


Spring 2015

India and Its Northeast Exception: From Frontier to Forefront

Akshita Manjari Bhanjdeo
Bard College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2015

 Part of the [Civil Rights and Discrimination Commons](#), [Human Rights Law Commons](#), and the [South and Southeast Asian Languages and Societies Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License](#).

Recommended Citation

Bhanjdeo, Akshita Manjari, "India and Its Northeast Exception: From Frontier to Forefront" (2015). *Senior Projects Spring 2015*. 118.

https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2015/118

This Open Access work is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been provided to you by Bard College's Stevenson Library with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this work in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@bard.edu.

India and Its Northeast Exception:
From Frontier to Forefront

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

by
Akshita Manjari Bhanj Deo

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

May 2015

Dedication

In my last year of high school, while aimlessly searching for something on the Internet, I came across a Google image of a Manipuri woman sitting on the side of the street in New Delhi.

For some reason I stopped on the picture and tried to figure out who she was. With piercing black eyes and wiry thin hair cascading down her shoulders wrapped in a white shawl she looked so frail and delicate. On leaning closer I could discern the letters on the signboard she was sitting beside, it read, "Repeal AFSPA".

I would later come to hear about her as the Iron lady of Manipur, Irom Chanu Sharmilla. Who has shown more strength, courage and resilience than the dozen military officers who stood watching her silently protest that cold day in New Delhi.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my adviser Sanjib Baruah for his unwavering support throughout the course of all my four years at Bard, and especially my senior year.

You were the first professor I ever had in college, and after my first class with you my first semester. I knew I wanted to be a political science major. Thank you for being patient with me and always meeting me with a smile. Your positive attitude was one of the reasons I was able to express myself and think outside of the box, and through our conversations I feel I have acquired some of your passion for the politics of the northeast. It will now forever be a region of South Asia close to my heart.

I would also like to thank Peter Rosenblum and Laura Kunreuther. Peter, thank you for reminding me to breathe in our meetings. You always put senior project in context to why I initially chose human rights in the first place and for that I will always be grateful. Laura, I wish I had taken more of your classes, because I learnt how to put myself in the project just enough to be passionate and motivated, but have a distance to give it room to formulate and stand strong on its own. I am so grateful to have learnt so much from the three of you, both in the classroom and outside of it.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Michelle Murray and Manishka Kalupahana, outside of my board members; you both have been in different ways very influential in my Bard undergraduate life and looked out for me, I cannot thank you enough for that.

I would also like to thank my parents, Rashmi Rajyalaxmi Bhanj Deo and Praveen Chandra Bhanj Deo for being the biggest pillars of support and strength to me throughout my life. You both always taught me to be curious and question things and to look beyond what meets the eyes. I am blessed by having you both in my life, you gave me the wings to dream and I never looked back.

To the rest of the people who contributed to my project, I will miss out a lot of you but know that in small and big ways you made sure I was supported and loved throughout my Bard life. To the 84 Broadway kids who took me under their wing, and the 40 East Market kids, who I cannot imagine not coming home to, Thankyou.

A special thanks to Christina and Jonathan for putting up with me, literally. Oliver, Hannah, Lucas and Jimmy for always being up for an adventure, you four have been there for some of the best days of my undergraduate life, Wagwon! Also Kathu, Dami, Amanda, Diego, Vittor, Katya, Violeta, Farah, Louis, Mark, Myschyf and especially Lara and Pepe. You are my home away from home, and my family forevermore.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	1
<u>CHAPTER 1: THE NORTHEAST REGION</u>	9
<u>History Of The Region</u>	10
<u>State Formation of The Northeast Region</u>	17
<u>Laws: Inner Line Permit</u>	24
<u>Laws : Armed Forces Special Powers Act</u>	30
<u>Army Response on AFSPA</u>	33
<u>Legal Representation of AFSPA</u>	35
<u>Present State of AFSPA</u>	37
<u>CHAPTER 2: NORTHEAST AND THE INDIAN MEDIA</u>	40
<u>Importance of Media in Influencing Policy</u>	40
<u>Media Case: Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC) Television Advertisement</u>	42
<u>First Media Coverage: KBC advertisement</u>	49
<u>Second Media Coverage: Nido Taniam murder in India's Capital</u>	54
<u>Third Media Coverage: Exodus of northeasterners from mainland cities</u>	68
<u>CHAPTER 3: COMPARING POLICIES REGARDING NORTHEASTERNERS IN THE MAINLAND</u>	76
<u>Bezbaruah Committee</u>	76
<u>Security Tips Booklet</u>	81
<u>CONCLUSION</u>	88
<u>BIBLIOGRAPHY</u>	92

Introduction

“Another India, the most diverse part of a most diverse country, very different, relatively little known and certainly not too well understood, once a coy but now turbulent and in transition within the Indian transition.”¹ B.G Verghese²



3

The states that comprise the eastern most part of India, collectively known as the northeast, are Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland, and Sikkim. For the purpose of this paper the state of Sikkim will be omitted due to its unique state formation within the union of India, which differentiates it from the other northeastern states, also known as the ‘seven sister states.’

¹ Cited in Haokip, Thongkhohal, India’s Northeast Policy: Continuity and Change (November 12, 2010). *Man and Society: A Journal of North East Studies*, Vol. VII, pp.86-99, pg87 Winter 2010.

² BG Verghese (21 June, 1927 - 30 December, 2014) was a senior Indian journalist. He started his career in journalism with the Times of India and was later Editor of the Hindustan Times (1969-75) and Indian Express (1982-86).

³ Government of India, Home Ministry: Map of the North East of India.

Prior to British colonization, the northeast region was a diverse trading and migratory route between the Indian subcontinent and its neighboring countries in Southeast Asia. For most of its history it was treated as a frontier area, part of a single unit comprising Assam and the princely states of Manipur and Tripura. The British administrative governing system had a threefold frontier: an administrative border, a frontier of active protection and an outer or advanced strategic frontier.⁴ The British only established direct rule in the administrative border, while treating the other regions as excluded areas that comprised a majority of tribal populations.⁵ This had an adverse affect on the inroads of governmental institutions and democratic infrastructures of the modern Indian state. Post independence the Indian state continued to use British colonial era laws such as the Inner Liner Permit and Armed Forces Special Powers Act to control the region, which was fast becoming a hot bed of armed insurgencies with some of the worlds oldest armed civil conflicts festering in northeast India.

The oldest conflict, the Naga one, began in the 1950s and has been in a stalemate agreement with the government of India, on the basis of a ceasefire, while peace talks are being negotiated, ever since. In terms of militias in the northeast, Manipur tops the list of militias with 35, Assam is second with 34, Tripura has 30, Nagaland has 4, and Meghalaya checks in with 3 militias.⁶ With the region sharing more than ninety percent of its boundaries with foreign nations such as China, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Bhutan, the policies used to govern the region and create states have originated

⁴ Baruah, Sanjib. "Dividing Line." The Indian Express. The Indian Express Ltd, 03 Oct. 2014. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/dividing-line/2/>>.

⁵ The term 'Scheduled Tribe' is an administrative term used to denote indigenous settlers or tribal communities in India. However, in the mainland the common term to describe them is Adivasi that literally translates to original inhabitants.

⁶ Cited in Baruah, Sanjib. Durable Disorder: Understanding the Politics of Northeast India. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2005. Print. Institute of Conflict Management (ICM).2002. 'South Asia Terrorism Portal'. <http://www.satp.org.pg5>

from a security standpoint rather than an economic one, or one driven to satisfy popular demands of ethnic homelands.

To ensure political stability the armed forces have been called upon by the central government located in the mainland of India to maintain law and order under the legal provisions of a law known as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. In addition, special provisions have been enacted by a council set up by the government of India to drive development in the region, leading to a case of special status been given to the people of the region and sowing the seeds of a tenuous relationship with the mainland and its people. This special treatment of the region, has led scholars to develop the idea of a new policy framework that suggests governing the region with multi-level citizenship, an alternative to the ethnic homeland model as described by Sanjib Baruah in *Postfrontier Blues: Toward a new policy framework for northeast India*.

The idea that a democracy with its free press, elected government and elections, and strong judiciary can root out the problem of insurgencies and stabilize a region by following a developmental strategy is being proven wrong by the four decades of instability in the region. With departments and multiple committees created solely for the purpose of improving development and ushering in economic prosperity in the region, the northeast has seen decades of unsuccessful policies. There is no new conception of trying to understand the roots of insurgency or the socio-cultural community of the region, which require 'out of box solutions' as said by former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Scholars of the region such as Mrinal Miri question the legitimacy of having policies in a country towards one of its own region since ill-conceived policies add to the sentiment of being treated differently,

“To whom, or for whom, do you have a policy? What is the object of a policy? The Northeast is a part of this country and at the same time we think that the people of the Northeast should be made the object of a policy. To be made an object of policy implies that the peoples of the region are not

in a relationship of human concerns such as love, friendship, understanding of the other, but in a relationship of the manager and the managed where the idea of management and the idea of policy are almost the same, policies are made to derive some advantage and manipulate for benefit.”⁷

This reevaluation of how conflicts and their resolution are approached is brought to the forefront by the increasing migration of northeasterners to the mainland, with recent spikes in tourism towards the region, both by foreign and domestic tourists since the easing of the Inner Line Permit⁸. Perhaps what is more interesting to observe, is the reimagining of the modern Indian state through the infiltration of homogenous communities in the mainland by northeastern students and employees. The treatment of northeasterners in the mainland has picked up national media attention in recent years, especially with the recent spate of attacks, which include derogatory words, verbal and physical abuse against northeasterners by people from the mainland in metropolitan hubs being covered by print and digital media.

Media has a significant impact in regard to policymaking in India; especially with the large number of consumers of the English language daily print newspapers and the television media industry having a far reach in the cities and interiors of the nation. A point that the media focuses on in the northeast is its lush biodiversity and ethnic tribal culture that make up the image of the region and steepen the stereotypes of the ‘wild frontier province.’⁹ The northeast region has a high tribal majority that is split into sub tribes and divided along the hills and plains of the region. Due to their physical features being more East Asian than Indo-Dravidian looking, northeasterners stand

⁷ Cited in Baruah, Sanjib. *Post Frontier Blues: Towards a New Policy Framework for the Northeast India*. New Delhi: Center for Policy Research, 2007. 1-80.Pg78 Print. East-West Center Washington. Miri, Mrinal.2002. “Northeast:A point of view” (public lecture).www.manipuronline.com/Features/May2002/Northeast14_2htm.(Accessed March 5 2007)

⁸ Yuthika Bhargava. "North-east India Sees Spike in Foreign Tourist Visits." *The Hindu*. N.p., 05 Aug. 2014. Web. 27 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/northeast-india-sees-spike-in-foreign-tourist-visits/article6284568.ece>>.

⁹ Cited in Sen,Arijit "Marginal On The Map: Hidden Wars And Hidden Media In Northeast India." (2011): . Reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk. Gerda Henkel Foundation. Web.Pg5

out in the mainland and are seen as the outsider. This has been sparking conversation in civil society and the press on who is seen as an Indian, and who is not. To give an example, the headline of the English language daily, Hindustan Times article last year was titled, “The Ugly Indian: how we are racist to our people.” This brought up the need for a dialogue on identities in India and shed a light on the long way Indians as a community need to go, in terms of integration and acceptance of people from the northeast.¹⁰ Conversations like these are part of this reimagining of how the northeast and northeasterners identity fall in the modern Indian state, questioning the credibility of the Indian political rhetoric of ‘Unity in Diversity’.

During the 2014 general elections, India was lauded as being the poster child for a successful democracy, with 814.5 million people eligible to vote making it the world’s largest election.¹¹ The winning national party, the Bharatiya Janta party (BJP) popularized an old marketing slogan they had used in the previous 2004 election, ‘India Shining.’ The premise of the slogan is India's growing economic and global position as a world player. The northeast conflict is a neglected problem and its hostile relationship with the mainland and central government is a counterpoint to this over optimistic slogan of a ‘shining’ democracy. The ongoing conversation of identity, ethnic homelands, and citizenship, is bringing this region from the frontier to the forefront, and is a step in India politically and socio culturally reimagining what it means to truly be a secular, tolerant and more importantly integrated democracy.

¹⁰ Karan,Thapar, "The Ugly Indian: How We Are Racist to Our People."Http://www.hindustantimes.com/. Hindustan Times, 10 Feb. 2014. Web. 27 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.hindustantimes.com/karanthapar/the-sad-but-inescapable-truth-is-we-are-guilty-of-racism/article1-1182080.aspx>>.

¹¹ Al Jazeera and Agencies. "India Announces Election Dates." - Al Jazeera English. Al Jazeera Media Network, 6 Mar. 2014. Web. 27 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/03/indian-announces-election-dates-2014355402213428.html>>.

This paper will look at India's relationship with its eastern most region, through three parts, to understand the state of exceptionalism carried out by the central government located in the mainland in the capital New Delhi. The northeast has been a peripheral region in the mainland consciousness of the modern Indian state: due to its geo-political isolation and lack of information on the indigenous inhabitants, which include various ethnic groups, such as people from Tibet, Burma, Thailand and Bengal, who migrated into the region at various periods of history and created a subsequent narrative in the formations of the modern Indian state.¹²

The first part of this paper will provide an overview of the geography and historical formation of the northeast to the subcontinent with a focus on laws such as the Inner Line Permit (ILP) and the Armed forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). This will be followed by an analysis of the media coverage by the national English speaking press of mainland India (what I refer to as mainland India, is the Indian subcontinent excluding the northeastern states) towards its northeast region by presenting three of the cases that increased media coverage on the region and highlighted the treatment of northerners in the mainland.

The second chapter is a medium through which we can see the perception of mainland Indians towards the northeast region and its people. This will be done through describing the coverage of campaigns I personally believed were instrumental in reaching mainland consciousness, and provide a back-story to understanding the key issues that caused such campaigns, concluding by analyzing their reception by the press. In the process I hope to understand the relationship between the coverage or non-coverage of minorities and peripheral regions and how this contributes to the alienation felt by northerners towards mainland India, both politically and socio culturally. This

¹² Kyoko Inoue, "Integration of the North East: the State Formation Process," in Mayumi Murayama, Kyoko Inoue and Sanjoy Hazarika (eds.): *Sub-Regional Relations in the Eastern South Asia: with Special Focus on India's North Eastern Region*, Tokyo: Institute of Developing Economies, 2005. http://www.ide-jetro.jp/English/Publish/Download/Jrp/pdf/133_3.pdf (Accessed April 25, 2015)pg17

attempts to show the paradigm shift of recent year, with dialogue and debates bringing the region to the forefront of media and politics. What I mean by forefront is the coverage the region receives by the English language print and digital press of the mainland in the recent decade, and the frontlines of politics and policy making, with the prime minister of India, making statements to the press and public on the development of the region, going as far as to make it a priority in his parties 2014 election manifesto, under the headline 'integrating the nation.'¹³

By looking at these campaigns and gauging the public reaction to it, I will also try to see if that had a role to play in pushing policy makers to create or amend laws that treat northeastern people differently than other Indian citizens. Ending with making a broader conclusion on the Indian political and social fabric and how the region is crucial in portraying the country as tolerant, secular, democratic and most of all redefining what it means to be Indian and not in the majority in respect to religion, caste and physical appearance.

The last part of the paper will compare and contrast a recommendations report and a security booklet aimed at northeasterners both originating in the capital, created by a government appointed committee and law enforcement aimed towards providing safety and security to the northeast natives in the mainland. The seven year gap between these two policies provides an insight into how the Indian government is coping with the problem, of integrating and not just assimilating the people of the northeastern states into the mainland India and how the Indian mainland is responding to civil society claims of reshaping its view and perception of people from the northeast.

The last chapter is looking at the recommendation report and booklet, issued by the government appointed Bezbaruah Committee and the police branch in New Delhi. These two cases

¹³ Joshi, Dr. Murli Manohar, ed. "BJP Election Manifesto 2014:Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat." Manifesto Eng. (2014): 1-42. 26 Mar. 2014. Web. 25 Apr. 2015.Pg7

show how the ongoing effort to integrate the northeast region to the mainland is a part of a larger narrative of India's foreign policy. Following its economic opening in 1991, with the 'Look East', changed to the 'Act East Policy'¹⁴ the northeast region was widely accepted by the central government as a key component in building stronger ties with Southeast and East Asia, and the regions stabilization was seen as an integral part of India emerging as a strong regional hegemon as it stepped onto the Asian diplomatic and economic scene.¹⁵

¹⁵ Sundararaman, Shankari. "Modi in Myanmar: From 'Look East' to 'Act East'." Institute of Peace & Conflict Studies. Centre for Indo-Pacific Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 17 Nov. 2014. Web. Introduction

Chapter 1: The Northeast Region

The formation of the northeastern states out of colonialism and the political unrest that carries on until the 21st century is crucial in understanding the division of the northeast from three zones, to the 'seven sister states' as they are referred to today, and how this has resulted in their continued alienation from the mainland.

These seven states underwent radical reorganization of internal demarcations and states post independence, and were part of the Indian official category of states between 1971 and 1987, with the exception of Nagaland that achieved statehood in 1963. They cover a total of 7.97 percent of India's land territory and contribute roughly 3.07 percent of the country's population.¹⁶ Its population is notable, with the largest concentrations of tribal people in the country – constituting about 30 percent of the total population in the region – though with a disproportionate distribution of over 60 percent in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland together, and a majority of non tribals in Tripura and Assam.

