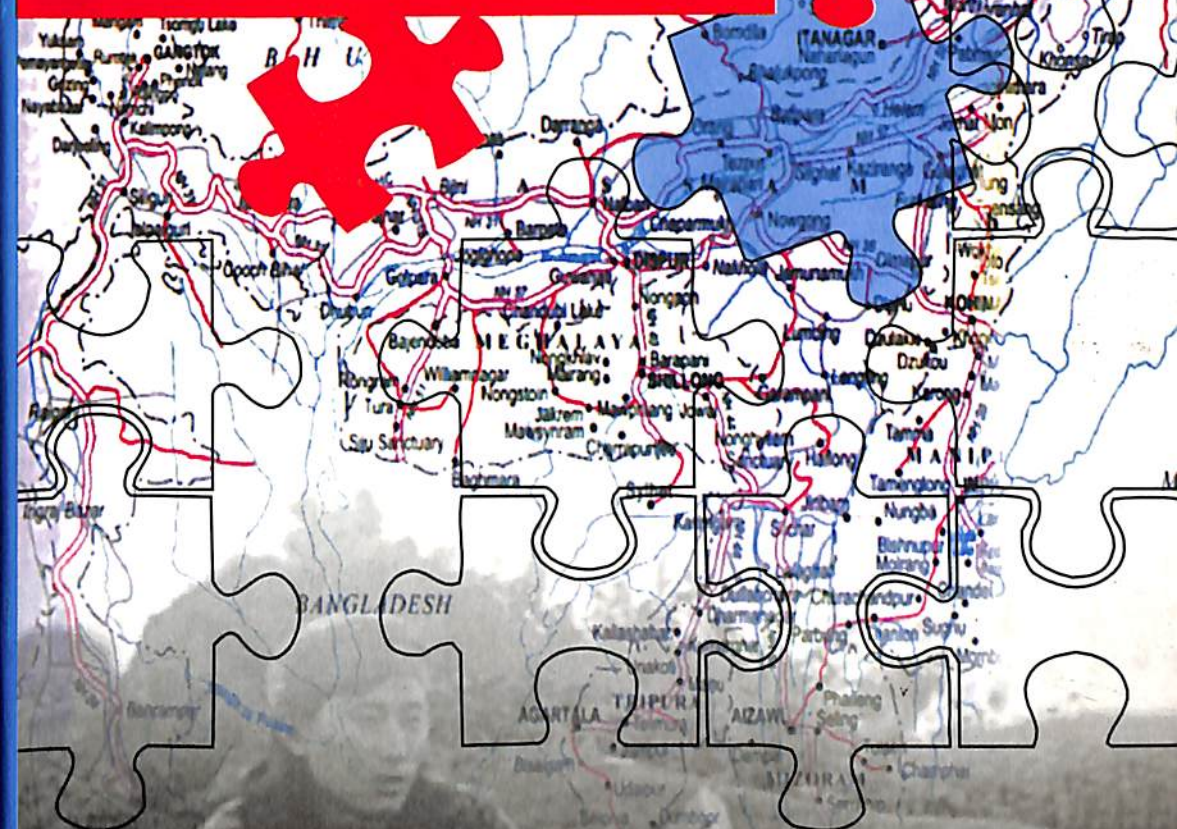


# Terrorism and Separation in North-East India



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Chandra Bhushan

# TERRORISM AND SEPARATISM IN NORTH-EAST INDIA



Chandra Bhushan



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## Preface

### **In Search of Light**

Complete North east region of India has seven states. They are Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh. The inhabitants of this area belong to more than 1500 castes and tribes. They speak more than 400 different languages and follow different religions. These North Eastern states have such a multiplicity of historic, geographic, social, cultural, religious and linguistic activities that any other state in India, perhaps, may not have.

It is a fact that social, economic and cultural activities of any community depend to a large extent on its social and communal structure. The same way their social, economic and cultural activities always have an impact of the race to which they belong, their specific qualities, ambitions, communal identity, self respect and awakening, faiths, mutual relations, religions, public common beliefs, literature, etc. If we study these activities of North East region we come to a conclusion that the communities in this region have some wonderful specialities that can hardly be seen in original course in rest of the country.

