



The Muddy Waters Of India's Northeast: Borderlands, Ethnic Homelands, Change And Upsets

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Abstract: Northeast India is characterized by disputed borders, ethnic territorial claims, and ongoing political turmoil. This research article examines the implications of these territorial disputes, particularly in Assam and its surrounding territories. The study also analyzes the 2014 land transfer between Tripura and Bangladesh, which reflects the underlying instability in border delineation across this region. Ethnic nationalism has been shaped by community elites and complex insider-outsider dynamics. This has spurred calls for creating separate territories such as Nagalim, Bodoland, and Kukiland. However, these demands frequently intensify conflicts among diverse ethnic groups. Colonial rule left lasting impacts through the introduction of the Inner Line Permit and missionary involvement. These policies reinforced distinctions between highland and lowland populations. Subsequently, postcolonial adjustments have led to additional fragmentation of ethnic identities. Development programs and cohesion policies have often produced unintended consequences. Rather than addressing discontent, these initiatives have frequently intensified estrangement among affected communities. The interaction of insurgencies, significant displacements, and resistance to modernization highlights the inadequacies of state-focused strategies. By situating these interactions within broader discussions of borderlands and ethnicities, this article argues for a different approach. The intricate socio-political and historical processes that characterize Northeast India's 'muddy waters' demand governance strategies that are both inclusive and culturally sensitive.

Keywords - Borderlands, Ethnic Homelands, Community Elites, Development, Change

Introduction

On 10th February, 2014, the Indian Authority agreed to give away 110 Acres of land (Tripura borderland) to Bangladesh (The Telegraph 2014, 12 February). There was a public protest in Tripura by civil society organizations and various communities. Similar border rows between Assam and Meghalaya, Assam and Mizoram, Nagaland and Assam, erupted at least once or twice every year in the hill region of India's Northeast. Innocent victims lost their property, sometimes even lost their lives, and took refuge in rehabilitation camps due to the muddying at the borderlands of India's Northeast.

Claims and retaliation' often muddle up the borderland of the state borders in India's Northeast. Most of the victims belong to the agricultural peasants and farming community. Claims and retaliations at the borderland occurred due to the expansion of farmlands and grazing lands for the community's livestock.

Borderland communities in India's Northeast attempt to expand their frontier every year, depending on the scarcity of farmlands and grazing areas.

Borderland, Ethnic Homeland and Violence in India's Northeast

Solving economic backwardness and the communication gap between India's Northeast and the rest of India are the objectives of the Government of India. Tribalism, Christianity, conflict, insurgency, ethnic homelands, modern ethos in trouble with customary belongings, elite conflict (see Chaube 1975, 196), and sub-nationalism (see Baruah 2009, 2-4) are broadly considered to be the negative symptoms or what we call 'muddy waters of contemporary India's Northeast'.

Ethnic groups on the edge of the border often claimed homelands and self-determination. The increasing tendency of ethnic politics due to the evolution of the community elites in the borderlands of India's Northeast led to the deterioration of ethnic and community ties. It unleashed terms like 'us', 'they', 'we', and so forth. The emergence of ethnic politics creates division between communities at the edge of the borderlands.

Ethnic principles often bypass legal principles when a claim of ethnic belonging erupts at the borderland. Claims at the borderland in India's Northeast are not peaceful; it is violent and conflicting. Baruah (2007) described such a process as a transformation from non-state spaces into state-controlled spaces, which provides the backdrop to many conflicts in Northeast India. Such transformation showcased diverse ethnic landscapes claiming overlapping borderlands and produced insider-outsider politics with varying agendas.

When the Chin Hills Regulation Act (1896) was enacted, there was an absence of dissent and protest by communities in India's Northeast and Chin Hills. Lack of awareness on the borderland and the geopolitical marker, i.e., 'border', during the past was the main feature of the Hill community of India's Northeast. During recent times, communities inhabiting the edge of the borderland have gained insights into the idea of border and borderland. At present, there is a presence of articulate thoughts, politically conscious individuals (community elites) in the communities of India's Northeast. The role of the elite plays a significant role in initiating social change within the communities of India's Northeast (see Chaube, 1975, 195). Community elites have sharpened the baseline meanings of border, borderlands, frontiers, and boundaries in India's Northeast. That is the difference in border, borderland, or frontier discourse in recent times in India's Northeast.