Another important aspect is the religious diversity, with the three states of Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya containing an overwhelming majority of Christians. The influence of missionaries has a huge impact on the socio cultural life of the northeast. One of the most successful aspects was the integration of the northeast with its diverse clans and sub clans of tribal groups forming a northeastern identity, by coming under one language for the first time– English. This also bolstered literacy rates with the total literacy population in the region being 68.5 per cent, with female literacy at 61.5 percent is higher than the country's average of 53.7 percent, with the national

¹⁶ Cited in the website of Ministry of Home Affairs, and Government of India. "Northeast division, Introduction." [Http://mha.nic.in/northeast_new#a](http://mha.nic.in/northeast_new#a). n.d. Web. 25 Apr. 2015. last updated 27th march 2015

average of men being 64.8 percent. The literacy rates vary with the different states, however Mizoram and Tripura¹⁷ have the highest rates not only in the region but also in the entire nation¹⁸.

History Of The Region

The northeast region was one of the last entrants to British India with it being one of the hardest regions for the British troops to infiltrate and annex. Historically, tribal kingdoms were successful in gradually consolidating parts of the region under various political units in the course of their rule. These kingdoms included the Ahoms (1228-1826), the Kacharis (1515-1818), the Jaintias (1500 – 1835) and the Manipur Kings (1714-1949), indicating that the region has historically retained varying degrees of independence into the nineteenth century, when the British took over the region.¹⁹ Samir Kumar Das, in his policy and research study comments on this political rule exercised which was free of any foreign rule in the region, with the exception being the British,

“Colonial rulers took nearly a century to finally annex the entire region and exercised their control over the hills primarily as a loosely administered ‘frontier’ area, thereby separating it from the ‘subjects’ of the thickly populated plains.”²⁰

Strategically, important to both India and China, the latter also claims the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh as part of South Tibet which led to the Sino Indian war of 1962. Despite a build up of troops on either side of the border, it has been suggested that the opening of this passage is

¹⁷ It is taken into consideration that Tripura has a high literacy rate not only because of the influence of missionaries, but also due to the Communist Party of India Marxist (CPIM) having a stronghold on the politics of the state, which has increased state run schools, and encouraged education by religious institutions and private organizations.

¹⁸ India. Education Sector. Social Sector Statistics. Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region. Comp. Economic Adviser. Government of India, 2011. Web. 25 Apr. 2014.

¹⁹ Das, Samir Kumar. Conflict and Peace in India's Northeast: The Role of Civil Society. 42nd ed. Vol. Policy Studies. Washington, D.C.: East-West Center Washington, 2007. www.eastwestcenter.org. East West Center Washington Project on Internal Conflicts and State-Building Challenges in Asia. Web. Pg76

²⁰ Ibid pg 73

inevitable, and that when it happens it will be comparable in geopolitical and economic terms to the opening of the Suez Canal²¹, a reason why the central government in India is keen on using a developmental trajectory to boost the economy of the northeast hoping to inadvertently increase opportunities for trade, infrastructure, and the re-opening of communication lines with neighboring countries.

Marred by violence and poor infrastructure, owing to connectivity and lack of political action by the center, the region has more in common culturally to Burma than states such as Punjab or even West Bengal in India. Geographically, the northeast has been associated with terms such as isolation and alienation. The geography is important, as the environment contributes to having two of the world's official biodiversity hotspots crossing the region. This lush environmental haven also has cultural prominence in the region with it being home to around 200 of the 635 tribal groups listed by the Anthropological Survey of India.²²

Another distinguishing feature is the cultural diversity, with 220 languages spoken in the region²³ and an equal number of dialects. Tribal people predominantly inhabit the hills states in the region like Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland with a degree of diversity even within the tribal groups. The diversity of the northeastern people is highlighted with most communities having roots in migratory groups from, Tibet, Burma, Thailand, West Bengal and Bangladesh, who settled into the region at various periods of history. Migration from other states in central India and Bangladesh to the northeast region, has caused demographic

²¹ Cited in *The Other Burma?: Conflict, Ben Hayes Counter-insurgency and Human Rights in Northeast India* (2012): 1-32. [www.tni.org](http://www.tni.org/report/other-burma). Pg 4 Web. <<http://www.tni.org/report/other-burma>>.

²² "Vision Document | Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, North East India." *Vision Document | Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, North East India*. Government of India, n.d. Web. 20 Apr. 2015. Pg 5 <<http://mdoner.gov.in/content/vision-document>>.

²³ "North East India." *North East India*. The Ministry of Communications & Information Technology, Government of India, n.d. Web. 20 Apr. 2015. *Introduction to North Eastern Languages*

changes. However, most hill tribes will have more in common, even physically to tribes now in Myanmar and Tibet. Such as the Nagas, who were split with borders coming up in previously unadministered territories during the process of independence, between northeast India and parts of Myanmar.²⁴

This geographic isolation is interesting as before partition, Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan), Burma and northeast India were all part of a single big trading area. Partition shut down relations between Bangladesh and the Indian state and created foreign boundaries to a previously engaged communal trading bloc.²⁵ This pushed the northeast region to be “cut off, between a hostile Pakistan, a hostile China with land Claims, and a hostile, closed Burma.”²⁶ With creation of Pakistan forming a bulwark of national identity after Partition, the northeast proceeded with a, security driven ‘frontier space’ political ideology framing by the center. It was handed down by colonial administrations as an ‘excluded area’, ‘backward area’ or a ‘distant outpost’. It missed the process of integration through the colonial resistance movement that brought the idea of nationalism to various parts of the subcontinent.

The complexities of the northeast region are easier to understand beginning with its geographical distinctiveness to the mainland of India. The northeastern region of India is connected to the eastern side of the country by a corridor of land, known as the “Siliguri Corridor” or the “chickens neck” more colloquially. It is a narrow stretch of land that is, like most of the borders in

²⁴ Soe Zeya Tun. "Myanmar's Naga People." [Www.reuters.com/](http://www.reuters.com/). Thomson Reuters, n.d. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://widerimage.reuters.com/story/myanmars-naga-people>>.

²⁵ It is an interesting point to note that came up in conversation with Sanjib Baruah, that the ‘Act East Policy’ with its idea of trade integration with foreign borders of the northeast, are not so much a new policy, as they are a reimagining of the old migratory routes and trading lines pre-independence.

²⁶ Mead, Walter Russel & Staff. "Modi Looks East." *The American Interest* Modi Looks East Comments. Charles Davidson, 02 Dec. 2014. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.the-american-interest.com/2014/12/02/modi-looks-east/>>.

South Asia, a “cartographic relic of the British decolonization process.”²⁷ The corridor at its slimmest point is at 14 miles (23 kilometer), and with partition dividing the subcontinent into the three countries of India, East and West Pakistan, the corridor was created to maintain contiguity between Bengal and Assam. The northeastern states share more than ninety percent of their borders, with the neighboring countries of China, Bhutan, Myanmar and Bangladesh, making the northeast region of India the physical land connector between India, China and Southeast Asia.

It is important to keep in mind the regions’ emergence, as a separate geopolitical region is a contemporary phenomenon in the history of the modern Indian state. The northeast historically has served as the eastern gateway for the passage of people, commodities, and ideas between India and its neighbors, its emergence as a separate region bounded nearly on all sides by other territorially defined nation states brought such continuities and interrelations, at least theoretically to an abrupt halt.²⁸ As a result of being a migratory route between the countries of Tibet, China, Burma, Thailand and Bangladesh, according to cultural historians the region has provided a meeting ground of many races and communities throughout history.

To understand the background of conflict in the northeast region it is vital to understand the socio economic and development factor from independence until now, as the region is relatively poor in terms of industry and communications, with most of the states ranking poorly on India's human development index.²⁹ However this is a recent phenomenon as prior to independence, Assam, as an undivided regional block was one of the largest tea exports of the British empire and

²⁷ Panda, Ankit . "Geography's Curse: India's Vulnerable 'Chicken's Neck'" The Diplomat. Published Online November 8, 2013 (Accessed Web. 26 Apr. 2015.) <<http://thediplomat.com/2013/11/geographys-curse-indias-vulnerable-chickens-neck/>>.

²⁸ Das, Samir Kumar. Conflict and Peace in India's Northeast: The Role of Civil Society. 42nd ed. Vol. Policy Studies. Washington, D.C.: East-West Center Washington, 2007. www.eastwestcenter.org. East West Center Washington Project on Internal Conflicts and State-Building Challenges in Asia. Web. Pg 6

²⁹ Purusottam Nayak. "Status And Trend Of Human Development In N.E. Region Of India." [Http://planningcommission.nic.in/](http://planningcommission.nic.in/). [Http://planningcommission.nic.in/](http://planningcommission.nic.in/), n.d. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. Pg1 <<http://planningcommission.nic.in/>>.

driven by expanding global trade and investment, was at the forefront of development almost 150 years ago, with per capita income being higher than the national average by 4 percent, which highlights its vast developmental potential that is still untapped.³⁰ Currently, the World Bank in a study of region carried out by the Bank and the Ministry of Development of the Northeastern Region (MoDONER) describes conditions in the region as a low level equilibrium of poverty, non-development, civil conflict and lack of faith in political leadership.³¹

The region does have massive potential for growth that is largely untapped, the World Bank acknowledges the recent economic development, population growth, growing educational opportunities, new livelihoods, and increasing interaction between the northeast region, mainland India and the nations southeastern neighbors, have started to ‘change the social and economic fabric and the outlook on developmental challenges.’³² However, the misallocation of funds from the center to the state, which include 10 percent of the annual budgets of the central government ministries since 1998, has been a failed attempt by the center to broker peace in the region. As between 20 and 55 percent of northeastern states GDP comes in transfers from the center, which keeps the economy afloat, but turns local governments into client states surrounded by autonomous areas ruled by former insurgents, while armed gangs wage guerilla campaigns at the margins.³³

³⁰ Vision Document | Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, North East India."Vision Document | Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, North East India. Government of India, n.d. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. Pg 4<<http://mdoner.gov.in/content/vision-document>>.

³¹ "Development and Growth in Northeast India: The Natural Resources, Water, and Environment Nexus." Worldbank.org. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ The World Bank, n.d. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. Pg 16<http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01062/WEB/0__CO-13.HTM>. Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region’s website

³² Ibid

³³ "A Neglected Crisis." The Economist. The Economist Newspaper, 25 Aug. 2012. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.economist.com/node/21560901>>.

The Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India has said that funds to the northeastern states add up to more than what India gets from the World Bank and the Asian development bank³⁴. This highlights the failure of the center to form a sustainable relationship that is not another form of patriarchal policy making such as what the British adopted to administer quasi control over these autonomous parts of British India. The Institute of Conflict Management (ICM), a think tank, lists 26 active armed groups in the region, and 10 organizations proscribed by India's home ministry on their insurgent radar, in addition to armed separatists being active in five of the seven states. However the Indian government refers to the conflict in the region as “low intensity” and counts their counter insurgency tactics as a success due to the decreasing fatalities, which have been falling in number since 2008 to under a 100, where in the 2000s the death toll was over 1,000 a year.³⁵

However, due to the root causes of these insurgencies persisting until today, the region is seen as politically unstable, which indirectly affects the economy of the region. The growth rate of the northeastern states has been below the national average. The main growth of the region is still stuck in between transforming it from a non-state space into state controlled spaces that provide the background of the regions’ main conflicts. Massive immigration from other parts of the sub continent for nearly a century, due to indigenous settlers from central India (who are different to the indigenous natives of the northeast) being brought to work on tea plantations managed by the British during colonial rule, coupled with significant cross border migration from Bangladesh (since the 1971 liberation war from Pakistan) make immigration a central theme presiding over the ethnic tensions in the region, which have over the years been more about land control stemming from

³⁴ Cited in Baruah, Sanjib. "Introduction." *Post Frontier Blues: Towards a New Policy Framework for the Northeast India*. New Delhi: Center for Policy Research, 2007. 1-80.Pg78 Print. East-West Center Washington Pg 17. (Mohan 2003)

³⁵ Sahni.Ajai "Survey of Conflicts & Resolution in India's Northeast Ajai Sahni#." *Survey of Conflict & Resolution in India's Northeast*. Institute for Conflict Management, n.d. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume12/Article3.htm>>.

immigration intolerance rather than secession from India. Armed insurgency has been mainly provoked with the economic advantages it brings to rebel groups through rampant extortion, kidnappings and bribes which try to strong arm local politicians and industrialists giving them the power to wield local political influence and fund militias.³⁶

As Sanjib Baruah states in *Post Frontier Blues: Toward a New Policy Framework for Northeast India*, “The partition of India in 1947 could not suddenly change the logic of a frontier and turn off the flow of people from one of the subcontinents most densely populated areas to a relatively sparsely populated region, one regarded as open to new settlements, but now separated by an international border”. Policies to protect tribals, increased their sense of ethnic homelands and communities and the influx of immigration has increased the fear of becoming a minority in ones own home state. A root problem of the growth in armed insurgents that are only agitated with the lack of infrastructure, and employment.

With the idea of better integration within the country and Southeast Asia being the government’s policy for its vision of the northeast, as told in the northeastern region Vision 2020. It shows how there is a concerted effort in the past few years by the central and state government to end the regions geo-political isolation. The document in its vision statement shows this promise, as it recognizes that at the time of independence the region was among the most prosperous regions of India, and states its purpose to return the northeast region to the position of national economic eminence it held till a few decades ago. The documents highlights how an imaginative leap in foreign policy, defense policy and internal security policy, as much as investment, infrastructure and

³⁶ Das,Dr. Pushpita Associate Fellow, IDSA. "North East India: Strategic and Developmental Imperatives." *North East India: Strategic and Developmental Imperatives*. Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), Indian Ministry of Defence, Web. 26 Apr. 2015.
<<http://www.idsa.in/event/NorthEastIndiaStrategicandDevelopmentalImperatives.html>>

commercial policy, is required to put it on the path to accelerated and inclusive growth.³⁷ With migration from the northeast region to the mainland increasing and vice versa, more dialogue is being created through government commissions to look into the reasons the northeast region is suffering a ‘developmental lag.’³⁸ For this it is important to look at the historical formation of the states, and the two policies that have hindered this development, to gauge what has been effective in integration and what has further increased the trust deficit between the region and the Indian government.

State Formation of The Northeast Region

It is misleading to think of violence erupting in the northeast to overnight succession demands, post- independence. The northeast has had a history of asking for separation alongside ethnic territorial lines, as they were only fledgling parts of British India, and much left to rule on their own devices. The northeast region during the British colonial rule was carved out of the Bengal province to form the Assam province in 1874, and was seen as a adjunct subordinate area that formed its own separate province comprised of various hill and plain tribes.

Being a difficult region to annex, the colonial administrators came up with two policies to exert their control over the region more efficiently. Firstly, by introducing the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873, the origin of what would be known as the Inner Line System. It was introduced on the pretext of protecting minority indigenous groups in the hill areas of Assam by restricting outsider’s entry, business activities, land transactions and settlement.³⁹ Secondly, going

³⁷ "Vision Document | Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, North East India."Vision Document | Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, North East India. Government of India, n.d. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. Pg 5<<http://mdoner.gov.in/content/vision-document>>.Pg 7

³⁸ Varma.Subodh "7 of 8 Northeast States Lag behind Average India Income." The Times of India. N.p., 2 Nov. 2009. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/7-of-8-Northeast-states-lag-behind-average-India-income/articleshow/5187537.cms>>.

³⁹ Inoue, Kyoko “Integration of the North East: the State Formation Process”, in Mayumi

along the lines of security for the native inhabitants, the hill areas of the province were demarcated into excluded areas and partially excluded areas. The former were to be directly ruled under British jurisdiction and the latter were given a system of limited representation under British administrative control. This policy sowed the seeds of separation and isolation in policy making towards the region, the British colonial government up until time of independence in 1947, treated the northeast separately and differently from other regions of British India and this created a problem for the national formation and integration into independent India⁴⁰.

Because they were tribal dominated these excluded areas were not integrated as much with the mainland due to them being 'protected enclaves'. They were demarcated sites due to British colonial efforts to allow tribals to practice 'customary practices', including clan-based rules of land allocation.⁴¹ This led to restrictive laws such as the Excluded Areas Act, the Partially Excluded Areas Act and Inner Line Regulations, which have been amended but are still used in parts of the northeast region. A Naga scholar rightly observes, "these regulations enabled the administration to control the people in the hills while appearing to show paternalistic concern for their customs and livelihood."⁴² Ever since independence, the northeast was seen through a security lens, as a buffer zone to protect the mainland of India from foreign threats. It was decidedly kept out of the democratic decision making process, as after independence the policy makers of new India, sought to nationalize the space and re-integrate it into mainland India.

Murayama, Kyoko Inoue and Sanjoy Hazarika (eds.), *Sub-Regional Relations in the Eastern South Asia: with Special Focus on India's North Eastern Region*, Joint Research Programme, Series N0-133, Ide-Jetro, 2005, pp. 20.

⁴⁰ Ibid pg 16

⁴¹ Baruah, Sanjib. "Towards a Political Sociology of Durable Disorder." *Durable Disorder: Understanding the Politics of Northeast India*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2005. pg11. Print.

