

**GEOPOLITICS  
OF  
NORTH EAST INDIA**

**A STRATEGICAL STUDY**

320.12095416

HAZ

003092

ICSSR

**JOYSANKAR HAZARIKA**

Geo politics of North East India is an attempt to understand the politico- geographical forces working in the North Eastern part of India in shaping it in various shades and colours.

The study is aimed to formulate a regional geopolitical framework based on neo-geopolitical ideas and tried to examine the correlations between geography, economic resources, ethnicity and politics.

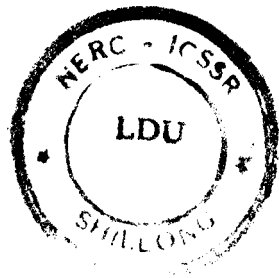
Balkanisation, boundary disputes between the states of this region and the Chinese claim on the part of Arunachal Pradesh and McMahon Line are some of the important perimeters discussed extensively in this work. In the field of regional geopolitics it is a pioneering work and would help to extend future studies.

**Rs. 260**

**Dr. Joysankar Hazarika** holds M.Sc and Ph.D degrees of Gauhati University. A student of Political Geography, he has specialised in regional geopolitics. Dr. Hazarika has contributed many research papers in various regional and national seminars. He teaches Geography, and is based in Jorhat.

**ISBN : 81-212-0517-4**

**GEOPOLITICS  
OF  
NORTH EAST INDIA**  
A STRATEGICAL STUDY



JOYSANKAR HAZARIKA

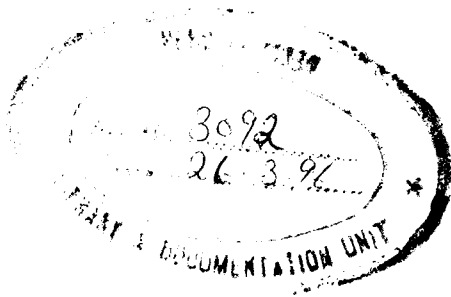


**GYAN PUBLISHING HOUSE**

New Delhi 110 002

320.12095446

H12



003092

**Geopolitics of North East India**

**A Strategical Study**

*(Geography, Politics, Anthropology, Tribal Studies)*

ISBN : 81-212-0517-4

© JOYSANKAR HAZARIKA

Published in 1996 in India by

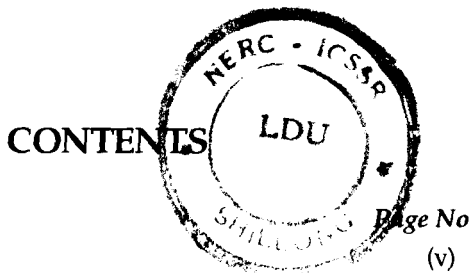
Gyan Publishing House

5, Ansari Road

New Delhi - 110002

All rights are reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any manner without written permission.

Printed at Mehra Offset Press, New Delhi - 110002



# CONTENTS

|                       |       |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Acknowledgement       | (v)   |
| List of Tables        | (vii) |
| List of Illustrations | (ix)  |

## PART—I

### INTRODUCTION

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Chapter 1 : Introduction to the Problem</b>         | <b>1</b>  |
| 1.1 The Statement of the Problem                       | 1         |
| 1.2 The Concept of Geopolitics                         | 3         |
| 1.3 Review of Relevant Works                           | 7         |
| 1.4 Significance of the Topic                          | 9         |
| 1.5 Objectives   | 10        |
| 1.6 Hypotheses   | 10        |
| 1.7 Methodology  | 11        |
| 1.8 Organisation of the Study                          | 12        |
| <b>Chapter II: Physical Base of the Region</b>         | <b>14</b> |
| 2.1 Physiography                                       | 14        |
| 2.2 The Eastern Hills                                  | 17        |
| 2.3 Climate  | 22        |
| 2.3 Soil   | 25        |
| 2.4 Geology  | 28        |
| 2.5 Drainage   | 30        |
| 2.6 Natural Vegetation                                 | 36        |
| <b>Chapter III : The Population Base of the Region</b> | <b>40</b> |
| 3.1 The People   | 40        |
| 3.1.1 The Routes of Migration                          | 40        |
| 3.1.2 Peopling Process                                 | 42        |
| 3.2 Language Distribution                              | 43        |
| 3.3 Ethnic Cultural Diversity                          | 50        |
| <b>Chapter IV: Historical Base of the Region</b>       | <b>57</b> |
| 4.1 Introduction                                       | 57        |