The region is divided by forming small states. But the administrators of these states could not stand

to the expectations of the people. They were totally unsuccessful in shouldering the heavy responsibility of public welfare, which was entrusted to them. On the other hand, they remained busy with self welfare rather than public welfare. Benefits of number of economic packages given by the Centre did not at all reach the people in general for whom they were intended and the claims of development made by publicity agencies, in turn, proved to be false and futile. Naturally the wave of terrorism and separation started blowing in this context.

The K. K. Birla Foundation selected me for undertaking research in Social , Economic Structure and Separatism / Isolation, in 2001 in North East region which I accepted as a challenge. My experience of journalism during the Nineties, in adverse circumstances and my mailing of information and news to various newspapers and periodicals came to my help in conducting the research. Though the period of one year for this work is very short, I put my utmost efforts in giving an equitable look at all the seven states and have tried to study the structure and separatist wave in the region.

There is a long list of personalities from whom I got co-operation. Even then I mention my heartfelt gratitude to senior journalists Rajendra Ranjan, Omkareshwar Pandey, Dinkar Kumar, Ratnesh, Ravishankar Ravi, local editor of Pooranchal Prahari. Guwahati , Shri Satan and Pathak, Outlook correspondent Nitin A Gokhale, Ranvijay, Samir Tanti and others for their valuable co-operation and encouragement given to me from time to time to complete the project. I express my sincere thanks to my guide Shri Rajendra Awasthi - editor of 'Kadambini' and Shivday Prakash Bharati - editor of 'Nandan' who always provided me the encouragement. Proof reading

of the book was done by Laxmikant Upadhyay. I am thankful to Shri Anjani Kumar who put his day and night efforts in composing the book on computer. My life partner 'Kalpana Bhushan' was always with me during the tour of North East and helped me from time to time without which this difficult task could not have been completed.

I, once again, express my thanks to honourable director of K.K. Birla Foundation Shri Bishan Tandon and assistant director Shri S. K. Sethi who always guided me every now and then during the research. I am thankful to all those persons , institutions, etc., who directly or indirectly helped me during the project.

**Chandra Bhushan**

# Chapter 1

## North East India

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### **Seven Sister States**

The seven states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram situated in far North East land of India are colloquially known as seven sister states. Actually, Himalayan ranges protect this area from North and East. South is surrounded by Chitgaon and China mountain ranges whereas Western side is surrounded by hills originating from Bangladesh. The whole region covering 2 lacs 55 thousand 83 square kilometres of land and accommodating a population of 3 crores 84 lacs 95 thousand 89 (2001 census) is actually the North Eastern part of India (see table 1).

Uneven and hilly land, rivers creating sweet music, dense forests added by attractive natural beauty has been the source of attraction for centuries. Because of its situation, the complete North East region remained cut off from rest of India for a pretty long period. Access to this region in olden days was possible only on foot or by boats.



**Table 1.1 Area and Population of North East States**

<i>States</i>	<i>Area (sq.km)</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Density</i>
Meghalaya	22,429	23,06,069	79
Arunachal Pr.	83,743	10,91,117	10
Assam	78,438	2,66,38,407	286
Manipur	22,327	23,88,634	82
Mizoram	21,081	8,91,058	33
Nagaland	16,579	19,88,636	73
Tripura	10486	31,91,168	263
Total	2,55,083	3,84,95,089	123

But with the development of culture this region gained importance in the eyes of rest of the world. We are going to see, in the following paragraphs, information of all these seven states, but in short.

### **Pragjyotishpur-Kamrup i.e. Assam**

Assam has its own importance in whole of the North East region. It has common boundaries with Bhutan, China, Myanmar (Burma) and Bangladesh. The name of the state 'Assam' has come up out of many wonderful things. The Historians also had given a long thought to find out the origin of this name but could not reach to a final conclusion. At the end it is accepted that the name Assam has come from a community name "Ahom". This Ahom dynasty ruled this region for about 600 years prior to British entry in the region, and therefore people started calling it Ahom's land which further was abridged as "Assam". This region was known as 'Pragjyotishpur' in ancient days. This region was ruled by 'Danavas' in that period. According to 'Kalki Puran' the Brahma created the planets (Naxatras) in this area only. As such this area surrounded by hills started to be known as 'Pragjyotishpur. During the course of time astronomy and astrology were developed in this area. Its proofs

are available today also in the form of 'Nav Graha Mandir' Temple of Nine Planets. A place of strength (Shakti Peeth) 'Kamakhya mandir' must also have been erected in those days only.

