



# **URBAN GOVERNANCE IN NORTH-EASTERN REGION**

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**U.B. SINGH**

Urban local government in the country has gradually been gaining importance with the increase in urban population since 1961. However, it could attract due attention only after the National Commission on Urbanization studied all aspects of urban management. In this context, the Indian Parliament passed a bill in 1992, which became the 74th Amendment to the Constitution. It is a landmark in the history of urban governance in the country. The Act not only constitutionalises the urban local government but also provides it with stability in addition to facilitating democratic decentralization and revitalizing these grassroot institutions.

A lot of work has been done in the field of rural management but no attempt has been made so far to present a comparative picture of urban governance in the scheduled areas which have been given a special status in the Indian Constitution. The proposed volume attempts to trace the historical development of urban local government in the North Eastern States, besides discussing the trends of urbanization and urban problems in the area. The book earnestly studies various provisions of Municipal Laws enacted and practised in the post-74th Constitution Amendment Act era. A study of law, governing autonomous areas has also been made.

The book must be of immense help to the students of public administration

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and researchers and teachers engaged in municipal administration and also to administrators and policy makers. This would also help in understanding the North-East Region, its problems regarding urban affairs and practices therein.

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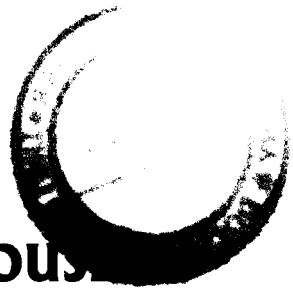
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(Legal Issues and Practices)

**U.B. SINGH**



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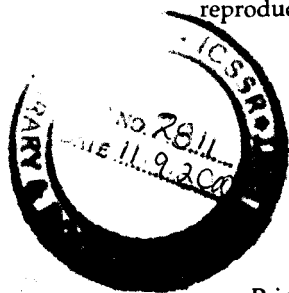
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# Contents

<i>Preface</i>	9
<b>One : INTRODUCTION</b>	11
Statutory Provisions; District and Regional Councils; URBAN SCENARIO: Arunachal Pradesh; Assam; Manipur; Meghalaya; Mizoram; Nagaland; Tripura; Sikkim	
<b>Two : ASSAM</b>	33
Nagar Panchayat or Town Committee; Constitution of Municipal Board; Reservation; Eligibility for Election; Resignation And Removal of Commis- sioners; Disqualification of Commissioners; Chair- man and Vice-Chairman; Resignation and Removal of Chairman and Vice-Chairman; Powers of Chairman; Duties of Vice-Chairman; Allowances; Election petition; Committees; Joint Committee; Conduct of Business; Quorum; Establishment; Budget; Contracts; Municipal Fund; Municipal Property; Municipal Taxation; Annual Value; Recovery of Taxes; Powers and Functions; Control in Respect of Public Health; Rules and Bye-Laws; Delegation of Powers; Appeals; Control; Dissolution. Municipal Corporation: Constitution; Reservation; Disqualifications for Councillorship; Resignation by Councillors; Powers of Councillors; Mayor and Deputy Mayor; Election Petition; Standing Committee; Joint Committee; Special Committee;	

Transaction of Business; Commissioner; Municipal Officers; Municipal Secretary; Corporation Establishment; Municipal Service Commission; Powers of the Corporation; Discretionary Functions; Contracts; Municipal Property; Municipal Fund; Budget; Borrowing; Sinking Fund; Accounts and Audit; Taxation; Imposition of Tax; Property taxes; Water Tax; Scavenging Tax; Rateable Value; Assessment; Valuers; Duty on Transfer of Property; Recovery of Taxes; Remission and Refund. Appeals; Rules, Regulations and Bye-Laws; Control; Wards Committees: State Finance Commission; State Election Commission.

*Three* : **MANIPUR**

87

Constitution of Municipalities; Composition of Municipalities; Reservation; Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson; Resignation; Removal of Councillors; No-Confidence Motion against Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson; Removal of Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson; Powers and Functions of the Chairperson; Functions of Vice-Chairperson; Powers of Municipality; Functions of the Municipality; Obligatory Functions; Discretionary Functions; Special Duties; Executive Officer; Other Officers and Staff; Conduct of Business; Committees; Municipal Taxation; Imposition of Tax; Assessment and Valuation; Municipal Property; Contract; Municipal Fund; Budget; Accounts and Audit; Rules and Bye-Laws; Control; Dissolution; Wards Committees; District Planning Committee.

*Four* : **MEGHALAYA**

105

United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District: Composition; Election; Qualification of Members; Chairman and Vice-Chairman; Election Petition; Conduct of Business; Establishment; Duties and Functions; Power for Sanitary Purposes; Water Supply; Sources

of Revenue; Tax Realization; Town Committee Fund; Budget, Accounts and Audit; Rules; Control; Appeal. Jaintia Hills Autonomous District: Constitution; Composition; Duration; Election; Qualifications of Members; Election Petition; Chairman and Vice-Chairman; Duties and Functions; Water Supply; Powers for Sanitary Purposes; Power of Taxation; Staff; Conduct of Business; Town Committee Fund; Budget; Accounts and Audit; Rules; Control; Dissolution; Appeal. Garo Hills Autonomous District: Composition; Duration; Elections; Qualifications of Members; Chairman and Vice-Chairman; Election Petition; Conduct of Business; Taxation; Assessment and Valuation; Power for Sanitary Purposes; Water Supply; Town Fund; Accounts; Audit; Budget; Staff; Control; Dissolution; Appeal.