|     |                                    |    |
|-----|------------------------------------|----|
| 4.2 | The Turko-Afghan Invasions         | 58 |
| 4.3 | The Advent of the Ahoms            | 59 |
| 4.4 | Koch Kingdom                       | 60 |
| 4.5 | Assam Mughal Relations             | 62 |
| 4.6 | Upheaval of Vaisnavism and Saktism | 62 |
| 4.7 | Moamaria Uprisings                 | 63 |
| 4.8 | Burmese Invasions                  | 64 |
| 4.9 | Advent of East India Company       | 64 |

## PART—II

### ANALYSIS

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Chapter V: State Formation Processes in North East India</b>                  | <b>69</b> |
| 5.1 Politico - Territorial changes in North East India                           | 69        |
| 5.1.1 Introduction   | 69        |
| 5.1.2 The Formation of North Eastern Province or Assam                           | 70        |
| 5.1.3. The Transfer Territory to Bhutan and Burma                                | 72        |
| 5.1.4 The Scheduled Districts Act and Frontier Tracts Regulations                | 74        |
| 5.1.5 The Inner Line Regulation of 1873  | 74        |
| 5.1.6 The Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas                                  | 76        |
| 5.1.7 Manipur and Tripura  | 76        |
| 5.2 Emergence of Political Processes in the N.E. India                           | 78        |
| 5.2.1 Emergence of Political Processes in the Valleys                            | 79        |
| 5.2.1.1 The Revolt of 1857   | 79        |
| 5.2.1.2 Peasant Struggles in Jaintia Hills and Nowgong                           | 79        |
| 5.2.1.3 Colonisation Scheme of Jenkins   | 82        |
| 5.2.1.4 Beginning of Modern Political Consciousness in the Plains                | 83        |
| 5.2.2 Emergence of Hills Politics  | 87        |
| 5.2.2.1 Influence of the two World Wars  | 89        |
| 5.2.2.2 Formation of Local Political Parties                                     | 89        |
| 5.3 The Economic Strength and Weakness During the Pre-British and British Period | 92        |
| 5.3.1 Economic Relations Between Assam and                                       |           |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Neighbouring Hill Areas in the Pre-British Period  | 93  |
| 5.3.1.1 Economy of the Plains  | 93  |
| 5.3.1.2 Economy of the Hills   | 94  |
| 5.3.2 Trade Relations Between the Plains and the Hills                                   | 95  |
| 5.3.3 The Development of Colonial Economy  | 97  |
| <b>Chapter VI : Geopolitical Problems in N.E. India</b>                                  |     |
| 6.1 Introduction   | 108 |
| 6.1.1 Boundary Problems in N.E. India — Internal   | 108 |
| 6.1.1.1 Assam - Nagaland Boundary Dispute  | 110 |
| 6.1.1.2 Assam-Arunachal Pradesh Boundary Dispute   | 113 |
| 6.1.1.3 Assam-Meghalaya Boundary Dispute   | 119 |
| 6.2 The Inner Line, The Outer Line and the Birth of McMahon Line and Associated Problems | 121 |
| 6.2.1 The Inner Line   | 121 |
| 6.2.2 The Outer Line   | 123 |
| 6.2.3 The Birth of the McMahon Line  | 124 |
| 6.3 North East Frontier of India and China's Claim                                       | 131 |
| 6.3.1 The Diplomacy  | 137 |

**PART—III**  
**SYNTHESIS**

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Summary and Conclusion | 143 |
| Suggestions            | 146 |
| Bibliography           | 148 |

