



IN DEFENCE OF

**REGIONAL
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
IN INDIA**

A CASE FOR THE NORTH EAST

P.M. PASSAH

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A Case for the North East

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P. M. Passah

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*A
Felicitation Volume
in Honour
of
Dr. Basudev Datta Ray
The Secretary
North-East Council for Social Science
Research
A Freedom Fighter, A Teacher par excellence
and
A Champion of the North-Eastern Region*



M. M. Jacob

RAJ BHAVAN
Shilong 793 001
Meghalaya State

Foreword

This publication is a fitting tribute to a selfless scholar, whose contributions are much valued by all. I am glad that a felicitation volume in honor of Dr. Basudev Datta Ray is being brought out. It is also significant that this book is compiled and edited by an eminent Economist, Prof. P.M. Passah. I know Dr. Basudev Datta Ray intimately, for the past many years and I have great appreciation for the remarkable service rendered by him for the cause of promotion of research in various fields. As secretary, North-East Council for Social Science Research, he was always piloting the cause of North Eastern Region. It was his devotion, hard work and a vision that made him to conceive the idea of establishing NEICSSR way back in 1974 and thereafter, conducting large number of seminars, workshops and conferences, on various topics concerning North Eastern States.

His personal rapport with individuals and institutions in the country, enabled him to get prominent scholars, to attend the conferences held in Shillong. He was mainly responsible along with his colleagues to publish a series of publications, on behalf of NEICSSR. About sixty-six seminars and conferences organised by him and his colleagues attracted not only prominent scholars of North Eastern Region but also, from other parts of the country.

I had the good fortune of participating in some of the workshops and seminars in Shillong, during the last few years. The workshops and conferences were very useful and

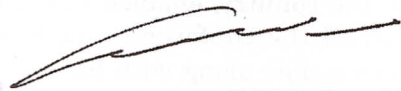
informative and attended by resource leaders competent to handle each topic under discussion. This felicitation volume is a useful publication as it comprises major contributions on topics of great interests in this North East Region as a whole.

Various papers on macro-economic and theoretical overview of the North East, by Amallesh Banerjee and others; Regional trade services and entrepreneurship by A.K. Neog and others; Micro-level studies by N.N. Bhattacharjee and others; socio-political aspects and women issues by Girin Phukon and others; are some of the topics of current interests to the readers. I do not wish to mention all the different topics included in this volume. This volume will be a treasure house to all those who wish to have a feel of North Eastern India.

Not only the choice of topics and themes for various conferences, NEICSSR is to be complimented for publishing many of the conference papers in the past. This publication is unique with a variety of topics from agriculture to industry including many other aspects pertaining to North East India in general.

I am happy that his contribution in social sciences are recognized by his colleagues through the publication of this "Felicitation Volume". I wish all success for this publication. May Dr. Basudev Datta Ray continue to serve the society through the NEICSSR, and I pray God to give him health and happiness to continue this endeavor to impart knowledge through this forum.

My best wishes,



(M.M. Jacob)

Shillong
The 28th June 2005

Preface

In the publication of this volume, the members of the North-East India Council for Social Science Research, Shillong are very proud and happy indeed. They had some time ago proposed to felicitate Dr. Basudev Datta Ray, the founder Secretary of the Council, and to publish a volume in his honour. Dr. Datta Ray deserves congratulations and felicitations not only from the members of the Council but also from all those who know him and his achievements in the field of social science research in the North-East. Many scholars and social scientists, young and old, in the North-East and in other parts of the country, have been provided with an ideal forum in the NEICSSR through the unstinted efforts of Dr. Datta Ray who continues as its Secretary for the last 31 years of its existence.

Dr. Datta Ray is well known as a teacher and research scholar of repute even though he had a chequered career as a student during his young days. At the young age, he joined the ranks of Freedom Fighters who fought for the freedom of India in the early part of the last century. He was born to a humble family at Bankura, West Bengal on the 10th of March 1924. His ancestral home was in a village in the District of Bakarganj, East Bengal where he had a part of his school education. He wrote his Intermediate Examination from Dum Dum Central Jail. He graduated from the Scottish Church College, Calcutta; obtained his M.A. degree in 1949 from the Calcutta University and then came to Shillong in 1950 to join the St. Edmund's College as a Lecturer in Economics and subsequently opened the Department of Political Science in 1962 and headed it till 1985. He was incharge of the

Faculty of Post-graduate studies in Political Science which was functional for seven years from 1973 in the St. Edmund's College. He gave lectures in the I.A.S. Pre-Training Centre as well. He was also a member of the Voluntary Health Association, Meghalaya and the State Resource Centre, N.E.H.U. Dr. Datta Ray obtained, in between, his B.T., LL.B., and Ph.D. degrees from the Gauhati University.