Baud & Van Schendel (1997) mentioned that the border is a reflection of power and myth of the state, and such myths are often challenged by ethnic links. Marking borders witnesses the imposition of laws, fissioning of ethnic units, and bifurcation of cultural attitudes by creating a new order. Scholars like Scott (1985) & Midgal (1988) revealed that marking a clear-cut border is a challenge for weak states because of the strong community ties that exist in borderland societies. For instance, cultural traits, family ties, trade, and other economic ties. Another essential aspect of borderland is the creation of transnational ethnicity and networks between ethnic groups across the border.

From Paul Brass (1991) to Ernst Gellner (1983) to T.K. Oommen (1996): Ethnicity signifies a common unit of culture, language, origin, belonging, and unique practices of groups or communities. Scholars on ethnicity link ethnicity with nationalism without considering ethnic units that were bifurcated by borderlands. Ethnicity and nationalism are modern categories, inseparable with the activities of the modern centralizing state (see Brass, 1991, 12). To Brass (1991), ethnicity is a sense of identity, consisting of the subjective, symbolic, or emblematic use by a group of people of any aspects of culture to create internal cohesion and differentiate themselves from other groups.

The entire notion of ethnic homeland as a composite unit contests the legal meanings of border and borderland to a whole new level. Ethnic homelands exist on both sides of the border in India's Northeast; for instance, the Chin community in Myanmar and Mizoram. The border separates the same unit of ethnicity into different legal subjects. Ethnic groups through their community elites failed to maintain cordial relationships between the separated ethnic units across the border; rather, they challenged the existing borderlines between states.

Ethnic nationalism attempts to go beyond established borders, though it is never successful. Zoro National Movement attempts to unite all the Zo settlers in India's Northeast. Myanmar is a case in point. Ethnic nationalism, claims for ethnic homelands, and ethnic consciousness countered border bifurcation. Such pan-nationalistic ethnic movements create a distinct version of nationalism that transcends borders. Ethnic nationalism, ethnic homeland, and ethnic consciousness attempt to change the existing borderlines between states. They often challenge the dominant categories, such as the centralized state and its borders.

Border bifurcation creates a picture of tension at the ethnic borderland. Karlsson (2001, 2011) mentioned that claims for borderland often overlap, and this has increasingly become a source of inter-ethnic violence and, on few accounts, ethnic cleansing. Apparudai (2006) noted that violence not only disrupts the social order but also creates its own order. Belonging, memories, and rootedness are often used as metaphors for ethnic

nationalism. Ethnic sentiments and loyalties attempt to dilute the existing border at the ethnic borderland. Apparudai (2006) further mentioned that public life has been ethnicised, structured along the lines of ethnicity or community affiliations, and creates a new type of uncertainty that haunts contemporary societies caught up in the fury of global transformations.

This uncertainty has to do with the idea of the nation of being a majority, 'the politics of numbers' with the issues of 'us' and 'they' or 'insider-outsider' (see Apparudai 2006, 13-15). The pervasive logic of insider-outsider, the idea of ethnic homeland underlines the basic nature of politics in northeast India (see Baruah 2005, 12). For example, the demand for Greater Nagalim attempts to dilute the existing borderlands between Assam, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh. Recent claims on Kukiland, Maraland, Hmarland, Bodoland, Zoland, and Tiwaland in India's Northeast prove the muddling in borderland due to ethnic consciousness, ethnic nationalism, and ethnic homeland claims which unleash disturbing terms like 'they-us and insider-outsider'. Such transformation showcased diverse ethnic landscapes claiming overlapping borderlands and produced insider-outsider politics with varying agendas. The emerging forms of ethnic politics at the frontiers and borderlands create more troubles and divisions, rather than uniting and maintaining cordial relationships between communities.

The Colonial and India's Northeast

One of the foremost agencies that transformed the communities of India's Northeast was the colonial administration. Colonial administrators introduced modern education, alphabets for Mizo, Naga, and Khasi, print dictionaries for the communities to read western books, translated the Holy Bible into the native's lingua franca, imposed rational laws, abolished headhunting and enmities between the habitations and villages. They gave their best shot to put the communities of India's Northeast under an effective rational law.

Colonial construction of India's Northeast can be termed as 'administer with a difference'. Stereotype labeling like primitive, wild, savage, and so on was the trend. The natives were effectively colonized as inferior subjects by the colonial administrators. Sadly, till recently, stereotypical and derogatory tags such as – primitive, wild, poor, and tribal community were attributed to the least understood communities of India's Northeast by the rest of mainstream India.