# Chapter 1

## Introduction to the Problem

### 1.1 The Statement of the Problem

The North Eastern part of India possesses a distinct regional geopolitical character because of its distant location, diverse physiographic framework with more ethnic diversity, economic backwardness with disparity in levels of development. Moreover, the region is flanked by four foreign countries—China, Myanmar (Burma), Bangladesh and Bhutan. Comprising seven states, namely Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura—North East India is located between latitudes  $22^{\circ}$  N and  $29^{\circ}3'$  N and longitudes  $89^{\circ}46'$  E and  $97^{\circ}30'$  E. The region, covering 255,082 square kilometres of uneven surface, supports a population of 31.4 million (1991), which accounts for 7.7 per cent of the total land surface and 3.72 per cent of the total population of the country respectively. While the rest of India either has direct access to the sea or the capital city of New Delhi for contact and trade, India's North East is virtually land-locked. It is connected with the mainland by a narrow corridor of foothill land in North Bengal which is 33 kilometres in width on the eastern side and 21 kilometres on the western side and is subjected to occasional disruptions due to heavy rains and floods. Such terrestrial location of the region converts it into an isolated pocket where feelings of alienation tend to germinate easily among the population.

The terrain conditions of North East India also make it an isolated region. The Himalayas on the North and the Patkai-Barail range on the North-East and East, the Meghalaya and Karbi plateau

in the West and Central region, the Naga, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura hills, with dense monsoon forests, have great bearing in the development of separatist tendency amongst the people. This tendency is further accentuated by poor levels of transport and communication in this region.

The historical moorings of this region are also charged with diversities. The region was known as Pragjyotisha, a very powerful kingdom with its capital at Pragjyotishpur, where the present Gauhati lies. Some non-Aryan kings ruled the region during the epic period and the name of the region became Kamrupa during the Puranic and Tantric period. After a long period of peace and freedom, the kingdom entered a new phase of unrest and hostilities during the Medieval period. In fact, this period begins with the invasion of Kamrupa by the Muslims (1205-1206 A.D.) and the Ahoms (1228 A.D.). As a result of this, many petty kingdoms emerged in Kamrupa. Thus the kingdom of Koches, Bhuyans, Kacharis, Chutiyas and Ahoms were established during 13th to 15th centuries. During the beginning of the sixteenth century, two powers attained their supremacy in the eastern and western part of Kamrupa and they were the Ahom and Koch dynasties respectively. The British, who came to this region to emancipate the people from the plight it faced due to political instability and the Burmese invasions, appeared in the political field of North East India through the treaty of Yandaboo in 1826.

Since 1826, the British administration took up the reins of development of this region and started exploiting the natural resources and accordingly formulated strategies to achieve its ends. The strategies which were adopted by the British were different in the plains and in the hills. As a result it gave rise to distinct political formations in the two regions. On the other hand modernisation processes led to the emergence of an elite group first in the plains, which realised the exploitative nature of the Colonial administration and raised its voice against it. Moreover, the disparity that the region gained due to the development process widened the gulf between the developing plains and underdeveloped hills.

Against this background of inherited socio-economic inequities, in the post-independence scenario, the Indian nation-state building processes have been facing serious problems of conflict, such as: the sub-national movements, boundary disputes, demands for regional autonomy, etc. But most of these conflicts have their roots

in the historic past i.e. from the pre-colonial to colonial period. Therefore, to understand the geopolitics of North East India it is imperative to analyse the basic legacies that this region inherited along with its attendant conflicts.

## **1.2 The Concept of Geopolitics**

### *Introduction:*

The concept of geopolitics demands some explanations as regards its origin, developments, present trends and its applicability to the present work. It is so because the concept underwent a change after the second World War and in fact got a revival since 1980. Leslie W. Happle rightly mentions in his article, titled 'The Revival of Geopolitics' as 'yet in the last decade the term geopolitics has crept back into use, and geopolitical analysis of both global and regional problems has become more common'.<sup>1</sup> A logical pre-requisite for any revival is a decline from a period of earlier activity. Therefore, here an attempt has been made to examine the concept of geopolitics in the light of its origin, decline and revival and to synthesize all these together for a relevant framework to study the present problem.

