

# Development Scenario of North-East India

Editor  
Jaynal Ud-din Ahmed



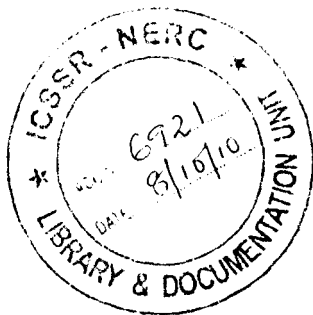
**DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO OF  
NORTH-EAST INDIA  
A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE**

Editor  
Dr. Jaynal Ud-din Ahmed



**DVS PUBLISHERS**

H. B. Road, Panbazar, Guwahati - 781 001



Published by VINAY SHARMA

for

**DVS PUBLISHERS**

H. B. Road, Panbazar, Guwahati - 781 001

Phone : 2638295, 2511789, 099540-93386,

Fax : 0361-2638295

e-mail : dvspub@gmail.com

website : www.dvspublishers.com

338.95416  
A-11A

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Frist Published in 2010

ISBN : 978-81-86307-25-0

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Printed at : Nice Printing Press, Sahibabad (U.P.)

Rs. 695/-

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**Dedicated to**  
**Dr. Kamal Uddin Ahmed**  
(Ex-Principal, Karimganj College, Karimganj, Assam)

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## Foreword

Few regions have been discussed and deliberated so much in the development forums in the recent years as the North-Eastern Region (NER) of India. The reason is not difficult to seek. One can go by any number of developmental indicators, the NER has so far been lagging far behind in the development front, which has become the bone of all contentions like insurgency, precarious law and order situation, etc. The government has also realized the seriousness of the problem. As a result, a number of development plans and programmes have been formulated and executed also from time to time. So much so, the Government of India has set up a Department of North East Region (DONER) at the centre to exclusively look after the developmental issues of North East India. Notwithstanding, there has not so far been any perceptible improvement in the development scene of the NER. Instead, the problems like unrest, uncertain law and order situation are on increase. The situation has become like poverty anywhere, i.e., NER is a danger for prosperity everywhere, i.e., the whole country. Then, the issue is how to overcome such situation. Obviously, solution lies only in the development of the NER. But, the vexing question is why the NER has been reeling under backwardness or underdevelopment in spite of so many developmental plans, packages, and policies. There is no denying the fact that there are some lapses and loopholes here and there in the developmental efforts of the Government.

There are reasons and evidence to believe that limited is the level of development in the NER, but much more limited is the availability of data on whatever development in different respects has so far taken place in the region. What ever data is available is highly scanty and scattered. As such, in the absence of required data and information, our knowledge about the NER has been far from adequate and systematic. As such,

currency is given to popular beliefs, sentiments and conventions. Thus, the development plans based on such predilections, presumptions, beliefs, sentiments, etc. become unrealistic and impracticable. The formulation of good plans depends on the availability of good data. This, therefore, underlines the need for availability of authentic and reliable data and information on various aspects of the economy of the NER.

The present compendium consisting of 26 highly researched papers meets, to a great extent, this long felt requirement of availability of authentic information on the economy of the NER. The papers cover the entire canvass of developmental aspects, namely, rural development, women development, small-scale enterprises, micro finance, tourism development, eco-development and environment, and educational development. The authors have presented the nitty-gritty of development issues involved in various aspects of the economy of the NER.

Dr. Jaynal Ud-din Ahmed deserves great appreciation for bringing out such a timely compendium covering almost all aspects of the regional economy of the NER. My sincere congratulations to Dr. Ahmed for such long needed academic contribution, which will be found immensely useful by the policy makers, researchers, students, and people having interest in knowing the NER.

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## Acknowledgement

I express my deep sense of gratitude to my esteemed teacher, Prof. S.S.Khanka, Dean and Head, School of Management Sciences, Tezpur University, Naapam, Tezpur, Assam with whose frequent and affectionate encouragement the present work could be possible. I am especially grateful to him because despite his heavy engagements he wrote the valuable foreword to this book. I have no words to express my profound obligation and respect for Prof. R.K.Raul, School of Management Studies, Assam University, Silchar, for giving me mature guidance and valuable suggestions from time to time.

The academic encouragement received from Prof. S.S.Khare, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, North Eastern Hill University, Tura Campus, Prof. Furquan Kumar, Head, Faculty of Management Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, Prof. N.M.Panda, School of Management, Economics and information Sciences, NEHU, Shillong, Prof. Keya Sengupta, Dean, School of Social Sciences, Assam University, Silchar, Prof. M.K.A. Siddiquie, Institute of Objective Studies, Kolkata, Prof. S.S. Pabla, Director, Manipal Institute of Technology, Bangalore, Prof. Sujit Sikidar, Head, Department of Commerce, Guwahati University, Assam is gratefully acknowledged.