**Five : SIKKIM**

137

Constitution of Municipality; Composition; Reservation; Disqualification for Membership; Chairman and Vice-Chairman; Resignation; Removal; Transaction of Business; Executive Officer; Municipal Establishment; Municipal Property; Contracts; Municipal Fund; Budget; Accounts and Audit; Municipal Taxation; Annual Value; Recovery of Claims; Functions; Fire Brigade; Election Petition; Rules and Bye-Laws; Control; Dissolution; District Planning Committee; State Finance Commission; State Election Commission

**Six : TRIPURA**

151

Notification of Municipal Areas; Constitution of Municipalities; Composition of Municipalities; Reservation of Seats; Standing Committees; Special Committee; Joint Committee; Municipal Authorities; Nagar Panchayat; Nagar Committee; Chairperson; Vice-Chairperson; Municipal Council; Chairperson-in-Council; Chairperson; Vice-Chairperson; Municipal Corporation; Mayor-in-

Council; Mayor; Deputy Mayor; Municipal Accounts Committee; Disqualification of Members; Election Petition; Transactions of Business; Municipal Officers; Municipal Fund; Municipal Property; Powers, Functions and Duties; Taxes; Property Tax; Recovery of Claims; Imposition of Taxes; Budget; Accounts and Audit; Municipal Police; Rules and Regulations; Dissolution. Tribal Areas District Council: Composition; Election; Chairman and Vice-Chairman; Allowances; Executive Committee; Powers and Functions; Chief Executive Officer; Taxes; Administration of Justice; District Council Fund; Property; Budget; Conduct of Business; Officers and Staff; Rules, Bye-Laws and Regulations; Control; Dissolution.

*Appendices*

175

Composition of Municipalities; Members and Chairpersons; Constitution of Municipalities; Reservation; Number of Functions; Functions of Schedule XII; Number of taxes; District Planning Committee; Wards Committee; State Finance Commission; State Election Commission; Particulars of Taxes.

*Index*

183

## Introduction

The North-Eastern region of India comprises of the seven states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura. The complex physiographic conditions proved restrictive to a large-scale urban development in the region in the past. Often described as a microcosm of the Indian subcontinent, the North-East is represented by all three physiographic divisions of the country, though on much smaller scale, the northern mountains, the central plain and the southern plateau.

As per the census of 1991, the region has a total geographical area of 2.55 lakh sq. kms. constituting about 7.7 per cent of the total area of the country and population of 31.5 million which forms 6.89 per cent of the country's total population. The area of the region was one-fifteenth of the country and the population accounted for 4 per cent of the whole in 1971. At the beginning of the present century, the population of this was 4.27 million. It increased to 10.26 million in 1951 and 31.55 in 1991. Thus, during the past four decades (1951-91) the population went up by more than three times. Among the seven states of the region, Assam's share is the largest being 71 per cent, followed by Tripura with 8.70 per cent, according to the 1991 census.

North-East India has a high concentration of tribal population. Excepting the valley, the region is inhabited by numerous tribes. Each tribe is an atomized group and is characterized by a nearly total absence of secondary intercourse with others. It proves that the region has remained relatively isolated from the influence of the cultures and civilizations of the Indian subcontinent for

relatively longer periods of time in its history. The only common bond between various tribes of the region is administrative in effect. For purposes of development in these states, a joint action in matters of common interest was felt and the establishment of the North-Eastern Council was an articulation of this urge towards an integrated development of the region.

The sparseness of the population may be explained by the geography of this region. The countryside is mountain locked and the terrain is uneven. It was not until 1826 that this region could be said to have been firmly integrated, politically and administratively, with the rest of India. Yet the British interest in the region remained more anthropologic than administrative, even more academic than integrative till the end of their rule and the region was a latecomer into the national mainstream. As a consequence, the region has failed to generate the necessary objective conditions for the emergence of urban centres in the region.

The absence of large economic activities has cast its shadow on the trend of urbanization as well. The degree of urbanization in all the states was much below the national average by the year 1961. Meghalaya was the only state with a substantial proportion of its population, around 15.3 per cent, living in towns. The people in Arunachal Pradesh were entirely rural in their composition. However, Manipur had a semblance of urbanization, where about 8.7 per cent of the population enjoyed urban living. The level of urbanization in Tripura was only marginally higher than that of Assam. In Mizoram, only one out of twenty persons opted for urban living during 1961.

