

ABSTRACT

LOOK EAST POLICY AND INSURGENCY IN INDIA'S NORTH EAST: A FEW CASE STUDIES(1990-2014)

The conflicts in the north east not only portray the shortcomings of the projects of policy makers but also highlight the intergroup dimensions. Steady external support to all insurgent groupings, irrespective of their ideologies and views, especially from Pakistan's ISI, with the linkages across the international borders has made the establishment of peace exceedingly difficult. Misuse of political power and financial allotments by the departments of the government of the different tribal and ethnic councils has also been alleged by both media and citizens. Fraud and misappropriation of the government funds in large amounts are believed to be transferred to insurgent outfits to meet their needs. Added to this, India's neighboring states have intermittently exploited the vulnerable conditions caused by the turmoil in the north east. North east's politics is directly affected by China, Bangladesh and Myanmar, and even smaller state powers like Bhutan and Nepal are also involved in the region. Through political backing, economic assistance, military training and arms supplies, India's neighbors have contributed to the ongoing violence of the region.

The north eastern states of India comprise 7 states struggling with the problem of insurgency for a long period since independence. While a lot of work has been done on the various aspects of India's north east, there is hardly any detailed study on how India's look east policy functions as a strategy to come to grips with the long standing insurgency problems affecting the region. This proposed study will look at both the state's discourses and the civil society and popular narratives that provide contrasting approaches to deal with the problem. The north east joins the rest of the country through a narrow corridor, the chicken's neck, with an approximate width of 33 kilometers on the eastern side and 21 kilometers on the western side. These consist of 2 percent of the boundaries while the rest of the borders are with China, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Bhutan. India's north east has been the land of incessant conflicts since independence. They are the reflections of its social and cultural differences, ethnic and the linguistic diversity, socio-economic underdevelopment, and peculiar political conditions. These problems combined to create chronic insurgencies that could not be entirely contained through conventional means. With the implementation of the first phase of the look east policy, it was expected that the situations will be sorted via opening of border trade and economic enhancement. This study attempts a thorough analysis of trends to see whether the new policy instrumentalities have helped combat insurgencies more effectively in this region.

LITERATURE REVIEWS:—

For decades northeast India was not spoken much due to its isolationist location and neglect from the mainland least was known or discussed about this region. Thus a very few eminent

researches are done on this region. Some of the major works on north east needs special mention.. The first book which made me know of the north east on the basis of its political grounds is **Strangers of the mist: tales from war and peace (Sanjoy Hazarika) [1994]**: This book states the linkage between the insurgent outfits of north east. They are dependent on each other through ideology, economy and social support. As they work in a combined way and their demands are intertwined with each other it becomes difficult to uproot them. A detailed discussion of Nellie where about 1700 people were butchered due to Indira Gandhi's self-serving decision to hold elections gave us the view how north east was politically exploited. There is a constant change of policy towards north east with the change of parties in parliament. Hazarika with his practical experiences and contacts has depicted individual problems of north east. The most dangerous issue of north east is the backing of immediate neighbors. The existence of the insurgent outfits in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar has made situations more critical. The acts of counterinsurgency have made the situation even worse. The brutality of the military and paramilitary forces lightened grievances and thus many more gets recruitment in insurgent groups. The problem, added to this is the massive scale migration leading to the changes of demography, ethnic tensions and battle for economic assistance. Pakistan, China, Bangladesh and Myanmar's assistance to north east, have extended its vicious conditions. Hazarika's effort to show how to stop these has been effectively illustrated in this book. Still the book lacks in various areas which my research needs .Firstly the book is of old publication and thus the contemporary situations of north east are not discussed enough, even the developmental projects for north eastern infrastructure are not mentioned ,neither the active participation of nongovernmental organizations are analyzed. This was a bit frustrating for me as the book helped me to know the past but neither present nor the future. As I find a gap I moved on to my next book of the same author. As I have read Hazarika's book before, his way of analysis is known to me and I had an expectation that this book might satisfy my demand of knowing north east more and ignites the fire of agitation. The books of Hazarika were like a journey to north east for me. They gave me a past and one of the ongoing troubles of north east. But as my work is on entire insurgency, the analysis of north eastern history and a vivid description of illegal immigration from the neighboring countries cannot help me fully to reach my research goals.