Colonial construction of wildness and primitiveness was inherent to colonizers for justifying their colonizing projects and euphemism as 'civilizing mission' or 'white men's burden'. Colonial administrators introduced Missionaries to India's Northeast as early as the 1850s to civilize, educate modern educations and to sanitize the natives. Missionaries paved the way forward where the colonial administrators had earlier incepted.

Colonial memories of India's Northeast existed not only in the archives and photographs. Missionaries still exist in the mind and soul of the communities of India's Northeast. Missionary activities still persist in spreading awareness, educating the poor, spreading religious harmony, and their records also fill up the bookshelves of India's Northeast archives. Colonial administration is a closed chapter (just a footnote) in the present scenario in India's Northeast. Missionary chapters cannot be closed till now, it is difficult to be friend, and still active in the corners of India's Northeast.

Cultural division between the plain (non-hill) and hill of India's Northeast was manifested by the Inner Line Permit (ILP) policy of 1872-73, and ILP is in force to date. This was a policy measure inserted by colonial administrators to create a political cleavage between the plains and the hills. ILP was adopted by the colonial administrators for an easier means to govern the hill areas. Communities from the plains of India view ILP skeptically, till today. They thought it as an extension of colonial imperialist policy which post-independent India had adopted. This creates politics of tension between the hill and non-hill communities of India's Northeast (see Rao 1979, 596). Christian Missionaries also believed that ILP generated a separatist tendency among the hill and non-hill settlers.

Furer-Haimendorf (1945), while characterizing rebellions of the aboriginal tribes of peninsular India as 'defensive movements', distinguished the occasional risings of the frontier tribes in India's Northeast as "more in the nature of resistance to the establishment of Government's authority than a challenge to the administration" (see Haimendorf 1945, 208-10). Northeast India was under British colonial rule during the mid-Nineteenth Century and amalgamated into a polyglot of the newly independent Indian Republic.

Communities at the Conflict Theatre of India's Northeast

The state of displaced communities in India's Northeast is alarming. Complication of India's Northeast continues to confound bureaucrats and politicians in New Delhi. Violence between the Bodo community and Bengali Muslims surfaced again and again on questions of land, sons of the soil, and a nativist mindset. Some Muslims in Assam have grown up their entire life in refugee camps. An estimated 0.8 million people are displaced in this troubled part of India due to ethnic violence and secessionist movements against India.

Indian laws on protective measures provide the potential for the creation of Ethnic homelands. For instance, the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution protects customary laws of communities and traditional rights to decide on questions of land and agrarian matters. Policies adopted by India turned communities of India's Northeast into a more vivid communities into ethnic blocks demanding ethnic homelands. Bodoland, Dimasaland, Maraland, Gorkhaland, Kukiland, Karbiland and Greater Nagalim are cases in point. Enmity between communities erupted due to ethnic homeland consciousness and autonomous district councils which are safeguarded by the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

"Ethnic ties in Northeast India do not neatly coincide with state boundaries, especially given the nature of the boundaries between states shaped by the political logic of what I describe as a cosmetic regional order" (see Baruah, 2005, 2). This is the root cause of what Baruah (2005) calls 'Northeast India's durable disorder' (see Khongreio, 2009, 438). Baruah (2005) mentioned that it is a reflection of the complex ethnoscape of the region and the political failure of the colonial state of British India and the postcolonial state of India. This disillusioned ethnic groups of the region organized their militias or revolutionary organizations on ethnic lines to address their grievances and dissatisfaction with the existing order, and sought autonomous districts within the states. They are forced to be part of political accidents or politically framed strategies.

Communities in India's Northeast do not live in distinct areas, because different communities overlap and community habitations cut across various autonomous district councils. Claims of ethnic homelands ignite violence and eventually internal displacements. Episodic killings between the Naga and Kuki conflict, 1993-1997. The Hmar and Paite conflict during 1997-98 were a testimony to argue that the Sixth Schedule is ineffective. Stability in India's Northeast simply failed due to the injustice patterns of change emerging in India's Northeast. Ethnic conflict in India's Northeast is not just about questions of land and resources, but also on the fear of losing identity and belonging (see Oinam, 2003, 2036).