Assam, in Sanskrit based language is A + Sam i.e. unequal or incomparable. As it is, the complete land in this region is uneven. There are mountains at some places whereas valleys at other places. Some places shower natural beauty whereas some places are covered with dense forests. Any way there are no two opinions regarding the nomenclature of the area.

According to a Chinese research scholar, Assam had trade relations with other countries even before 100 B.C. He further wrote that Assam had a silk trade with Egypt and Rome in those days. Archeological survey has discovered from the dug- out footprints that Assam existed right from the stone age. People of Mongol race came to this area during 'Veda Era'. The tribes of original residents of this area are known to be belonging to Mongol race who were then known as 'Kirat' in Veda era. As per 'Kalki Puran' and 'Vishnoo Puran' the area was known as 'Kamaroop'. Its area was spread up in a radius of 450 miles from Kamakhya Temple. This temple is situated on Nilanchal mountain in Guwahati. It is said that the Dunavaking Narakasur, named Bhagawati fought from the side of 'Kouravas' in Mahabharatta war at 'Kurukshetra' with full flavour and bravery. But he was killed at the hands of 'Bhima' from Pandavas. A Chinese traveller Huentsang visited Assam when it was ruled by Bhaskar Burman (594-650) and described Assam with details. The King Bhaskar Burman had friendly relations with Harshavardhan. And as such Assam was flourishing in those days. 'Slastanbha' dynasty rose after Burman rule in Assam. It ruled Assam till 10th century. Shri. Vanmala Vermandeo from this dynasty spread its rule



to North Bengal. After this rule followed Brahmapal of founded the Pal dynasty which ruled Assam till early 12th century. Another important ruler 'Prithu' returned successfully the Muslim attack by Mohammad Ibne-Bakhtiar. But was defeated in 1228 by Muslims.

During 1228 itself, Ahoms from Burma entered this area by crossing 'Patkui' mountain ranges, under the leadership of 'Chukaka'. The Ahoms took many intelligent and important decisions and appointed many local persons on important posts. They founded 'Kamta' state. Koch state in Kamroop was established by Vishwa Sinha in 1515. His son 'Narnarayan' was an efficient and intelligent ruler (1540-1584). He joined north Bengal with quite a large land of Assam. He ruled Tripura Kachhar, Khasi and Jayantiya hilly areas also. The Ahom kingdom was extended to Manas river in the West by 17th century. But from 18th century Ahom rule started falling. Frequent attacks by the Mughals, internal clashes added by frequent attacks from Burma finally defeated the Ahoms in 18th century. The region then came under the rule of Britishers in 1824. The British government signed the Yadambu agreement on 24th February 1826 and compelled the Burmese to leave this region. Thus., the Britishers captured the complete region.

The region was attached to Bengal and was ruled accordingly between 1826 and 1874. But finally in 1874 this region was declared as a province. Gwalpara, Kachhar, Silhet, Khasi, Jayantiya, Naga, North Kachhar, Mikir, Garo and Lusai (all hilly areas) were joined to Assam and were made its parts. But at the time of division of India during independence struggle the district of Silhat was given to Eastern Pakistan (today's) Bangla desh. Gradually, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram, etc., were made separate states severing them from Assam. This is the reason why

**Table 1.2 Sexwise Population of North East India**

<i>States</i>	<i>Male</i>		<i>Female</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	1991	2001	1991	2001	1991	2001
Meghalaya	9,07,687	11,67,840	8,67,091	11,38,229	17,74,778	23,06,069
Arunachal Pradesh	4,65,004	5,73,951	3,99,554	5,17,166	8,64,558	10,91,117
Assam	11657989	13787799	10756333	12850608	22414322	26638634
Manipur	9,38,359	12,07,338	8,98,790	11,81,296	18,37,149	23,88,634
Mizoram	3,58,978	4,59,783	3,30,778	4,31,275	6,89,756	8,91,058
Nagaland	6,41,282	10,41,686	5,68,264	9,46,950	12,09,548	1988636
Tripura	14,17,930	16,36,138	13,29,275	15,55,030	27,57,205	3191168
Total	16387229	19874535	15160085	18620554	31547314	38495059

all the north eastern states are known as seven sister states.

