

DYNAMICS OF
**POLITICAL
PROCESS**

B. SATAPATHY



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This book deals with the "Process approach" to politics in Arunachal Pradesh which was previously known as NEFA. For the first time, an attempt is made in this direction to understand and to analyse the dynamics of political process in this land—a sensitive and an imperilled frontier. The forces of change brought about through democracy, modernisation, urbanisation, industrialisation and so on in Arunachal Pradesh have been critically analysed. The study focusses on process of the growth, internalisation and working of democracy in this territory which has been very smooth and rooted in the indigenous social council systems prevalent in Arunachal Pradesh, From "Backward area" to "Statehood", the different stages of Political development have been systematically dealt with. The book examines, in detail, the building and shaping of modern Arunachal Pradesh arising out of two environments such as (a) a hostile external environment and (b) a domestic compulsion for maintaining its identity and cultural integrity.

The book is divided into seven chapters dealing with the different dimensions of political process. This book provides a broad framework of study covering the problems of change, legitimacy, political participation, alienation and integration in India's mainstream in Arunachal Pradesh.

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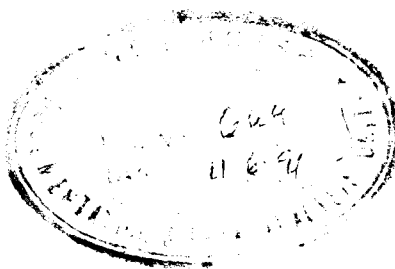
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PERSPECTIVE

A study on political process in a society at different levels of socio-economic and psychological development is a recent origin having a multi-dimensional and non-disciplinary orientation. The process is far broader than politics. Although its roots go back to Heraclitus, Hegel and many others, it has been set forth in both general and explicit terms by twentieth century sociologists, such as Ross and Cooley and Philosophers, such as Dewey, Whitehead and Bentley. By process approach, the world or any part of it is seen as an ongoing stream of events in time, as becoming, rather than merely being.¹ change—weather slow or rapid, hidden or open—is continuous. It is also complex. The development of civilisation is a long march between a pre-social and ultra-social man. Through a natural process of change and fluidity, the primary function of reason, as applied to man in society, is no longer merely to investigate, but to transform; and this heightened the consciousness of the power of man to improve management of his social, economic, and political affairs by the application of rational processes seems to be one of the major aspects of the twentieth century revolution. At present, men have become fully conscious of his power over his environment and over himself, and of his right to make laws under which he would live. A study of political process examines the making of an adaptation of his own laws regulating his social behaviour. The understanding of this new dimension necessitates a sound knowledge of social environment in which it operates. Therefore, it cuts across established branches of the social sciences. For this purpose, an attempt is made to identify, examine and analyse some specific potential dimensions of the political process. It inheres an integrative linkage at different stages of development and growth being concomitant with national level.

The process approach to politics developed as a reaction against viewing politics in terms of presumably static and depersonalised structures. Political process primarily refers to those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers directly or indirectly in the formation of public policy.² Specifically, it implies the activities of the people in various groups as they struggle for and use power to achieve

personal and group purpose. Out of a wave of variables concerning political process, the proposed work is based upon certain specific dimensions such as political participation, electoral behaviour, the issue of political inactivity and apathy, political communication and decision-making.

To begin with, participation is an ingredient of every polity and particularly an essential element of democratic government like ours. Political participation is a making of political socialisation. On other words, Political participation is the concrete manifestation of political socialisation. It is the means by which consent or legitimacy is granted or withdrawn in a democracy and rulers are made accountable to the ruled. Political participation and legitimacy are both sides of a same coin. At different levels of change, political participation has become invariably a potent force. If the political change effected by a political participation is well directed, positive and wrought by a conscious and considered will, the society moves to a better way of life. As it is well known that the social development of India remains to be in the form of a vertical growth, it can be only measured in relation to how it has affected the necessary change in the social set-up in the existing dynamic environment. In an age of science, social usages and customs are normally retarding factors. But the Laws that a society continually formulates through different methods of political participation, provide the instrument and mechanism of social change. Hence, an attempt is made to probe into the subject from the opposite angle and to raise such queries as: What are the urges that prompt citizens to participate in political actions? How legitimate are their claims? To what degree is participation a reflective of an urge to socialise, or perform what one considers one's duty or to help in the existing political process? To what extent the feedback mechanism establishes rapport between the citizens and the policy makers? In a more specific way, political participation helps us to assess the consequences of political inactivity among certain sections of the electorate and the amount of participation that reasonably can or should be expected of citizens in a democracy.