The redrawing of the political map of India's Northeast during the postcolonial period was a hurried exercise of political engineering. "It was an attempt to manage the independentist rebellions among the Nagas and the Mizos and to nip in the bud as well as preempt, radical political mobilization among other discontented ethnic groups and from today's vantage point this project of political engineering must be pronounced a failure" (see Baruah, 2005, 12-23). Failures to effectively draw the political map of India's Northeast gave birth above the natural resources filled up with the largest number of ethnic revolutionary groups. The 'cartographic surgery' or 'political engineering' was carried out without considering the pre-colonial traditional territories of various distinct ethnic groups of the region.

India's Northeast introduced insurgency in India during 1952; Nagaland under Angami Phizo started the tone of secessionist violence. Separatist violence and multiplicity of secessionist violence entrenched since late 1970s in Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura and Assam. Insurgency groups multiply and many peace attempts were failed. The only successful peace accord was the 1986 Mizo Peace Accord. Peace remains an exception in India's Northeast, with Mizoram and Sikkim being notable exceptions. There cannot be lasting peace in India's Northeast; because sense of alienation, negligence, discrimination and sidelining exists in the minds of the rest of India towards India's Northeast. Violence, Insurgency and secessionism rock the newspaper headlines of Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura every single day.

Mapping Changes in India's Northeast

Change in India's Northeast needs introspection. Change is not a single entity; rather, it comprises multiple entities. Development has been the swansong for post-independent India. Post 1947; India's Northeast transformations are mainly occurring in four parameters – tribal culture, language, territory and religious beliefs. These parameters are neither independent nor isolated from each other. They often work in combination with one another.

Patterns of change among the communities of India's Northeast are discomfiting in nature. Communities in India's Northeast dissent and question patterns of change. They often recall the sense of belonging and rootedness. The general consensus on change in India's Northeast is – change is dissent in India's Northeast; because change overturns the socio-cultural fabrics of these communities. Modernization and institutionalization based on rational-legal perspectives without customary linings invite dissent to various communities in India's Northeast. Change in India's Northeast brings forth contradiction and it is totally non-fitting. Change is uncomfortable in India's Northeast. No community in India's Northeast remains stagnant. Historical situation subjects to change in India's Northeast.

India's Northeast is a polyglot of discrete formations of communities with distinct language, territory, religion, common origin and cultural traits for separate communities. A significant change in India's Northeast since the 1970s was the emerging political awakening of identity revivalism. Bewildering number of salient ascriptive identities (see Baruah 2005, 45-52; see Hazarika, 1994, 12-15) have disturbed the traditional bond between communities in India's Northeast are local rivalries and resource disputes between tribal areas,

between hills and plane areas, between 'sons of the soil' and migrants from the Bengal planes. Nepal or central India (see Weiner, 1978, i-xii).

New Delhi invests in state and group leaders in the Northeast by distributing substantial financial and coercive resources by tolerating the erosion of democracy and the rule of law (see Lacina, 2009, 1002). This support allows local community elites of India's Northeast to consolidate power and repress violence against what New Delhi considers the most sensitive targets, such as key infrastructure and industrial facilities.

Change and Bad Repercussion of the North-Eastern Areas Re-Organization Act, 1971

The North-Eastern Areas Re-Organization Act, 1971 failed to solve ethnic habitations. The Act divided the habitations of various communities of India's Northeast. The Act dissected these communities and merged the slices of these habitations into a legal state apparatus. This was an accident by choice from the state's perspective. From a community perspective, this was an insult. Michiel Baud and Willem van Schendel (1997) observed in Asia that the statecraft of preexisting highly developed native states with their own conceptions of territorial integrity and boundaries (though different from the European model) powerfully influenced colonial administrations so that colonial borders were often superimposed on much older political and religious divides.

Errors on re-organizing frontiers (colonial) and state (postcolonial) were there even during colonial period. Peter Robb (1997) labels this wrong process of chalking out frontiers as unscientific.

"I began by thinking that we ought to refuse to take any cognizance of what may happen beyond the borders: but the more I thought about it and the more I considered the impossibility of restraining the Nagas, the less practicable did that policy seem. This conclusion is unsurprising because that colonial line/boundary was 'imaginary' and 'not based on tribal boundaries or natural obstacles' like rivers, mountains and hills and was thus quite unfamiliar to the Nagas". (Elliot letter to Lord Ripon on 28 May 1881; quoted from Peter Robb, 257-258).

Pre-colonial boundaries of India's Northeast communities were fluid and flexible. Colonial and post-colonial boundaries became acute among the communities of India's Northeast. Identity polarization occurs more acutely in post-independent India based on boundaries. India's Northeast communities became ethno-political blocks. Identity markers got polished; revivalist trend sets in various communities of India's Northeast. The resultant effect is various social formations in India's Northeast looked to their primordial cultural assets to define and consolidate their boundaries.