### **Meghalaya - Scotland of East**

The state of Meghalaya was formed by severing the hilly areas of Garo, Khasi and Jaintia from Assam on the 21st January 1972. The 22,06,069 population of this state occupying the area of 22,429 square kilometres in (2001). Southern and half of the western border of this state is with Bangladesh. On all remaining sides it is surrounded by Assam.

Actually there is no historical background for the name and state of Meghalaya. The state has heavy rains during the period from April and September. The sky of this state is always full of clouds during the said period, spreading eye soothing and attractive natural beauty. It is therefore known as 'Meghalaya' Megh (clouds) + Alaya (home) i.e. Home of clouds.

Some historical information about the three important tribes of the state-Khasi, Garo and Jaintia, is available. According to researches the Khasi tribes belong to Mongol race. It is apparent from their face cuts that they have come from outside. But their eyes are quite different from Mongolians. Another tribe 'Khasi' people came from south east Asia via Burma and Burasta or directly via Burma and settled in Khasi and Jaintia hills. But it is a fact that they belong to Mongol and Austrian races. Secondly they came to this area during 4th century AD and before the Aryans came. There is no specific mention of these people in ancient Sanskrit literature also. There is a reference to Kirats belonging to Mongol race. We can get the references of Khasi tribals in the 'Bhagwat Purana' penned by Shankar Deo in 1500 AD. Information about these tribes was not available for a pretty long period upto 19th century. But the



'Buranji' (history) of Jayantiya has information of Hindu King 'Khayrim'. According to Koch Buranji (history) Koch king Narnarayan defeated the Jayantiya king in a battle. The king Khyrim then mediated and made both of them to leave war and resolve the problems by way of talks.

According to Ahom Buranji, the Ahom kings established marital relations with Jayantiya king in early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Accordingly the Ahom king asked the Jayantiya king to establish a market at Fulwari near Kamroop. Their friendship lasted till early 18<sup>th</sup> century. But since the Jayantiya king arrested the Kachhari king, the then Ahom king Ramsing was annoyed. Actually the Kachharis were under the protection of Ahom king Ramsingh, that time. As a result the Ahoms killed hundreds of Jayantiya tribals.

The king Khayrim had also established friendly relations with the Ahoms during 17<sup>th</sup> century. By 18<sup>th</sup> century the Ahoms established trade relations with the people in planes.

The Britishers captured Silhat in 1765. The Khasis used to come to Silhat border for trading in silk, wax, cotton textiles, iron-ore, honey, etc., at Pandua. In return they used to take Rice, Salt and dried fish. Limestone from Khasi area was being carried to Bengal. In a short period the British traders started a trade in limestone with the Khasi tribals. Thereby they came in contact with the Khasis.

In 1824 the Burmese attacked Kachhar and pierced themselves upto the Jayantiya hill borders. The Britishers took benefit of this and sent one platoon for the help of Jayantiya king. An agreement was signed on 10<sup>th</sup> March 1824 between Jayantiya king and the Britishers under which the Jayantiya king accepted the protection of Britishers. The same way

the Khasi chief also allowed the Britishers to enter their area with a view to have protection from Burmese attacks and invasion.

Later on when the possibility of Burmese attack was removed, the Britishers requested permission to construct a road joining Assam valley and Surma valley through the hilly area of Khasi and Jayantiya. This was accepted by majority of Khasi chiefs and the road was completed by March 1829. But U. Tairot Sinha had opposed this. Later on in 1862 the Jayantiyas revolted against the Britishers under the leadership of U. Kiyang Nangwah.

Specific information concerning history of Garo-tribals is also not available. But it is accepted on the basis of some proofs that these people came to this area from Tibet in ancient days and settled in Garo Hills. They had to face resistance from the king of the area when they crossed the Brahmaputra and proceeded to Assam valley. But in a short period they got a Garo girl married to a prince and in return they settled in the area. Later on the prince was displeased with the Garos for some reason. Eventually the Garos had to leave that area. Finally they settled in the southern hills of Kamaroop district. Even today the Garos consider Tibet to be their origin. This may be the probable reason why their language has nearness to Tibeti language. But their traditions, rituals at the time of birth and death and marriage have no similarity with those of Tibetians. On the other hand they are nearer to Kachhari and Naga tribes.