It was in the middle of 1974 that Dr. Datta Ray brought together a number of teachers and social scientists of the North-East in a meeting at Shillong on the 30th June of that year under the Chairmanship of late Prof. V. Venkata Rao of the Gauhati University. The meeting with one accord decided to establish the NEICSSR with the principal objective of undertaking, organising and facilitating research activities in the North-East besides other activities related to research. Earlier he founded the Shillong Political Science Association and the Inter-Disciplinary Forum and guided them for a few years.

Dr. Datta Ray who has been able to effect good rapport with many research centres and institutes both in the North-East and in other parts of the country, is guiding the Council which has since held more than 66 seminars, conferences, symposium, workshops, etc. and published as many research proceedings in the form of Books. Many national and international organizations have been attracted by the fairly high standard of publications of the Council mostly dealing with the question of socio-economic problems and issues of the North East. The Journal of NEICSSR is being published regularly since 1977 under his guidance.

By the 1st of March 1985, Dr. Datta Ray's service in the St. Edmund's College was superannuated but the college authorities continued to assist him and to utilize his service. Immediately in April 1985 he started the Women's College in the St. Edmund's College premises where the new college continued to function upto 1991. He was the founder Principal of the college upto 1992. In fact as the Secretary of the organization known as 'The Shillong Academy', he had earlier helped to revive a dying Secondary School at

Laitumkhrah and made it functional. The School had since shifted to its own campus at Upper New Colony. Dr. Datta Ray was instrumental in organising, as the Rector, both the School and the Women College under the sponsorship of the Shillong Academy, which are now functioning in the same campus. Dr. Datta Ray never retires. From 1993 onwards he has exclusively devoted his time to the cause of the NEICSSR.

He wrote a number of books including the *Assam Secretariat: An Administrative History of North-East India* (1978); *Tribal Identity and Tension in North-East India* (1989); and a volume of *Bengali Poems* (2004). He edited 20 books published by the NEICSSR and authored more than 40 research papers.

As an editor of the book, I am indeed very grateful to the members of the Council for the opportunity they have given me in associating myself with this work, and I join in with all of them in felicitating Dr. Datta Ray, the Secretary of the Council all the time. I am especially grateful to the authors of the Papers contained in this volume for their generous response and for their scholarly researched contribution. It must now be said that this Felicitation Volume is published, to use the words of one contributor, "in honour of Professor B. Datta Ray, a freedom fighter, a teacher *par excellence* and above all, a social scientist with deep concerns for the underdevelopment of the North-Eastern States (Region) of India. This octogenarian thespian has spent over the last three decades in herding the social scientists of the Region into the secular forum of the NEICSSR, of which he is the Secretary General. In times when the polity is fragmented and even this fragmentation is assigned morality and legitimacy, the aging Nehruvian Scholar still spends sleepless nights in building a new India, a dream consigned to ashes of history a long time ago." The title of the book justifies his conscious efforts as the Champion of the North East.

In a very special way, I must express my thankfulness to His Excellency, the Governor of Meghalaya, Shri M.M. Jacob for writing a Foreword to this Volume.

We must also thank M/s. Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, for agreeing to expeditiously publish this book. Last but not the least our thanks are also due to Mr. Godfrey Pathaw for partly helping in computerised work.

Shillong:
The 30th June 2005

Editor

Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	vii
<i>Preface</i>	ix
<i>List of Contributors</i>	xvii
Introduction	1
— <i>Prof. P.M. Passah</i>	

SECTION-I

MACRO-ECONOMIC AND THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF THE NORTH-EAST

1. Economic Growth and Sustainability of North-Eastern States	21
— <i>Amalesh Banerjee</i>	
2. Macro-Economic Development in India: With an Overview of North-Eastern Region	35
— <i>Tarun Bikas Lahiri</i>	
3. Producing Economic History of the Tribes of North-East India (An Exercise in the Methodology)	51
— <i>J.B. Ganguly</i>	

SECTION-II

AGRICULTURAL SECTOR AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTH-EAST

4. The Economic Impasse of North-Eastern Region: A Way Out Through Agriculture	59
— <i>R.K. Choudhury</i>	

(xiv)

5. Rethinking on Agricultural Development Need of North-East Farmers — *D.N. Chakravarty* 70
6. Poverty in North-East India — *Prabin Baishya* 79
7. Rural Development and Combating Poverty in Mizoram and Nagaland — *Sukhendu Majumdar* 87
8. Household Food and Nutritional Security: A Critical Analysis of North-Eastern Hilly Areas — *B.C. Bhowmik* 96
9. Towards a Strategy for Rural Development — *M.P. Bezbarua* 119

