

# Conflict Resolution as a Strategy for Growth in Northeast India's Conflict Transformation

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**Abstract** - The relationship between state initiatives in conflict resolution as a means of bringing about development in northeast India is the main topic of this article. The primary goal of this essay is to determine the historical significance of the state's position as a driving force behind developmental initiatives in developing nations like India. I will talk about the ethnic tensions in Northeast India and what the Indian federal government has done to address them. With the historical foundation of ethnicity-based political conflicts in an institutional framework, I will also discuss how and to what degree ethnicity-based political conflicts arose in this region. In addition to focusing on various cleavages and ethnic disputes inside the state, this paper will demonstrate how ethnic movements have continued and what steps the government has made to resolve ethnic conflicts in several Indian states, particularly in the Northeast. In this paper, a few legal and constitutional provisions that were made in colonial India but are still in effect in the Indian states are briefly discussed. The primary focus of the essay on national and state-building techniques is internal conflicts, and I will go on to demonstrate how these conflicts function as outside forces that influence development.

**Index Terms** - North-East India; conflict resolution, growth, conflict transformation

## I. INTRODUCTION

Tribes, or groups of people with a distinct racial or linguistic identity, live in the northeastern regions of India. The distance between the Northeast and India's center is considerable. Ethnic conflict is based on the ethnic makeup of the Northeast. Roy proposes the idea of a "Nation from below" to create an ethnic line with a single name, shared ancestry, same language, shared culture, and shared identity for everyone. Identity-based opposition to other causes democratic movements, military conflicts against the state, ethnic cleansing, and other comparable behaviours (Roy, 2005:2177). However, sustainable progress requires peace and political stability. Because development takes time and requires a calm environment, it does not happen overnight. As a result, it has been noted that politically unstable and conflict-ridden regions endure slower development over time. Such a link exists between violence and underdevelopment in the Northeast of India. For the past two decades, the Indian government has employed a variety of conflict resolution techniques to assure sustainable development in Northeast India, but the most of these have been ineffective. Since gaining independence from British rule in 1947, ethnic conflicts and violence have existed in the Northeast of India (Gswami, 2013:28). The seven (now eight) states were proclaimed, and soon after that, the ethno-nationalist groups were born. Both imperial initiatives and pressure from the national movement against colonialism contributed to the condition that the founders of independent India inherited. In India, the British established the fundamental structures of the state, including territorial authority that was centralized, a modern military and civil service, the rule of law, and the emergence of constitutional democracy (Kohli, 2004:255). However, these qualities were geographically constrained. The Northeast India, which has historically been difficult for the State to govern due to its location and geographic peculiarities, has continued to have a small economic base and a low social mobility. The fighting states receive special facilities from the Indian government, but not because of their ethnic conflict or extreme radicalism; rather, it is done for India's overall development. However, it is uncertain whether or not North-East India would advance in its special category.

## II. A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR CONFLICTS AND DEVELOPMENT

The right growth plan for any nation depends on both its internal and external circumstances. A general theoretical framework for determining the state's intervention in the increased development of Northeast India is thought to be important for both internal and foreign agencies, which are important for both conflict resolution and development. For a better understanding of the situation, I'd like to highlight that society, politics, and the economy are thought of as the internal foundations of development, but national ideologies and governmental policies are thought of as the exterior factors. Since development has recently become a discourse of interdependence, particularly for developing countries and postcolonial states, which have been battling to escape a protracted state of underdevelopment, the idea of external and internal development has high relevance for development strategies and debates in the modern world. It was believed that the state's "mind" could be used to control the external "body" when India gained its independence, so the state assumed control of national development in Northeast India to bridge external and internal development (Cowen and Shenton, 1996:338).