India's Northeast social formations are gripped with issues of ethnicity and identity politics among tribal communities as well as non-tribal communities. This is the disturbing aspect of change in India's Northeast. Consolidation of identities along the lines of tribe and community had already incepted. The socio-cultural boundaries provide resources for ethno-cultural mobilization among some communities in India's Northeast. This is mainly due to evolution of identity politics and ethnic mobilization.

Post-independent India and the New Delhi approach to the tribes of India's Northeast radically altered from colonial administrators. Colonial policies of maintaining status quo on forest settlers were replaced by development, modernization and integrationist ethos. This slogan of change coerced by New Delhi found many skeptics in India's Northeast. Rather than celebrations, dissent goes with loud noises of protest against the bureaucrats and policy makers sitting in swanky offices of New Delhi.

Post-independent period witness acceleration of social change and modernization of various tribal groups in India's Northeast. Inserting modern ethos to a community can never become modern and rational in pure sense. Communities want development and progress not modern by blood. Communities in India's Northeast do not welcome at all the individualist and profit motive underpinnings of modernity. Inserting modern ethos on tribal communities of India's Northeast fail on many counts. Many communities have shown varying degrees of strain in accepting modernity, which often has an assimilation overtone.

Ethnic self-consciousness, consolidation along the lines of tribe, community and language groups have become increasingly manifest in India's Northeast. Bad terminologies do pops up. Vilifying others, outsiders, terminologies like 'us' and 'they' circulate as common lingua among the communities of India's Northeast. Disturbing notions like 'insiders' and 'outsiders' enhanced the gaze for blood and belonging, claims for resources, land, jobs, assets and deprivations of their habitations. Regionalism along social and ethnic lines is the dominant marker of social change in post independent India's Northeast.

Emergence of non-tribal culture among tribal social formation dilute the traditional tribal way of life in India's Northeast. Communities demand for specified territories as politico-administrative units are multiplying in India's Northeast during recent times. The platform for smooth integration of tribal's and non-tribal's of various language groups, of locals and immigrants and of various religious communities appears to be discussed.

Consolidation of ethnic upsurge in India's Northeast can be foreseen as strategies of adaptation of indigenous inhabitants of India's Northeast in contemporary times. Peace remains rarer and rarer in the present scenario. Discontents became oral among the various communities in India's Northeast. Unsettled conditions and cry for progress got entangled in the whole political decision-making process. Post independent history showcases social unrest and mass stirrings in India's Northeast.

Less Appreciative and More Sadness on Change in India's Northeast

An expert committee 'Transforming the Northeast' commissioned by Government of India (1997) report pointed out "there are four deficits that confront the Northeast – a basic needs deficit, an infrastructural deficit, a resource deficit and most importantly – a two-way deficit of understanding with the rest of the country which compounds the others" (see GOI Report 1997). Sarma (2005) mentioned that transforming India's Northeast confronts senses of isolation, negligence, backlogs, gaps in basic minimum services and poor infrastructure together produce a vicious circle of economic stagnation and unemployment, which in turn lead to militancy and hamper investment.

Examining social change in India's Northeast communities opens up new trends and new perspectives. Ugly debates on social change in India's Northeast are often the talking point in many seminars and conferences. 'Less appreciative' describes the theoretical framework for theorizing social change in India's Northeast.

It is less appreciative simply because communities in India's Northeast often complained that communal ties and sense of brethren were hijacked by the outsiders in the name of progress. In India's Northeast, progress and development does not mean bringing better lives and progress. The scenario at present is contrary to progress – class distinctions are more acute, poverty rate rising, farming land shortages are predominant, winners are lesser and looser predominant in the communities in India's Northeast. Social change in India's Northeast is a force to reckon with. It is a worthy epistemological engagement to document.

Customary social ties, interactions, roles, values and beliefs are transforming into indirect interactions, impersonal roles, formal values and beliefs in India's Northeast society. The catalyst to poise such transformations from community towards state often remains absent. Traditionally, individuals in the community-based society of India's Northeast were regulated by traditional authority and beliefs. Close personal relationships, strong families tie and traditional authority were diluted in India's Northeast due to rational ethos which sprung up rapidly during post-independent India. In earlier times, India's Northeast societies deny had sense of loyalty whereby an individual revered to the village chiefs.