⁴² Sharma.Chandan Kr. "The State and the Ethnicisation of Space in Northeast India."Published in *Shifting Terrain: Conflict Dynamics in North East India* . Eds. N.G. Mahanta and D.Gogoi. DVS Publishers, Guwahati/Delhi., 2012. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. Pg2

Independent India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru in an opening speech of the 1952, Scheduled Tribes and Schedules Areas Conference, spoke of this practice of segregation by the British for their commercial and security interests and how it manifested in alienation of the northeast region towards mainland India. In particular, Nehru addressed the policy of segregation that prevented the spread of the freedom movement in other parts of the country, a cause that could have potentially united pan-India against a common enemy,

“For half a century, we have had a struggle for freedom in this country culminating in the achievement of independence. We must remember that this experience of hundreds of millions of Indian people did not extend to the tribal area; we were not allowed to go by the old British authorities, so that our freedom movement did not reach these people. The result is that we have been psychologically prepared for the last thirty, forty or fifty years for various changes in India, while those frontier areas were not so psychologically prepared. In fact, they were prepared the other way by British officers or sometimes the missionaries who were there. The missionaries did very good work there and I am full of praise for them, but politically speaking they did not particularly like changes in India. In fact, just when changes were coming in India, there was a movement in northeastern India, supported by many foreigners there, to encourage those people of the north-east to form separate and independent States.”⁴³

Indian leaders after independence were acutely aware of this alienation that had to be dealt with, resulting in the northeast getting ‘special status’ which translated into different governing laws than the rest of the region. Nothing highlights this constructed space of special status, as the fact that seven different states, have come together to be known in the Indian state construction as the northeast. No other region in India is known exclusively by their geographic location in the Indian subcontinent. A reason that makes the national public perception of the region, a mesh of tribes and ethnic conflict, rather than understanding ground realities of socially constructed borders and demarcations along nuanced ethnicities.

This reorganization of states between 1947-1956 saw fourteen states created based on language characteristics, in the northeast region however the only state to receive division on

⁴³ Excerpt from Nehru's speech at the opening session of the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Areas Conference, New Delhi, 7 June 1952 (Cited from copy of speech available with Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi).

linguistic basis was Assam with the rest of the statehood demands being rejected. The demands of minority groups for a Nagaland state to be created out of Assam and for separation of the Mizo areas from Assam were not met. Ethnic groups in various areas, especially the people of the hills expressed their dissatisfaction of the reorganization of states, by demanding autonomy and establishment of a separate state.⁴⁴ This was the root of secessionist demands that led to some groups to taking up arms and anti government movements escalating into low intensity armed conflicts.⁴⁵ It was whenever demands by groups could not be diplomatically solved between the government of India and the representatives of these armed factions that the government was easily pushed to labeling the area “disturbed” and sending the armed forces to quell dissent and consolidate the area, without much thought on bridging ethnic demands of statehood and political autonomy.

Independent India's first years were marked with turbulent events – a massive exchange of population with Pakistan, the Indo-Pakistani War of 1947 and the integration of over 500 princely states to form a united nation. The regional composition of the northeastern region at the time of independence consisted of the “Assam plains of the old Assam Province, the hill districts, the North Eastern Frontier Tracts (NEFT) of the North Eastern borderland, and the princely states of Manipur and Tripura, both of which opted for merger with India in 1949.”⁴⁶

The Indian Government, however, continued the erroneous organization of the states, based on British Colonial rule era laws and regulations further dividing tribal groups and their interests. As

⁴⁴ Inoue, Kyoko “Integration of the North East: the State Formation Process”, in Mayumi

⁴⁵ Chadha Lt Col Vivek “Low Intensity Conflicts in India: An Analysis.” [Http://www.ipcs.org/](http://www.ipcs.org/). International Terrorism Watch Project, Observer Research Foundation, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies., 2005. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.ipcs.org/books-review/india/low-intensity-conflicts-in-india-an-analysis-2006.html>>.

⁴⁶ Inoue, Kyoko “Integration of the North East: the State Formation Process”, in Mayumi Murayama, Kyoko Inoue and Sanjoy Hazarika (eds.), *Sub-Regional Relations in the Eastern South Asia: with Special Focus on India’s North Eastern Region*, Joint Research Programme, Series N0-133, Ide-Jetro, 2005, pp. 23.

states in the northeast were originally part of a Greater Assam, the Indian constitution promulgated in 1950, in the form of the Sixth Schedule for the administration of “Tribal Areas” were meant to protect the tribal people who were living in pockets all over the country. It was applied in the northeast but its counter effects, were seen when the four states which first gained statehood (Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram) were the same states to which entry was regulated during the British colonial period.

The first of the hill tribes to achieve statehood were the Nagas, and the government mostly were pushed to this decision by the Indo-China war of 1962 which made them fear the security situation escalating near a hostile neighboring foreign country. Consequently, this fight for autonomy set the tone for subsequent tribes to band together and take up arms to get their demands met. So, from fractured parts of the northeast frontier agencies, to union territory status to gaining its own statehood, the northeast adopted its own means to create autonomy and with the center adopting military solutions, the region invited stronger resistance, pushing the government to thwart resistance with counter-insurgency.

The subsequent states that broke off from Assam, and now form the “seven sisters’ states”, were even before Independence, the home of several indigenous cultural and political organizations representing the interests of hill peoples. After a failure of autonomy, which came about from a lack of political representation and rightful ethnic homelands given to these tribes, some of these groups pursuing political activities, including protest against unity with Assam, a demand of autonomy within Assam and the loudest cry was for the demand of their own statehood, based on ethno-linguistic lines. Subsequently, Nagaland in 1963, Meghalaya in 1972, Arunachal Pradesh in 1975 and Mizoram in 1987 were formed out of Assam. Manipur and Tripura remained as Union Territories of India between 1956 until 1972 when they attained fully-fledged statehood.

Most of the states achieved a peaceful transition to statehood compared to Nagaland, which required the armed forces to step into the area. Meghalaya became a state in 1972 and the movement was conducted within the constitutional framework of India; where the two ethnic hill tribes within the new state (Khasi and Garos) inhabited their own territory in the hills and, in such a case the central government was able to take an accommodating stance. This was also the case in Tripura and Manipur, which were princely states that peacefully opted to join India in 1949 and from union territories became fully-fledged states in 1972.

In the case of Mizoram, it was more along the lines of Nagaland statehood formation, where the government began by attempting to suppress the Mizo's movement by military force and then reached an agreement with the Mizo National Front in 1972. Consequently, Mizoram from the status of an excluded area during the British time went through the transition of being a union territory and attained statehood in 1987. Two points important in the secession to statehood for Mizoram, is the famine between 1959-1961 that intensified discontent towards the Indian government, and the separate status as a central government administrative agency that Nagaland received due to its extremist armed policies that resulted in being the first state to achieve statehood out of the Assam province.

In the case of Arunachal Pradesh, the main concern was its boundaries that it shared with China. As it made the unsettled border area acquire military importance for the central government and was therefore integrated into Assam at the time of independence and upgraded to union territory status in 1972, and in 1982 became its own state. The interesting point of observation in Arunachal Pradesh becoming its own state is that it shows how the northeast region was always seen in terms of a security dilemma. Due to the strategic sphere of influence, the military always had a strong influence in the administration of the region, and its relationship to its neighbors coupled

with internal disturbance led to the central government taking direct control in the form of a governor to supervise the state. Achieving statehood for Arunachal Pradesh could also be seen as a move by the Indian government aimed at indicating to China that national integration was being achieved even in the frontier region of the northeast.⁴⁷

Until the independence of India, it was still being decided to which dominion the Assam province and the excluded and partial areas were belonging to, making it a relatively new frontier. It is crucial to realize that state building and nation building with the mainland and the northeast only begun with British withdrawal from the subcontinent, therefore even though merger with India was widely accepted, there were some British officials who entertained the idea of a ‘crown colony’ and wanted to see the excluded areas governed as a separate state. It is important to note that it was not mainland Indians or northeastern natives who decided their future, but rather Lord Mountbatten the last governor general of India, who decided in June 1947 that Assam and the excluded areas in the northeast should belong to independent India. It goes to show that even before independence there were calls for an exploration of the possibility of establishing a separate political entity especially among the hill ethnic groups such as the Nagas and Mizos.⁴⁸

The integration of the northeast and its process of state formation demonstrates that the region was prone to demand autonomy, as it had and never been a region completely united under one leadership making the Indian administration another ‘external agent’ or ‘colonial power’ governing them.⁴⁹ In regards to the economy post independence, with the India-china border

⁴⁷ Inoue, Kyoko “Integration of the North East: the State Formation Process”, in Mayumi Murayama, Kyoko Inoue and Sanjoy Hazarika (eds.), *Sub-Regional Relations in the Eastern South Asia: with Special Focus on India’s North Eastern Region*, Joint Research Programme, Series N0-133, IDE-JETRO, 2005, pp. 24.

⁴⁸ Ibid. Some examples are the “Independent North-East” plan and the “Crown colony” plan promoted by the British who had been engaged in work in the Northeast (Reid 1996:110; Coupland 1944:164-165)

⁴⁹ Das, Samir Kumar. *Conflict and Peace in India's Northeast: The Role of Civil Society*. 42nd ed. Vol. Policy Studies. Washington, D.C.: East-West Center Washington, 2007. www.eastwestcenter.org. East West Center

conflicts the region became a strategic national security zone brewing an unhealthy administrative and financial relationship with the center, weakening its chances to become a developmental economic zone. As it became locked in a nexus of armed groups, the armed forces and governmental officials whose weak leadership made the political climate unstable decreasing the ability for sustainable economic growth.

The political climate was tense as any indigenous movement demanding any amount of autonomy were considered “anti-national” and became a “security problem”, and thus suppression became the response for resistance and resistance was countered with oppressive policies that laid the foundation for creating a trust deficit with the government of India. It is no wonder that every state in the northeast except Sikkim, has a number of armed insurgents in the state, four of these seven states (Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura) have witnessed scales of conflict that between 1990 and 2001 could be characterized as low intensity conflicts by the government.⁵⁰

Laws: Inner Line Permit

The fraught relationship between the northeast region and the central government in the mainland has been characterized with laws that have excluded rather than integrated the region to the mainland, an example of this being the Inner Line Permit. It was one of the reasons by which areas in the Assam province before independence, were administered under “excluded areas” and “partially excluded areas” leading to a policy of separation and isolation that carried on post independence.

Washington Project on Internal Conflicts and State-Building Challenges in Asia. Web. Pg8<<http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs/ps042.pdf>>.

⁵⁰ Baruah, Sanjib. "Introduction." Post Frontier Blues: Towards a New Policy Framework for the Northeast India. New Delhi: Center for Policy Research, 2007. 1-80.Pg15 Print. East-West Center Washington

Together in this forced union of areas once considered “excluded” and the newly independent government of India, an issue that became a catalyst for groups demanding autonomy: was the population inflow. It created political tension between the natives of the northeast region and the migrant workforce that came from outside because of the economic development of the region during the British period. It is interesting to delve deeper into the roots and reception of this colonial policy, as immigration remains at the heart of the conflicts in the northeast.⁵¹ As B.P Singh author of *North-East India: Demography, Culture and Identity Crisis* puts it,

“It is essential to realize that the widespread identity crisis in north-east India has been caused by the large-scale migration of population from outside the region during the past one hundred years, and the total dependence of people on the land and the States’ apparatus for a livelihood. The phenomenon has made the local population feel outnumbered and swamped by people of different cultural origins. The failure of various sections of the migrant population to adapt themselves to the local language, customs and traditions has further accentuated the identity crisis.”⁵²

The Inner Line Permit is a travel permit handed out by the Indian Government to Indian and foreign citizens wishing to travel to certain restricted areas.⁵³ Under Section 2 of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873 the permit is required for visit to Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland, with conditions and restrictions differing from state to state.⁵⁴ The permits are a remnant of India’s colonial past, as this law is an offshoot of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations, 1873. The regulation protected the British East India Company’s interest in the tea, oil and elephant trade by prohibiting British subjects from entering into these Protected Areas (to

⁵¹ Das, Samir Kumar. *Conflict and Peace in India's Northeast: The Role of Civil Society*. 42nd ed. Vol. Policy Studies. Washington, D.C.: East-West Center Washington, 2007. www.eastwestcenter.org. East West Center Washington Project on Internal Conflicts and State-Building Challenges in Asia. Web. Pg 8

⁵² *North-East India: Demography, Culture and Identity Crisis* by B.P Singh, *modern Asian Studies*. Vol. 21, No. 2 (1987), pp. 162. Published by: Cambridge University Press.

⁵³ Under the foreigners protected Areas Permit (PAP) issued under the foreigners act of 1946, all areas falling between the ‘inner line’ as defined in the said order (line defined by ministry of home affairs) and the international border of the state have been declared as protected area, which as of now are only applicable in demarcated parts of Arunachal Pradesh.

⁵⁴ Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, and Office of The Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India. *Entry Restrictions NER*. Accessed on 26th april <http://www.mdoner.gov.in/content/inner-line-permit>

prevent them from establishing any commercial venture that could rival the company's agents). The word "British subjects or other" was changed to citizen of India or any class of such citizens in 1950. In the British period it was also seen as a traffic regulation, it was done keeping in mind the separation of hill areas and low plains of the state, which were deemed by the British to be on the periphery of their administrative rule in the subcontinent and the idea of the permit was used as a facade to 'extend protection to different tribes' but was mainly to minimize 'outsiders entry, business activities, land transactions and settlement.'⁵⁵

Despite the fact that the ILP was originally created by the British to safeguard their commercial interests it continues to be used in India, officially to protect tribal cultures in northeastern India.⁵⁶ However, the permit system has been met with much debate, as citizens of the northeast want the permit, to protect against illegal immigrants from neighboring countries, who mostly come in search of employment and are used as 'vote bank' politics in India.⁵⁷ The other reason cited by the Indian government of the continued use of the policy is giving indigenous tribal people in northeast their rights over land and preserving their heritage such as preserving local languages and customs. The government however uses this to control the inflow of mainland tourists to the region and abuses the citizens of India's, basic right to travel and settle freely in the country, not to mention allowing four of seven states, to restrict entry, the central government frequently faces demands from groups in Meghalaya, Assam, and Manipur to institute a similar

⁵⁵ Inoue, Kyoko "Integration of the North East: the State Formation Process", in Mayumi Murayama, Kyoko Inoue and Sanjoy Hazarika (eds.), *Sub-Regional Relations in the Eastern South Asia: with Special Focus on India's North Eastern Region*, Joint Research Programme, Series N0-133, IDE-JETRO, 2005, pp. 21.

⁵⁶ ChandraAbhimanyu. "China Urged to Accept Arunachal as Part of India, but Indians Can't Enter State without Permits." *Scroll.in*. N.p., 17 Sept. 2014. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.scroll.in/article/679148/China-urged-to-accept-Arunachal-as-part-of-India,-but-Indians-can't-enter-state-without-permits>>.

⁵⁷ A system whereby politicians reach out to minority groups with their interests in mind, to gain votes to keep them in power.

system in their states. It is used by both groups of trying to hold economic and political power, but its biggest regression lies in its inadvertent promotion of a policy of segregation.

On February 4th, 2005, The Hindustan Times, an English language daily print publication, reported that some states of the Northeast wanted the easing of the permit for foreign tourists but not for Indians, their reason being they believed ‘indians’ would be less likely to visit the Northeast.⁵⁸

At the moment most states have eased entry rules in to areas where the inner line permit is required however, it goes to show how this invisible line which separated the more ‘civilized areas’ from ‘tribal dominated lands’, has led to a defining ‘otherization’. Resulting in people from the mainland with restrictive access having a notion of the northeast region being tribal and hostile to outsiders, and within the northeast mutual suspicion being the key element between the people from mainland and the northeast. Arijit Sen, in his article ‘Marginal on the map: Hidden Wars and Hidden media in Northeast India’, explains this divide further and how it reflects in the media,

“This racial profiling has high risk consequences and leads to an ‘otherization’ of people living in the region and a denial of nationality and its benefits. It is this margin-mains tram perspective that drives representations of the region in the media. There still remains an invisible line between the Northeast and the rest of India.”⁵⁹

The notion of the social fabric and culture of the region being exploited and tarnished by mainlanders, adds to the disengagement of the mainland to the region. Importance here given to students, journalists, teachers, healthcare providers and civil society advocates who would also require a permit to enter. The restriction and inflow of information from the region and vice-versa is a condition marred by the fact that citizens of India are deterred in traveling to the region, as they

⁵⁸Cited in SenArijit . "Marginal On The Map: Hidden Wars And Hidden Media In Northeast India." (2011): . Reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk. Gerda Henkel Foundation. Web.Pg19

⁵⁹Reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk. Gerda Henkel Foundation. Web. Pg1-61

would require the same amount of effort to travel to a neighboring country, as inside of their own. Including the fact that there are places outside of the northeast that are tribal dominated, that have no such system and attract tourism due to their natural bio diversity, and tribal culture, goes to show that 'protection' might be disadvantageous, as tourism would bring in for starters employment and much needed infrastructure to increase connectivity, both land, air and rail.