Rostov suggested that "a stage can be "built" by another, although in fact he acknowledges that in modern societies the so-called "changes are caused by external circumstances" (Rist, 1999: 96). Second Debordin: "There is a difference between the outer world and the inner world, and finally, there is a clear resemblance through which we get to know the outside world impressions, but these are impressions produced by objects in the external world" (Cowen Shenton 1996:80). According to Mao, "external causes are the conditions for change, and internal causes are the causes." Causes are the basis of change, and external causes become active through internal causes. To understand the development of things, one must examine them internally and within oneself in relation to other things" (quoted from Cowen and Shenton, 1996: 78). Arrighi says: "The analysis shows that the inner class structure cannot be subordinated to the outer dominance of the colonial and neocolonial structures." At the right temperature, the egg turns into a chicken, but without the temperature, you can turn a rock into a chicken because everyone has a different base" (Cowen and Shenton, 1996:74).

Likewise, inside and outside have their own characteristics and meanings. Among them, society is seen as the inner cause of all development, and so is the state agency that accelerates the country's development process by influencing various internal processes. If internal development functions as the external condition of the state, a factor outside the development of the state becomes an agency of aid and support, and that is not the case. 48 Volume 45 Only financial questions; Therefore, the article deals with the nature and role of the state, which play the most important role in development. This conceptual and theoretical framework is placed in a context specifically related to Northeast India, which will be the focus of attention. The nature and history of ethnic conflicts are very important as external factors develop. Next follows an in-depth analysis of the ethnic conflict resolution policies adopted by states that are indicated for development and shows how they act as external actors' development. To fully understand state politics, we need to look at the heritage of the British people's government, which was inherited by Indian states as part of Colonial India, later Sovereign India.

### III. ETHNIC CONFLICTS AND THE LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT AS A PROCESS OF INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTHEAST INDIA

Ethnic violence is high in northeastern India, in eight states from Assam to Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim. Development accounts for 75 major ethnic groups and sub-groups that speak around 400 languages, and that is India, conceptualised as a truly multiethnic society. In Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland, various tribes make up over 60% of the population, while Assam alone has 23 different strains (Dev 2004: 47–49). A vast and diverse non-tribal population, mainly in Assam, Manipur, and Tripura. During British colonial rule, these three regions were incorporated into traditional India. But later, the British colonial authorities set separate limits for this territory, which created ethnic diversity (Barua, S. 2007:16–17). The main reason is that the arrangement of these lines of fire was intended to ensure the security of these areas against outside forces. But many ethnic groups came about because of the political boundaries set by the British Empire. As in, even after India gained independence, there was division or disunity. Before British colonialism, the hill and lowland peoples were united, but British rule divided them. People were severely mistreated, discriminated against, and ruled by outsiders. Hence, the process of development in the hills and northeastern regions had a tremendous impact on the nationalist movement and independence (Borah, R. 2011:23).

The entire development process is influenced by three main regional factors: (i) national security and the deployment of troops in the region, (ii) the building up of the Northeast and its peoples in other parts of India, and (iii) "foreign" colonies in the north-east. The Disputes are interrelated and constitutive in social, political, and economic terms reports (Bhaumik 2007; Hazarika 1995, cited by Mcduie-Ra, D., 2008: 190–194). Despite the venue, varieties are dominant in this region, which is national security-dominated militarization. The northeastern regions share 90% of their borders with other countries. China and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) receive much attention because India is at war with them. of them since independence. Hence, the Indian government is always on guard to ensure national security in this region. Hence the geographical position of the region in terms of development had a tremendous impact on the state-building process in South Asia, although there were some separatists. Since independence, groups have formed an insurgency in the Northeast region (ibid.). Kohli, A. ("Can Democracies Accommodate Ethnic Nationalism?" 1997: 342-343) wrote this ethnic movement can function peacefully in a well-institutionalized state if the state is able to position borders inside.

