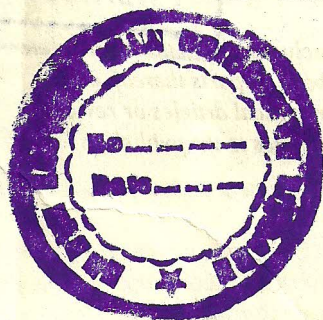


# DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTH EAST REGION *PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS*

By

Anand Kumar Yogi



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## FOREWORD

The North Eastern Region of the country is located along a strategic frontier and has a distinctive socio-cultural mosaic. Despite abundance of natural resources, the region is economically backward. Also the pace of development has not been rapid inspite of the efforts made specially through the programmes taken up under the successive Five Year Plans. Dr Yogi has made an honest effort to analyse the development scenario of the region. His painstaking effort to bring into sharp focus some of the maladies that beset the region deserve close attention.

The North Eastern region has enormous scope and potentialities for development. It is endowed with rich natural resources. It has immense hydel potential. It has wide scope for development of agro-based and mineral based industries. But because of inadequacy of infrastructural facilities, weak back-up support and lack of the right type of management interventions, the region has not been able to pick up or sustain the tempo of economic growth. Dr Yogi tries to examine these facets of developmental constraints of the region in a wider national and regional perspective.

Development of an area is a cumulative outcome of several processes which operate continuously embracing political, social and economic facts and factors. The development of the North Eastern Region has been a more complex problem because of its strategic location, typical topography, existence of a multiplicity of ethnic, linguistic and tribal groups, etc. Dr Yogi has analysed the process of economic development in the region in this given frame work and has also critically examined the investment patterns and plan priorities that have been followed in the region so far. In the overall context of planning and development, his reference to the emerging role of the North Eastern Council is quite appropriate and relevant.

Dr Yogi rightly touches upon the main facets of regional planning approach and the operational methodology for ensuring a regional plan. Naturally, such a system calls for a closer association of the NEC with the Central and State Planning machineries, a clear differentiation between Central, Regional and State level Planning and understanding of the role of each of them besides effective involvement of experts and professional organizations. These aspects have been very well brought out in the book.

After a thorough macro-analysis, Dr Yogi has pin-pointed the development focus in the North East on productive sectors with adequate support of infrastructure, management interventions and human resources development. It is this approach that would ensure viability and equity in the region besides enhancing the self organising capacity of the region which is so urgently required for attaining self sufficiency.

As mentioned earlier, the region is a mosaic of several tribes and sub-tribes, ethnic and linguistic groups and each group has its own identity, faith, beliefs, religion, socio-cultural practices etc. The people of this region are rightly proud of their rich cultural heritage. The presentation of socio-cultural aspects in the book is very interesting and informative and particularly the fact that the socio-cultural mosaic has considerable influence on the development strategies of the region and that development programmes divorced from socio-cultural facets have little chance of success in the region.

Finally, I must appreciate the scholastic effort of Dr Yogi in bringing out this significant work and I am sure his comprehensive study of the problems and prospects of socio-economic development of the North Eastern Region is timely and would offer an opportunity to the students, academicians, as also the administrators and planners to understand and appreciate the life, culture and economy of the North Eastern Region and its problems and prospects.

SHILLONG

the 11th April 1991.

(L.M.Menezes)

Secretary

North Eastern Council, M.H.A.

## PREFACE

The North Eastern region which constitutes the eastern frontier of our nation is unique in many ways. Its uniqueness stems from its peculiar geo-political, geo-economic dimensions, which complicate the already complex mosaic of multi-ethnic, multi-lingual land leopled by myriad tribes with diverse cultures. Such a context makes the development of the region a complex problem.

I came to the North Eastern region as a stranger and with little knowledge about the area, when I joined the prestigious institution, the North Eastern Council (NEC) as a Director (Evaluation & Monitoring) in March, 1986. Soon after coming to NEC, I realised that for handling of developmental aspects of the region, it was essential and necessary to learn and know about the life, culture and economy of the region and also its problems and prospects. In this effort, my rural background and some association with the tribal communities of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh helped me a great deal. No less has been the inspiration from the people of this region whose area I have covered in the present study.

My humble desire to share with others the experiences of development and planning in the region prompted me to venture on this publication. The book, therefore, is a modest effort to highlight and analyse the problems and prospects inherent in undertaking developmental activities in the region, given its complexities. I shall consider my efforts amply rewarded, if this work helps in future developmental activities in the region which will auger the prosperity and welfare of the people in the region.

I would be failing in my duty if I do not acknowledge my gratitude to all those, but for whose help and encouragement, I could not have completed this work. At the out-set, I would like to put on record my sincere thanks to Shri R.K.Tikku and Shri S.P.Bagla, former Secretary and Senior Planning Adviser, NEC, respectively for their valuable advice and guidance. I am also grateful to Shri L.M.Menezes, Secretary, NEC, who wrote the "Foreword" which speaks for itself and shows the keen interest shown by him in this book.

I would also like to express my thanks to my friends and colleagues in NEC in general and S/Shri M.P.Hazarika, M.P.Nigam, Dr. M.Sinha, R.P.Gupta, S.Rangachar and J.Dutta in particular, for their encouragement and help in finalising the manuscript.

My thanks are also due to S/Shri S.Lyngdoh, Saroj Das and H.Katoky for their help in typing and proof reading. M/s Spectrum Publications also deserve all praise for their efforts in bringing out this publication. I also owe a lot to my family members particularly my wife, who shared my anxious moments while working on this project.

SHILLONG

April 24, 1991.

A.K.YOGI



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