Taken one step further, the inner line permit is just for Indian nationals however, the Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order, 1958 applies to all foreign nationals where a protected area means any border area falling beyond the inner line, and restricting access and stay, except and in accordance with a permit issued by the Central Government or any Officer authorized by the Central Government in this behalf. The following are a list of travel requirements of foreign nationals,

- Tourists have to travel in groups of at least 4
- They have to travel with a registered travel agent
- In some areas only certain entry/exit points are allowed. In certain areas non-Indians cannot enter at all
- Citizens of Pakistan, Bangladesh, China and Myanmar can get the PAP only with approval of the Ministry of Home Affairs⁶⁰

The duration of the trip needs to be 10 days, after which you have the option of reapplying to get an extension of 7 days. An interesting note on press freedom with this permit is that if you are a foreign journalist who registers and gets a card issued by the Press Information Bureau of the Government of India shall not be required to obtain the permit, clearly implying that if you are a journalist, they want you to state it.

Mainlanders who travel or immigrate to the northeast region similarly feel the discrimination experienced by northeasterners when they travel outside of the region. This in part could be because of the restriction of free movement by the Inner Line Permit imposed on some parts of the

⁶⁰ Ministry of Home Affairs. "Foreigners Protected Areas Order, 1958." Inner Line Permit (n.d.): n. pag. [Http://www.mdoner.gov.in/](http://www.mdoner.gov.in/). Government of India. Web.

region. In 2011, after 138 years, the Indian government removed the permit system on an experimental basis for a year from all Inner Line areas except Arunachal Pradesh.⁶¹ In the North Eastern Region Vision 2020, which was published by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region in 2008, stated the need to improve both domestic and foreign tourism flow to the region to boost development, “there is no doubt that easing Restricted Area Permits and Inner Line Permits will greatly improve tourism.”⁶² The document which was written by the north east council, seemed to hint at the dichotomy of this colonial era law, which Sanjib Baruah in his article ‘Dividing Line’ in The Indian Express, an English language daily, aptly captures,

“The disconnect between the original rationale for those institutions and modern realities grows wider each day. The inner line produces a major structural dilemma for the 21st century practice of citizenship. Those that are mobile and find their way into areas beyond the inner line are defined as outsiders. Further, mobility on the part of those considered native to that zone is discouraged because preferences that go with native status are made specific to habitats to which particular groups are fixed.”⁶³

The segregation of people between the mainland and the region is significant; as it is reflected in the way one views the other. The word ‘chinky’ which was banned earlier this year was used as a derogatory term, applied casually towards people from northeastern due to their East Asian features, and similarly in the northeast region, words to denote outsiders were used to refer to mainlanders such as, “bahirot manu”(Assam), “mayang”(Manipur), “vai”(Mizoram), “bahar manu(Nagaland)”, “tephreima”(Angamis in Nagaland), “tsiimar”(Aos in Nagaland).⁶⁴ In addition, the term outsiders until 1980, was either not used at all or was used simultaneously with the term “outsiders”. It was only in 1980 that the Assam Literary Society (Asom Sahitya Sabha), one of the

⁶¹Cited in Sen,Arijit . "Marginal On The Map: Hidden Wars And Hidden Media In Northeast India." (2011) . Reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk. Gerda Henkel Foundation. Web. Pg19

⁶² "Vision Document | Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, North East India."Vision Document | Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, North East India. Government of India, n.d. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. Pg 5<<http://mdoner.gov.in/content/vision-document>>.Pg 9

⁶³ Baruah, Sanjib. "Dividing Line." The Indian Express. The Indian Express Ltd, 03 Oct. 2014. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/dividing-line/2/>>.

⁶⁴Cited in Sen,Arijit "Marginal On The Map: Hidden Wars And Hidden Media In Northeast India." (2011): . Reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk. Gerda Henkel Foundation. Web. Pg20

organizations leading the Assam Movement, came forward and changed ‘bahiragats’ (outsiders) into ‘bideshis’ (foreigners). It was a significant move: while outsiders may be bona fide Indian citizens, foreigners are not.⁶⁵

This goes on to show how the ethnic cleavage between the mainland and the northeast region, due to colonial era laws of policing further the divide to see each other as being part of the same nation, and develop a collective idea of being citizens of the same Indian state. With the region coming to the forefront and councils such as the one compiling the 2020 Vision Document understanding the lack of integration with the mainland, showcase how a concerted effort by the central government to catch up on the ‘developmental lag’ post independence on the region, begins with revamping the archaic and draconian laws that hold back the region from maximizing its potential for empowerment, both economic and political.

Laws : Armed Forces Special Powers Act

In reading the published words surrounding the northeast of India, the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 and the Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers (Amendment) Act, 1972 are two laws that have pierced the civic and political nature of the region. The law itself has its roots in the British colonial framework – the armed special powers ordinance of 1942 was promulgated by the British to suppress the freedom struggle of Indians such as the Quit India Movement. These ordinances were replaced by the armed forces (Special Powers) Act 1948.

The Act confers on an officer, warrant officer, or a non commissioned officer, or any other person of equivalent rank of the armed forces the power to:

⁶⁵ Das, Samir Kumar. Conflict and Peace in India's Northeast: The Role of Civil Society. 42nd ed. Vol. Policy Studies. Washington, D.C.: East-West Center Washington, 2007. www.eastwestcenter.org. East West Center Washington Project on Internal Conflicts and State-Building Challenges in Asia. Web. Pg 11

- Fire upon or otherwise force, even to the point of causing death of any person disregarding orders against unlawful assembly.
- Arrest without a warrant.
- Enter and search premises.
- Destroy any arms dumps.
- Stop, search and seize any vehicle.

The Act also provides legal immunity to military personnel for their actions. A clause that has been a major cause for concern in civil society as it reduces transparency and confers immunity for the armed forces that participate in regular counter insurgency operations in the region.

The present Act was enacted by the Parliament in 1958 and it was known initially as Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers Act, 1958. The Act was preceded by an Ordinance called Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers Ordinance, 1958 promulgated by the President of India in 1958. The Act applied to the entire State of Assam and the Union Territory of Manipur. After the new States of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland came into being, the Act was appropriately adapted to apply to some areas in these States as well. The Act has not been made applicable to any other State in the country, with the exception of a nuanced law of similar caliber in Jammu and Kashmir, and briefly in Punjab to counter the Sikh militancy in the 1980s. The Act at present is in force in Assam, Nagaland, Manipur (except the Imphal municipal area); Tripura (40 police stations); the Tirap and Changlang districts of Arunachal Pradesh and a 20km belt in the states with a common border with Assam.⁶⁶

The law was deemed to be only in effect in “disturbed areas⁶⁷”, and for declaring an area as a disturbed there must be a grave situation of law and order, on the basis of which a governor or

⁶⁶ Cited in Ministry of Home affairs nodal webiste.Ministry of Devleopment of North East Region

⁶⁷ North East Network. "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women." Pakistan Horizon 47.3 (1994): 167-82.[Http://www.ohchr.org/](http://www.ohchr.org/). Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Web. 25 Apr. 2015. Pg 170<<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CEDAW/Womenconflictsituations/NorthEastNetwork.pdf>>.

administrator can form an opinion that an area is in such a dangerous condition that use of Armed Forces in aid of civil power is necessary.⁶⁸ The law has been invoked as a matter of routine policing of the public in the regions deemed 'disturbed' and from the narrative of the Indian state, has been touted as a success to reduce insurgency and as a deterrent to armed groups. However on a closer inspection of the Annual report of the home ministry for 2010-2011 we see that the areas that the Act extends to have dealt with low intensity conflicts and sporadic instances of violence, that could have been relegated to the police force of the state, not requiring the intrusion of the Armed Forces. As the report states how "Mizoram has continued to remain peaceful, Meghalaya has low intensity violence in some parts, Arunachal Pradesh had a spurt of incidences of violence" but notes how the state remains largely peaceful, Nagaland and Tripura, it states have declined in the violence profile."⁶⁹ This report goes to show how the Armed Forces are vague about the terms of what a disturbed area constitutes and even acknowledge that not all parts of the violence are directed to the government of India, but are born out of ethnic tribal clashes, which could be very well seen in various parts of India, that have a tendency towards sporadic instances of violence, which do not consequently demand the policing of public life by the armed forces on a daily basis.

Hiren Gohain in his article, "The North-East: Post Colonial Trauma?" describes the AFSPA in a chapter titled, 'Brutalization of Army', as the sweeping powers given to the military in an act that was originally calculated to suppress the Naga Rebellion, and now is applied liberally wherever in this region "insurgency raises its head."⁷⁰ The debate ranging about the role and effectiveness of AFSPA has two very clear but polarized sides - the army versus civil society, with both sides

⁶⁸ "Naga People'S Movement, Of Human ... vs Union Of India on 27 November, 1997."Supreme Court of India, n.d. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://indiankanoon.org/doc/1072165/>>.

⁶⁹ India, Government Of. "2009-2010 Annual Report." (n.d.): n. pag. Government of India. Web. <http://mha.nic.in/hindi/sites/upload_files/mhahindi/files/pdf/AR%28E%290910.pdf>.

⁷⁰ Gohain, Hiren. "Post-Colonial Trauma?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 41.43/44 (2006): 4537.JSTOR. Web. 26 Apr. 2015.pg1

speaking for the citizens who are collateral damage, and are caught in the crossfire between armed forces and insurgents.

Time and time again AFSPA has been hauled up for being the single biggest obstacle for development and change in the northeast since it curtails the very basic needs of people living under it. Sanjib Baruah in a chapter titled, 'Routine Emergencies: India's Armed Forces Special Powers Act', highlights the use of repressive methods used during counter insurgency that included, 'village regrouping' or the forced relocation of civilians in campus under close surveillance. These practices however have been successful in being seared on the collective public consciousness, so much so that even though village regrouping took place during the 1950s and 1960s, civilians on the receiving end, even decades later, remember "search operations, the starvation, the regime of curfews and the reduction of identity to a roll call and a piece of paper... and not the so-called campaigns for "hearts and minds."⁷¹

Army Response on AFSPA

The government of India has frequently said that it cannot take action to amend the AFSPA because of the opposition it faces from security forces. In February 2013, India's finance minister (and former home minister) said, "The army has taken a strong stand against any dilution of the AFSPA... We can't move forward because there is no consensus."⁷²

Army officials also routinely cite the need to protect the morale and integrity of the army as reason not to scrutinize allegations against army personnel. A retired, senior Indian diplomat told Amnesty International India in May 2013, "If the AFSPA goes, the army will have to go first. The

⁷¹ Baruah Sanjib "India Against Itself." Google Books. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1 June 1999. Web. 28 Apr. 2015. Pg xii.Preface.

⁷² Joshi,Sandeep "Army's Stand makes it harder to amend AFSPA: Chidambaram."February 7th 2013. The Hindu. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/armys-stand-makes-it-hard-toamend-afspa-chidambaram/article4386754.ece>

army knows that if the AFSPA is lifted, they'll be flooded with lawsuits, which are indeed bad for moral, if you deploy the Army, you give them immunity. That's the narrative the government has accepted from the Army." The brief then continues to investigate various sentiments from the side of the Army that makes the conversation demonstrate how impunity is going unchallenged. With the military occupation acting as barrier for the government to directly affect change and improve development: ensuring the people in the state remain hostile to the center.

Army officials have said that removing the impunity clause in cases of violence against women, as the Justice Verma Committee recommended, would have a "de-motivating" effect on army personnel. A former deputy Chief of Staff for the army, who was stationed in Manipur, wrote: "No military personnel would want to get involved in false civil cases and spend the next few years doing the rounds of civil courts where all the false evidence from the hostile local witnesses will be marshaled against them."⁷³

Although rights groups in Jammu and Kashmir and states in northeast have opposed human rights abuses, army officials have discredited any opposition saying that it is driven by a foreign agenda. An army officer writing in 2011 said, "There appears to be a concerted campaign on the part of some foreign-funded NGOs to demonize the Army and delegitimize its counter-insurgency and counter-terrorist operations."⁷⁴ The insistence of the army to operate their rule of law, in what they call disturbed areas, has gained attention by the larger English-language print press in India. Becoming one of the highest concerns of supporters of civil societies in India, but the Indian defense establishment has opposed even minor amendments to the law, despite the findings of

⁷³ Indian Defence Review. "Justice Verma Committee Report and AFSPA." Lt. Gen. Harwant Singh. 4th, February 2013. <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/justice-verma-committee-report-and-afspa/>

⁷⁴ Indian Defence Review. "Justice Verma Committee Report and AFSPA." Lt. Gen. Harwant Singh. 4th, February 2013. <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/justice-verma-committee-report-and-afspa/>

independent bodies in India and internationally that the law has resulted in numerous serious human rights violations over many years.

The main causes of objections for organizations such as Amnesty international and Human Rights Watch have stemmed from the law violating India's obligations under international human rights law, including the rights to life, to be protected from arbitrary arrest, and be free from torture and other ill-treatment, both international human rights organizations have pointed this out in annual reports regarding India.⁷⁵ International bodies have repeatedly recommended the repeal of the AFSPA. These include the United Nations Human Rights Committee and United Nation member states during India's Universal Periodic Review at the Human Rights Council in 2008. It has shed a spotlight in cases of violation that are directly in opposition to human rights treaties that India is a signatory of, especially the provisions protecting soldiers from prosecution, which deny victims of abuses the right to a remedy because it forbids prosecution of soldiers without approval from the central government, which is rarely granted.⁷⁶ It goes to show how repeated efforts to eradicate the Act have only resulted in the judiciary being able to modestly modify the report. As the State is constantly looking for permission from the Army, in a cycle that begs the question, if the central government can even envision the future of the northeast region without a policy to control and police it.

Legal Representation of AFSPA

Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch, in their 2011 article urging for the repeal of AFSPA, directly addresses then-Prime Minister Manmohan Singh who had made a promise to

⁷⁵ "Briefing: The Armed Forces Special Powers Act: A Renewed Debate in India on Human Rights and National Security." Amnesty International India (2013): 1-17. Amnesty USA. Amnesty International India. Web. Pg 4<<http://www.amnestyusa.org/sites/default/files/asa200422013en.pdf>>.

⁷⁶ "India: Repeal Armed Forces Special Powers Act." Human Rights Watch, 19 Oct. 2011. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/10/19/india-repeal-armed-forces-special-powers-act>>.

repeal the act following the 2004 death in military custody of Thangjam Manorama Devi, a Manipuri woman suspected of being a militant, which caused violent protests in Manipur.⁷⁷ Singh set up a judicial inquiry to examine the law and promised to abide by its conclusions. The committee, led by Justice Jeevan Reddy was submitted in 2005, found that while the security situation required continued deployment of the army, the AFSPA should be repealed and replaced by a more humane law. The committee referred to the Act, as a “symbol of oppression, and object of hate, and an instrument of discrimination and highhandedness”, however the committee's report was not acted upon by the government, even with the United Nations Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination in Geneva stamping the Act as ‘racist’.⁷⁸ This was not the first time the Act was pulled up in courts to challenge its constitutional validity and effectively in quelling dissent, in 1997 the United Nations Human Rights committee pointed out the “climate of impunity” provided by the Act, and since then, the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions (2006), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2007) and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2007), have all called for an end to the AFSPA.

The first legal document challenging AFSPA is the Naga People's Movement versus Union of India (27th November 1997). The Supreme Court of India in this case upheld the Constitutional validity of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act.⁷⁹ However amendments to the act were added under the leadership of late Chief Justice Jagdish Verma, who was popularly known for his judicial innovation alongside judicial activism and fundamental rights protection. The Institute for Defense

⁷⁷ "An Analysis of Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958." An Analysis of Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958. The Asian Centre for Human Rights, Mar. 2005. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.pucl.org/Topics/Law/2005/afspa.htm> (Peoples Union for Civil Liberties)>.

⁷⁸ Human Rights Watch. “These Fellows Must Be Eliminated” Relentless Violence and Impunity in Manipur. Afspa Rep. N.p.: n.p., 2008. Web.

⁷⁹ "Naga People'S Movement, Of Human ... vs Union Of India on 27 November, 1997 Supreme Court of India, n.d. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://indiankanoon.org/doc/1072165/>>.

Studies and Analyses in their review titled the, 'The Armed Forces Special Powers Act: The Debate', points out how it is of importance to note that "many violations of the law were removed by the legal sanctity accorded to the 'Dos' and 'Don'ts' by the Supreme Court in the Naga People's Movement case."⁸⁰ These include: adherence to procedures for arrest; handing over the accused to the police within 24 hours; as well as the upholding of the immunity clause.

Present State of AFSPA

From reading the literature and examining the two committees set up to review AFSPA including the Jeevan Reddy Commission and the Santosh Hedge Commission on Manipur Encounter Deaths the following seem to be the most vital arguments that have been given for the retention of AFSPA.⁸¹ First, India is fighting low intensity wars in the state and, therefore, AFSPA enables the security forces to fight both internal and externally abetted forces that threaten not only the security of the state but also of the country. Second, the army has its military establishments, intelligence set-up and even convoys that pass through areas where AFSPA is not operative.

Therefore, the security of both men and material require the legal safeguards and operational powers of AFSPA. Third, cases of hot pursuit could well take troops from areas where the law is in force to where it may have been revoked, thus leading to legal complications, as well as allowing terrorists to create safe havens for themselves. Fourth, the army, in its security assessment, sees a rise in terrorist violence in the coming years, given the availability of trained and willing terrorist

⁸⁰ Cited in Armed Forces Special Powers Act: The Debate." Armed Forces Special Powers Act: The Debate. Ed. Vivek Chadha. Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), Indian Ministry of Defence, n.d. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.idsa.in/monograph/ArmedForcesSpecialPowersActTheDebate.html>>.