The strategy of creating autonomy failed to eliminate the unrest and the rebellion escalated through a process of ethnic settlement as another means of resolution became inactive in case of an uprising in that region (Baruah, p. 1999:106–114). The competition is over. Political power, socioeconomic differences between groups, historical tensions between minorities and majorities, or the borderline situation of minority communities or groups close to them in neighboring countries have become the cause of ethnic conflicts in India. Brubaker and Laitin (1998:424–425) identified ethnicity as the main cause of increases in ethnic violence. The Northeast region has collapsed, a major dilemma for its multicultural tradition, described as a major feature of India. Different ethnic groups claiming a national identity led to widespread ethno-nationalism. In India, the movement attempted to establish a unified identity based on religion and culture. National identities appear in different parts of India.



#### IV. STRATEGIES FOR PEACEBUILDING AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN NORTHEAST INDIA

The armed forces advised to activate strong government institutions without any intervention in order to create a secure environment first since it takes national might to withstand the ongoing conflicts in this region. It is also recommended to strengthen civic authority, but such military and civilian interference in efforts to establish peace in the face of violence is not preferred (Lacina, B. 2007:175–176). This Indian military theory, based on the insurgency's ability to persist, embodies counterinsurgency and unconventional warfare in India and symbolises the continued existence of rebel organisations (ibid). Although citizens don't always support rebels, they can nonetheless exert pressure on the government or contribute to the insurgents' continued survival. Delhi's efforts to build positive relationships between people and security forces in Northeast India are commendable because they have significantly decreased violence since 1989. The government was able to guarantee the protection of people, with only a few unintended events, despite harsh criticism from human rights organisations (Lacina, B. 2007:177–179). The government easily achieved its political goal despite some forceful measures because of political activities, even as the separatists gained a reputation for brutality and crime.

Severe criticism was levelled at the existing inner line, the split of Assam, the recognition of new tribes, and the reformation of immigration. The fact that the government spent a significant amount of money on the region's overall growth but the general populace was unsatisfied was evidence of either corruption or poor policy. Separatists benefited more from the gulf between upholding the law and manipulating politics, which may be due to the divergence between wartime ideology and the nature of violence. Delhi made an effort to secure security through negotiations, generous development, and accommodation of the rebels, but violence was not completely eradicated (ibid). However, policy and negotiation are ongoing to ensure that the rule of law is implemented in Northeast India for peace.

#### V. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE AND ITS POLICIES IN RELATION TO DEVELOPMENT EXTERNALLY

Although the qualities were few, the British left behind their ideology, conceptions of centralised territorial control, the modern army and civil service, the rule of law, and the start of constitutional democracy in India (Kohli, 2004:255). The Northeast India 50 Volume 45 was difficult for the state to govern due to its position and physical peculiarity, and due to its downward reach, the region's economy remained constrained. Numerous authors who studied the Indian state (e.g. Sanjib, B., 2003; Kohli, A, 2004: 221-243; Potter, Robert B. et al., 2004: 72-73) discovered that the colonial state was unwilling to provide the funds and resources necessary to establish a formal land market or that there were no adequate government initiatives to guarantee property rights in order to avoid those conflicts. Following the end of the arm rebellions in the Northeast after 1947, the State adopted a number of territorial control methods that paved the stage for future growth in the region's northeastern India. However, since some ethnically defined groups were given preference, the State's initiatives to protect indigenous tribal groups restricted their rights to land ownership and exchange, business and trade licenses, and access to elected office, which increased ethnic conflicts in the area.

The nations bordering Northeast India are important external elements since some terrorist groups in China, Bangladesh, and Burma share a Naga identity and cooperate with one another by providing moral and material support. They may therefore readily obtain weapons, guerilla training, and ideological instruction from others. However, the "Congress System" incorporates the core idea of the "Grand Coalition," as defined by the term's originator Rajni Kothari in 1964: "a consensus system that operates through the institution of a party of consensus" (Kothari 1989:51). The Congress party is primarily distinguished by its dedication to secularism and by the fact that it represents all of the major societal groups and interests (Kothari 1989:27).

