan 2008).

16.3.4 Urbanisation

Urbanisation is also one of the parameters of development in Northeast India. Northeast which is a predominantly rural society, is undergoing the process of urbanisation. Urbanisation has become part of the agenda for the following reasons: encouragement by the state government to promote development through a partnership between the state and private entrepreneurs in the post-reform period; the rise of new social classes such as entrepreneurs among the local tribal communities, etc. Literature on urbanisation in Meghalaya is an example of urbanisation in Northeast India. The Meghalaya government initiated a plan to develop New Shillong Township (NST), coinciding with India’s beginning of economic reforms. For developing the NST near the old city of Shillong, the land was acquired in various areas Mawdiangdiang, Diengiong, Umsawli Mawpet, Mawtari and Mawkiang. From 2003 onward, the Land allotment was made to several people in violation of the law (Kha Kha 2019). Acquisition of Land for NST along with usage of mineral and forest resources has become the centre of politics in Meghalaya Karlsson (2011).

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Discuss the features of the Vision Document 2025 of the AGP government (1996-2001).

- 2) Comment on urbanisation as a part of the development process in the Northeast.

16.4 LET US SUM UP

Eight states in Northeast India are endowed with natural resources. Their economic development can be viewed in terms of the development of sectors – agriculture, industries, service, infrastructure and preservation of the environment. Due to its topography and geography, the economic development of Northeast India lags behind several other regions of the country. The process of development of the region can be broadly into three phases: the first phase (from the 1950s till 1972; the second phase (1972- the 1990s); and the third phase (post-liberalisation period). In all these phases, the role of the centre towards the development of the region is important.

Regarding the role of the centre of the Indian state, there are two kinds of contrary arguments in the academic circles. One argument suggests that the centre has neglected the opinion of the people of the Northeast in the formulation of its policies, including those relating to the development of the region. Another argument suggests that a lot of funds have been allotted by the centre for the region's development. But these have not been adequately spent due to corruption and the link between the politicians and bureaucrats. The first phase of Indian politics was marked by the dominance of the Congress party and the Nehruvian model of development. In this phase, the centre's policies towards Northeast India were also impacted by the concerns of the development of the nation-state, insurgencies, and autonomy movements in the region. The second phase was marked by the reorganisation of Assam, the establishment of the North-East Council (NEC), and the inclusion of all Northeast states in the Special Category Status. The NEC was created to work as an agency of development of

the region. The Special category entitled the states in the Northeast for special grant and tax rebate from the centre.

The third phase began with the introduction of economic reforms in India. Moreover, this impacted the policy orientation about the Northeast. This phase was had some important features as follows. Development became an important agenda in Northeast India; the regional governments got relative autonomy from the centre to devise policies about the development of their respective states, and the private sectors (entrepreneurs, businesspersons) were encouraged to play a role in the development in partnership with the state. During this period, the central government established the Ministry of Development of the North Eastern Region (DoNER). Different state governments in the Northeast devised their development policies in all sectors of the economy – agriculture, industry, infrastructure, etc. These policies attempted to create employment opportunities, use natural resources properly, revive sick industries, and utilise land to increase production. This phase also saw the increase in the role of the private sector – entrepreneurs in the exploitation of natural resources. They often work in collusion with politicians. The exploitation of natural resources has led to climate change. It has resulted in conflict between the civil society movements as opposed to the exploitation of natural resources and political classes.

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16.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) The two arguments are contrary to each other. One argument underlines that the central government neglects the opinion of the people of Northeast India while devising policies about the region. These policies are related to all kinds of issues, e.g., cultural, language and development. The other argument suggests that the centre has been allotting a large amount of money to Northeast India. However, it is not meet the target because of corruption and nexus between the politicians and bureaucrats.
- 2) There are three phases of development in Northeast India. The first phase (the 1950s-1972) was marked by the dominance of Congress and the Nehruvian model of development in India. In Northeast India, the prime concern of the central government was on nation-building, dealing with insurgencies and the question of political autonomy in the region. The Second (1972-the 1990s) saw the reorganisation of Assam, establishment of NEC and categorisation of the states in the Northeast as Special Category states. The third phase began with the introduction of economic reforms. This phase is significant because of the following factors: state government got relative autonomy from the centre to formulate their policies; development became a major issue of their agenda; the state government could work in collaboration with the private sector in developing their states. Some states governments attempted to introduce their development agenda in relation to different sectors, for creating job opportunities and utilising local resources.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) The Vision Document 2025 of the AGP government (1996-2001) suggested direct government intervention in alleviating poverty and generation of employment; developing human resources; achieving social and economic achievement; developing all sectors of the economy state, etc.

- 2) During the post-reform period, urbanisation has become part of the development process in Northeast India. The emergent class of entrepreneurs and other elite sections of society are allotted land for setting up a new township. Acquisition of land and its allotment has become a source of politicisation and conflict. Development New Shillong Township in Shillong is an example of urbanisation in the Northeast.



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