⁸¹ "Human Rights Law Network." Santosh Hegde Commission Submits Report on Manipur Extra Judicial Killings. Human Rights Law Network, n.d. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.hrln.org/hrln/criminal-justice/reports/1501-santosh-hegde-commission-submits-report-on-manipur-extra-judicial-killings.h>

cadres in Pakistan, who are more over likely to increasingly turn their attention towards India after the de-induction of US-led forces in Afghanistan.⁸²

Under these circumstances, the army feels that once AFSPA is revoked, political compulsions will not allow its re-introduction even if the situation in the state worsens. The example of Imphal, which has seen a spurt in militant activities since the lifting of the disturbed area status, is cited as proof. Maj. General Umong Sethi,'s arguments are based on these premises.⁸³ Lt General Satish Nambiar, while highlighting the need for review in view of the domestic perceptions, feels that "It is possible to state with some conviction that in 99 per cent, possibly 99.9 per cent, or maybe even 99.99 per cent cases, our forces take every precaution to ensure that there is no loss of life to innocent civilians or collateral damage to property."⁸⁴

Major General Nilendra Kumar, highlights the need for humanizing AFSPA. He recommends a number of measures, within the 'Armed Forces Special Powers Act: The Debate' constitutional and legal framework of existing laws to build in the necessary checks and balances. Considering these developments, according to changes in the AFSPA regime in the foreseeable future seem to be a possibility or at least an amendment that push the military to the border and make accountability in the army a reality.

However, it is safe to predict that changes will not be substantive says Sanjib Baruah in his article. 'Most of the powers under the AFSPA would probably be retained in one form or another,

⁸² Cited in Armed Forces Special Powers Act: The Debate." Ed. Vivek Chadha. Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), Indian Ministry of Defence, n.d. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. Pg 42<<http://www.idsa.in/monograph/ArmedForcesSpecialPowersActTheDebate.html>>.

⁸³ Ibid Pg 38

⁸⁴ Ibid pg 5

as has been the case with changes to other controversial security laws in India.⁸⁵ The recovery of this space will not be an easy task unless the civil society groups wield some social power and establish themselves as a force that is too important to be ignored by rivaling parties.⁸⁶ Reforming civil society, in other words, is the key to ensuring its effectiveness in peacemaking in the Northeast. Both the state and civil society have roles to play in this regard. Otherwise, it will be impossible to break the vicious cycle of conflict and peace.

⁸⁵ Baruah, Sanjib "Routine Emergencies: India's Armed Forces Special Powers Act." *Civil Wars in South Asia: State, Sovereignty, Development*. By Aparna Sundar and Nandini Sundar. New Delhi: Sage, 2014. 189-211. Print.

⁸⁶ Das, Gurudas, N. Bijoy Singh, and C.J Thomas, eds. 2005. *Indo-Myanmar Border Trade: Status, Problems and Potentials*, New Delhi: Akansha. (Das 2007: 52 – 65)

Chapter 2: Northeast and the Indian Media

This chapter will try to analyze the print and digital media coverage by the national English speaking press of mainland India towards its northeast region. This will be done through describing the coverage of media cases that reached mainland consciousness, and provide a back-story to understand the key issues that caused such extensive media coverage. In the process I hope to understand the relationship between the coverage or non –coverage of minorities and peripheral regions and how this contributes to alienation felt by northerners towards mainland India, both politically and socio-culturally. To do this I selected three media coverage's, which had a high circulation and viewership rating and received political attention due to this reason. The first one being digital, a promotional advertisement that was circulated massively both online and gained coverage by the print English language press of the mainland, being featured on prominent newspapers, television and online media. The second and third were two cases regarding northeastern youth in the mainland that received media coverage in the print English language press of the mainland, and subsequently highlighted the alienation felt by northerners in the mainland.

Importance of Media in Influencing Policy

The laws governing the northeast region, such as the Inner Line Permit and AFSPA, serve to police the region and in the eyes of the central government, quell dissent. However, with government appointed councils and policymakers turning to look at the region with an economic lens to push development. A fourth estate of democracy is being called upon to bolster integration with the mainland – the media. The mainland news both print and digital is located in the country's capital, the seat of central government and parliament where policy makers debate and make key decisions. A reason why this section of the press is often called the 'national press'; as it reflects the

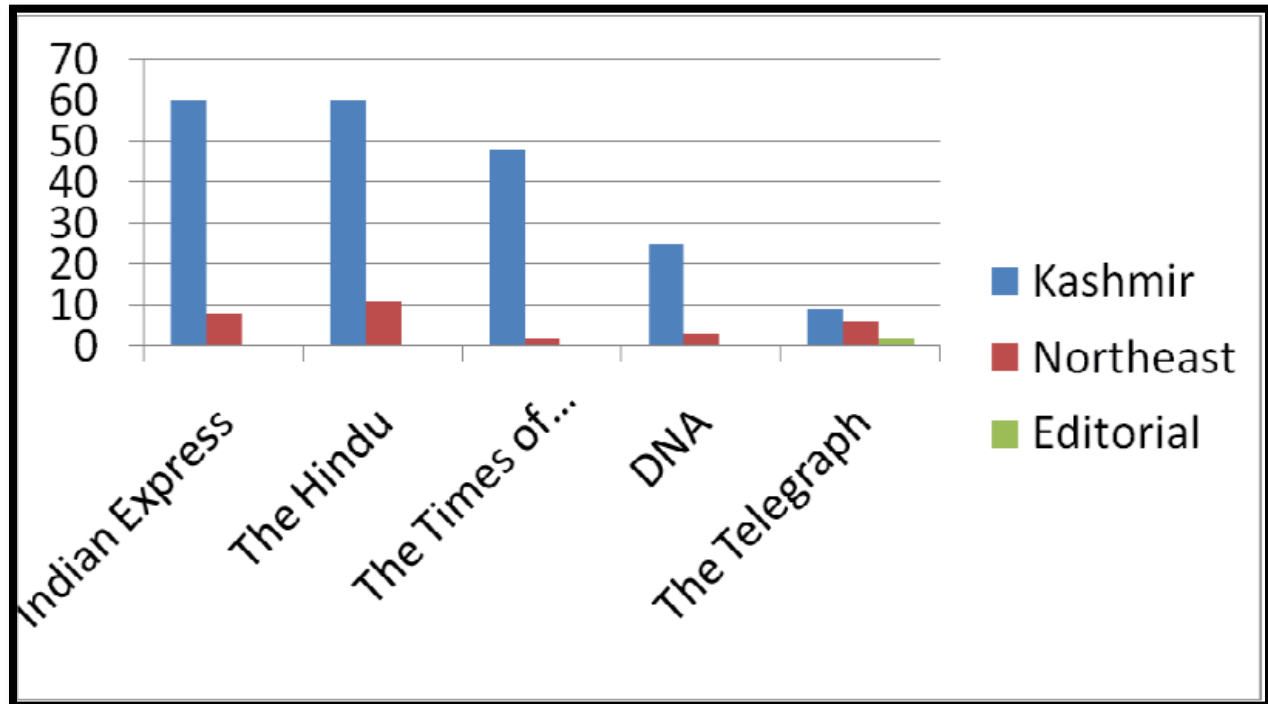
opinion of an influential readership and plays an agenda setting role.⁸⁷ The media is influential in putting the spotlight on issues that need the attention of policy makers, especially to push for laws and policies that represent the views of the nation. However, it also sheds a light on the prevailing social, cultural and power geometry in Indian society, based on what is written about and what is not.

For example, the Kashmir conflict is so close to national political consciousness that it is frequently spoken and discussed in both print and digital media.⁸⁸ However, the conflicts in the northeast are seen as taking place on the periphery of the nation, not warranting the attention of the mainland English speaking press. If an issue of the northeast is covered in the media, it usually follows the immediate time frame of the incident, and fails to highlight the historical context or political timeline of the incident. The figure below lays out the bias in the media coverage of the two main conflict zones in India: the northeast (with the specific example of Manipur) and Kashmir.⁸⁹ The bar graph indicated the number of reports from the Northeast and Kashmir over three months in 2009. The bar on the left, shows how even though in the years spanning 2005-2011, a larger number of civilians have been killed and families affected in the Northeast (1,772) when compared to Kashmir (1,139). The media focuses primarily on the Kashmir issue, mostly because it also is an international media hotspot, but more importantly because it is an integral part of Indian national consciousness. The northeast on the other hand, rarely appears on international or domestic news coverage's: reflective of the government's attitudes towards the region.

⁸⁷ Sonwalkar, Prasun, Ag Noorani, "Contested Nation", Jstor (Economic And Political Weekly), March, and 1 – 8. 09 Feb 2010. "Mediating Otherness: India's English-language Press and the Northeast." pg 389 Contemporary South Asia 13.4 (2004): 389-402. [Http://www.sagepub.com/](http://www.sagepub.com/). Carfax Publishing, Dec. 2004. Web. 20 Apr. 2015.

⁸⁸ Kashmir is a disputed territory over the three countries of India, China and Pakistan. India and Pakistan have fought three wars over Kashmir in 1947, 1965 and 1999.

⁸⁹ Cited in Sen, Arijit "Marginal On The Map: Hidden Wars And Hidden Media In Northeast India." (2011): . Reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk. Gerda Henkel Foundation. Web.Pg14



90

With the recent spate of attacks in the mainland, towards northeasterners, the issue of alienation and the failure of integration on the region have been on the rise. Yet, the problem still persists of the media discussing the region in stereotypes and political rhetoric, which could be because of a lack of information on the region, combined with the lack of regional news outlets by mainland press in the region. The following three case studies were chosen because of the extensive coverage by the media and how they highlight and reflect the alienation felt by northeasterners in the mainland, and for mainlanders raised awareness on the issue of discrimination and racism towards people of the northeast.

Media Case: Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC) Television Advertisement

The Indian rendition of the reality television game show, 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?' Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC) has been running consecutively for eight seasons over the last

⁹⁰ Ibid Pg14

fourteen years in India. Its popularity has been cemented in the nation with its adaptation from a British television game show to accommodate Indian viewers over the years with creative marketing tactics designed by India's Sony Entertainment Television group, which airs the show on its channel. Some of the tactics they employed included successful movie stars from the Indian movie industry to host the show, creating a distinctly Indian design that is showcased from the background music to the sets, and its logo, which proudly sports the rupee sign. One adaptation that has become synonymous with the success of this cult television hit in India is their creative and poignant promotional advertisements, their objective being to let people know that a new season will be airing soon on their television sets.

KBC in its media launch of the 8th season premiering in 2014 aired a theme of inclusion to publicize the show in its highly televised promotional advertisement. To give the reader an idea of the success and cult phenomenon of the show in 2011, twenty seven million people tuned in to watch the finale of the previous season.⁹¹ Its continuing success that ensures its longevity on the television screen is strategic, as producers of the show create a demographic mix screening contestants based on geography, education and occupation. As most of the contestants who regularly watch the show are from various rural regions of India and not just metropolitan hubs. KBC producer Siddhartha Basu in an interview with Hindustan Times, an English language daily newspaper explains this marketing strategy further,

“It was very much a programming decision to reach out to contestants from further afield, from the interiors, to have video windows on each one of them, their lives and milieus, their hopes and disappointments... Because we wanted the viewer to relate more deeply with the person on the hot seat in this life-changing game...much of the viewership of the show came from these very ‘interiors.’ In 2000, there were 25 million

⁹¹ TAM Peoplemeter System. "Top 10 Television Shows in India in 2011!" Trak.in Info Channel. N.p., 03 Jan. 2012. Web. 28 Apr. 2015. <<http://trak.in/info/925-top-10-television-shows-india-2011/>>.

cable homes. Today, there are 110 million, and this massive expansion has swept small towns deep in the hinterland in its embrace.”⁹²

This approach to mixing demographics with socially conscious messages produced the 2014 marketing campaign that had in its hot seat a contestant from a region that may be seen as an interior in India, but in policy circles has been relegated to the term ‘frontier.’⁹³ Saurabh Varma the CEO of Leo Burnett India the firm that created the advertisement for KBC in its eight season, when asked about how he came up with the idea of the television promotional advertisements, replied by highlighting the need for creating a dialogue. He further pointed at the need to raise awareness and political consciousness across the nation, in a strategic attempt to unite diverse people through the medium of the show,

"Over the years we have noticed that people wait for the KBC promos as much as they wait for the next season of KBC. Our latest promos take this insight to a larger, national and social canvas. KBC ads effectively use the power of communication to raise the collective conscience of the nation.”

His reply shows an interesting comprehension of how Indian media is perceived to have by its viewers and creators, the influence to promulgate public awareness on politically sensitive topics. By using both print and digital media to create dialogue through their mass campaigns these marketing companies reach out to diverse sections of society in an attempt to increase viewership and ratings by uniting them, and in this case by using the platform of the show as a medium. It seems to be almost akin to a public social message in the United States wrapped up in a mass marketed social advertisement that without divulging the complex history of the problem, holds a mirror to society to at least acknowledge there is one.

⁹² Saxena.Poonam "Five Crore Question: What Makes KBC Work?" [Http://www.hindustantimes.com/](http://www.hindustantimes.com/). Hindustan Times, 19 Nov. 2011. Web. 20 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.hindustantimes.com/television/five-crore-question-what-makes-kbc-work/article1-771297.aspx>>.

⁹³ <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2012/06/09/26780/>, <http://www.nfr.indianrailways.gov.in/> (The term has been used by academicians and in policy circles, as the northeastern states were categorized as the North-East Frontier Agency or North-East frontier tracts before they became states part of the Union of India)

The show has previously touched on sensitive cultural issues such as the India and Pakistan rivalry, communal tension faced by India's religious minority, gender discrimination, and the rising inequality in urban metropolises. However, what came as a surprise to Indian viewers was the addressing of the racial discrimination faced by the India's northeastern minority. The one minute 11 second advertisement saw the host of the popular show, Amitabh Bachchan, a Bollywood superstar playing the game with a young woman referred to as Poornimaji, who is a native of one of the northeastern states.⁹⁴

The theme of the advertisement was to touch on the discrimination felt by natives of the northeast states who due to their East Asian phenotypes features are mistakenly categorized as Chinese, Nepalese, Tibetan or belonging to a country outside of India. As the 'hot seat' or the contestant chair is referred to on the game show is designed to accommodate Indian citizens spread across various demographics, having an northeastern native on the seat is important. Firstly it highlights how the viewership is diverse enough to connect with a contestant who is part of a minority and secondly how the show is broadening its reach from mainland India to increase viewership in the northeastern states presumably.

The advertisement is set as if it were a normal episode of the show and cuts to viewer's that are mostly from the northeast, (this is obvious by their physical features and nothing actually alluding to which state or region they are from) to showcase the anticipation and hope tied to a northeastern girl making it to the contestant chair with a chance of winning 1 million rupees.

It starts off with a scene in a living room where a family of northeasterners watching the game show sees Bachchan the host introducing a contestant who is referred to as Poornimaji. The

⁹⁴ Sony. "KBC 2014 Launch Film - Kohima." YouTube. YouTube, 8 July 2014. Web. 27 Apr. 2015. <<https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=QVLYDOW2jC8>>.

advertisement alludes to them being her family as they wait with bated breath for her correct answers that bring her closer to winning the prize money. Then the scene cuts to a restaurant where a native of the northeast is watching the television airing the show with his two north Indian friends who comment on the contestant reaching the 'hot seat' with a jovial laugh implying they did not think she would make it this far in the game. The scene then follows the normal script of him asking her a question with four options and the surprise came, when she chose to use one of her remaining lifelines, risking her chance of winning the game, by choosing to ask the audience a question. While he reads out the question, the scene cuts to northeastern natives who are watching the show eating a meal wearing private security guard uniforms and the second of a native of the northeast watching the show from a kitchen of a restaurant wearing a chefs uniform, both are common but stereotypical views of occupations of natives of the northeast when they come to the mainland for employment in service sectors.

Their expressions of the northeast natives when she asks to use an audience poll are of disappointment as the question was, "which country is the city Kohima in?" with the options being: China, Nepal, India or Bhutan. To unknown readers Kohima is the capital of one of India's northeastern state of Nagaland. The advertisement here plays with suspense and rhetoric, as the girl looks clearly from the northeast but is unable to answer a question of geography about the northeast, and has already used up one of her lifelines in the show. The northeastern boy who is watching it with his friends in a restaurant shakes his head with dismay as his friends laugh and say how even they knew which country Kohima is in.

The emotional message is clear, when the poll's answers are in. There is a unanimous agreement from the audience poll that Kohima is in India, the capital of one of the states in the northeast. As Bachchan then informs her that everyone knew that it was in India, she replies by

saying, “Yes, everyone knows about it, but how many believe in it”. Her reply, making her decision to use an audience poll clear, she wanted to reconfirm that Indians believe that the northeast is in India. The background score of the advertisement then turns to soft emotional music, as the viewers realize why she asked for the audience poll: to highlight how northeastern natives are discriminated against and made to feel like they don’t belong in India or to subsequently prove their ‘indianness.’ The last scenes are of the two friends of the northeast boy in the restaurant looking embarrassed and nudging their northeast friend saying, ‘sorry bhai’ (brother), and Bachchan turning to the camera and stating the show’s eighth season’s tagline, ‘this game is such, that you don’t just win money, but also win hearts’.

For years the show has been using publicity promotions to appeal to the masses and engage them with thought provoking messages crafted and presented with endearing simplicity.⁹⁵ However, this media campaign was pertinent in establishing how the issue of discrimination of northeastern natives was reaching public consciousness in mainland India.