I am indebted to the family members of North Eastern Hill University and to my colleagues of the department, Prof. G.Singaiyah, Dr.K.Mishra, Mr.B.F.Lyngdoh, Ms.D.H.Malini, Mr. D.Bhagat and Olivia G. Momin and my friends for encouraging me in my academic pursuits. In the same measure, I am grateful to Mr. Sydney Herberth N. Sangma, Asstt.General Manager, District Industries Centre, Tura and Mrs. Agnes M. Sangma, Tura Public School, Tura for their constant inspiration in my academic word.

I am beholden to my parents Alhaj Aftab Uddin Ahmed (Father) and Mrs. Fuljahan Khanan (Mother) who have been my regular

source of inspiration and thankful to my brother Moulana Md. Nazrul Islam and other family members for their prop up in my research hobby.

My wife Sampa deserves a singular thanks for her patience in various ways in completion of this work.

I am also thankful to Mr. Vinay Sharma of DVS Publications, Guwahati, Assam for accepting the manuscripts and bringing out this volume expeditiously.

**12<sup>th</sup> Rabiul Auwal,  
Milad-Un-Nabi, 2008  
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## Introduction

North East India dwells in an enviable position because of its fascinating beauty and biodiversity. The region is landlocked, distant and secluded part of the country whose traditional routes of communication to markets were snapped by the partition of India. It shares an international boundary of about 4000 kilometers with the neighboring four countries: China, Bhutan, Myanmar and Bangladesh. The region is connected with the mainland by a narrow corridor in the foot-hills. The corridor is subjected to occasional disruptions due to heavy rains and floods. The raw materials are plentiful but industrialization is a far-flung dream and unemployment is extremely high in rural areas of Northeast.

Northeastern region of India is economically backward and mostly a tribal region. The indications of this socio-economic backwardness are infrastructural hazard of the region, comparatively lower level of industrialization, agrarian bias economy, under-utilization or non-utilization of valuable resources, violence and insurgency, awful law and order situation, etc. This is primarily due to geographical isolation and topographical complication. The states of Northeast are not only ethnically distinct, but also the homes of small ethnic groups. These groups are not only isolated on the swelling topography, but also technologically backward. With the massive emphasis on rural development and overall demand for social transformation, the region is yet to avail of the latest technology in almost all the sectors. The future development of the region is largely based on technological transfer and proper use of the existing resources. No serious efforts are being made to transfer latest technology in the national policy of self-reliance. Northeastern region is economically at subsistence level in the present vista. By tradition, the vital resources; land, water, forest and even minerals are controlled by the community,

in which technological investment is negligible. It is, therefore, an urgent need to develop appropriate strategies for various means of development for which diagnosis of various perspectives of economic development is of immense important and a great necessity.

The present publication is a collection of articles on various aspects of enterprise scenario and development visualization with reference to Northeastern region. The papers presented in this volume have covered various issues concerning the development perspectives. The highlights of these papers are presented below:

Gupta attempted to analyze emerging dimensions of entrepreneurship in agriculture. He highlighted that present knowledge society does not preclude anybody from participating in the growth process and only professional outlook towards growth options alone can help the society to stay fit. Concept of SCOTA can help to seize it. Agriculture has traveled a lot from purely family affairs to global subject amalgamating the concept of business, entrepreneurship and care. In agriculture, besides early entrepreneurship of farm production to animal production, many new potential areas are emerging of which Agriculture/plant clinic is the latest. This new area requires special care to provide maximum benefits. Such care may include a special procedure for collection, packing and processing. Of all the agriculture related entrepreneurs, soil health clinic will be of great value.

Mohan and Kabra in their paper established the aptness of agriculture and forestry for enhancing employment. The study highlighted the approaches and prospects of employment opportunities in agro-based small manufacturing units, units allied to agriculture and agro-based forest industries, etc. The paper, however, recommended the opening of Agri. Clinics / Agri. - Business centre in remote areas at the grass root level is the road to destination for both the unemployed graduate youths and the nation as it offers exciting future opportunities with a variety of challenges, provided one works hard with full determination.

Raul and Ahmed investigated the usefulness of DWCRA scheme for development of women in rural areas. They found that efforts are yet to make to deal with the problems of women beneficiaries. Higher percentage of achievement to target without improving the economic position of beneficiaries and non-implementation at the grass-root level are the main snags of the scheme.