DURABLE DISORDER; understanding the politics of north east India (Sanjib Baruah) [2005];The policies of Indian government, its complexities and diversities related to that of colonial exploitation have different reactions in different states. The centre discussion of the book is about insurgent groups, their slow but steady extensions and the major socio political misbalances as their consequences. A brief analysis of ULFA is given in the book which forms the base of several insurgent outfits. Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur are the two states given special importance to emphasize the political and military influences existing there. There is a special mention of look east policy forming a strong weapon of the Indian government in the establishment of peace and prosperity. Even though the majority of north east comprises the tribal communities and thus is termed as backward, a silver line of peace can be seen through look east policy. Baruah's book is more disorderly in structure both a weakness and a potential

attraction of the book. This is a collection of essays from various journals and thus it suffers from inevitable disjointed feel of disparate topics struggling to form a book. As several aspects of my research remained unanswered, my digging remained unaltered. Baruah's book is definitely a path to reach at the north east states political scenario., but it does not clear the issue of ethnic demands emerging from decade separation from mainland, above all, the book does not satisfy the policies apart from LEP, necessary for stabilizing the north eastern socio political conditions.

THE JUDGEMENT THAT NEVER CAME(ARMY RULE IN NORTH EAST INDIA) [NANDITA HAKSAR AND SEBASTIAN .M.HONGRAY]: This book specifies the atrocities done by the ASSAM RIFLES on the people of MANIPUR , a small village called OINAM .This incident not only raised the question on the humanitarian grounds but on the so called democracy establishment policies of India. This is the place where for years the citizens hardly got the chance to place their stories in front of authority. The book signifies several petitions against the horrifying tortures of Special Forces deployed there for counterinsurgency. Media never got the scope to present their stories and the Ngo were pretty busy in collecting funds for their own strong grounds. Both the journalist well defined Indian authority saying that it not only humiliated but has proved the hierarchical torture of powerful to powerless can never be uprooted whatever measures are taken. In July 1987 the counterinsurgency was launched by the Assam rifles known as operation blue bird continued for a year with an immense destruction of human lives properties and merciless rapes. The citizens were forced to be bonded labors and were captivated in the local church for the entire day which highlighted the question of the tribal communities, are they actually citizens of India? Corruption at high level was focused in these states. Even Nandita was forced to turn to Christianity. Nagas were constantly being humiliated by the militants. The underground militants on the victims were extremely inhuman .The book however fails to determine the basic reason for the insurgencies of other states of north east as every state is intertwined with that of others .As this book gives a detail analysis of the administrative atrocities, this is an important one.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:-

The entire north east India has been tormented by insurgencies since independence. Crossing several hurdles, the Indian state has a mixed record of success in dealing with this challenge. A major change in approach came through the introduction the look east policy in 1991. The two phases of the look east policy has yielded several changes in the north east. Infrastructure and communication facilities have improved markedly. Yet, the insurgent outfits have not perished altogether and continue to engage in low intensity conflicts. The relative remoteness, proximity of international borders, limited road and rail way connectivity and lack of sea access fuel disaffection and breeds insurgency in the region. This study asks three specific questions.

1. Has liberalized trade relations following in the wake of a new wave of regionalism across the northeast and Southeast Asia contributed to any veritable economic upliftment of the states as a counter to the ongoing insurgencies in this region?

2. Has the LEP contributed to the fashioning of good governance as an approach to combat insurgencies?
3. Has the LEP engaged with the civil society of the northeast in its efforts to find long lasting solutions to the problem of political violence in the region?

This study will explore these questions by focusing on the three states of Manipur, Tripura and Mizoram. It would follow a simple research design to find answers to these questions. It will devote each chapter to discuss trade and connectivity, good governance, and civil society respectively, and compare empirical evidence, culled from both state and civil societal sources, available on the ground to assess whether the LEP qualifies as a new approach to dealing with insurgency and political violence in the region. Each chapter would also look at the approach of the state prior to the introduction of the LEP so that one can compare properly and come to a balanced conclusion in each case. .

Conclusion

The strategic location of India's north east also makes it the gateway to South East Asia. However, it was economic distress which forced India to liberalize its relations with the east. This was the basis of India's much vaunted Look East Policy (LEP). Though it has enriched the economy of India, LEP's contribution towards the development of the north east was negligible. The second phase has begun to take the political disturbances more seriously.

The fact that unless the LEP recognizes the structural basis of the region's long standing problems, little benefit will ultimately come out of it. Insurgency is not new to the north east. It is suffering from internal strife since independence. Conventional anti-insurgency tactics have had limited success in this region. Could the LEP yield a fresh perspective in combating this menace? This research makes the modest claim of engendering a fresh perspective on this issue.