Interesting points to note in the advertisement, is the use of Hindi throughout, which is one of India’s national languages and popular in most parts of India, but like the southern states who use regional dialects more colloquially, most states of the northeast do not speak the language, but would rather be more comfortable using English or their regional language. Pointing to how the advertisement was aimed at a Hindi speaking mainland India, and along with the tagline, attempting to win the ‘hearts and minds’ of natives of the northeast. Secondly, the presumably northeastern natives who are portrayed in the advertisement, are clumped together as being from the northeast region due to their physical features, rather than stating if there were from a specific state in the

⁹⁵ "Indian Version of 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?' Launches with Focus on North East India Racial Discrimination with Campaign via Leo Burnett." Campaign Brief Asia. Campaign Brief Asia, n.d. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.campaignbrief.com/asia/2014/07/indian-version-of-who-wants-to.html>>.

northeast, or from the region at all, since India also has an influx of ethnicities, that share Indo-Tibetan features. This reinforces the stereotype that all people who possess indo-Tibetan features can be clumped together to be from the northeast region. However, the northeast actually has shifting demographics and includes different people from the mainland who migrated to the northeast over the course of the subcontinent's history.

On analyzing the media coverage of the advertisement, from the English language print press of the mainland, it is clearly stated from the beginning that the advertisement was effective in shining a light on the different levels of racism that is present in the country. With most of the discrimination present in India being caste and religion based, discrimination based on the way you look, is a contemporary phenomenon mainlanders are beginning to comprehend, with the added effects of globalization creating metropolitan hubs making people live in close quarters to each other in previously homogenous neighborhoods. Previously, discrimination was associated with special status being granted to the marginalized on the basis of being part of a group of people who had been deemed to be on the lower hierarchy of caste. Which also included tribal's (indigenous people), with both groups of minorities been given the legal status of scheduled tribe (ST) and scheduled castes (SC) by the government of India, under a policy that is legalized in the constitution and known commonly as reservation.

It is similar to affirmative action in the United States, and includes protective arrangements, affirmative action and development as a three pronged strategy to bridge socio economic gaps and improve the situation of these historically disadvantaged groups of people. However, the people of the northeast who do not come under the SC/ST category are not marginalized people as they lived in their own communities and for most of history were autonomous. Nonetheless, are discriminated against not for being part of a caste or class, but rather because of the way they look. Which is part

of a growing conversation on the citizenship rights that come with being an Indian regardless of the way you look or which part of India you are from: the idea of nationhood, superseding pre-colonial ideas of statehood and tribal communities. It directly begs the question can social recognition through media and political awareness of differences, allow for a more comprehensive way to bring a frontier to the forefront?

First Media Coverage: KBC advertisement

The KBC promotional advertisement was an episode in an ongoing series as part of the eighth seasons campaign called “The Unity Edition”. The advertisement was a success as its response was overwhelming on national social media, the advertisement was released on July 8th, 2014 and in a week had reached four hundred and fifty thousand views on video hosting website YouTube.⁹⁶ The English language print press, The Telegraph, an Indian daily newspaper with the fourth largest circulation in India, called it ‘precise and powerful’ and describes the northeastern contestant in the advertisement as ‘hitting back at stereotypes and racial discrimination’. The Indian Express, an English language daily, commented on the timing of the advertisement, as in the months leading to the advertisements release there was widespread mobilization in the mainland by northeast students organizations and civil society activists. Who were demanding from the government stringent laws and policies to protect northeastern natives from discrimination; which has led to verbal and physical assaults to tragic death in some cases. After describing the advertisement, the daily ended with a solemn note of much needed proactive acceptance by the

⁹⁶ Tewari,Saumya "KBC Kohima: Winning Hearts." KBC Kohima: Winning Hearts. N.p., 14 July 2014. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <http://www.afaqs.com/news/story/41368_KBC-Kohima-Winning-Hearts>.

mainland towards their northeast “brothers and sisters”, and stresses on the “need for the rest of the country to embrace them as our own.”⁹⁷

After being widely circulated on online media portals and lauded for its creativity and important message of recognizing discrimination, a second coverage of the advertisement was based on how a certain member of an influential section of society perceived it to be, “offensive and embarrassing”. Not towards a certain individual or group but to the government of India. The Times of India, an English language daily with the third largest circulation in the nation and the most widely read English newspaper in India, on the same month the promotional advertisement was released, published an article and follow up articles on the matter, chronicling how the promotional advertisement ‘irked a senior government official’ who filed a complaint with the Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC) demanding that it be taken off air.⁹⁸ What is interesting in the media coverage of this promotional advertisement is the polarizing reception of the advertisement. The senior government official whose name was not disclosed to the press, was ‘irked’ by the promotional advertisement as he firstly thought it would create controversy and secondly as the question about which country Kohima in, was in ‘extremely bad taste’ citing the tenuous relationship between the region and the mainland. On the basis of this complaint the BCCC council arranged for a private screening of the promotional advertisement for its members to determine whether according to the complaint they should discontinue the promo. According to a source in the council who was giving this information to the press, the council members found nothing objectionable in it; the following was published in the paper as a council members statement explaining why they did not consider censoring or banning the promotional advertisement,

⁹⁷ "Watch: Amitabh Bachchan Wins Hearts with New ‘KBC 8’ Promo." The Indian Express. N.p., 10 July 2014. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://indianexpress.com/article/entertainment/bollywood/watch-amitabh-bachchan-wins-hearts-with-new-kbc-8-promo/>>.

⁹⁸ Government of India "Audit Bureau of Circulations." [Http://www.auditbureau.org/news/view/17](http://www.auditbureau.org/news/view/17). N.p., 2013. Web. <<http://www.auditbureau.org/news/view/17>>. July-December 2013

“It was found that the trailer was highlighting the problem that northeastern people face, and is a step in the right direction. In fact at a time when crimes against the community are on the rise, the promo was seen as emphasizing the issue of alienation of the northeastern community and making people aware of it.”⁹⁹

The council that plays the role similar to a television watchdog dismissed the complaint and on the contrary seemed to appreciate the advertisement and highlighted the issue of alienation.¹⁰⁰ On the official BCCC website, the actual complaint is put forth and the action undertaken by the BCCC is notable, as there was a ‘unanimous decision by the council and states how the promo was not disruptive and reflects the northeast in a positive manner.’¹⁰¹ The Financial Express (FE), an English language daily business newspaper, in an article titled ‘The Best Ads 2014’, ran a campaign which was judged by seven panelists of the media and advertising industry within India. It opened up the campaign by inviting online readers of the FE to vote on what they considered the best advertisements of the year. The writer of the article clarified in the introduction what they meant by ‘best ads’, by which they explained not ‘measuring the impact they had on the ad sales or the brand recall but rather celebrating creative idea, the thought that struck a chord.’¹⁰² The article among a few selected winning advertisements picked up on the KBC Kohima Question advertisement and after describing it first, had the panelists make comments on the advertisement, why they selected it to be part of this campaign, and finally its impact.

What seems to make a connection with both panelists and online voters of the FE campaign was the idea of ‘collaborative inclusion’ that KBC show was trying to shed a light on. One of the panelists, KV Sridhar, the chief creative officer of SapientNitro an advertising and marketing agency

⁹⁹ Bhatia,Saloni "Kohima Question Promo of Kaun Banega Crorepati Upsets Government Official - The Times of India." The Times of India. N.p., 25 July 2014. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/tv/news/hindi/Kohima-question-promo-of-Kaun-Banega-Crorepati-upsets-Government-official/articleshow/38977901.cms>>.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid*

¹⁰¹S.no. Action By Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC)BCCC On Complaints Received From 16 April 2014 TO 8 December 2014 (n.d.): n. pag 5. 2014. Web

¹⁰² Banasree Purkayastha. "The Best Ads 2014." The Financial Express. N.p., 16 Dec. 2014. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.financialexpress.com/article/industry/the-best-ads-2014/19507/>>.

in India, commented on the relevance of the advertisement and its ability to start a sensitive dialogue on the national stage, “It is heartening to see a brand picking up a burning and politically, not a popular issue and evoking a national debate.”¹⁰³ What is interesting about these statements is how the mainland was ready to understand the context, as the message was not far from the national political consciousness, as it was easy to understand both the construction of the advertisement and the message it was trying to send. What seems to have hit the nail on the head is who picked up on this message and instead of being offended, was appreciative of the advertisement holding up a mirror to society to reflect the ongoing change from being a sensitive security driven topic, to the conversation of alienation and discrimination of northeasterners being a valid soul searching experiment for a majority of the nation residing in the mainland.¹⁰⁴

Director of the Indian marketing communications company Lowe Lintas & Partners, who was a panelist in the campaign referred to the timely relevance of the advertisement. Going on to state how it contributed in making a strong statement about an issue that was piquing mainstream India’s consciousness, adding for statistical effect, “No wonder this ad was watched more than 1.3 lakh (130, 000) times within the first three days of its launch.”¹⁰⁵ The advertisement became an iconic media translation of everyday ground realities of harassment that had become commonplace. Even though actions against the community had been on the rise for a while, especially due to large

¹⁰³ Gouri Shah. "New KBC Ad Campaign Takes on Racial Discrimination." [Http://www.livemint.com/Hindustaan Times](http://www.livemint.com/Hindustaan Times), 10 July 2014. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.livemint.com/Consumer/XaKBHtHAYum6GierRoytJ/New-KBC-ad-takes-on-racial-discrimination.html>>.

¹⁰⁴Ibid

<http://ibnlive.in.com/news/watch-the-city-of-kohima-is-in-which-country-the-new-inclusive-kaun-banega-crorepati-2014-teaser-is-a-real-tearjerker/484802-44-124.html>

<http://www.buzzfeed.com/regajha/kohima-is-part-of-india>

(Online media and news portals used the phrase holding a mirror to society while describing the KBC promo advertisement)

¹⁰⁵ Gouri Shah. "The Best Ads 2014." *The Financial Express*. Hindustaan Times, n.d. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.financialexpress.com/article/industry/the-best-ads-2014/19507/>>.

numbers of students and workers coming to the mainland for education and employment opportunities in recent years.

Two months prior to the release of the KBC Kohima advertisement came a viral social media commentary video, which was posted on YouTube, on April 17th of 2014, which was titled, “Harassing a girl from North East: Racism Experiment” released by an Indian social media enthusiast group known as Trouble Seeker Team which uses social media to raise awareness about socially relevant issues. The video has a boy who does not have East Asian features, and speaks with a strong north Indian accent, repeatedly asking a girl from the northeast, where she is from? Whether she is actually Indian? If she is Chinese? What she is doing in India?. Using derogatory names such as ‘chinki’ alluding to her East Asian phenotypes to get her attention, the video is 4 minutes long and shows several passersby who do not comment on the situation and continue walking. And the ones who come to her defense by confronting the harasser and trying to educate him on how Indian citizens do not have to adhere to a certain imagined idea of what one should look like. Especially once they realize he is picking on her because of her physical features. In each case the boy playing the part of the harasser lets them know after a while that it is a social experiment; explaining how the concept behind it was to see how people would react if they see someone being a victim of racism in a public place. The video has close to 3 million views on video hosting site YouTube and was named one of the 5 viral social media experiments of 2014 by the English language daily, The Hindustan times on its front page.¹⁰⁶

The importance of the advertisement or its subsequent media coverage was to show how the idea of racism in the mainland, is a much less politically sensitive topic to address than even a decade

¹⁰⁶ Osama Salman. "2014 Review: 5 Viral Social Media Experiments."

earlier. Since harassment against northeasterners is not happening in a vacuum, but garnering more attention with ordinary citizens outside of civil society, students and activists confronting it as a national problem. The media has a hand to play in increasing public awareness of casual racism that includes derogatory remarks: simply through increasing its coverage on the region and confronting the issue of security of northeasterners in the mainland. Another English language print daily, The Indian Express, ran an article detailing the rise of socially conscious viral media videos, and among others focused on the video by the 'Trouble Seeker Team on racism towards northeasterners, which in four months since its release had garnered over 20 hundred thousand views, the founder of the group Rahul Sharma, expressed his motive and inspiration for making this video, which was the death of a northeastern boy named Nido Taniam, which inspired him to make a video which highlighted the growing awareness needed to tackle domestic racism.

The reason for the KBC advertisement being a touted as a success, coming on the heels of both the print and digital press condemning discrimination in all form, has little to do with its, circulation and message, but more importantly is based on its timely relevance, as the issue of northeasterners facing discrimination and feeling alienated from the mainstream is getting more national media and consequent political attention.

Second Media Coverage: Nido Taniam murder in India's Capital

A reason for this relevance was the time period of this advertisements release, which was five months after the much publicized hate crime on a northeastern native from the state of Arunachal Pradesh. It was among a spate of attacks that have caught the attention of the mainland English language print press and one that reached policy circles as well.

For a country with such diversity, the proximity of people living together from different faiths and beliefs is remarkable. Discrimination to people from the northeast has a deeper root than

religion or physical appearance. This prejudice also stems from a lack of information, awareness and knowledge on the conditions both political and historical of the northeast, and a feeling of alienation arising from their perceived geographical distance and racial phenotypes.

What came as a shock even outside the northeast due to his father being a Member of the legislative assembly of Arunachal Pradesh at the time was the murder of Nido Taniam in January of 2014. He stopped at a shop in a crowded market in Delhi, to ask for directions to his friend's house. The shopkeeper and his friends made fun of Taniam's dyed blonde hair and red trousers, to which Taniam took offense and slammed his hand on the glass counter of the register, breaking a glass in the shop owned by his assailants. Leading to a skirmish between the owners of the shop and Nido. Alerted to the brawl between the shopkeepers and Taniam, the police took both parties to a nearby police station where Tania settled the dispute by paying a compensation fees for the broken glass. This allowed both parties to leave the police station with no legal charges, and both parties were dropped off at the sight of the brawl. It was upon the police's departure that he was beaten up for a second time by a mob of no less than six men out of whom two were identified as juveniles.¹⁰⁷ He succumbed to these injuries during the course of the night.

This wasn't a senseless fight over a hairstyle or dress sense, however it was Taniam's features that marked him out for harassment. His death highlighted the racism that many from India's northeastern states are subjected to. As the derogatory word 'chinki' is not even widely acknowledged as being racist. The Times of India, a few days after the incident had as its headline on the front page, "Arunachal MLA's son beaten to death in Delhi, anger spills over". A second article from the same English language daily a few days later, had as its headline, "Youths protest

¹⁰⁷ Avasthy, Divya "Who Is Nido Taniam? North-East Student's Death in New Delhi Hate Attack Reveals India's Racial Division." International Business Times RSS. IBTimes Co., Ltd., 05 Feb. 2014. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/who-nido-taniam-north-east-students-death-new-delhi-hate-attack-reveals-indias-racial-1435218>>.

against Nido Taniam's death". The two were among a stream of articles from the daily that were following the Nido Taniam case, as they shone a light on the racist undertones of the attack. Chronicling the development of the case as charges were brought against the accused under the Scheduled caste and scheduled tribes (prevention of atrocities) Act 1989, as Nido Taniam belonged to a tribal community. Highlighting, how this was not just a case against an Indian citizen, but a citizen who belonged to a group of people who have been historically marginalized or left outside of the conversation on the makings of the modern nation state.

In the first article by the Times of India, the lead of the article ends with a sentiment common in many of the articles published after the death of Nido Taniam, "in yet another incident of targeting of people from the northeast". It goes on to explain in the body of the article the case and directly points to its inadequate management. On both the police for 'alleged inaction' and the government who recommended a magisterial inquiry into the incident, while student groups were demanding a fast track court to convict the apprehended accused. The article ends with a comment made to television news channels by a youth, stressing the need for people to be sensitized to everyday discrimination occurring in the mainland,

"This is surely about racism...we are living in India, but we don't know whether we are actually living in India or not".

The youth claimed to be a cousin of Nido Taniams, and his comment was important because most crimes against natives of the northeast are dismissed as ordinary law and order problems, and are not looked at with the added sensitivity of being a problem of racism. Secondly, the comment highlights how being a part of India does not necessarily mean that citizens of the northeast feel their concerns are adequately looked into. Hence the question, alienation from the mainland brings up is – how acute are racial tensions between mainlanders and northerners, that the latter have to question which country they are citizens of.

Another English language daily print publication, The Telegraph, ran several articles documenting the case and its outcome. Almost two weeks after the attack, it ran a front-page story, which had in its headline a quote from Nido Taniams mother, it read, “Nido was for India”. The article described the incident and its aftermath and the dialogue it had created in New Delhi, the capital of the nation. Forcing the country to examine the concerns faced by the northeasterners in the mainland. The article mostly had quips from an interview with Marina Nido, who is Nido Taniams mother, as she spoke about her son being very much a citizen of the country. Adding how discrimination was very present in the mainland, she recalled an incident where she was teased by shopkeepers in one of the cities in the mainland, for looking Chinese and speaking accented Hindi. She ended with a solemn note of regret at not having objected more strongly then, as these issues of racial discrimination were swept under the media and political radar for years. The article highlighted how the Nido Tania case really felt like a tipping point on the issue of talking about racism and alienation, especially from the side of what northeasterners go through everyday in the mainland. It focused on the casual racism that northeastern native have to confront on a daily basis, and allowed more natives to openly voice their experiences that had tainted their experience of living outside of their home state. The article zeroes in on a comment, even choosing to start the article with it, “Nido Tania had once told his mother “I am India”, Marina Nido Recalled.”¹⁰⁸

What is interesting about this sentence is the proof of being Indian that is brought up whenever racism towards northeasterners is brought to the forefront. The article also had a paragraph that described the protests as having a message of being ‘discriminated despite being Indian.’¹⁰⁹ A student leader from the northeastern state of Manipur describing how the underlying message was not towards nationalistic or patriotic sentiment, or a lack thereof but rather pointing to

¹⁰⁸ Dholabhai,Nishit"Nido Was for India: Mom." The Telegraph. N.p., 15 Feb. 2014. Web. 28 Apr. 2015. <http://www.telegraphindia.com/1140215/jsp/frontpage/story_17941115.jsp#.VT_taK1Viko>.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

a different system of institutional attitude meted out to northeasterners in the mainland. And in the context, it seems to be on the surface against their physical features, which prompted questions of race and belonging.