Satya in her study enabled to understand the perspectives of establishing market mechanisms. She suggested that the pronouncements of these multi-level utilities facilitate exploration of entrepreneurial talents which can appropriately be utilized within the available resource-base and help boost enterprise development.

Considering the role and contribution of rural women to farm sector and their participation in agricultural sector, Singh, Chanu and Prasad attempted to analyze empirically their extent of participation in fourteen decision-making areas and also the influence on their participation by their socio-personal characteristics in their decision making process. The study was conducted on farm women in the district of Imphal East in the state of Manipur. Their diagnosis revealed that majority of the farm women were of middle age group having average experience in agriculture, medium economic motivation, and average level of socio-economic status. The paper identified that the education level and economic stability are the major determinants for decision making process of farm women.

Tourism Industry is one of the most vibrant sectors with potential to contribute towards growth and development perspective of any region. Lyngdoh in his paper viewed that the industry has not been able to grow at its perceived and attainable rates due to many micro, meso and macro level problems. He identified the problems faced by the industry in the state of Meghalaya and suggested the measures for growth and vitality of the sector. Stress is laid upon the business opportunities available and management of the micro and macro level factors so as to bring about growth and development of the tourism sector in particular and overall economic development in general.

Ramabrahmam pointed out that India is primarily a destination of international tourism. Offering historical destinations and the growth of special interest tourism, the relevance of history has further increased. He suggested that milestone achievements in tourism industry in the light of entrepreneurship development in Northeast can solve the emerging problems.

Singha and Kabra studied the prospective for employment and economic growth through promotion of tourism because of its potentiality of attracting a large number of tourists. They viewed that development and expansion of tourism industry has great scope in the state of Meghalaya by utilizing the tourism resources, facilities and services and its untapped market potentials. This can be achieved by creating a strong infrastructure like transportation and communication links at the various important tourist destination.

In the present technology driven business scene, Rashid and Khadem studied the problems faced by rural entrepreneurs in Dhubri district of Assam. They highlighted that many opportunities have been created which are not sufficient for entrepreneurs to execute after imbibing immensely the vision of tomorrow's world. The infrastructural hold up in rural areas is one of the major intimidations of economic deprivation of the present century. The study found that even though the rural populace played an important role in various economic activities and trained in various technologies, some of them are not able to start their own enterprise due to various hindrances like marketing problems, lack of financial assistance, limited scope of farming, seasonal availability of commodities, lack of medication in broiler farming, difficulty in getting license, etc. experienced by them.

Borbora, in the context of unsatisfactory performance of Indian financial institutions in lending to the poors, studied the position of microfinance as an effective tool in poverty alleviation. He particularly examined the role of SHGs in terms of linkage with financial institutions and assessed the impact of the microfinance related programmes in Assam. He concluded that more efforts and institutional innovations are required in this respect.

Micro-finance through Self-Help Groups has made positive impact on the lives of the people both rural and urban in terms of their social, economic and political upliftment. However, these have been restricted in the certain regions leaving aside the backward regions of the country. In this perspective, Bhagat studied opportunities and challenges of micro finance in Garo Hills with a view to studying the growth of microfinance in Garo hills of Meghalaya and to examine factors affecting the Micro-finance in Garo hills. The study indicated that though the numbers of SHGs have grown in Garo hills, it failed to function as a savings and credit group. He suggested that government should bring and support committed people and organizations who will work to make poor understand the importance of SHGs.

In the context of reform measures, Ahmed highlighted in a case study the inter district disparity in branch expansion of commercial banks. He observed that the existing bank branches are inadequate to serve the requirements of the people in rural areas. He concluded with an idea that regional inequalities in branch expansion still persist even after sixteen years of economic reform.

Choudhury, Goswami and Thangkhiew drew attention to the need to conserve the ecosystem in Meghalaya state. They observed that the ecosystem of the area seems to be least disturbed due to minimum human interference. Rapid demographic change due to high population growth during the last few decades has a dramatic impact on the nature and natural resources of Northeast leading to emergence of various environmental problems like depletion of forest resources, habitat loss and fragmentation, loss of biodiversity, soil erosion, recurrent floods, drying of perennial streams etc.

Urbanization plays a pivotal role for economic betterment and a peaceful lifestyle of individuals in any region. Laskar accentuated problems and prospects of urbanization in Mizoram. His paper found that the growth of urbanization in this high resource based state Mizoram is uncontrolled unorganized. The future growth of urbanisation needs proper direction and guidance in order to promote economic growth. He stressed

that immediate steps are warranted to enforce development control and building regulations.