### *Origin:*

The term 'geopolitics' entered the English language as a loose translation of *Geopolitik*, the pseudo-science that had become so highly popular in Germany in the inter-war years, 1919-1939. In its popular connotation, *geopolitik* denoted "mobilisation of and knowledge for the purposes of the state".<sup>2</sup> It implied "the application of knowledge and techniques of political geography to the problems of international relations—in particular, to the foreign policy of the German State"<sup>3</sup> and all its various shades of meaning related to the utilisation of geography in the service of the national government.

Rudolf Kjellen (1868-1922), the Swedish political scientist, originally coined the German language term 'Geopolitik' in 1898, though it received scholarly attention only during the first World War, particularly after the publication of Kjellen's essay 'The Ideas of 1914—A Perspective on World History' in 1915. In this essay Kjellen discussed the motto of German war-euphoria, and squarely expressed his solidarity with the cause of the German nation. Owing to this scientifically concealed support for German imperialism, Kjellen's

geopolitical ideas and writings (along with the term *Geopolitik* itself) gained wide popularity in Germany. Kjellen defined geopolitics as the "science which conceives the state as a geographic organism or as a phenomenon in space".<sup>4</sup> He believed that "wars, expansion, and breaches of international law are... not due to some fatalistic and deterministic force standing outside men, nations and their leaders". Kjellen was deeply interested in the geographical processes through which, in the course of the peopling of the earth's surface, or parts of its territories, get transformed from simple geographical areas into well articulated cultural-political regions, each with a distinctive personality endowed with a deeply ingrained instinct for survival, self-preservation and propagation. This process of the socio-cultural transformation of each space gave each region, "in casual sequence, continuity, solidarity, interaction, loyalty, and nationality; that is, the creation of a nation with, what Kjellen called, a geographical instinct".<sup>5</sup>

In a subsequent work, *Del Staat als Lebensform* (1924), Kjellen attempted to develop a "system of politics" by investigating the state as a form of life in the context of its geographical space (*geopolitik*), economy (*oekopolitik*), population (*demopolitik*), society (*sociopolitik*) and constitutional structure (*kratopolitik*). His equation of state and politics was based on the assumption that "the nature of the state is ultimately power ... the law is its servant".<sup>6</sup> In Kjellen's scheme of politics, maximisation of power was the central objective of state action.

Even though the term *Geopolitik* was coined by Kjellen, the real father of geopolitical thought in Germany (and the modern world) was the German geographer Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904)—father of the concept of state as an earth-bound organism, and the author of the first ever text on political geography, *Politische Geographie* in 1897. Ratzel adopted the theme of evolution through environmental adjustment and struggle for survival as the central organising concept of his *Politische Geographie*, which heralded the emergence of a new subdiscipline focussed on the study of the state as a living organism. Just as the struggle for existence in plant and animal world is centred on the need for space so also the history of nations could be interpreted as a struggle for political territory.

The central point in Ratzel's theory of political geography was that the state is a particular type of spatial organism—an earth-bound

organism—consisting of a piece of humanity and a portion of the earth. According to Ratzel, the state's "geographical and ... political expansion have all the distinctive characteristics of a body in motion which expands and contracts alternatively in regression and progression. The object of this movement is always the conquest of space with a view to the foundation of States".<sup>7</sup>

According to Ratzel, each state occupies a definite territory and, as such, represents a spatial organism with a fixed location. Every state also represents a group of people who feel inseparably attached to the geographical area of the state, and who increase in numbers as the state grows in maturity. As its population grows, the state requires larger land territory to sustain the increasing numbers. This results in a continuous struggle for space in which the more powerful states expand at the cost of their weaker neighbours. This was the basis of the concept of *Lebensraum* (or living-space), one of the central themes in German geopolitics.

Geopolitics developed as a highly popular subject of study in the inter-war period. Under the leadership of General Karl Haushofer, the Institute of Geopolitik was established in Munich in 1924, and *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, a journal, served as the mouthpiece of the Institute. Geopolitik was officially defined as "the science of earth relationships to political developments". There were two main aims of German geopolitics, one short-term and the other long-term. The short-term was to secure the revision of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. The long-term was to educate what the geopoliticians called the 'space-consciousness' (German: *Raumsinn* or *Raumauffassung*) of the German people, if only to prevent anyone from ever again imposing such an anti-German settlement as Versailles.<sup>8</sup> Geopolitik projected Germany as a state dying of slow suffocation within unfavourable political boundaries enforced by foreign powers, so that *Lebensraum*—the need for living-space—became a fixed national obsession.