A large number of people belonging to western China came to Burma via Tibet in 400 A.D. But some strong tribes living in Chindwin vally of Burma pushed them to Assam. These Chinese travellers might have probably accepted some traditions and rituals from Naga tribals while travelling through their area.

Human hunting was a main tradition of Nagas. Some Garos also accepted this tradition even till today.

### North-Eastern population and birth rate 1991-2001

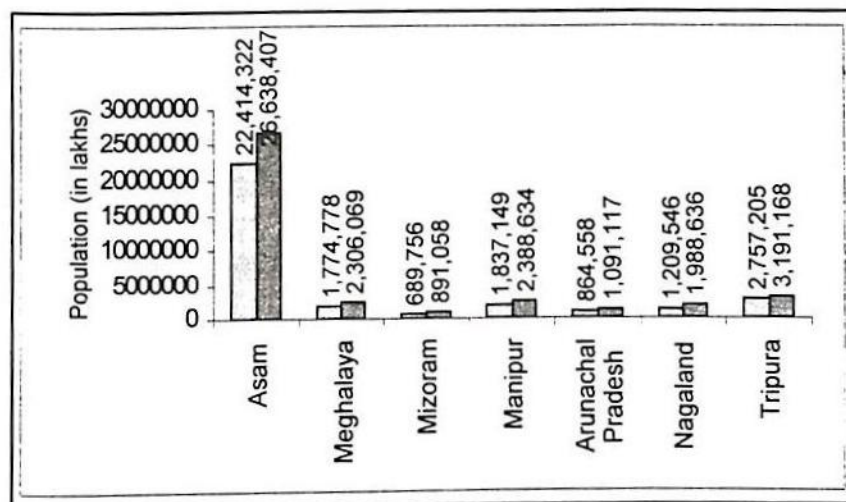


Fig. 1.

There are no historical facts available pertaining to Garo hills area for the period up to early Mughal Rule. According to history of Mughal period some landlords from plains used to recover share (tax) from the local people in hills. These landlords came under the control of Britishers when they captured the region in 1765. Naturally these landlords started paying the tax collected by them to the British government instead of Mughals. But since the clashes between these landlords and the local people increased the British asked Mr. David Scott to investigate and submit a report on the situation. Later on, landlord's rights of recovering tax was declared as illegal. After this David Scott was appointed as commissioner of this area. Then the local people accepted British control and started paying taxes to them. There existed three types of Garos that time -



1) landlord Garos 2) Tax payer Garos and 3) Independent Garos. First two Garos came under British control in the beginning. But in 1866 the British appointed an officer at Tura for bringing the independent Garos under their control. Eventually a number of independent Garo villages came under the purview of taxation. Assam was made a province in 1874 and the Garo hill district was included in Assam.

### **Mizoram - A state in the arms of Mountains**

A larger piece of land having an area of 21,081sq kms and population of 6,89,756 people mostly Christians was separated from Assam and made a separate state on the 20th February 1987 as the implementation of an agreement of Govt. of India with Mizo National Front, signed on the 30th June 1986. The state of Mizoram has common border with Myanmar in the east and south and with Bangladesh on the west. It is connected with rest of India through its North border with Assam and Manipur on those directions. A smaller part of western border is with Tripura. As it is bordered along 630 kms by Myanmar and Bangladesh it has a strategic war importance.

As a matter of fact there is no specific mention of Mizoram and its people in the history. But according to traditional beliefs the Mizos have their origin at Chinlang in Sichun province of China. According to some historians these people came to Burma in 900 A.D. and gradually came to this area in three stages. Mizo means person living on higher lands or mountain man. These people in first stage came to Mizoram from Burma before 16 century and then to Tripura and settled in Western part of Tripura. In the second stage these people came to Kachhar and Manipur in second half of 17th century and settled there. Finally in third stage i.e. during the 17th and 18th century they finally got settled in this area. As this area is

known as Lushai Mountains area these people were also known as Lushais. These people finally established their control on Lushai Mountains. The Maras (lakhar) and Lais (pawi) also captured the southern part of this area. But in 1895 when this area came under British Rule it was divided in two parts 1) North Lushai mountains and 2) South Lushai Mountains. South Lushai mountain district was under administrative control of Lieutenant Governor of Bengal and North Lushai mountain district was under control of Chief Commissioner of Assam.