In the context of high priority on infrastructure development by the government at the centre and the states, Singha and Kabra attempted to highlight the present status of infrastructure development in North East Region in general and Mizoram in particular. Their paper also tried to focus on the problems being confronted in developing infrastructure in Mizoram.

Singha and James in a micro study on the womenfolk of Manipur state stressed that the water is one of the greatest challenges in the hill tribal villages in Northeastern states. It adversely affects the quality of life and economy of the region. They visualized that the inappropriate government policy and the lack of commitment on the part of the people are responsible for this crisis.

Malini assessed the marketing system in rural India with special reference to north eastern region. She highlighted the need for making consistent attempts to innovate tools and strategies to overcome the challenges that face the existing market and to capture new market. Practical efforts are needed to bridge the gap between rural and urban. The paper also pointed out the saturation of urban markets in recent years and the growing demand in rural markets simultaneously. She felt the need to design promotional strategies for the rural market.

Debnath observed the viewpoints of modernization and concluded that modernization is a developmental process. It does not imply westernization and hence the hypothesis that equates it to Europeanization stands null and illogical. His paper also highlighted the association of modernization with capitalism, industrialism, secularization, urbanization and rationalization in the context of collective society.

Prasad, Chanu and Singh in another attempt aimed to examine the spots of time in decision-making by the Manipuri farm women in their day-to-day obligations. They found that 'economic motivation' and 'socio-economic status' were the factors, which affected significantly to the spots of time of decision-making.

Realizing the present challenges of management world wide, Sibhu and Vijaianand attempted to deal with the need, steps and management of Enterprise risk. The risk management approaches often limit the focus for managing uncertainties around physical and financial assets because they focus largely on loss prevention, rather than adding value. They recommended redefining of risk management in this rapidly changing world.

Choudhury analyzed the need for environmental education for protection of environment in the context of Northeastern region. She stressed on the encouragement of the environmental issues through people's involvement and understanding for quality of life and quality of environment in the region.

Bhandari studied the implications of mid-day meal (MDM) programme on the literacy of Tura region of Meghalaya state. He concluded with an idea that to provide education along with food in all the primary schools requires a lot of reorganization. Good managerial efficiency of all the implementing agencies, infrastructural development in the school as well as in the region, and information amongst the poor classes of people about MDM are need of the moment.

Choudhury identified determinants of reading behaviour of tribal women workers in East Khasi Hill Districts of Meghalaya. He found that lack of time, personal problems, library facilities, monetary problems, etc. are the major hindrances of reading behaviour of tribal women workers in the area under study.

Subudhi underlined the role of teachers in Meghalaya state. He hinted that the challenge for education in the state of Meghalaya is the teacher. He suggested some facts and practical strategies, which actually need urgent attention for educational and thereby socio-economic development of the state.

Participation of women in all field of economy especially business, women empowerment is necessary to face of challenges of emerging world economy. In this direction, Singaiah and Rao emphasized on women empowerment through entrepreneurship in rural areas. Their paper focuses on the necessity of relevant training programmes by which awareness of rural entrepreneurship, confidence over their strength and

motivation can be inculcated. The financial support is to be arranged under different heads of both financial institution and developmental banks.

Singh and Srivastava in an attempt studied the cost and return of inland fish production in the district West Garo Hills of Meghalaya. They found that the total cost per acre of water body area was highest in case of small producers followed by medium producers and lowest for large producers. In the same way, the total returns from fish farming were highest for small producers followed by medium producers and large producers. It was also observed from the study that the small producers give more attention to intensive fish farming where as medium and large producers takes fish farming as their secondary income activities.

The compilation of papers may be helpful to research scholars as the same will provide valuable inputs to make more in-depth study of the problems. This publication is expected to be a valued contribution on the field which will enrich the readers interested in the development vision of Northeastern region.

**Jaynal Uddin Ahmed**

The resources of north eastern region are controlled by the community in which technological investment is negligible. It is, therefore, an urgent need to develop appropriate strategies for various means of development for which diagnosis of various perspectives of economic development is the immense necessity.

The present publication is a collection of articles, contributed by research scholars, on various aspects development vision with reference to north eastern region. The papers presented in this volume have covered various issues concerning the development perspectives of the region.

The compilation of papers may be helpful to research scholars as the same will provide valuable inputs to make more in-depth study of the problems. This publication is expected to be a valued contribution on the field which will enrich the readers interested in the development vision of north eastern region.

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ISBN 978-81-86307-25-0



9 788186 307250

**Price Rs. 695.00**