The German geopolitik ended with the defeat of Germany in 1945 and the death of Karl Haushofer in 1946. Apart from the highly supportive role of geopolitik in the German adventurism leading to World War II, a fundamental reason for the decline and complete eclipse of geopolitics in the Ratzelian mould, of state as a living organism possessed of an instinctive drive toward territorial expansion, was the fact that in post Second World War phase of world history the Ratzelian theory of state ceased to represent the

contemporary political reality. In the new post-War world of decolonization, political boundaries became fixed, and each state had to adjust its perspectives, and plan its strategies of development in terms of its fixed territory and its resources.

Geopolitics became a neglected branch of study and had been in disrepute for most of the 40 years since the end of World War II, because of its war guilt. Yet in the last decade the term geopolitics has crept back into use, and geopolitical analysis of both global and regional problems has become more common. The roots of a revival in geopolitical reflection and writing lie in the changing international political and economic environment. This revival has been made up of several different strands, and has attracted conservatives, liberals, radicals and quantifiers.<sup>9</sup> First, there has been a general willingness by 'traditional' political geographers to use the adjective 'geopolitical', and to explore more fully the political implications of their analysis. Cohen's pioneer work on geopolitical perspectives for a multipolar world, first suggested in 1963 at the nadir of postwar geopolitics, has been continued by him (Cohen, 1982) and by others, with renewed enthusiasm and confidence. A second, rather different, strand has been the development of a "behavioural geopolitics", constructing behavioural and statistical models of the international diffusion of wars and conflicts across frontiers. This is an approach being developed by both geographers (O'Loughlin, 1986) and political scientists (Most and Starr, 1980). O'Sullivan's recent text, simply titled *Geopolitics* (O'Sullivan, 1986), presents a blend of historical and policy oriented discussion of global geopolitical issues, with more behavioural work on linkages, diffusion and game theoretic approaches.<sup>10</sup>

A third strand comes from those influenced by Marxist or neo-Marxist theory. Their theoretical base gives them a perspective for both a critique of earlier geopolitics, and for a reconstruction of contemporary geopolitics based upon economic relationships, and particularly, on the role of capitalism in the world-economy (Taylor, 1985). An alternative approach is based on Wallerstein's 'world-economy' and 'world-systems' approach to the development of capitalism and its geographical expression. This approach has been used by Taylor (1985) in reconstructing a theoretical basis for political geography. For Taylor: "In world-systems analysis of geopolitics is about rivalry (currently East versus West) in the core for domination

of the periphery by imperialism (currently North versus South) (Taylor, 1985 : 37)".<sup>11</sup> Geopolitics has found a place in radical geographical analysis as attention has turned from purely economic to the role of the state and the political superstructure. Debate has increasingly hinged on the extent to which the political is genuinely independent of the economic base: thus Skocpol (1977) argues that it is precisely the significance of 'geopolitical situations' and 'geopolitical circumstances', that Wallerstein neglects in this analysis of European capitalism.<sup>12</sup> But it is in France that the most sustained geopolitical interest has been developed by Lacoste and his colleagues on the journal *Herodote*. Lacoste and his colleagues on *Herodote* (published since 1976) have given much attention to a wide range of global and regional geopolitical issues. Many of these studies show how detailed geographical analysis, when sensitively related to historical and political studies, can illuminate geopolitical questions.

In the post-World War geopolitical scenario, to speak of geopolitics apropos superpower rivalries and conflicts between states has become less and less shocking. The concept of 'territorial expansion' in case of modern nation-states has become less relevant, and has been replaced by 'expansion of influence'. "The ultimate goal of geopolitics", no longer, remains "... a fairer and better distribution of the world's living space, and control over that space: a fairer distribution made in accordance with the numbers of each group and their capacity for achievement" (Haushofer, 1944 : 135).