The Telegraph, had as its front page a week after the incident, an article looking at the protests within the northeast itself, titled, “China slogan heard in Nido Backlash”. With cries of equal and fair representation getting stronger in the mainland and center, within the northeast a curfew was established by the Mizo Students Union on outsiders and a non-Manipuri shopkeeper who had closed shop for the day gave a quote to the newspaper saying that he closed down the shop to show solidarity with the people of Manipur (a state in the northeast region). The article however mentioned the most probable reason so many ‘outsiders’ who were not natives to the northeast but have been living their for generations, complied with the curfew, was out of fear for a reactionary attack.

This highlights how discrimination is present in the mainland towards northeasterners and in general to someone who looks like they are an ‘outsider’, however that same stigma of not belonging to a community is associated with people who may not be seen as part of the identity makeup of the northeast either. There are words and derogatory terms associated with people from the mainland when they come to the northeast, temporarily for work or education or permanently to settle down. The articles conclusion was a paragraph from a memorandum by the regional branch of the national party, Manipuri Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) signed by its members and president, it spoke of how the attacks were not a ‘good social indicator for a democratic and developing country like India’, and it added how the attacks would be “globally condemned and would affect the country’s good will.”¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰Zodin Sanga and Khelen Thokchom. "China Slogan in Nido Backlash." The Telegraph. N.p., 13 Feb. 2014. Web. 26 Apr. 2015.
<http://www.telegraphindia.com/1140213/jsp/northeast/story_17929762.jsp#.VSxAGxPF_UI>.

The memorandum was sent to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and signed by students of the Mizo Students Union, whose primary intention of compiling a memorandum was to urge the prime minister to frame an anti-racism law to protect northeasterners and deliver justice to victims and their kin.

It was a telling sign of the northeast coming together in solidarity and understanding the effect its community had on international perceptions of India. Especially regarding the government's treatment to its minority and ethnically diverse communities. As the mainland was seeing the English language press report continuously on what it meant to be a citizen, the northeast is realizing the claims they inherit by being a part of the country. It is a move towards society accepting if they can live in harmony with equal citizenship rights, with people they might have deemed previously to be an 'outsider'.

In another article released by the English language newspaper, *The Hindu*, published the same month as the KBC Kohima Advertisements release, had as its title, "In Divided Neighborhoods" with the subtitle, "How India has come to be known as the most racist country in the world". The article got inspiration for its title from a United Nations survey based in 80 countries that asked people whether they were willing to live with a person who was racially different to them as their neighbor.¹¹¹ The study concluded that India was the second most racist country in the world, coming shortly behind Jordan.

The bulk of the article was describing the lack of communication and dialogue in culturally diverse neighborhoods. In metropolises such as New Delhi, neighborhoods occupied by original residents of the community are forced to live in close proximity to migrants from the northeast. The article adds that this leads to reciprocal suspicion and stereotyping, as these original residents were

¹¹¹ Max Fisher. "A Fascinating Map of the World's Most and Least Racially Tolerant Countries." *Washington Post*. The Washington Post, 15 May 2013. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/05/15/a-fascinating-map-of-the-worlds-most-and-least-rationally-tolerant-countries/>>.

usually rural landlords and to meet demand had given their houses to rent to northerners and other migrants from outside New Delhi, who came in search of employment or educational opportunities. The writer of the article was invited to be part of a communication-building program in these parts of New Delhi between landowners and their northeastern tenants to facilitate more conversation to erode stereotypes. The part of the article that stands out is how this dialogue to talk was initiated by the death of Nido Tania.

The writer describes the reaction by society to the death, as being similar to ‘the breaking of a dam’, a phrase that was used time and time again to refer to this reaction of people speaking out about the daily harassment from the northeastern perspective. The writer further adds how the incident ‘broke public silences about discrimination and bigotry that people from India’s northeast states endure routinely in the country’s capital.’¹¹²

A second English language daily, The Indian Express, a week after the death of Nido Taniam, ran an article with the headline, “We can ill-afford Sense of Alienation on basis of Race”, the article tried to explain how racial discrimination practiced in the mainland was a cause for concern, as it attributed alienation to people of the northeast feeling like ‘second class citizens’ causing them to seek greater participation in ‘self governance’. The author starts of the article, trying to unmask the politicians who because of the media attention on this tragic case have a chance in the spotlight to align their interests with that of the northeastern community, especially with elections to the lower house of parliament being three months away from the death of Nido Taniam.

“With elections to the Lok Sabha less than three months away, crocodile tears are being shed by political leaders for the migrants from the Northeast who are victims of racial slurs and attacks. The fact that the north-easterners look different on account of their mongoloid features and the hairstyles they usually sport should be no reason for them to be treated like aliens from another world.”

¹¹² Harsh Mander. "In Divided Neighbourhoods." The Hindu. N.p., 26 July 2014. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.thehindu.com/features/magazine/mag-columns/in-divided-neighbourhoods/article6252411.ece>>.

The fact that it is now commonly accepted to report in the media that northeasterners are victims of “racial slurs and attack” is a new phenomenon. Especially since the migration towards the mainland from the northeast in recent years has been bringing to the fore inherent racism that takes shape in what are perceived to be cosmopolitan and metropolis hub. Making the phenomenon harder to ignore and sweep under the rug as a stray incident, since there seems to be a fine line between discrimination and racism. As the latter would mean this isn’t only a problem with the relationship mainlanders have with northeasterners but an actual institutional prejudice is at play resulting in a preferential treatment to some and not others.

About 86 percent of people from northeast living in Delhi have faced discrimination with 20-30 calls made a month to the northeast helpline, to register a cases ranging from assault to non-payment of salaries. According to research by the North East Helpline and Support Centre based in New Delhi. Over two hundred thousand migrated to Delhi from northeastern states between 2005 and 2013 an about 86% of then have faced some form of racial discrimination. Another interesting point is the location of these assaults and discriminatory practices that are overwhelmingly found in none other than the capital, New Delhi.¹¹³ It comes as no surprise then that the mainland media with its political news reporting based in New Delhi and politicians vying for a seat in the parliament housed in the national capital, cannot gloss over a spate of attacks towards a certain community. Triggering nation wide protests calling for recognition of hate crimes and atrocities against the community.

¹¹³ Gohain, Manash Pratim "2014 Not a Good Year for NE People Living in Delhi - The Times of India." The Times of India. N.p., 4 Jan. 2015. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/2014-not-a-good-year-for-NE-people-living-in-Delhi/articleshow/45746623.cms>>.

The writer of the Financial Express article that tried to explain why ‘we can ill afford sense of alienation on the basis of race’ clearly saw a link between political inaction combined with selective media coverage. He saw this as being reflected in the various homegrown movements that were escalating the divide, between northeast and the mainland. His article sends a somber note as he predicts that after the media attention begins to die down, all ‘promises of steps to assimilate the northerners into the national mainstream would be forgotten’ leaving the issue right where it started from with no progress made to understand the root causes of the issue.

Two points that he picked up on, highlighted firstly, what reporters perceive the consequence of alienation to be, and secondly how this problem can be solved. The fact that media coverage and reporters who work in the media industry, think that the root causes of alienation comes from not being assimilated to the mainland, shows how we are not working towards integration, with which I mean structural integration. Referring to a political goal of gaining access to institutions and opportunities, in the mainstream economic, social and political structures. Integration goes beyond adopting the culture and therefore being a part of it to achieve equal and fair representation. Rather assimilation would only signal adopting of mainstream cultural norms resulting in a loss of cultural distinctiveness. Since we aren’t asking the mainland to understand the northeast or be sensitive to their demands and needs, and what we are explicitly stating in our newspapers and media is that the northerners with the help of governmental policies should understand the mainland better to not risk assault and violence.

Secondly, equating the operation of several armed factions in the northeast and some of their sub groups that demand complete independence from the nation, to a feeling of being treated like second-class citizens, is highlighting the lack of information even reporters have on the northeast. As state formation from one unit to seven different states, and demanding political autonomy has been a cry in the northeast well before independence and its controversial succession

to India. It is because of not gaining political autonomy or equal and fair political representation historically in the mainland, which is mostly evident with the region having different laws and policies than the rest of India, that these spurts of development and globalization in parts of India have not reached the northeast region.

Resulting in the rest of India waiting for the northeast to somehow catch up on this ‘developmental lag’ by adopting more of the culture of the metropolitan cities and its consequent inability, resulting in them being treated as second-class citizens. An example being the language barrier, as most northeastern states have a high literacy rate due to the presence of Christian missionaries during British colonization, who converted vast numbers of indigenous people belonging to different tribes to Christianity from their native religions.

However, this resulted in English and local languages being predominately spoken in the region instead of Hindi and other national languages that are spoken in the mainland. The policy of assimilation would have them learn Hindi before migrating to the mainland. Whereas cultural sensitivity through media and integration would allow mainlanders to realize this and speak to them in a language that they understand such as English. Rather than thinking them illiterate or ignorant because of language practices in the mainland. An example of this being an incident in October last year when three northeastern youth were beaten up in the southern state of Karnataka for not speaking the local language Kannada, the incident was widely reported and condemned by politicians in the English language news channels and print press.¹¹⁴

Another article in the Times of India, had as its headline “2014 not a good year for NE (northeast) people living in Delhi”. It was published at the beginning of January and was among a

¹¹⁴Press Trust of India"3 Arrested for Beating up Northeast Students in Bangalore." The Hindu. N.p., 15 Oct. 2014. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/3-arrested-for-beating-up-northeast-students-in-bangalore/article6503332.ece>>.Press Trust of India

number of articles in 2015, which spoke about the consequences of the Nido Taniam case and how it shone a spotlight on the northeastern community residing in the mainland. Inevitably bringing not just natives of the region but the northeast itself under the scanner, and its tenuous relationship to the mainland.

An article published in the opinion column of, *The Indian Express*, was titled 'India after Nido' with the headline, "His death reminds us of the transitions the Indian project still needs to make". The author Pratap Bhanu Mehta, the president of the Center for policy research in Delhi, explained why this public attention was vital in this incident not being a mere statistic. Articulating the exact nature to why Nido Taniam's death was called the 'breaking of dam' by the English language print press. "In India, a single violent incident bears the weight of complex histories and tangled sociologies, it has reopened the delicate question of the place of the Northeast in India's imagination".¹¹⁵ Mehta, then goes on to outline three transitions that 'the idea of India' still needs to complete the Indian project. These include first the need to move from territoriality to people: he goes on to elaborate how the idea of the modern nation state is tied to an emphasis on territoriality which has often led to making concrete peoples invisible. And since the northeast is often spoken in terms of territory, which is evident by an entire region with different states and cultures being classified under the term Northeast. Even within the northeast aligned ethnicity with territoriality and defending this territory 'trumps almost everything else, such as human rights, economic freedom'. Mehta provides a unique insight of the similarities of the two pathologies of the Indian state and the northeast, as both of theirs has been 'who controls what territory, not about how to define proper ethical relationships with others'. This move from geopolitical viewing of states with restrictive boundaries to citizens of united India with equal opportunities and rights, is an ongoing

¹¹⁵Mander, Harsh "In Divided Neighbourhoods." *The Hindu*. N.p., 26 July 2014. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.thehindu.com/features/magazine/mag-columns/in-divided-neighbourhoods/article6252411.ece>>.

struggle and is a segway point to consider for his next transition in the political reimagining of the nation: diversity to respecting freedom.

Mehta, explains the idea of toleration which was based on the terms of segmentation and hierarchy, especially with a caste ridden social order that demarcated people into groups, so that each 'community could have its place as long as it remained in that place'. Mehta argues that knowing the histories and identities of others might help, however the emphasis should be on seeing everyone as equal beings. Making identity more of an irrelevant fact in the background, not an axis on which we organize what rights people have and what places they can inhabit. He explicitly makes a reference to the cause of the assault on Nido whose dyed blonde hair marked him out for verbal abuse by shopkeepers in Delhi, "how one wears one hair is nobodies business'. Mehta makes a claim here on the attitudes of Indians on the subject of tolerance, since the idea of unity in diversity is used time and time again in political rhetoric and to show a side of the country which considers itself to be a diverse and secular democracy, however Mehta here brings in his final transition whereby a self proclaimed innocence of a tolerant society often sidelines deep questions about racism in India. He elaborates on how the idea that any kind of racism is unacceptable, because only complete intolerance of racism instead of partial tolerance on accepting who is Indian will help alleviate the dark cloud that hangs over nationalism in India.

Concerning the northeast especially, he states, "we often cannot decide whether the northeast is radically different or the same based on race". With a history of compartmentalizing people based on class, caste and creed, a rapidly developing India is awakening to its problematic relationship to the outside world. The fact that India seeks to compartmentalize people to govern under various laws had been inherently problematic as Mehta states in his fourth transition for India that is going from a state of exceptionalism to a state of normalization. This directly hints to the special status given to historically marginalized groups of people in India, and with the northeast in

particular special governing laws such as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). A security law which effectively allows the armed forces to assist the state in areas that are deemed as 'disturbed' in the region to perform counter insurgency operations. Including other form of state intervention such as the creation of separate ministries and development councils with what Mehta calls, 'ill conceived ideas of a territorial identity'.¹¹⁶ For this makes the northeast always have policies governing them that are unique compared to the mainland, with unique not always meaning better.

However, even as these ministries and organization may have contributed to the northeast feeling exceptional, and treated with separate provisions of the law, the public pressure developing in the law few years with the recent spate of attacks being publicized and happening in the mainland, has alerted mainlanders and the international community on how in the worlds largest democracy, racial tension and ethnic violence can highlight how fragile India's social make up is.

Mehta concludes that by allowing this special status and unique governing policy, it is legitimate to decipher the correlation between the political problems of the area known as the northeast, and the racial problem of attacks on northeasterners: as they are both a form of distancing from the language of Indian citizenship.

Another reason why the death of Nido became symbolic in national conversation regarding identity and citizenship was because students and civil society were using the word 'racism' and identifying the various forms of discrimination that had tainted their relationship to the mainland and mainstream society of India.

However, what was most important in this outpouring of students, civil society participants and politicians, was that the society had taken a collective stand regardless of being from the

¹¹⁶ The Government of India established Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region in September of 2001. It functions as the medium by which the Central Government deals with matters related to the socio-economic development of the eight states of Northeast India. The Ministry have five organization functioning under it, which deal exclusively with finance, agriculture, mining, native handicrafts and handlooms, and one for overall development of the region, called the North Eastern Council.

northeast or mainland, this was especially noticeable with the stalwarts of Indian politics such as Rahul Gandhi who is the vice president of the Indian National Congress Party and chairperson of the National Student Union of India, Narendra Modi a leader of the national Bharatiya Janata Party who was at the time running for the candidacy of Prime Minister, and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal joined in the student protests or condemned the attack and spoke out against discrimination and sympathized publicly with students and activists from the northeast. Who were vocalizing their alienation and taking steps to put the onus on the Indian government and policy makers in New Delhi to create laws to protect people from the northeast against racial discrimination. Modi during a campaign rally in the state of Uttar Pradesh, spoke directly to racial discrimination and how that would taint India's national image, while it was trying to promote its cosmopolitan hubs as global cities, he spoke directly about the Nido Taniam case calling it 'shameful', and added,

"We should see Delhi as a global city. But in the last few days, the language and actions have brought disrepute, not only to the national capital but also to the entire country... African women were ill-treated. Daughters from Manipur were ill-treated. Now a son from Arunachal Pradesh has been killed. This does not cover us with glory,"

This highlighted another change in tackling racial discrimination as politicians were actively engaging in discussion and promoting a conversation on racism and discrimination and actively condemning the incident across all party lines. However, it contributed to a blame game, when different sections of society were pointing fingers, instead of uniting in parliament to fast track laws towards the protection of northeastern natives who come to the mainland. This was seen as the Indian press covered the parliament session in February of 2014, a week after the death of Nido Taniam, with the headline, "Live Parliament Session: Lok Sabha adjourned for the day after uproar

over Nido Taniam's death."¹¹⁷ Sushma Swaraj who was then leader of the opposition in the 15th Lok Sabha (lower house of parliament) raised the issue of Nido Taniam and called it a murder, and went on to speak about the molestation of two Manipuri girls in Delhi the same month, and called them "people who have fought for India". In essence in one case of discrimination his death brought forth an ongoing conversation about race and discrimination and in the case of the Manipuri girls who were molested and filed a legal case, were lending their voice to the cause of speaking up about violence and discrimination in all its forms. She concluded by saying "youth from all regions need to be protected, as Arunachal Pradesh was a part of India and should be considered in that manner".