SECTION-III

INDUSTRIAL ASPECTS

10. The Fourth Revolution: Industrial Location and Regional Development in India - Implications for the Eastern India — *A.C. Mohapatra* 137
11. Technical Education for Industrial Growth and Prosperity in North-East India — *S. Aravamudhan* 149

SECTION-IV

REGIONAL TRADE: SERVICES AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

12. Approaching Towards an Open Model of Regional Trade — *A.K. Neog* 159
13. Importance of Trans-Border Trade in the Economy of the North-East: The Case Study of Arunachal Pradesh — *K. Alam* 169

(xv)

14. Higher Education in India with Special Reference to North-East: Problems and Perspective — *X.P. Mao* 183
15. Role of HUDCO in Housing and Urban Development of N.E. India — *N.C. Das and Nayan Barua* 199
16. Problems of Indigenous Entrepreneurship in North-East: Economic or Psychological? — *Alok Sen* 207
17. The Entrepreneurship Question in Assam (A Historical Analysis) — *Gorgy Chakraborty* 219

SECTION-V

MICRO-LEVEL STUDIES

18. Settlements of Undivided Kamrup District of Assam — *N.N. Bhattacharyya* 235
19. Marketing of Arecanut in Assam: A Study in the Lower Brahmaputra Valley Region — *Prasanta Saikia* 249
20. Educational Development and Health Condition of the Scheduled Tribes of North-East India with Special Reference to Barmans of Barak Valley — *P.J. Goswami* 260

SECTION-VI

SOCIO-POLITICAL ASPECTS AND WOMEN ISSUES

21. Politicisation of Economic Disparities in North-East India — *Girin Phukan* 277
22. Indian Democracy: Some Feelings and Questions of a Commoner from the North East — *M. Kar* 287

23. The Unhealthy Health Sector and the Women of Assam — <i>Archana Sharma</i>	317
24. Reservation of Seats for Women in Grassroots Democracy: With Reference to Meghalaya — <i>E. Jyrwa</i>	326
25. Empowering Women through Self-Help Group: A Meghalaya Experience — <i>Biloris Lyndem</i>	336
26. A Blueprint for Giving Constitutional Status to Traditional Institutions in Meghalaya — <i>P.M. Passah</i>	344
<i>Index</i>	357

Technical Education for Industrial Growth and Prosperity in North East India

—S. Aravamudhan

Introduction

In the context of a Developing (section 2) region it is important to know whether what is required (section 3) to be provided is resources in kind or currency. If it is a question of provisions in resources in the form of materials, the supply of communication equipment for import into the region seems to be the main and popular option giving all the people a consolation of 'Aiding' and also being 'Aided'. This is a point which can be debated at length whether, providing amenities in their home can bring them a durable comfort and, is it a development strategy (section 4) which eventually make them self-reliant? People who find the instantaneous conveniences could be the everlasting solutions, would stoutly support these measures.

On the other hand aiding financially requires that there are proper investment strategies, which requires that the recipients be literate and educated. The simpletons would staunchly support this approach on the basis of the fact that imparting education may not be as expensive and literacy levels can be increased at much less cost and does not require

much of technological know-how. True that the progress in this approach can be a durable asset and improve the human-resource potentials. But this approach alone cannot bring forth the required regional industrial Growth. And, it is the triangular considerations (section 5) of this type which become the concerns of Social Scientists who want to provide a strategy to usher in prosperity in the region, and how to scale this prosperity index in terms of affluence and abundance indices is in general a global concern.

The Point of View of Developing Environment

Industrial growth in a developing region is a sign of progress towards prosperity. Since it is possible to pick out and adapt well established Industrial processes, what remains to be learnt by the inhabitants of the region is to mould their ways of living to adapt the technological means without compromising on the scientific factors locally prevailing which are creditable for the congeniality of local environment.

When the development process is considered it is necessary that the progress of development be monitored by the improvements of the individuals. This means a given individual must improve in his capability to requisition what he has to acquire and be in possession so as to make the minimization of material dependence on other individuals, and also of the necessity for physical assistance from others. This would invariably require learning as to what is it that better would be shared with others for economy and convenience and what is it that should be if it is the concern of an individual entirely. This is the strategy of individual improvement, which suggests measures to enhance literacy levels and means of higher education. Such knowledge comes to be within the grasp when movements inspired by involuntary inferences of individuals from their experiences govern these. These developmental movements cannot be directed movements.