Later on both the districts were combined on the first April 1898 for administrative convenience and was named as Lushai Mountains. It's administrative control was given to the Chief Commissioner of Assam making Iswal its headquarters. Later on this district was brought under central control in 1972 and afterwards on the 20 th February 1987 it was made a separate State.

The Mizos settled in Lushai mountain ranges during 17th and 18th century. Jahmuvaka was made the first chief. He had six sons. Jadeng, Paliyan, Vanglua, Revung and Sailowa. Naturally the area was subsequently divided in Six Parts. It is said that Sailowa ruled the Sailo area. His rule was limited to North and Central area of Lushai Mountains. Actually Pavi (Povi) and Hamar were the original residents of this area. But the Sailo chief was so strong that he ruled the area for years.

The tribal Chiefs in this area never had good relations with each other. They were always fighting with each other on the grounds of boundaries of their area. There was continuous opposition to any new ruler in this area during 1840-1892. During this period -specifically in 1850 a war broke between Northern -Southern, Eastern- Western tribals. This



war too, continued for years together. These Lushai tribals were taking help from the tribals of Chatgaon Hills, as well as Silhat and Kacchar. Meanwhile two British companies entered this area in 1871-72. One of them came via Chatgaon and the other via Kacchar. But the irritated Lushai revolutionaries attacked the Britishers at Changshil and Iswal in 1890. P. Ropuliari also opposed the British control on Lushai mountains during 1873 to 1893. But finally in 1893 she was handcuffed and sent to jail where she died in 1895.

Administrative and Military headquarters were established at Iswal in 1891 with a view to have better control over Lushai Mountains. Actually British rule on Lushai mountains started in 1891 when this area was divided in two parts and attached to Bengal and Assam. But the revolutionaries again rose in 1892 and started attacking the Britishers. Later on both the divisions were again joined in 1898. Since then there were no political activities in Lushai Mountains till the second world war broke. First political party Mizo Union was formed in this area on the 9th April 1946. Shri. Pachunga was elected as the president of this party. This party decided to keep this area as a part of Assam and conveyed this decision to Assam Governor after independence. Another party Mizo Freedom Organisation was formed in 1947 under the leadership of Lalmaviya. This party demanded its inclusion in Burma which was seconded by many Mizo Chiefs. But the party, in a very short period, lost its public base and support. As a result this party was absorbed in Eastern India tribal Union - a political party formed by Khasi, Jayantiya and Garo people.

### **Arunachal Pradesh - Land of Rising Sun**

This state is situated in the Eastern Parts of India. Remote eastern land is within this state.

Naturally the rising Sun appears first of all in this state. Thus,, it is known as the land of the rising sun. It was previously known as NEFA ( North East Frontier Agency). But on the 21st January 1972 it was brought under the Central Rule and named as Arunachal Pradesh. It was made a full fledged state on the 20th February 1987. Arunachal Pradesh is spread on the land measuring 83,743 Sq. Kms. with a population of (Census 2001) 10,91,117. Northern border of Arunachal Pradesh is occupied by mighty Himalayan ranges whereas the southern boundary by Patkui Hills and mountains. This state is surrounded on all sides by different countries except on South where it is neighboured by Assam. Bhutan is situated on its West, Tibet and China on North and Myanmar on East.

Since no specific historic information regarding the state and its people is available, it is assumed that the inhabitants of this area have come from Bhutan. It is, probably therefore, that majority of the population follow Buddha Religion. The state was first named as NEFA in 1914. During 1913-14 a meeting of China, Tibet and British Governments was held at Simla. A border line between India and Tibet was then drawn in the scale of 1" = 18 miles. This map was signed by Sir Henry McMohan. Since then this border line is known as Mc Mohan Line and is taken as authorised border between Tibet and India.

The then British Government divided this area in 3 parts Balipara frontier track, Sadia frontier track, and Lakhimpur Frontier Track. This was done in 1914 on the recommendations of Assam Chief Commissioner Sir Winston Balli. A post of advisor cum observer for this area was created in 1943. Later on in 1948 the area came under the direct control of Central Government. The area was redivided in six



tracks -1) Sadia Frontier Track, 2) Lakhimpur Frontier Track 3) Tirap Frontier Track 4) Sela sub Agency 5) Subangiri Frontier Track 6) Twesang Frontier Track and a political officer was appointed for each division. The area was combined with Assam in 1950. It was renamed as NEFA in 1954 and frontier divisions were reorganised -1) Kaming Frontier Division 2) Subangiri Frontier Division 3) Siyang Frontier Division 4) Lohit Frontier Division 5) Tirap Frontier Division and 6) Twesang Frontier Division. The sixth i.e. Twesang Frontier Division was from NEFA and was included in Nagaland in 1957.