The level of urbanization picked up a higher pitch during 1981-1991 decade. The degree of urbanization showed an impressive upswing in Manipur too, though on a less dramatic note than that seen in Mizoram. Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh too are experiencing greater urbanization in recent years. It is significant, though, that the level of urbanization remains stagnant in Meghalaya, Assam and Tripura, now although these three States recorded a relatively higher level of urbanization by the year 1961. ✓

Interestingly, the higher elevations of the region are experiencing unprecedented urban growth and are fast outpacing the level of urbanization found in the states dominated by plains

and plateaus. Despite having a large proportion of plain areas, the degree of urbanization in Assam remains incredibly low and its growth has been negligible during the past three decades. Likewise, in the case of Meghalaya, which has the largest share of urban population in the entire North-East, now occupies much lower rank and the urban growth was only marginal in the past three decades (Nayak). Urban development in the Nagaland hill tracts is confined to the low altitude foot-hill zone. The process of urbanization in the North-East seems to have been restricted to the administrative centres and the valleys in the hilly areas. In the Brahmaputra valley, the process of urbanization is yet to take off in areas with a large concentration of tribal population.

The structure of urbanization as revealed from the pattern of distribution of towns and population in different size-classes is inconsistent. The 1991 census recognized as many as eight cities in the region, supporting a population over a lakh. That a very large proportion of the urban population lives in large townships is clear from the fact that nearly two out of five urbanites (38.29 per cent) are claimed by these towns. The Class-II towns are, however, few in comparison and account for a little over 9 per cent of the urbanites in the North-East. Towns having population of 20,000 to 50,000 are far more numerous and support close to a quarter, around 23.2 per cent, of the urban population. Predictably, nearly all the large towns are located in the valleys and in the Meghalaya plateau. Assam has four Class-I towns while Tripura, Meghalaya, Manipur and Mizoram claim one each. Barring three of these towns in Assam, the remaining are the state capitals (Nayak).

Significantly, the annual exponential population growth rate in the region has always been found to be much higher (2.24 per cent per annum during 1901-1991) than the national average (1.18 per cent per annum). The total growth rate in the region during 1901-91 has been 638 per cent as against the country's average of 255 per cent. Among the states of the region, Tripura exhibits the highest growth rate of 1491 per cent, followed by Nagaland with 1091 per cent and Mizoram (737 per cent). Meghalaya records a relatively lower percentage growth (421 per cent) in the region, but still is higher by one and a half times than the national growth

percentage. In the case of Manipur and Assam, the growth percentage is more than two times the national average while in Arunachal Pradesh, the growth has been more than one and a half times during 1961–1991 than that of the country's average.

The topography and the associated subsistent or quasi-subsistence nature of the economy have been the most severe constraints on urban development in the hills and the plateaus. The vast length of the valley in relation to the breadth hardly offers good sites. Despite the constraints imposed by the physical environment and the socio-economic structures, the region, of late, is experiencing large proliferation in the number of towns and increase in the proportion of people living in urban areas. These changes are, however, not accompanied by any significant and perceptible shift in the economic organization. Moreover, the level and growth of urbanization reveals striking regional variations with its concomitant implications for the region's overall growth and development (Nayak). While literacy percentages compare well with the all-India averages, the growth of urbanization is quite poor uniformly in all the states and territories when projected against an all-India perspective. The region is marked by a far higher growth rate of population during this century as compared to the other parts of the country. While the growth rate varies from state to state, in some cases, for example, Nagaland, it is more than double the growth rate of the country. This alarmingly high growth rate of population has a great impact not only on its geographic character but also on its socio-economic structure.

The economy of the North-East, when exposed to the modernization process, can be treated as rudimentary in form and self-sufficient in character. But tribal economy could be described as even more primitive than the economy of the people of the plains. For instance, even at the low level of economic development, an economy can be self-sufficient, it is only indicative that wants and needs were less than the supply potential of the economy. The limited wants of clothing, housing and food, could be met by the families on their own. Recently, the Government of India declared a package of economic development for the region, although its impact is long awaited.

**Statutory Provisions**

The heterogeneity in population and complexity in topography, unevenness in urban growth, tribal dominance and primitive culture have kept the region in an isolated state of economy and development, distanced from the national mainstream. The situation, therefore, led to the special status to the region in the Constitution of the country. A major part of the region is characterized as Scheduled Areas and special provisions have been incorporated for its administration.

The Constitution provides that the provisions of the Fifth Schedule apply to the administration and control of the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in states other than the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram. The administration of tribes of these states is undertaken under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule.

Under the provisions of the Fifth Schedule, the executive power of a state extends to the scheduled areas therein. In the state having Scheduled Tribes, a Tribes Advisory Council is established which consists of not more than twenty members, of whom about three-fourths are the representatives of Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assembly of the state. The Council advises on matters pertaining to the welfare and advancement of the Scheduled Tribes as may be referred by the Governor. The Governor may direct that any particular Act of Parliament or of the State Legislature cannot apply to the Scheduled Area or can be applied with exception and modifications. The Governor may also make regulations for the peace and good governance of any Scheduled Area.

As per the provisions of the Sixth Schedule, the tribal areas in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram are an autonomous district. If there are different Scheduled Tribes in an autonomous district, the Governor may divide the area inhabited by them into autonomous regions.

**District and Regional Councils**

As per the Constitution, every autonomous district has a District Council. It consists of not more than thirty members, of whom not more than four persons are nominated by the Governor

and the remainders are elected on the basis of adult franchise. A separate Regional Council is constituted for each autonomous region in the district. Both these Councils are bodies corporate and have perpetual succession and a common seal and can sue and be sued against. The administration of the area vests in these councils.