In this situation the question of regional geopolitics has been gaining ground. It is because in a federal or quasi federal state one can easily conceive the necessity for regional geopolitics, since the regions are political and spatial ensembles and are governed and administered by the elected, who have a real power in relation to the centre. Therefore, this study is made on the basis of neo-geopolitical theories, based primarily on regional geopolitics, for which a relevant research framework is yet to evolve.

### **1.3 Review of Relevant Works**

It has been mentioned earlier that the geopolitics became a neglected branch of study and had been in disrepute for most of the 40 years since the end of the Second World War, because of its war guilt. Yet in the last few decades the term geopolitics has crept back into use, and geopolitical analysis of both global and regional

problems has become more common. Since 1980 many books have appeared with 'geopolitics' or 'geopolitical' in their titles, the term is widely used in media and political discussion, and is subject of many academic and policy articles.

Since the late 1970s numerous studies on geopolitical perspectives on global strategy have been published. In 1982 an International Institute of Geopolitics was founded in Paris, and journals like 'Geopolitique' (1985) were published. Geopolitique (1985) A NATO Scientific Division symposium was published in Zoppo and Zorgbibe (1985).<sup>13</sup> This study both reviews 'classical geopolitics', and examines their applicability in the nuclear era. According to Leslie W. Happle<sup>14</sup>, the tendency of this literature is to take a rather restricted view of both traditional geopolitics (excluding the Germanic tradition, and limiting it to global issues), and of 'geographical factors' (tending to limit them to physical configurations and space, and ignoring human distributions). It also tends to equate geopolitics to 'power politics', to ascribe an overwhelming role to technology, and so, to assume that geopolitical relationships emerge 'naturalistically', without the intervention of social and political structures and theories.

An alternative perspective, which is more geographical, is given by Jay (1979), who claims that 'Geopolitics is, definitionally, the art and process of managing global rivalry (Jay, 1979 : 486)<sup>15</sup>, but he links this to regional politics: 'Good regionalism is good geopolitics; and bad regionalism is bad geopolitics' (Jay, 1979 : 485). Other studies includes Deudnay (1983), the 'geopolitical atlas' of Chaliand and Pageau (1983) which begins with geopolitical world-views, and Freedman's atlas of Global Strategy (Freedman, 1985), which also begins with a consideration of geopolitics. Most of the geographers' contribution to geopolitics concentrate on the geopolitics of global strategy, such as O'Sullivan's highly critical study of the geopolitics of deterrence (O'Sullivan, 1985)<sup>16</sup>, Locaste's study of the geography of the Euromissiles (Cruise and Pershing II) and the risk of 'decoupling' European and American strategy (Lacoste, 1983), and Pepper and Jenkins' study of the geopolitical situations of the USSR and USA in terms of nuclear vulnerability and siting, and the way this affects their perceptions and fears (Pepper and Jenkins, 1984)<sup>17</sup>. In the last few years texts on geopolitics have appeared (G. Parker, 1985; O'Sullivan, 1986), together with lengthy reviews (Brunn and

Mingst, 1985). Cohen (1973) describes geopolitics as the relation of international political power to the geopolitical setting (*Geography and Politics in a World Divided*).<sup>18</sup> In France, Pierre George (1964) though he rejected both the term geopolitics ('the worst caricature of applied geography in the first part of the 20th century has been geopolitics') and geopolitical analysis (Lacoste, 1981), yet in 1984 published *Geopolitique des Minorities*<sup>19</sup>, arguing the case for a geopolitical analysis of minority problems (George, 1984). The study made by the geographers Foucher (1982) and Sanduer (1981, 1985), within the Central American context, shows how a geographical basis can illuminate geopolitical analysis.

In reconstructing a theoretical basis for political geography Peter Taylor defines geopolitics as 'rivalry in the core for domination of the periphery by imperialism' (Taylor, 1985 : 37)<sup>20</sup>.

The study of regional geopolitical problems started in France (1981) and was developed by Lacoste and his colleagues through the journal *Herodote*. They give considerable emphasis on cultural variations in geopolitical studies as well as regional studies. Many of these studies illustrate geopolitical questions by relating historical and political studies to detail geographical analysis. The recent themes include German geopolitics, Near East geopolitics, geopolitics of the sea and the geopolitics of Islam.

