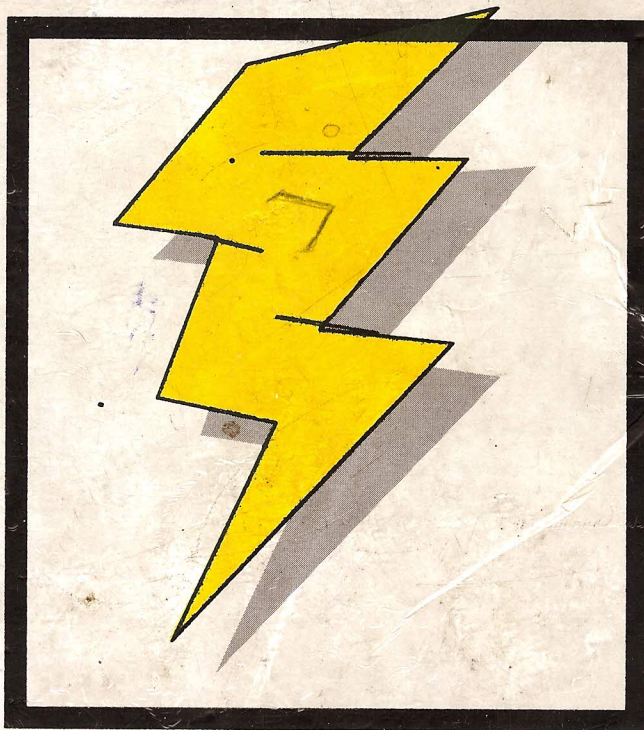


NORTH-EAST INDIA

*Problems,
Policies
&
Prospects*



H.K. BARPUJARI

For decades India's North-east is in the throes of tension and turmoil. This book seeks to identify the problems of North-east India and analyse and assess the policies of the Union and State Governments to ensure peace, stability and security of the strategically important sensitive region.

The restructuring of the States on linguistic basis did not find favour with the emerging elite of the ethnic groups both of the hills and the plains. To satisfy the political aspirations of the tribesmen, the balkanisation of Assam was set in motion and the process continued, but an appropriate solution of the problem is still not in sight. To aggravate the situation an unending influx of migrants of the post-Independence period created an explosive situation upsetting the demographic balance of the entire region. The author has delineated objectively, the nature and extent, apart from the effects of immigration, the role of political parties and how and to what extent the Union and State governments have tackled this volatile and emotive issue. The entire region is seething with secessionism, militancy and insurgency bred by a sense of alienation, deprivation and neglect. The endeavours that had been made by the Centre and State governments to bring militancy to the negotiation table bore no fruit. The policy of the government, the author strongly feels, should be conciliatory, but firm; if conciliation fails, the divisive and secessionist forces must be brought under control with an iron hand lest the situation be out of control.

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Dr. H.K. Barpujari, 86, the doyen of Indian historians, is well known to the academic world for his scholarly works and articles in learned journals. He taught history for over four decades and had his training in historical methodology under Professor C.H. Philips of the SOAS, London University. He is closely associated with several learned associations of India and presided over the fifty-sixth session of the Indian History Congress, Calcutta, 1995.

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**NORTH - EAST INDIA:
PROBLEMS, POLICIES AND PROSPECTS :
SINCE INDEPENDENCE**

by

**H.K. Barpujari, M.A., Ph. D (Lond)
Professor Emeritus : University of Gauhati**



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Preface

Since the Transfer of Power India's North-east came into prominence and geo-political significance as it bordered three unfriendly countries—China, Burma (now Myanmar) and East Pakistan (present Bangladesh). For decades the entire region was in the throes of tension and turmoil. (This book seeks to identify the problems and to analyse and assess the policies of the Union and State governments in the post-colonial period to ensure peace, security and stability of this strategically important sensitive region.)

The restructuring of the States on linguistic basis did not find favour with the newly-emerged elite of the tribals in the hills: it deprived them, as they felt, of their political and cultural identity in the context of the territory composed of diverse ethnic groups at different economic levels and political development. The Sixth Schedule devised to satisfy their needs and aspirations within the framework of the parent State could not meet their demands. Hence followed the fragmentation of Assam with the emergence of Nagaland as a full-fledged State in 1964. The Assam Reorganisation and the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 which created five States and two Union Territories (now States) could not but inspire Karbi-Anglong and North Cachar Hills and the tribesmen in the plains to make demands of autonomy as a stepping stone to Statehood. To what extent the balkanisation of Assam thus set in motion, provided an appropriate solution or created new problems; answers to this question will be found in succeeding pages.

The influx of immigrants in the wake of the partition of India and the emergence of Bangladesh had created an explosive situation upsetting the demographic balance in the north-east. If the inflow remained unabated, the plainsmen felt, they will be aliens in their homeland and their very identity will be lost. The hillmen also feared they will be outnumbered and swamped; their main prop the land and forests will also be lost to them. The inevitable reaction, an anti-foreigner's drive paralysed the government and then followed in its wake an orgy of violence, looting, arson and killings which took a heavy toll of human lives and loss of property worth millions. What is the nature and extent of the influx of immigrants? Is the identity of the ethnic groups, including the major community namely the Assamese, really in danger? What was the rôle of the political parties including the party in power? How and with what effect the Union and the

State governments tackled the problem? Is the problem of influx insoluble? These are some of the questions which this book seeks to explain.