The elected members of the District Council hold office for a term of five years from the date appointed for the first meeting of the council. The term may be extended by the Governor for a period not exceeding one year at a time and in any case where a proclamation of Emergency is in operation, not beyond a period of six months after the proclamation has ceased to operate.

These councils have power to make laws with respect to the allotment, occupation or use of land other than which is a reserved forest for the purposes of agriculture or grazing or for residential or any other purpose likely to promote the interests of the inhabitants of any village or town; the management of any forest not being reserved forest; the use of any canal or water course for the purpose of agriculture; the regulation of the practice of 'jhum' or other forms of shifting cultivation; the establishment of village or town committees or councils and their powers; any other matter relating to village and town administration including police, public health and sanitation; the appointment or succession of chief or headman; the inheritance of property; marriage and divorce and social customs. All the laws are submitted to the Governor and until assented to by him, have no effect. The councils may constitute village councils or courts for the trial of suits and cases between the parties all of whom belong to Scheduled Tribes. The councils exercise the powers of a court of appeal in respect of all suits and cases triable by village council or court. The District Council may establish, construct or manage primary schools, dispensaries, markets, cattle ponds, ferries, roads, road transport and waterways in the district. These councils have the powers to assess and collect revenue in respect of such lands in accordance with the principles being followed by the government of the state in assessing lands for the purpose of land revenue in the State generally. They have power to levy and collect taxes on lands and buildings, and tolls on persons residing therein. The District Council has power to levy and collect all or any of the taxes on professions, trades, callings and employments, on animals,

vehicles and boats, on the entry of goods into a market for sale and tolls on passengers and goods carried in ferries as also taxes for the maintenance of schools, dispensaries or roads.

After more than fifty years of Independence it is of immense interest to study whether the North-Eastern region, experiencing steady urban growth, is diversifying. The recent Constitutional Amendments have created a new era for local administration. Consequently, the Government of India constituted a Committee of the Members of Parliament (1995) to study and suggest whether the new enactments can be made applicable to the Scheduled Areas as well.

The committee suggested that "the urban centres in the Scheduled Areas may be grouped in three categories, viz.

- (i) transitional areas comprising small trading/administrative social service centres with mixed urban and rural or *quasba* character. These centres could be designated as Nagar Panchayats;
- (ii) the larger urban centres functioning as administrative and trading centres with higher level of social services. These centres may be known as Municipal Council. Some of the municipal councils in course of time may graduate to the status of municipal corporations; and
- (iii) industrial and mining townships which have a special character with potential for separate category".

The committee made further recommendations that "Nagar Panchayats should perform all functions of the Gram Panchayats. They should have a standing committee for rural development to cater to the conventional functions of the Gram Panchayats. With regards to the composition of Nagar Panchayats, not less than a half of the members should be from the Scheduled Tribes. The Intermediate Panchayat should have an Urban Affairs Committee for guiding the affairs of Nagar Panchayats within its jurisdiction in accordance with the objectives set for them in law. The Autonomous District Council should also have an Urban Affairs Committee which may guide the functioning of the Urban Affairs Committees of the Intermediate Panchayats and help the Nagar Panchayats develop in harmony with the tribal economy and their development."

In the case of each industrial and mining township, the committee suggested that "the zone of its influence should be identified and a comprehensive plan prepared for its development by a special body comprising of representatives of the municipality, the industrial and mining projects, the local administration and the Panchayats under which the area falls. This task should be completed within a period of two years".

In view of the recommendations of the Committee of the Members of Parliament and also in the light of the urban growth and growing demand of urban infrastructure and services and more so, consequent upon the Constitutional provisions, it becomes necessary to make a study of the region: its demographic characteristics, cultural heritage, special constitutional status, pattern of urbanization, local administration, municipal laws, etc., before taking any concrete decision in respect of municipal administration.

## URBAN SCENARIO

### **Arunachal Pradesh**

Arunachal Pradesh or the land of the rising sun, was earlier known as the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA), was administered by the Ministry of External Affairs with the Governor of Assam acting as an agent of the President. It evolved as a Union Territory on 20 January, 1972. Ultimately, Arunachal Pradesh attained statehood on 20 February, 1987 (Mitra). The history of Arunachal Pradesh can be traced to only when Ahom kings began to rule Assam in the 16th century. The British took possession of Assam in 1838 and brought Arunachal Pradesh also under their administrative control. Post Independence, it was a part of North-East Frontier Agency, and later, made a Union Territory.

Area wise it is the largest state in the North-East region. It consists of the submontane and mountainous ranges sloping to the plains of Assam. The mountainous terrain of the state is composed of a variety of tribes. Barring only 12 towns, the entire area is rural where an overwhelming 88 per cent of its population lives. Agriculture is the mainstay of the people. About four per cent of the total geographical area was brought under agriculture till August 1987, while forests covered about 62 per cent of the

area. Endowed with abundant forest, mineral and hydel power resources, Arunachal Pradesh has a high industrial potential.