In India geopolitical studies have been done mostly by political scientists studying rivalry between super powers vis-a-vis its impact on India. The books titled by the term geopolitics has been almost lacking except the Sen's book on *Basic Principles of Geopolitics and History*<sup>21</sup>. Also an unpublished thesis by Parihar (J.N.U., 1989) on *Ideological Heritage and Trend in Geopolitics*<sup>22</sup>. In North East India geopolitical studies have been done by Bhattacharyya<sup>23</sup> on 'Geopolitics of North East India'. Except for Bhattacharyya, regional geopolitical studies made by geographers in India are almost lacking.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Topic**

This study of the geopolitics of North East India has been done basically to find out correlation between geography and politics. In doing so emphasis has been given to the past developments of political and economic forces which generally determine present and future politico-territorial ramifications in any geographic space, which is permanent.

The North Eastern part of India is diverse in all respects and these diversities are reflected in the various demands for regional autonomy, socio-economic movements, boundary and insurgency problems, etc., which strengthen the centrifugal forces. Since the primary objective of every nation-state is to maintain and integrate all its diverse areas into national mainstream and to generate centripetal forces to achieve this, in the case of India's North East the problem of integration has been facing severe acid tests due to different factors. These factors are sometimes obvious, like physiographic, racial, cultural and linguistic diversities, which require less cognitive measures. But on the other hand some factors, like jealousy between the plains and hills, backwardness and stagnation in economy, problems of socio-cultural movements, boundary, disputes, etc., need some elaboration, which this study intends to undertake.

### **1.5 Objectives**

The study has been made on the basis of the following objectives—

- i) to analyse the basic geopolitical forces working in this region.
- ii) to analyse the politico-administrative changes and their consequence.
- iii) to study the economic base of the region and the economic relations between the constituent parts of the North East Indian states.
- iv) to study the inter-state border disputes and the international boundary conflicts in the context of regional geopolitics of North East India.

### **1.6 Hypotheses**

To achieve the above mentioned objectives following hypotheses have been framed—

- i) physiographic and ethnic diversity of the region are the basic causal factors encouraging geopolitical vivisection.
- ii) the various administrative policies of the British were responsible for the emergence of diverse politico-territorial formations in this region.
- iii) boundary disputes in this region are legacy of the former colonial administration.

- iv) economic potentiality of the plain and hill regions of North East India and their different levels of development provided the early push-factor to generate centrifugal tendencies among the plains and the hills population.

### **1.7 Methodology**

The study has been carried out on the basis of both deductive and inductive methods using morphologic, historical and functional approaches.

In achieving the first objective, a morphological approach has been adopted to explain the various physiographic divisions, climatic conditions, soil types, drainage patterns, geological structure and vegetation. In analysing the objective, the various physical factors have been synthesised and tested the hypotheses on the basis of data collected from various journals, topo-sheets and personal investigation at the field level.

Historical approach is adopted in achieving the second and third objectives. Various historical books on North East India by British historians and administrators as well as various Assamese and English history books written by Assamese historians have been consulted. The hypothesis has been tested on the basis of data available from various government publications, government secret documents of State Archives, State Assembly Libraries and the National Library. Though direct communication could not be made with the India Office Library, London, various secondary and authentic data could be collected from the important collections found in Jawaharlal Nehru University Library (J.N.U.), New Delhi, and National Library, Calcutta.

In achieving the fourth objective, historical as well as functional approach have been adopted and analysis made on the basis of historical documents, field study, various government circulars, assembly debate proceedings, etc. A questionnaire has been prepared to analyse the inter-state boundary disputes. The data has been collected, processed and tested the hypothesis. In this regard, it is pertinent to mention that the access to state government documents relating to the sensitive border problems was not possible owing to official unwillingness to open the same to public. Also, personal visits to all the disputed areas could not be possible due to insurgency situations in the North Eastern States. Therefore,

the internal boundary problems have been studied on the basis of personal investigation to a limited extent.