There had also been a growing sense of alienation bred by geographical isolation, communication gap and above all prolonged neglect and indifference of the Union government. Small wonder that the region is seething with secessionism, militancy and insurgency. The endeavours that had been made by the Union and State governments to bring the ultras to the negotiating table bore no fruit. The policy of the government, the author strongly feels, should be conciliatory but firm. Conciliate to the utmost, not by words but by deeds, eradicating feelings of alienation, deprivation and neglect. Conciliation should not be perverted to appeasement which is a sign of weakness. If conciliation fails, the divisive and secessionist forces must be brought under control with an iron hand and in the process, care should be taken, the innocents should not be punished along with the guilty.

The current or contemporary history is yet to attract the attention of the Indian historiographer. He is to deal with the raw data, 'proximity of events and personalities' and 'involvement of events and happenings' around him. There is nothing like a final verdict in history: for a better perspective and understanding history is being reassessed, reinterpreted and reconstructed from time to time in the light of new sources unearthed. True, a historian may discover facts which may be of vital importance to him for explorations of truth or express a judgement which may adversely affect interests at certain quarters or powers that be. The author strongly feels, history is no respecter of persons and that the duty of a historian is to lay bare facts or pass a judgement without fear or favour. Under no circumstances should he suppress or distort facts to suit interests personal, political or communal. Clio has no other interest than the search for the truth, the whole truth, irrespective of national, religious, linguistic or regional considerations. Above all, his findings must serve the interests of the community by removing misunderstanding, strengthening views and enlightening the public on both its strong and weak points.

Archival materials on North-east are not accessible to scholars for the period under review. Annual, quinquennial reports, and documents of historical importance remain unpublished nor readily available. The present analysis is based by and large on reports, official and unofficial, monographs, brochures, scholarly papers and articles published in journals, periodicals and media, local and national. These are invaluable source materials for the subject under discussion based as these are on personal

(vii)

knowledge or on the reports of those who had witnessed the events. Grateful thanks are due to all those whose pioneering works the author extensively made use of.

Chandmari : GUWAHATI

H.K. Barpujari

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Abbreviations Used

- AAPSU*, All Arunachal Pradesh Students Union
- AAMSU*, All Assam Minority Students Union
- AASU*, All Assam Students Union
- AAGSP*, All Asom Gana Sangram Parishad
- ABSU*, All Boro Students Union
- AGP*, Asom Gana Parishad
- AJD*, Asom Jatiyatabadi Dal
- AJYCP*, Assam Jatiyatabadi Yuva Chatra Parishad
- ALMA*, A'chik Liberation Matgrik Army (Garo Hills)
- AMSU*, All Manipuri Students Union
- APHLC*, All Party Hill Leaders Conference (Meghalaya)
- ASDC*, Autonomous State Demand Committee (Karbi - Anglong)
- ASR*, Assam Secretariat Records
- ATTF*, All Tripura Tiger Force
- BAC*, Boro Autonomous Council
- Barpujari*, H.K. Barpujari
- BPSMC*, Boro People's Statehood Movement Council
- Br. SF*, Boro Security Force
- BSF*, Border Security Force
- BSMC*, Boroland State Movement Council
- BSS*, Boro Sahitya Sabha.
- CEC*, Chief Election Commissioner
- CENSUS*, Census of India, Report (Assam), Part III
- CHT*, Chittagong Hill Tract

CPI, Communist Party of India

CPI (M) Communist Party (Marxist)

CRPF, Central Reserve Police

Deka, Kanak Sen Deka

DHD, Dima Haram Dauga (N.C. Hills)

EITU, Eastern India Tribal Union

Gupta, Shekhar Gupta

HALC, Hynniewtrep A'chik Liberation Council (Khasi Hills)

HSPDP, Hill States People Democratic Party

Hazarika, Sanjoy Hazarika

Hill Tribes, Problem of Hill Tribes, North Eastern Frontier

HPC, Hmar People's Convention

IBRF, Indo- Burmese Revolutionary Force

IFC, Indian Armed Forces

IM(DT) Illegal Migrant (Determination by Tribunals) Act

IOR, India Office Records

ISI, Inter Services Intelligence (Pakistan)

Judicial Enquiry, Judicial Enquiry under Chairmanship of T.U. Mehta

KASDC, Karbi Autonomous State Demand Committee

KCP, Kangleipak Communist Party (Manipur)

KIA, Kachin Independent Army (Myanmar)

KNA, Kuki National Army (Manipur)

KNV, Karbi National Volunteers (Karbi - Anglong)

KSU, Khasi Students Union

MNF, Mizo National Front

Menon, Romesh Menon

Murty, T.S. Murty

Nayar, Kuldip Nayar

NDFB, National Democratic Front of Boroland

NEC, North-Eastern Council

NEDFI, North Eastern Development Financial Coporation Ltd.

NEEPCO, North Eastern Electric Power Corporation

NEFA, North East Frontier Agency

NEIHA, North East India History Association

NEICSSR, North East India Council of Social Science Research

NESCC, North-Eash Student's Co-ordination Committee

NLD, National League for Democracy (Myanmar)

NLFT, National Liberation Front of Tripura

NNC, Naga National Council

NNO, Naga National Organisation

NPC, Naga People Convention

NSCN (K) National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang)

____ (M) National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Muivah)

NSF, Naga Students Federation

PDF, People's Democratic Front (Boro)

PLA, People's Liberation Army (Manipur)

PLP, Purbanchaliya Loka Parishad

PREPAK, Peoples Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (Manipur)

Prabhakara, M.S. Prabhakara

PTCA, Plains Tribal Council of Assam

RAW, Research and Analysis Wing

RPF, Revolutionary Peoples Front (Manipur)

Rustomji, Nari Rustomji

SDUF, Self-Defence United Front of South - East Himalayan Region