The first full-fledged census operation in Arunachal Pradesh was held in 1961. During the census of 1961, the whole of the state was declared as rural. It was from 1971 that the process of urbanization took shape in this state. In 1971 the State had 3.70 per cent of total population in urban areas. It rose to 6.56 per cent in 1981 and further to 12.21 per cent in 1991. The rapid growth of urban population in Arunachal Pradesh is attributable to the establishment and expansion of administrative centres in the state (Bhattacharjee). The decadal rate of urban growth of Arunachal Pradesh was 139.63 per cent during 1971-81 and 152.98 per cent during 1981-91. The number of towns in Arunachal Pradesh was four in 1971 and six in 1981, which rose to ten in 1981-91. An important feature of the growth of urban settlements in Arunachal Pradesh is the dominant role of intra-state migration rather than inter-state rural-urban migration. In 1971 the state had only five districts, and the number rose to nine in 1981 and 11 in 1991.

The basic constraint of the development of urban centres in Arunachal Pradesh is the communication bottlenecks. In this state, the approach roads to all the towns are routed through the roads of Assam. There is no link road connecting the towns of Arunachal Pradesh within the state which is detrimental for the marketing of the produce of the state. Consequently, the produce is localised and there is no scope for the growth of wholesale market in the state. Besides, the geographical condition of the state is also an impediment to the growth of towns.

Arunachal Pradesh is the largest tribal state in the region but has no area under the Fifth or Sixth Schedules. The only special provision for the state under Art 371H concerns the special responsibility and powers of the governor with respect to law and order in the state and the issue of self-governance and extension of other laws in the state. Accordingly, Arunachal Pradesh does not find a mention in Art 243ZC. Therefore Part IX-A of the Constitution automatically covers Arunachal Pradesh without any modification. Despite having more than one-tenth urban population, the State has no urban local government as enunciated in the Constitution and no municipal laws have been enacted.

**Assam**

The political map of Assam has undergone several changes during the past decades. As a result, Assam, today is a reduced region. It is remarkable that the people of Assam have reconciled to the Union Government's bid to bring about integration in this region by fragmenting the State into separate units.

Scholars are not in consensus on the origin of the name 'Assam'. Some opine that Assam is called so because of its uneven terrain. They rely on a similar sounding Sanskrit word 'Asoma' meaning peerless. The land whose bewitching picture is conjured up by the name 'Asam' is in fact peerless, judging by the exquisite natural beauty, cultural richness and human wealth endowed to it. Geographically, Assam is now a shadow of its former self. It has been reduced to one-third of its original size in the past few decades. In 1947, Assam had an area of over 2 lakh sq. kms. excluding the then North East Frontier Agency, and current Arunachal Pradesh. Today, the current area of Assam is only 78,523 sq. kms. comprising 23 districts. The state covers about 2.39 per cent of the total area of the country.

During the epic period Assam was known as 'Pragjyothis' and later as 'Kamrupa'. Guwahati, the pulsating capital of Assam, is an ancient town whose history dates back to the Puranic days.

Assam is situated in the north-east corner of India and is bounded by Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh on the north, Nagaland and Manipur on the east, Meghalaya and Mizoram on the south and Bangladesh, Tripura and West Bengal on the west. Only a narrow strip of submountane region of the Himalayas connects Assam with the Indian mainland. Assam is dominated by the Brahmaputra river whose total length from the source to the sea is 29 kms. and has 120 tributaries. Rainfall in Assam is one of the highest in the world.

As it is today, Assam may be divided into two important physical regions — the Barak Valley, and the Brahmaputra Valley. Agriculture covers slightly less than two-thirds of labour force. Of agriculture-based industries, tea occupies an important place. A good share of the economy of the State has increasingly been contributed by the tea industry. Assam has an exclusive range of colourful festivals. There are also a larger number of places of tourist interest.

Assam is mainly based on an agricultural economy. Agriculture plays a vital role in the development of social strata, but is alone not the only contributory factor to the development of townships. The most important factor is industrialization of the state and Assam is still industrially backward. The tea industry is the only big industry that falls under agricultural sector. Second, the development of trade, commerce, liberal professions and opportunities of higher education are some other factors which attract the rural people to settle in the urban areas. However, most of the urban centres in Assam are so contiguous to the villages, that it becomes difficult to demarcate the actual town area from that of the village area. There is no denying the fact that a significant percentage of urban population in Assam comprises outsiders from various states of India. The indigenous people are less willing to migrate to the urban centres unless they are assured of good employment opportunities and other business avocations to earn their livelihood (Bhuyan).

Assam is the largest state in the region. About eleven per cent of its population inhabits in 91 urban centres. The state has been experiencing higher decennial growth. The four class one towns account for more than one-third of its total urban population. Assam has all the three types of urban local bodies. The Assam Municipal Act, 1956 regulates the functioning of Nagar Panchayat or Town Committee and Municipal Board, while the lone Municipal Corporation of Guwahati has its separate Act.

### **Manipur**

Manipur, which is characterized by its economic backwardness is a small state having a total geographical area of only 22,327 sq. kms. of which 90 per cent is covered by hills. The physiographical feature of the state, therefore, presents notably two distinct areas, viz., the valley and the hilly area, which are conspicuous by their absence of uniform development strategies for the past many decades whereby the valley has been placed in a favourable position with higher concentration of population of about 70 per cent of the total population of the state (Singh).