The next dimension includes the study of the electoral politics. In a democracy, voting participation reflects the involvement of the individual in electoral process. In the present study, the term voting participation has been used in its literal sense, analogous to 'turn out'. Besides, it explains a state of withdrawal from or indifference to such activities. These activities include voting, seeking information, discussing and proselytizing, attending meeting, contributing financially and communicating with representatives.³ It analyses the trend of political apathy both as a symptom as well as a cause of weakness in the system. It points out ways and

means how to overcome a failure to involve all the members of a society in decision-making process, thereby, averting crises of legitimacy. Further, it provides a scope to analyse and to compare the trend of local politics in effecting and affecting the course of politics in general. The aspect encompasses a generalised survey of political events and conditions preceding or succeeding a particular election, the statistical and aggregative analyses of election, investigation of structural factors in relation to election results, selection of candidates, election campaign pamphlets, posters, party alliances, party manifesto and symbols, and an attempt to draw the implication of these trends for the political system.⁴

The other aspects of the present study are political communication and decision-making process. It is no doubt that a free flow of information in a system sustains and nourishes the system. Here, it has a reference to opinions communicated upward-either single or as a whole public opinion), or through media from the people to their governors. It is concerned with the state's capacity to scan its environment, as well as its capacity to communicate and engender a response from the people. The role and the functioning of mass media in the political process particularly during election periods in imparting political education to the people has been included in the present study.

Finally, the decision-making aspect of the study involves a sequence of steps: clarification of the broad ends of policy; elucidation of the nature and scope of the problem demanding decision; generation of information relevant to the problem, selection of the decisions, its adoption and its feed back in the political system.⁵

In Arunachal Pradesh, a continuity of positive political transition is indicative of an emergent inductive modernisation aiming at transforming the traditional political culture at the grass-root level. The existing literatures (including past and present) on and in Arunachal Pradesh have been consulted. But few works deserve attention in this field, In his book *A Philosophy for NEFA*,⁶ Verrier Elwin has presented an original scheme concerning the regulation, administration and development of NEFA (known as Arunachal Pradesh). The work became instrumental in helping the Government of India for formulating decisions in regard to Arunachal Pradesh. It proved to be an original source for further research in this area. Some of the limitations are of its general approach, description and historicism. In his second book, *Democracy in NEFA*,⁷ he has presented a systematic record a existing information on the political institutions of the different tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Another book edited by him, the *India's North East Frontier in Nineteenth Century*,⁸ contains a number of

accounts of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh including their village councils by a number of early European visitors to the territory. The research piece *A Century of Tribal Politics in North-East India 1874-1974*,⁹ written by V. Venkate Rao explains political development in North-Eastern region—the relations between the tribals and the British, and the formation of district councils. But, in particular, the author has paid scant attention towards the development of Arunachal Pradesh. Besides, it is of immense importance of knowing the historicity of growth of North East in general.

The scholar Raghuvir Sinha in his book *Religion and Culture of North-Eastern India*,¹⁰ discusses the importance of religion and culture in the real cultural context of North-Eastern Tribal people whom he has studied in 1958. Overall, the work is of general nature lacking a specific relevance to Arunachal Pradesh. In essence, it makes a novel contribution to the sociology of religion. The book entitled *North East India: A Sociological Study*,¹¹ edited by S.M. Dubey contains thirty five contributions by eminent scholars on various aspects of North-East India. This is the first and only study that provides an integrated understanding of North East India. On Arunachal Pradesh it contains only one article regarding its emergence. In general it deals with (a) social structure, stratification and change (b) political development and modernisation and social aspects of economic development. M.L. Bose in his research piece entitled *Historical and Constitutional Documents of North-East in India (1824-1973)*,¹² has made judicious selection of documents and these have been compiled and classified into four parts. The study presents the various stages on the evolution of the administration of the NEFA and the break up of North Eastern India into present political set up. The nature of the work is a pioneering archival compilation. It primarily provides the original documents and its sources.