Remaining frontier divisions were made districts in 1964. It was brought under central territory category in 1972 by renaming it as Arunachal Pradesh. Itanagar was then made it's capital on 20th April 1974. Till this time it was administered from Shillong.

**Table 1.3 Total area, Agriculture land and forest area of North East states (1990-91)**

States	Total area sq.km.	Land under Agril. sq.km.	Perc-entage	Land under forests sq.km	Perc-entage
Meghalaya	22429	3020	13.46	9496	42.34
Arunachal pradesh	83743	3500	4.18	51540	61.54
Assam	78438	32050	40.86	30708	39.15
Manipur	22327	1750	7.84	15154	67.87
Mizoram	21081	840	3.98	15935	75.39
Nagaland	16579	9680	58.39	8629	52.04
Tripura	10486	3080	29.37	6293	60.00
North East	255083	53920	21.14	137754	54.54

### **Tripura - Land of Waters**

Tripura was given the status of state on 21st February 1972. This state having an area of 30,486 Sq. Kms with a population of 31,91,168 is surrounded

on all sides except East by Bangala Desh. It's eastern border is with Assam and Mizoram.

Historical proofs are nowhere available as to how this area was named as Tripura. But peoples belief is that the area was named after the name of the son of 39th Daitya king of this area (Durhya). A part of popular believe that Tripura is the combination of two words Tui+Para. Tui means 'water' and Para means 'nearness'. Thus, the land which has water resources very near is Tripura. History of this area for the period upto 15th century is written on the basis of public beliefs and their traditions. Accordingly historian 'Rajmala' has opined on the basis of these beliefs and traditions. Another historian Mohmedan has different version. He says that Trilochan was the king of Tripura during Mahabharata era. There was a war between Tripura and Kachhar king during the period of king 'Prateeta' the 69th king of Tripura. Prateeta was defeated in this war and he was compelled to leave the area of Kholongma and had to shift his headquarters to Dharamnagar on the banks of river Jusi. During this rule the river Barak divided Tripura and Kachhar from each other.

Modern history of Tripura starts from Veerchandra Manikya (1862-96). The Jayantiya tribes revolted against Tripura Rule in 1863 under the leadership of Parikshit. Maharaja Veer Vikram Kishor Manikya was the last king of Tripura (1923-47). He was a versatile and efficient administrator and therefore was very popular amongst the people. He implemented a number of projects for allround development of Tripura. Construction of roads and buildings around Agartala, establishment of Rural University, etc., are some of his achievements. He also worked for development of trade and commerce. That is why he enjoys a special mention, in the history



of Tripura. His minor son Kirat Vikram was throned as the king after the death of Maharaja Vir Vikram Kishor. Efforts were made to join Tripura to East Pakistan immediately after independence. King mother Maharani Kanchan Prabha Devi approached the then Home Minister Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel and requested him to protect Tripura. In return the Government of India took immediate initiative and saved Tripura from going to Pakistan. This marked the end of empirical rule of 1300 years. Tripura was finally included in India on 15th October 1949. A recommendation was made during 1954-56 to join Manipur and Tripura to Assam. But the C.P.I. (M.) opposed this for the apparent reason of protecting the culture and rights of Jayantiyas. Thus,, it was brought under Central Territory on 1st November 1956.

### **Nagaland - Land of strong tribals**

The land with an area of 16,579 sq. kms metres and a population of 23,88,634 was (Census 2001) given status of Indian State on the 1st December 1963. It has Myanmar on the Eastern border, Arunachal Pradesh on North Eastern, Assam on Western side and Manipur on the South. Specific historical information regarding Nagas is not available. Their origin is based on the traditional beliefs and history is penned on this basis only. As a matter of fact Nagas are related to Indo-Mongol race. It is still a mystery as to how the name Naga came up. There are number of folk tales regarding this. Some say that 'Naga' comes from the word Noke, which means people. Some say that it is derived from the word Nanga, but according to Sanskrit Naga means person living in mountains.