In terms of the annual rate of growth of urbanization in Manipur, especially during 1951-81, it registered an increase of

37.22 per cent during the decade 1951-61. This declined to 7.65 per cent during 1961-71 as against 10.25 per cent during 1971-81. Therefore it was with the increase in the level of urbanization, measured in terms of the percentage of urban population to the total population of the state over the year 1951-81, that the population living in urban area has multiplied about 134 times during the same period. An important characteristic is that about 87.97 per cent of the total urban population of the state is still in the valley area. In other words, the process of urbanization in Manipur is, by and large, a process of urban agglomeration mainly in the valley area unaccompanied by industrialization and expansion of necessary urban amenities leaving the hill area still predominantly rural (Singh).

The hill areas of Manipur for which District Councils exist, have been excluded from the purview of Part IX; however, there is no such exemption vide Art 243ZC in relation to municipalities. Moreover, confusion is likely to be created when Part IX has been extended to the valley and Part IXA to the entire state with the hill areas left without any guidelines.

The State has more than one fourth of its population inhabiting in 30 towns, comprising lone class-one town accounting about 40 per cent of total urban population. The state has the Manipur Municipalities Act, 1994 providing administrative provisions for all the three types of urban local bodies, although there is no municipal corporation in the State.

### **Meghalaya**

Meghalaya, literally meaning the abode of clouds, is essentially a hilly state. Meghalaya was created as an autonomous State within the State of Assam on 2nd April, 1970. The full-fledged State of Meghalaya came into existence on 21st January, 1972. It is bounded on the north and east by Assam and on the south and west by Bangladesh. Meghalaya is divided into seven administrative districts. These are predominantly inhabited by the Khasis, the Jaintias and the Garos. These tribal communities are the descendants of very ancient people having distinctive traits and ethnic origin.

Meghalaya is basically an agricultural state. Eightythree per

cent of the total population depends primarily on agriculture for livelihood. The topography, physical features and land conditions as prevailing in the State provide extremely limited scope for extensive cultivation or to bring additional area under net cultivation.

The total forest area in the State is 9357 sq. kms., with only 993 sq. km. under the control of the State Government and the rest under the District Councils and private managements. Meghalaya is also rich in wildlife. The state has two national parks and two wildlife sanctuaries.

The state has seven towns (1991) containing about 19 per cent of its population. Surprisingly, it has been witnessing the lowest decadal urban growth in the region. Though the level of urbanization in Meghalaya is low, the growth rate of urban population in the state had been very high which has been putting pressure on the existing civic amenities.

Meghalaya has a unique system of urban administration. It consists of many other components concerning the District Council and the traditional leadership. The District Council acts as the executive and legislative authority in respect of specific matters mentioned in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. The Council mainly has powers with regard to: (i) the allotment, occupation, use or the setting a part of land for the purpose of agriculture or grazing or for residential or other non-agricultural purposes or for any other purpose likely to promote the interests of the inhabitants of any village or town; (ii) the management of any forest not being reserved forest; (iii) the use of any canal or water course for the purpose of agriculture; (iv) the regulation of the practice of jhum or other forms of shifting cultivation; (v) the establishment of village or town committees or councils and their powers; (vi) any other matter relating to village and town police and public health and sanitation; (vii) the inheritance of property; (viii) marriage and divorce; (ix) social customs; and (x) the appointment or succession of chiefs or headmen.

The District Council appoints the 'Syiem', the 'Dollois' or the 'Nokmas'. These officers are normally elected by an electoral college consisting of the entire population within the area. Both the District Council and traditional leaders take up schemes within their

respective jurisdiction relating to creation and management of civic infrastructure. There are several departments of the government responsible for matters relating to urban development in the state.

Urban local administration in the State is organized by municipal boards at Shillong and Tura, a cantonment board and four town committees. The government has decided to create a municipal corporation for Shillong master plan area and a town committee at each of the subdivisional headquarters.

Presently, local bodies in the state can be created in urban areas both under the Assam Municipal Act, 1956 adopted by the Meghalaya and the relevant Act of the concerned District Councils. The Municipal Boards of Shillong and Tura have been constituted under the Assam Municipal Act, 1956, while the town committee at Jawai, Nongstoin, Williamnagar and Baghmara have been created by the District Councils. In some cases, the area of the town committee is so big that it is physically impossible for the town committee to look after civic amenities. The main sources of revenue are taxes on house, latrine, water supply, animals, market fee, service charges on government buildings, taxes on entry of vehicles, car parking, rent on land and houses, stall and shops, etc. The municipal boards are handicapped by a weak resource base and inadequate technical manpower. Both the Boards are being managed by officers for a long time (Agnihotri).

The entire territory of Meghalaya is divided into three Autonomous District Councils. The responsibility for extending both Part IX and Part IX-A rests only with the Parliament.

### **Mizoram**

Mizoram was one of the districts of Assam till 1972 when it became Union Territory. After being annexed by the British in 1891, a part remained under Assam while the southern half remained under Bengal. Both these parts were amalgamated into one district under the Chief Commissioner of Assam. With the implementation of the North Eastern Reorganization Act, 1972, Mizoram became a Union Territory. As a sequel to the signing of the historic memorandum of settlement between the Government of India and the Mizo National Front in 1986, it was granted

statehood on 20th February, 1987. It occupies an area of great strategic importance in north-eastern portion of India. Mizoram has great natural beauty and an endless variety of landscape and is rich in fauna and flora. Most of the Mizos are Christians. Mizo language has no script of its own. The missionaries introduced the Roman script for Mizo language and for formal education. About 60 per cent of the people of Mizoram are engaged in agricultural pursuits. The entire state of Mizoram is a Notified Backward Area and is categorized under No Industry District. However, concerted efforts are being made to accelerate the growth of industries in the State.