In the research piece entitled *Problem of Development of Tribal Areas*,¹³ by S.G. Deogaonkar, the problem has been viewed from double angle; externally from the point of view of getting the tribals into the mainstream of National life; internally, effecting this change without consigning to oblivion the tribal culture in its essentials. In a nut shell, it means development with preservation. It is an excellent collection of articles of eminent scholars on this subject and is of immense help in offering a theoretical base for its understanding. VIK Sarin in his book *India's North-East in Flames*,¹⁴ pinpoints, analyses and discusses the complex problems confronting seven sisters of North-East. In particular, he has studied the process of social change in Arunachal Pradesh and points out how tensions are developing in this frontier area. We further examines its geo-political

significance having extra-environmental pressure on this sensitive area as well as the relationship between tribals and non-tribals in the administrative process. The author J.N. Choudhary in his research piece *Arunachal Pradesh: From Frontier Tracts to Union Territory*,¹⁵ has done a comprehensive study on Arunachal Pradesh in general. This book is a sequel to the earlier book entitled *Arunachal Panorama*.¹⁶ The book makes an attempt at tracing the historical situations of the tribes over the ages as far as they could be known from extract records, and various reports and accounts. The book also covers up the political, economic and administrative development of Arunachal Pradesh. Precisely, the research piece is descriptive, informative and provides a systematic factual development. In his book *Administrative Development of Arunachal Pradesh (1875-1975)*,¹⁷ author Bijon Mahanta presents a systematic study of the politico-administrative development that took place during a century. It encompasses a detailed study of Arunachal Pradesh, its land and people, geographical features of the territory, mode of living of the people and their socio economic background which form the basis for the development of administration. The researcher, S.D. Jha his book *Arunachal Pradesh (Rich Land Poor People)*,¹⁸ has studied the working of socio-economic variable in relation to socio economic transformations taking place in the Union Territory during the recent past. The book, in essence, provides a systematic descriptions of the total aspects of the people and the land. The book is quite well informative and up-to-date a data bank. The author Dr. A. C. Talukdar in his book *Political Transition In The Grassroots In Tribal India*,¹⁹ offers a microstudy leading to sweeping generalisation. Amidst the diversity and divergence of tribes, he has taken up a district named East Siang having a particular community in dominance called Adi. No doubt it is a grassroot study having an empirical and methodological rigour. The book in essence provides an in-depth and a scientific study of a micro-level.

After a preliminary review of the existing literatures on both content and method of the study, it is found that merely the works on Arunachal Pradesh are general, descriptive and anthropological in nature. Besides, researches in Arunachal Pradesh are very few and limited. The paucity of materials on Arunachal Pradesh is one of the major bottlenecks. The attempt is being made to codify the oral tradition.

Change has become an elemental force in itself. At present the political change in Arunachal Pradesh presents a viable and challenging trend. The primitive society with tribal populating has accepted the challenge to bridge the gap of the centuries to modernity in a short span of time. On the

otherhand, the existing age old, well developed indigenous political system with village councils vis-avis the acceptance of the big culture of the Indian political system with an application of industrialisation, urbanisation and westernisation and democracy are bound to cause a phase of transition. The gradual development of the interaction between two forces has shown a positive trend for an assimilation in the mainstream. The existing political process having a traditional gerontocracy is gradually adapting with the process of change with preservation. So, an understanding of the nature of the interaction between two forces necessitates the significance of the study of political process in detail for an intended and directed change. In this context the present study attempts:

- (a) to present a theoretical orientation of the political process in general;
- (b) to describe the socio-economic and geo political forces shaping the course of political process in Arunachal Pradesh from the British period:
- (c) to analyse the trend of political participation at different stages of its development;
- (d) to explain the political behaviours in general and assembly elections and;
- (e) to assess and evaluate the impact of change and the legitimacy for change.

The study is analytical, reflective, quantitative and partly empirical. The sources include Statistical Handbook of Arunachal Pradesh 1976 and 1985: Dying Ering Committee Report, 1965: NEFA Administration's Policy, letter No. JUD 150/58 of 24th, Jan. 1959 etc.: and from Acts and Rules b) "The Rules for Administration of Justice in the Dibrugarh Frontier Tract," Inner line regulation act-1875." The Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulations"; "The North-East Frontier Agency Panchayat Raj Regulation, 1967"; "The North East Frontier Agency Panchayat Raj Regulation Amendment), 1970, "The North East Areas (Reorganisation), Act, 1971"; "The North-East Frontier Agency Panchayat Amendment), Regulation, 1971," "The A.P. Gram Panchayat Constitution) Rules, 1972". "The A.P. Anchal Samity and Zila Parishad (Constitution) Rules, 1972"; The Rules Regulating sanction of Grant-in-Aid to Anchal Saities by the NEFA Administration' 1972" etc. Furthermore; it includes the reports of general elections of 1977, 1978 Assembly election, 1980 and 1984 including the elections of the legislative assembly and the Census of India, 1981, Besides, daily English Newspaper Assam Tribune, Arunachal News Letter (Fortnight), Arunachal journal, Government documents and above all the important research

pieces past and present have been consulted for this purpose. To make the study systematic, and empirical an attempt is made to quantify the data in tabular and graphical forms.

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