Communities started forming variety of associations granted by the Indian Societies Registration Act of 1860 which was enacted during the British colonial rule. Associations divide the community into variety of interest groups and takes precedence over individual's self-interest. These associations are often led by elites for progress or for self-interest.

India's Northeast is also a part of Zomia (see Scott, 2009, 1-23). Zomia represents a largest remaining region of the world, where peoples resist to be fully incorporated as nation-states. India's Northeast communities were self-governing peoples few hundred years ago. Today, they form the other Indian with different culture, religion and lifestyles. The fact is that communities in India's Northeast felt that they are being ruled not with their laws; but imposed laws ruled them since colonial to post independent times.

Hills peoples are best understood as runaway, fugitive, maroon communities who have over the course of two millennia been fleeing the oppressions of state-making projects in the valleys – slavery, conscription, taxes, corvee labor, epidemics, and warfare. Virtually everything about these people's livelihoods, social organization, ideologies, and (more controversially) even their largely oral cultures, can be read as strategic positioning designed to keep the state at arm's length. Their physical dispersion in rugged terrain, their mobility, their cropping practices, their kinship structure, their pliable ethnic identities, and their devotion to prophetic, millenarian leaders effectively serve to avoid incorporation into states and to prevent states from springing up among them (see Scott, 2009: ix-x).

The Community Image of India's Northeast

Structure of India's Northeast is fundamentally different in terms of language, culture, rituals and religious affiliations. The hill districts of Assam were administered separately from the plains since British days. After independence, hill districts emerged into separate hill states precisely because of their compactness of elite articulation.

Communities from India's Northeast remain in the limelight not for good reasons; but for disturbing reasons. We hear breaking news and newspaper headlines only bad issues about India's Northeast such as – backward, uncivilized, tribes, conflict zones, insurgent prone, brewing ethnic homelands and discrimination from the

mainland India. We hardly notice good news about India's Northeast except on music, sports, boxing and soccer.

People from other parts of India remained naïve on India's Northeast culture, religion and so on. Ignorance on India's Northeast by other parts of India is a syndrome north-easterners felt in today's India. People from mainland India do not even know the state capitals of India's eight Northeast states. A Ph.D scholar from University of Delhi once asked me, "Is Shillong the state capital of Assam"? I reverted, "What is your score in geography"? (personal communication, April 30, 2013).

Indian Army chiefs and Indian Airforce chiefs had served tenures with different capacities in India's Northeast and still talk in outrages manners. Indian government employees – administrators, defense personnels, scientists, judges, police officials, telecommunications and revenue employees dislike transfer orders from mainland India to India's Northeast.

The Failed Development Attempts in India's Northeast

Policy measures are inserted into India's Northeast with wrong measures. Institutional changes accompany along with policy orientations from New Delhi towards India's Northeast remained unsuccessful. The region has a separate ministry known as Department for Development of the Northeastern Region (DoNER) inceptioned during 2001. Creating separate ministry unit headed by a central cabinet minister is a part of this reorientation on India's Northeast. It is a sole ministry that looks after India's Northeast. The idea itself is odd (see Miri 2002, public lecture). It also has a separate body call NEC – Northeastern Council, established in 1971 by an Act of Indian Parliament. NEC plans for development and sustainability. However, it fails to make sustainable changes in India's Northeast.

The discomfoting question is – where is sustainability in India's Northeast? This region is more dependent than any parts of India. From power to basic consumer goods, NEC fails to deliver its motto in every doorstep. India's growth story, India's development story cannot be festive, if India's Northeast remained concerned up and stereotyped by the mainland Indians. India will never glow when India's Northeast remain gloomy.

Legacy of poor governance and violent ethnic politics are the living nemesis of India's Northeast. New Delhi counts on regional parties seriously for forming coalition governments, while regional parties from India's Northeast cannot impact seriously in New Delhi's political graph. A fractured political theatre exists in India.

Political slogans like promoting infrastructure and industrial facilities remained as swan song during election warm-ups by New Delhi for India's Northeast states. After the elections, it went silent. Gandhi family (viz. Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi) come to India's Northeast only before the elections. The Gandhi family trips to India's Northeast is almost zero after the election.

Conclusion

To conclude, Indian state projection to be a perfect state are often confronted in India's Northeast because communities in India's Northeast knowledge that federal state, sovereign state exist beyond their mental blocks. The term "state" is difficult to digest in the forest and hill habitations of India's Northeast.

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