The proportion of urban population in Mizoram has increased considerably from 3.54 per cent in 1951 to 5.36 per cent in 1961, 11.14 per cent in 1971, 24.67 per cent in 1981 and 46.20 per cent in 1991. The decadal growth of urban population has been recorded as 105.14 per cent during 1951-61, 164.85 per cent during 1961-71, 222.61 per cent during 1971-81 and 160.27 per cent during 1981-91. The fall in the recent decennial growth rate of urban population as compared to the increasing trend in the previous three decades is mainly due to sharp fall in the growth rate of the two larger towns of Mizoram, namely Aizawal and Lunglei which together constitute about 59 per cent of the total population of urban Mizoram (Agarwal).

The state enjoys the distinction of having the highest percentage (46.20) of urban population in the region. Such a huge population inhabits in 22 towns consisting of the lone class-one town covering about half (48.7 per cent) of the total urban population of the State.

In Mizoram, there are only three small Autonomous District Councils under the Sixth Schedule. The bulk of Mizo territory is not covered by it. Moreover, while the entire Mizoram and the Sixth Schedule area therein enjoy double exemption under Art 243M, only the Sixth Schedule area is exempt under Art 243ZC.

### **Nagaland**

The Nagas are basically tribal people and every tribe has its own effective system of self-governance from time immemorial. In the 19th century the British appeared on the scene and ultimately

the area was brought under British administration. After Independence, the territory was made a Centrally administered area in 1957, administered by the Governor of Assam. It was known as the Naga Hills of Tuensang Area. This failed to quell popular aspirations and unrest began. Hence, in 1961 this was renamed as Nagaland and given the status of State in the Indian Union which was formally inaugurated on 1st December, 1963. Agriculture is the main occupation of 90 per cent of the population in the State. The process of industrialization in the State is in its infancy but the need to have more industries have been well recognized. The growth of urbanization in Nagaland has been quite fast and it is even faster than in some other states of North-East India. Kohima is the capital of the State and been growing fast on account of expanding administrative and political activities. Dimapur, on the other hand, has been expanding fast due to the development of business, industries and civic and educational facilities. Each of these towns is unique in respect of its growth pattern, but both are cosmopolitan in character. These urban areas have emerged as ethnically integrated cultural centres. People who have come from outside are living together with the indigenous urbanites by integrating themselves with the latter socially, culturally and economically (Saikia).

The State has 17.28 per cent of its population centred in nine towns, comprising two class-two towns inhabiting more than half of its urban population. The decadal growth has been remarkable. No part of Nagaland is scheduled. However, there is a special provision for the state in the Constitution (Art 371A). The State has been exempted from coverage by Part IX but not from Part IXA.

### **Tripura**

Tripura is the second smallest state in the country. It is strategically situated between the river valleys of Myanmar and Bangladesh. It is surrounded by Bangladesh on all sides, except for a narrow sector in the north-east, where it borders on Assam and Mizoram. Tripura was a Hindu state of great antiquity having been ruled by the Maharajas for 1300 years before its accession to the Indian Union.

The History of Tripura dates back to the *Mahabharata*, the *Puranas* and pillar inscriptions of emperor Ashoka. There are no historical records available of Tripura except *Rajmala* which is the chronicle of the Kings of the ruling family of Tripura. Nineteenth century marked the beginning of the modern era in Tripura when king Maharaja Berchandra Manikya Bahadur modelled his administrative set-up on the British Indian pattern and brought in various reforms. His successors ruled Tripura till 15th October, 1945, when it was annexed to the Indian Union. After Independence, it became a part 'C' State and with the reorganization of states in 1956, it became a Centrally administered territory. On 21st January, 1972, this territory attained the status of a full-fledged state.

The state covers an area of 10,491 sq. kms., about 0.32 per cent of the total area of the country is divided in three districts. Tea production is the major industry in Tripura. The sericulture industry in the state is also developing fast.

About 15 per cent of the State's population lives in 18 towns comprising lone class-one town having more than one-third (37.6 per cent) of its urban people inhabiting therein.

Urbanization in Tripura has taken place with Agartala as the nucleus. Agartala's overwhelming preeminence as an urban centre in Tripura originates from the fact that it has been the capital of Tripura and urbanization of this industrially backward state has been caused mainly by the expansion of the administrative infrastructure (Bhattacharjee). As the flow of migrants from Bangladesh slowed down after 1961, the decadal rate of growth of urban population fell from 141.80 per cent during 1951-61 to 57.63 per cent during 1961-71. But even during 1961-71, the rate of growth of total population of Tripura and consequently, proportion of urban population went on increasing although at a slow pace. During 1961-71, increase in urban population was mainly the result of the increase in the density of population of the existing towns as no new towns came to be recognized and the areas of the towns also did not register any notable increase. The rate of urban growth registered a further fall in the decade of 1971-81. This happened in spite of the fact that four new towns, viz., Amarpur, Sonamura, Kamalpur and Sabroom came into existence during

this period. It is also found that during 1971-81, the rate of growth of urban population of Tripura only marginally exceeded that of total population of the state and consequently there was very little change in the proportion of urban population during this decade. The 1981-91 decade witnessed a very appreciable (87.75 per cent) increase in urban population of Tripura and subsequently, the proportion of urban population which was in the neighbourhood of 10 per cent in 1971 and 1981, reached 15.26 per cent in 1991.