The Indian National Congress (INC) governed the Indian system from 1947 to 1967. Later, they were in a stronger position, but because of increased competition at the state level, they were also losing ground. According to Wilkinson (2010), the state's strategy towards insurgency in the Northeast should be evaluated using both formal policies and specific actions. The Indian government took admirable steps to calm the turbulent states, particularly Mizoram. The most successful measures implemented by New Delhi include allowing rebel leaders to hold the highest positions in the states, facilitating minority immigration, approving the creation of new states, and granting local rule to the minority. Additionally, the government gave sufficient funding for raising living standards and infrastructure to speed up development.

Although India took different approaches, the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) constitutional amendment of 1958 had a significant impact on the formulation of policy because the army and paramilitaries were in charge of the process of changing the balance of power (Hanjabam 2008:164). The AFSPA was implemented when states failed to recognise the complexity of insurgencies, but the insurgency grew as a result of the widespread use of force in the 1950s and 1960s, making subsequent discussions challenging. Locals showed a lot of sympathy for the insurgent organisations, and the occupying military implemented conflict management and resolution techniques (Goswami 2013:43).

India made it very clear during its three wars with Pakistan and the militants in Kashmir that she is not ready to cede any of her territory. All 24 of the Northeast's members of the legislature demanded the abolition of the AFSPA, but they failed to convince the 543 Lok Sabha members to agree with them (Hanjabam, 2008:163). The government's effort regarding devolution of powers, greater development investment, and measures to protect the cultures and customs of the minorities have enhanced their credibility with both

the populace and rebels. The leaders of the ethno-nationalist movements realised as a result that they could no longer rely on the locals' support and have faith in them.

Since the state had not directly intervened to put an end to these conflicts (affecting marginalised communities), it was not surprise that self-help emerged in the shape of arm rebellions with a variety of objectives, including political autonomy. It's crucial to remember that not all armed groups were rebellions. Some of them were developed with the intention of battling insurgency.

Even though they were organised along ethnic lines, not all rebel groups were ethnic militias. For instance, in the late 1970s, the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and a number of insurgent organisations in Manipur set out to cultivate a multiethnic support base. Since ethnic political conflicts grew more complex and turned into armed rebellions against the regime as ethnic violence and displacement increased as a result of the state's policy, active state intervention actually became necessary to protect the discriminatory regime (Goswami, 2013:30-46). Observing the nature of the issue in this area, Mahandra Lama claims that "political sensitivities" prohibit the government from disclosing information on relocation (Lama, M., 2000:26). According to Sanjib Barua (2003), "all the energies and resources of the state went to the sustenance of that structure, leaving very little resources for other activities, including development" in the region because all development projects pertaining to Northeast India were created by the central government far from the area.

## VI. CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of the paper, I will restate my opening claim that genuine, long-term, and sustainable growth requires both peace and stability. After becoming independent, post-colonial India utilised the various development apparatuses it had inherited, including the modern army. Every state endeavour was met with a positive response from society, which helped to foster new circumstances for the area's overall development. However, despite several initiatives and methods adopted by the Indian central states, the region's effective and major development is still years away because the Northeast of India continues to exist in a paradoxical state of peace and violence.

It is stated that law and order will be restored if all forms of ethnic violence are decreased through ethnic reconciliation after a careful evaluation of national policies and local viewpoints. If the current tumultuous situation can be brought under control, the government will have more time and resources to support local government agencies for the overall development of Northeast India because it won't be preoccupied with fighting terrorists and insurgency. At the same time, local citizens will have faith in the government over their security if the extremists are appeased. After a detailed analysis of national policies and local opinions, it is claimed that law and order will be restored if all types of ethnic violence are reduced through ethnic reconciliation. The government will have more time and resources to support local government agencies for the overall development of Northeast India if the current stormy situation can be brought under control because it won't be focused on battling terrorists and insurgency. In addition, if the extremists are appeased, the local populace will have confidence in the government for their security.

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