Because of Non-availability of information it is assumed that Nagas are original Kirats. As per the folk tales based on *Mahabharata*, Naga Queen Ulupi



fell in love with Arjuna and she brought him to Naga Lok. Both lived together for a period. Later on Arjuna went to Manipur. Traditional beliefs say that Nagas were on the side of Kaurvas in the Kurukshetra War. Even this history is silent as regards to Nagas right up to 12th century. Ahom king Chukafa Verma met the Nagas while coming to India in 1228. It is believed that there was a war between Nagas and Ahoms. The Konyak Nagas defeated the Ahoms in 1536 and seized their guns. But afterwards the Konyak Nagas were defeated by Ahoms and they were compelled to enter in to treaty where under the Nagas had to return the earlier seized guns to Ahoms along with a large sum. It is further believed that this area was under Ahom rule till the end of 17th century. But it started weakening in the early 19th century. By 1816, after the invasion of Burma the Ahoms lost their hold over this land.

Relations between Nagas and Britishers can be divided in three periods. First period is taken as 1832-1850. During this period the Britishers sent their soldiers to Naga Mountains. Secon period is 1851-1863. The Britishers followed the policy of Non-interference with Nagas. But later on the Britishers left this policy. Third period starts from 1866 when the Britishers captured the Naga Mountains in toto.

The Britishers first time came in contact with Nagas when it was decided to have a road between Manipur and Assam. Captain Jenkins and Demberten proceeded to Naga Mountains with a troop of 700 Manipuri soldiers in 1832. The Nagas were quite angry and disturbed because of this move.

The Britishers recruited Nagas in their army during First World War. The Naga mountains got flared up during Second World War. The Japanese succeeded in reaching Kohima. The warfare continued for 64

days. This tale can not be complete without short discussion about Rani Gaidulu and her Khampai disciples. Rani Gaidulu staged a long opposition to the Britishers. But finally in 1950 she was captured by the soldiers of Assam Rifles. The Britishers sentenced her for life imprisonment. She was released in 1946, just one year before India's independence. Revolt and opposition of Rani Gaidulu against the Britishers is taken as a part of freedom struggle. She went underground in 1960 and joined the movement run by Fizo. At the end in 1966 she appeared in Kohima and declared her belief and faith in the policy of Government of India.

In short, this area was made a 'Naga Mountain District' within Assam in 1881. The district was given autonomy in 1951. Finally it was given the status of Indian state with reorganisation on 1st December 1963.

### **Manipur-The land with culture**

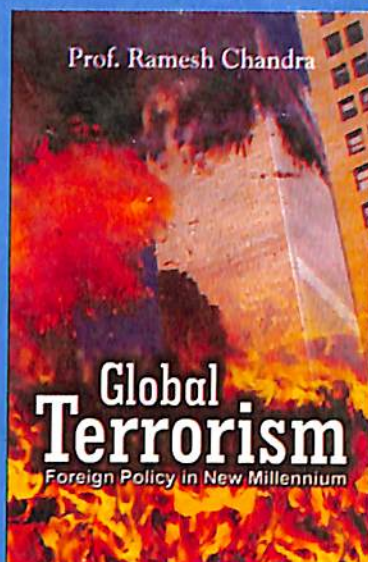
Manipur was given the status of Indian state on the 21st January 1972. This state is spread on a land measuring 22327 sq kms with a population of 23,8864. Nagaland is on North while Assam and Mizoram on West side. Its total Eastern boundary is joined with Myanmar along with more than three fourth boundary on south. Rest of the Southern boundary is joined with Mizoram.

Manipur has 90 per cent of its land as mountainous land. This is the second state along with Assam in North East which has maintained its cultural relations with rest of India. Majority of the population in this state belongs to Hindu religion who are known as 'Maitei'. Actually Manipur is geographically cut from rest of India. Even then cultural heritage of India is deep-rooted in this state. Although specific historical information regarding

Manipuris is not available it is believed that the Manipuris were quite rich culturally. Two-third of Manipuris population resides in the valley. They call themselves as Aryas, but their physical structure identifies with that of Mongols. Around 29 main tribes of this state reside in mountain areas.



Of Related Interest



## GLOBAL TERRORISM

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