### **1.8 Organisation of the Study**

The entire work is divided into three parts. Part one consists of four chapters, part two of two chapters and part three of one chapter only.

In Chapter I, the introduction to the topic, its scope, the concept of geopolitics, review of literature, the objectives and hypotheses are discussed.

In Chapter II, the physical base of the region is discussed with its physiographic framework, soil and climatic conditions, geological structure, drainage and vegetation.

In Chapter III, the population base of the region is discussed stating the peopling process, various routes of migration to this region, linguistic groups and a critical assessment of the same.

In Chapter IV, the historical base of the region is discussed, stating the evolution of various ethnic communities, the period of their dominance over this region, foreign invasions and the British occupation and annexation.

Chapter V and VI are devoted to the analysis. Here analysis is made of the state formation processes and the geopolitical problems in North East India.

Chapter VII is the concluding chapter, where the summary of the above chapter is written and conclusions are drawn and possible suggestions are made.

### **References**

1. Leslie, W. Happle, *Political Geography Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 4, October, 1986, S 21-S 36.
2. H. Sprout, "Geography : Political Geography", *International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, 1968, vol. 6, p. 120.
3. R. Hartshorne, "Political Geography", in P.E. James and C.F. Jones (eds.), *American Geography, Inventory and Prospects* (Syracuse University Press, 1954), p. 172.
4. H. Bewkema, "Geopolitics", *Encyclopaedia Americana*, 1970, vol. 12, p. 472.
5. R.E. Kasperson and J.V. Minghi (eds.): *The Structure of Political Geography* (Chicago, Adine Publishing), 1969, p. 8.
6. K. Kost, "The Conception of Politics in Polimal Geography and

- Geopolitics in Germany until 1945", *Political Geography Quarterly*, vol. 8, pp. 369-85.
7. F. Ratzel, *Politische Geographie* (Munich, R. Oldenbourg), 1897, cited in R.E. Dickinson : *Makers of Modern Geography* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul), 1969, p. 69.
  8. J.H. Paterson, "German Geopolitics reassessed", *Political Geography Quarterly*, vol. 6, No. 2, April, 1987, pp. 107-114.
  9. Leslie W. Hepple, "The Revival of Geopolitics", *Political Geography Quarterly*, vol. 5, No. 4, October, 1986, S 21-S 36.
  10. Leslie W. Hepple, *op.cit.*
  11. Peter, J. Taylor, 'Political Geography', 1985, p. 37.
  12. *Ibid.*
  13. Zoppo, C.E. and Zorgbibe, C. Eds (1985), *On Geopolitics : Classical and Nuclear*, Dordrecht, Netherland : Martinus Nijhoff.
  14. Leslie W. Hepple, *The Revival of Geopolitics*, *Political Geography Quarterly*, supplement to vol. 5, No. 4, October, 1986, S 21-S 36.
  15. Peter Jay, "Regionalism as Geopolitics", *Foreign Affairs* (1980), 58, 490.
  16. O'Sullivan, P. (1985), *The geopolitics of deterrence*. In *The Geography of Peace and War* (D. Pepper and A. Jenkins, eds) pp. 29-41. Oxford : Basil Blackwell.
  17. Pepper, D. and Jenkins, A. (1984), *Reversing the nuclear arms race : geopolitical bases for pessimism*, *Professional Geographer* 36, 419-427.
  18. Cohen, S.B. (1973), *Geography and Politics in a World Divided*, Oxford University Press, London, Toronto.
  19. George, P. (1984)- *Geopolitique des Minorities*, Paris : Presses Universitaires de France.
  20. Taylor, P.J. (1985) *Political Geography*, London, Longmans.
  21. Sen, D. (1975), *Basic Principles of Geopolitics and History*, Delhi, India, Concept Publishing Company.
  22. Parihar, R.-*Ideological Heritage and Trend in Geopolitics*, Centre for International Politics Organisation and Disarmament, Jawarharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 1989.
  23. Bhattacharyya, N.N.- "Geopolitics of North East India", *North Eastern Geographer*, vol. 21, No. 1 and 2, 1989.