In Tripura, although the tribal area is neither comparatively small nor compact, has been brought under the ambit of the Sixth Schedule and an Autonomous District Council has been constituted. It is for Parliament to make a law for extending the provisions of Parts IX and IXA to the Scheduled Areas in Tripura.

There is the Tripura Municipal Act, 1994 to administer all the three types of urban local bodies, i.e., nagar panchayat, municipal council and municipal corporation (the last mentioned is not in existence).

## **Sikkim**

The early history of Sikkim starts in the 13th century with the signing of a brotherhood treaty between the Lipcha chieftain and the Tibetan prince. The Namgyal dynasty began rule since 1642. Sikkim formally became an integral part of the Indian Union in 1975.

Sikkim lies in the heart of the towering Himalayas. It is bounded by Nepal in the west, Bhutan in the south-east, Tibet in the north and north-east and West Bengal in the south. Most of the area of the state consists of ravines and green valleys. The third highest mountain peak in the world, Kanchenjunga is situated on Sikkim's western border. Its dense forests are ideal habitat for wildlife.

State's economy is basically agrarian. It has the largest area under cultivation and highest production of cardamom in India. The state has been declared as industrially backward. Road length in the state is 2383 kms. Two closest railway stations are Siliguri (114 kms) and New Jalpaiguri (125 kms.). There is no airport in Sikkim.

The state's population is comprised of the three principal ethnic communities of the Bhutias, the Lepchas and Nepalese.

Sikkim witnessed a tremendous increase in its urban population during the 1971-81 decade. The following decade (1981-91), however, recorded a decline in urban population. There was only one town in Sikkim, in 1951. In 1961, the number rose to 6 and to 8, in 1981. Surprisingly, there are no class one and two towns in Sikkim. The majority of towns fall under class three category. The urban local bodies are in the process of being constituted. The State has enacted the Sikkim Municipalities Act, 1995 for its urban governance.

**ANNEXURE 1**  
**PERCENTAGE OF URBAN POPULATION AND DECADAL GROWTH**  
**(1971-81) IN THE NORTH-EASTERN STATES**

	<i>%age of Urban Population</i>			<i>Decadal Growth</i>	
	1971	1981	1991	1971-81	1981-91
Arunachal Pradesh	3.70	6.65	12.21	139.63	152.98
Assam	8.81	*	11.80	-	91.66
Manipur	13.19	26.42	27.69	165.36	34.73
Meghalaya	14.55	18.07	18.69	63.98	36.36
Mizoram	11.36	24.67	46.20	222.61	160.27
Nagaland	9.95	15.52	17.28	133.95	74.74
Tripura	10.43	10.99	15.26	38.93	85.75
Sikkim	-	16.15	9.12	159.73	(-)27.60

\* No census was held in 1981.

**ANNEXURE 2**  
**NUMBER OF CLASS I AND II TOWNS (1971-81) IN THE NORTH-  
 EASTERN STATES**

	1971			1981			1991		
	Total	Class I	Class II	Total	Class I	Class II	Total	Class I	Class II
Arunachal Pradesh	4	-	-	6	-	-	10	-	-
Assam*	69	1 (15.5)	5 (24.4)	-	-	-	87	4 (37.6)	4 (11.7)
Manipur	8	1 (70.9)	-	32	1 (41.7)	-	30	1 (39.7)	-
Meghalaya	3	1 (83.4)	-	7	1 (72.4)	-	7	1 (48.7)	-
Mizoram	2	-	-	6	-	1 (61.2)	22	1 (48.7)	-
Nagaland	3	-	-	7	-	-	9	-	2 (52.4)
Tripura	6	1 (61.8)	-	10	1 (58.6)	-	18	1 (37.6)	-
Sikkim	7	-	-	8	-	-	8	-	-

\* No census was held in 1981

Figures in parenthesis denote percentage of population.

**ANNEXURE 3**  
**POPULATION STATISTICS IN THE NORTH-EASTERN STATES DURING  
 1981 AND 1991**

	Density		Population (1981) (%)		Literacy (1991) (%)	
	1981	1991	SC	ST	Total	Urban
Arunachal Pradesh	8	10	0.5	69.8	41.59	71.59
Assam	230	286	-	-	52.89	79.39
Manipur	64	82	1.3	27.3	59.89	70.53
Meghalaya	60	79	0.4	80.6	49.10	81.74
Mizoram	23	33	Negligible	93.6	82.27	93.95
Nagaland	47	73	-	84.0	61.65	83.10
Tripura	196	263	15.1	28.4	60.44	83.09
Sikkim	45	57	-	-	47.0	70.15

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