On the other hand what would be required for the retention by each and every individual, to facilitate better

cohesion among those who are disposed to be living together and wish not to be in isolated groups, is quick supply of manufactured goods. This brings in the question of the feasibility of manufacturing and availability. This is the part of industrial concerns and this growth would require, for development, directed movements of individuals who are supposed to be the beneficiaries. This is the part that which is mostly addressed to while aiding developmental needs since a speedy transformation in the surroundings is a tangible outcome.

Development Routes and Assessing The Path to Progress

The above requires the environmental awareness in the scientific perspective, and, for this, what one can simply import as manufactured materials must also be supported by required literacy level of the public and the provision for the transfer of knowledge about the industrial viability.

Hence if the tailor-made technical goods can be imported, it may not be possible to sustain the (improvements) growth without a provision for teaching the elements of Science and Technology which make-up the importable finished product. If the learning processes do not progress concomitantly with the possible use of materials, then, without such a back-up knowledge, in the long-run it leads to the ways of living regimented by whatever was convenient in the earlier days. But the present state of growth, can set in such a motion which is not conducive to stop and monitor for assessing the growth.

Can There be Progress only with Technological Means of the Imported Equipment and Instruments?

This problem is even more acute in a context when the resources are not much in abundance and there are no viability to develop transport facilities to base an industrial production, but, on the other hand, technological products as equipment are brought in as facilities which remain only as

a mere opportunistic amenities. And, there is not much scope for teaching/learning process to become relevant and vibrant, but such efforts lead only to peripheral *terminology circulation* with inflationary amenities abound. The technological equipment thus brought in eventually would provide merely an exhibition-stall display recording perfunctory utilization.

More Insights for the Context of North East India

It is probably necessary to appreciate that development should comprise more of the movements guided by Phenomena. "A phenomenon is usually characterized by individuals' experiences, which are directly apprehended by senses, for which the causes are no criteria at the instance of occurrence". Letting them remain to be phenomenal, renders it to border on mere empirical observations which cannot provide a basis for sustainability and economic accountability. These remain merely objective-source experiences of individuals and the inferences (that remain highly subjective to that particular individual and) which cannot be much educative for collective appreciation. And, even if such inferences (*as they are attributable to a specific individual only*) do provide a measure for regulations, these would be prone to be arbitrary and hence can cause inconveniences.

But such an individual's dependence on objective sources must be channeled as inferences resulting in the comprehension of the causes behind so that the totality of this phenomena results in an objective body of information which becomes amenable to be applicable for the collective endeavor- [*at this point it is necessary to reiterate that, even when a surrounding is convenient, "why is it so convenient?" must be answered and understood or else the same surrounding might prove eventually inconvenient and at that time it would have already become a path of no return to the earlier or anything better*]. It is this part which is subtler and requires eventually a self-regulation of movements along with the phenomenal exposure to the environment. It essentially implies higher cognitive levels, and growth of civilization

concomitant with the material benefits, which accrue from industrial growth.

If it so happens that, just for the reasons of better exposures, the surrounding is rendered abound with imported equipment, the subtler components of development (*which are what that make the human civilizations 'possible'*) would not be enhanced and the individuals become more constrained with the occurrences from objective sources without having the necessity to comprehend natural phenomena. What is traditionally a fear of nature, becomes customarily convenient, and eventually regimented ways of living. A balanced approach is what should be prescribed or made available as an avenue for progress of growth and development. Hence where traditional practices, though are prevailing because of its only known limited advantages, must be well scrutinized and people must be made to appreciate more of phenomena instead of simply preserving objects for the upholding of the traditional experiences. Simply bringing in peripheral industrial outputs extraneously and getting the inhabitants used to the only "black-box" approaches would not make the individuals any better but collectively there would be a euphoria prevailing because things appear familiar to what appearances are common place in developed environments.

Concluding Remarks

Current managerial and decision-making tools use extensive varieties of standardized questionnaires to gather data (information) for analysis and can provide necessary monitoring tools. These FORMS and TEMPLATES become conveniently transferable among a certain strata and more or less stand-up on a global footing. But in cases of severe constraints, the same tools must be applied with drastic modifications in the FORMS and TEMPLATES to be useful locally.

Hence to exercise choice on the kind of Aiding strategy, and identifying and upholding the necessary balances

required to sustain the developmental activities, is all what determines the contents in the policy drafts and extents in the reach of the plan proposals.

This requires the annually periodic deliberations reinforcing the findings in successive deliberations and an effort to find methods of how to incorporate the outcomes of the deliberation at the implementation stages. Both directed movements and the phenomenal inferences must form part of the developmental strategy.

Thus individuals' independence to acquire as much phenomenal exposure as one can encounter must be duly transforming into regulated movements as a consequence of the comprehension possible on the occurring events. Even without determining any specific welfare targets, such a conscious way of living only can bring about the required improvement in individuals and development of the environment.

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