What is interesting about the issue of Nido Taniam being raised in parliament and with the Prime Minister himself, is that instead of intangible ideals and policies, direct order was the priority, it was a dialogue that in the policy circles magnified the scrutiny on all democratic institutions to be aware of discrimination in all its forms.

An event that was referred to during the Nido Taniam was the 2012 mass migration of people, which the press termed as an Exodus, prior to the Nido Taniam racist attack, it was the second biggest media coverage regarding people from the northeast and the issue of their safety and security in the mainland. It also shines a light on the progress made towards developing policies and holding accountable committees to fast tracks laws towards the well being of northeasterners.

Third Media Coverage: Exodus of northeasterners from mainland cities

Just two years prior to this in August of 2012, students and workers from the northeastern states received mass text messages that threatened retaliation by Muslim groups towards natives of the northeast. Causing a mass migration from metropolitan hubs in the mainland. The messages

¹¹⁷ "Live Parliament Session: Lok Sabha Adjourned for the Day after Uproar over Nido Taniam's Death." Indiatoday. India Today Online, 5 Feb. 2014. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/parliament-adjourned-telangana-winter-session-andhra-pradesh/1/341795.html>>.

were circulating in electronic and social media and were provoked by videos and pictures of ethnic violence that gripped the northeastern state of Assam in July (where fighting between the mostly Hindu Bodo tribe and Muslims has displaced more than 500,000 people).¹¹⁸ The texts prompted around 10,000 people to flee several urban metropolises.¹¹⁹ Creating a mass panic, since it incited hatred against people from the northeast culminating in verbal and physical attacks with some cases being registered in cities in the mainland.¹²⁰

Media reports termed it an 'exodus' a word that brings to mind, an emigration or departure of usually a large group of people. It also reverberates to historical contexts within India minorities having to pledge their allegiance to a Hindu majority India or having to prove their 'indianess'. In the historical narrative weaved into the fabric of the country, people remember this being one of the reasons the all India Muslim party led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah propagated the creation of Pakistan. A safe haven for Muslims who the party insisted would not have their demands met by being a minority in the Indian sub continent.

The mass panic that forced the government to tighten security in cities such as Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Pune, had shone yet again a rare spotlight on the alienation of the northeast. Babloo Loitongbam, the founder of Imphal based Human Rights Alert, said of the exodus, "If you think of it in terms of explosion, the buildup has been going on for a long time, people from the northeast have always been outsiders in India's cities. Very deep down, there is a

¹¹⁸ "Internal Displacement Monitoring Center » India IDP Figures Analysis." N.p., 20 Apr. 2015. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.internal-displacement.org/south-and-south-east-asia/india/figures-analysis>>.

¹¹⁹ "Exodus of Northeastern People Hits Businesses in Bangalore." Exodus of Northeastern People Hits Businesses in Bangalore. Business Standard, 17 Aug. 2012. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/exodus-of-northeastern-people-hits-businesses-in-bangalore-112081702027_1.html>.

¹²⁰ Nairita Das. "Northeast People Indeed Assaulted, Threatened in Bangalore." Wwww.oneindia.com. N.p., 18 Aug. 2012. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.oneindia.com/2012/08/18/northeast-people-assaulted-threatened-in-bangalore-kar-1055896.html>>.

sense that we are not protected by society at large and the state in particular.”¹²¹ The exodus was covered in the English language press in terms of a panic caused by social media and a knee jerk reaction by people from the northeast to remove themselves from any instance of violence. However it also conveys the sense of insecurity felt by northeasters in the mainland, and their lack of trust in governmental institutions to provide them with security. In addition, it also shows how the northeast is portrayed as a region marred in ethnic or tribal violence, with little in depth knowledge of the history or changes in that nature of violence since these frontier states merged with the union of India.

The central government condemned the hate messages and tried to pacify panicked students and families. The English language press in the mainland was flooded with coverage on the large-scale migration. By trying to explain the situation in Assam to make unknown readers in the mainland aware of why the so called ‘exodus’ was taking place, and secondly, quoting people in the government to follow how the law and order situation was being handled. An article in The Hindustan Times, had as its title, “Driven by rumors exodus of NE people continues from Karnataka.”¹²² The article chronicled how and why natives of northeast were choosing to leave as even with ‘appeals and assurances of safety by the Karnataka government’ people continued to flee the state in hordes for the third consecutive day, the article estimated around 15,000 people had fled the state of Karnataka. Whose capital Bangalore known as the silicon valley of India had experienced the biggest number of people leaving to the state of Assam.

¹²¹ Kazmin, Amy "Exodus Shows Alienation of India's Northeast." Washington Post. The Washington Post, 17 Aug. 2012. Web. 28 Mar. 2015. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/exodus-shows-alienation-of-indias-northeast/2012/08/17/63bae21e-e88d-11e1-a3d2-2a05679928ef_story.html>.

¹²² "Driven by Rumours Exodus of NE People Continues from Karnataka." Http://www.hindustantimes.com/. N.p., 17 Aug. 2012. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/driven-by-rumours-exodus-of-ne-people-continues-from-karnataka/article1-914830.aspx>>.

The article also featured a quote from the law and parliamentary minister S. Suresh Kumar saying the exodus was not due to a threat factor but rather due to ‘anxiety to be with their parents at a time when Assam was gripped with violence’, this statement was issued by a few members of state governments that were forced to provide answers on how their states were controlling the law and order situation, however at the same time the Prime Minister in 2014 Manmohan Singh condemned the exodus and brought the issue up in parliament with the aim of attempting to calm northeastern natives, pledging their safety to be a top priority, the following is an excerpt from the speech made in parliament,

“What is at stake is the unity of our country. What is at stake is communal harmony,” he told Parliament. “We will do our utmost to ensure that our friends and our children and our citizens from the northeast feel secure in any and every part of the country.”¹²³

The fact that the prime minister had to publicly denounce the mass messaging, and issue a statement to the parliament of maintaining peace at all costs showed that the perceived threat was real. Not only to people from the northeast but mainlanders in the business and government sector. As northeasterners who worked in the service industry and students who were enrolled in educational institutions were part of the groups of people who left overnight.

The fact that the government denounced the violent threats made via electronic media ‘rumour mongering by anti-national elements’, downplayed the fact that special transportation in the form of daily trains ferrying migrants to the northeast were being arranged by state governments with heightened security in these railway stations, making the fear very clear, as the railway minister even issued a statement on the rise in demand for train tickets had made its impossible not to increase the number of trains going to states in the northeast.

¹²³ Kazmin, Amy "Exodus Shows Alienation of India's Northeast." Washington Post. The Washington Post, 17 Aug. 2012. Web. 28 Mar. 2015. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/exodus-shows-alienation-of-indias-northeast/2012/08/17/63bae21e-e88d-11e1-a3d2-2a05679928ef_story.html>.

The incident sparked outrage in the northeast and from civil society who did not see it as a one of incident but a continuation of the government and army overlooking warning signs of violence towards people from the northeast. In an article covering the exodus in Bangalore by newspaper, The Economic Times, Chief Minister Jagdish Shettar of Karnataka tried to alleviate fear by speaking in a press conference to reporters about the situation being under control. However admitted there had been a few stray incidents of violence against members of the northeast community, but blamed the lack of complaints registered for the reason behind law officials not being able to apprehend the culprits. On being asked to elaborate on these stray incidents, Home and Deputy Chief Minister R. Ashoka intervened calling it a 'sensitive issue', and refused to divulge more information, as he added it concerned the well being of the entire country, and was not just a northeast issue.

The English language daily, The Hindu, ran an article in September a month after the incident, with the title, "Pulling Assam back from the Abyss". The article was put together by several policy makers, scholars, activist and intellectuals both from the mainland and the northeast, and went into depth about the impact of such an incident on the rest of the country. Its main aim was to put down ideas on how instead of merely curbing hate speech, the central and state governments need to firmly handle acts of hatred and discrimination. It pointed at how there was no follow up by mainland press on the situation, as the 'riots and violence in Assam had moved away from the headlines of the metro media'.

The spurt of media coverage regarding the exodus had not dented the real threat of violence that was still is entrenched in the northeast community. In some parts where there are mobilization of groups along ethnic, community and linguistic lines such as the Bodo Territorial Administered Districts, which the articles writers attribute to the failure of state and central governments inability

to assert a 'sense of decisiveness or win back the confidence of all groups'. Another reason the articles states, why the news of the northeast region has 'acquired an international resonance', which is true in effect as major international newspapers and news magazines such as the The New York Times, The Washington Post and TIME magazine carried reports of the migration, with headlines such as, "Exodus shows alienation of India's northeast" by The Washington Post, and TIME magazine running the story with the headline, "India's Northeast: how a troubled region may be a global flashpoint".

These reports were another dent to the Indian governments handling of its ethnically diverse communities especially of the northeast region. Which has been reported in the international press as an unknown region marred with conflict and human rights violations committed by the armed forces to quell dissent. The signatories of the The Hindu article, acknowledged how most of the northeastern natives who left came back within days, as no reports of extreme violence were reported or registered and the threat had mostly subsided. However, highlighted the critical need by the state and central governments to firmly handle acts of hatred and racial discrimination instead of merely curbing hate speech. This was probably in response to the governments crack down on social media, as they 'banned bulk mobile messages for 15 days and tried to track the senders of the hate messages'. They termed it a 'misuse of technology' but, skimmed over the deep-rooted prejudices of mainlanders in regard to northeastern migrants - which are steeped in stereotypes of the region.

The ban on bulk messages came at the same time to prevent racial discrimination against people from the North East, the Ministry of Home Affairs had asked all the states and union

territories to book anyone who commits an act of atrocity against people from the region under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.¹²⁴

Dubbing these random racist attacks erroneously covers longstanding historical and political narratives from the northeast on who they are and how both the mainland and the northeast are implicitly bound in a cycle of violence. Furthermore, the media selectively picking stories when they have sensationalism attached to it, rather than giving a complete background understanding of the conflict. Leads to a vague notion of violence being associated with the northeast with no context, and highlights certain parts of the story of the northeast and not others.

While the 2012 mass hysteria created thousands to flee back to the security of their home states in the northeast. It was the rare moment where the violence of the northeast was shone a light on at a national level. The racial attacks were hardly covered as part of a violence being linked to illegal Bangladeshi migration (which took place after the liberation war of east Pakistan resulting in the independent country of Bangladesh in 1971). Migrants who were Bengali speaking Muslims, entered the northeast and the majority have been residing in the region which was historically occupied land by the tribal Hindi speaking Bodo community. The violence that took place in Assam was not communal and much more territorial as it was essentially over land resources and who had access to them.

Sanjoy Hazarika, chairman and director of the center for North East Studies and Policy research in New Delhi, in the article covering the northeast exodus by TIME magazine, talks about the complexity of the region that continues to confound bureaucrats and politicians in Delhi. Speaking about the exodus, he commented on the continued prevalence of violence in the northeast

¹²⁴ Karishma Kuenzang & Kashika Saxena. "Call a Northeastern 'Chinki', Be Jailed for 5 Yrs - The Times of India." The Times of India. N.p., 6 June 2012. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/people/Call-a-Northeastern-Chinki-be-jailed-for-5-yrs/articleshow/13848316.cms>>.

because ‘its more difficult to actually resolve issues related to land resources and ethnic tensions than it is to make a hue and cry about illegal immigration.’¹²⁵

With the violence being linked to religious reasons, in retaliation, the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh had Muslim groups staging protests that were a gateway to violent riots. An event that occurred in July culminated in northeasterners getting blamed for the violence against Muslims. Subsequently, in August the same years were being threatened to leave before Ramadan, a day of religious observance for Muslims. There is a correlation here of violence, but instead of grasping an opportunity to shine this national light on the origins of these misunderstanding or causes. Politicians picked up on the communal tension and blamed insurgent forces in Pakistan that helped anti national agents in India to publicize this. A northeastern problem took hold as a communal one.

¹²⁵ Ishaan Tharoor. "India's Northeast: How a Troubled Region May Be a Global Flashpoint | TIME.com." World Indias Northeast How a Troubled Region May Be a Global Flashpoint Comments. TIME Inc, 22 Aug. 2012. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://world.time.com/2012/08/22/indias-northeast-how-a-troubled-region-may-be-a-global-flashpoint/>>.

Chapter 3: Comparing policies regarding northeasterners in the mainland

Bezbaruah Committee

The one positive outcome from the mass media coverage and protests by student groups of the hate crime leading to the death of Nido Taniam in January 2014 was the Bezbaruah Committee. An 82-page report was submitted within five months to the central government by the 11-member committee headed by retired Indian Administration Services (IAS) officer M.P Bezbaruah, on the concerns of the people of the northeast living in other parts of the country. The report was aimed at looking into the various forms of discrimination leading from racial remarks to violent physical assaults on northeasterners residing in the mainland. The committee was lauded for its structure and detailed terms of reference that included four main points,

“(1) To examine the various kinds of concerns, including the concerns regarding security, of the persons hailing from the North Eastern states, (2) to examine the causes behind the attacks/violence and discrimination against the people from the North-Eastern states (3) to suggest measures to be taken by the government to address these concerns (4) to suggest legal remedies to address these concerns.”¹²⁶

The committee analyzed the concerns of the people of the northeast that were living in various parts of the mainland, and recommended how to address these problems with long-term (1.5 to 3 years), short-term (1 to 1.5 years) and immediate measures (6 months to 1 year). The report was detailed and meticulous, as the committee traveled to various metropolitan hubs to understand the challenges of living in metropolitan cities, such as Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Pune, Chennai and Hyderabad. They were innovative and detailed in their recommendations, an example being, opening the process of the report up to the public. By having recommendations such as an official email account where suggestions regarding the issue could be

¹²⁶ "Report of the Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri M.P Bezbaruah to Look into the Concerns of the People of the North East Living in Other Parts of the Country." (n.d.): n. pag. Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. Web. <http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/ReportOfMPBezbaruahCommittee.PDF>.

directed and furthermore for wider publicity press releases, were inviting anyone who were interested in making suggestions on the issue to address concerns to the Member Secretary of the Committee, through emails and directly addressed letters. It was a way to include the public in the process of compiling the reports and in effect attempted to make sure members of all sections of society felt included.

It was the first committee that was government appointed that compiled a report of its nature - regarding the welfare of northeastern students in the mainland. It was unprecedented in its swift and concise nature of reporting. Its aim of opening up the report to the public seemed to be an attempt on increasing transparency. By having a through examination of the concerns and addressing them with a summary of recommendations.

I would like to outline the findings of the report and make a brief summarization of its main points. In addition to looking at the after effects of the recommendations, I will compare it to a previous security booklet issued to northeastern students. To determine the effects they had on the northeastern community and how they were perceived after their publication in media coverage of the mainland highlighting how the issue of security of northeasterners in the mainland was coming to the forefront.

After an introduction and background stating the main concerns found, the report was split into three parts. With the purpose of finding the root causes of violence and putting them in broad main categories that were in order of priorities that needed urgent attention. The first part was categorizing various kinds of concerns of the people from the North East, which ranged from a 'sense of insecurity and vulnerability' to 'discrimination and apathy of the law enforcing agencies', and ended in a summing up of the major concerns that found a huge migratory trend from the northeast region.

In a study report conducted by the Center for North Eastern Studies and Policy Research by Jamia Millia Islamia, it observed that the total number of northeasterners in various parts of India increased from 0.4 million in 1981 to 1.1 million in 2001. It also tracked where this migratory community was scattered in the mainland, so as to get a detailed account of concerns in regard to accommodation and to pinpoint where the discrimination was most acute, which alarmingly was centered on the capital – New Delhi.

The detailed account also was significant, as the committee tried to get an idea of the kinds of incidents involving discrimination of northeasterners in the mainland. An example being whether it was institutional prejudice or whether they was a general attitude of discrimination specifically targeted to people in the northeast.

After highlighting the lack of a detailed study report on the issues faced by the northeastern community in the mainland, they found that they were compiling the first one of this nature. Which goes to show how pressing concerns have largely gone unreported or not registered at all. This is an alarming point which demonstrates how the Nido Taniam case was the first time the government was pushed to find and adopt measures to eliminate the root causes of discrimination. Opening up the conversation to hear from minorities their treatment in the mainland, and not just limited to working professionals, but to include students, women and blue collar workers as well. The committee was showing concern but also recommending legal provisions to safeguard northeastern natives from harassment and discrimination. Targeting police, lawyers and governmental authorities to recognize the prejudice at the institutional level. It also was directly targeting educational institutions and the media, to raise awareness through social media and legal awareness campaigns at all prominent universities and schools, to reach a mainland audience at the state level.

In regard to sexual and verbal harassment faced by women from the northeast, the report cited 86% of the North East people faced racial discrimination in metro cities in India. The idea that integration was key through a two-way information drive, was secondary to amending the legal statutes: to provide legal assistance and consultation, such as constituting a panel of lawyers, 50 percent of whom should be women and providing nodal police station for northeasterners. So that First Information Reports (FIR) can be registered immediately including a government relief fund for victims of hate crimes at the judiciary level.

There was a focus on a new law being created or amending the Indian Penal Code to recognize racial discrimination. It was the first report acknowledging that ‘there are clear racist overtones to acts of violence against northeasterners’ and recognized the act of ‘hate speech.’¹²⁷

This is a contemporary idea in India, as discrimination has been mostly acknowledged in regard to caste, but racism is seen as a foreign idea. Globalization opening up homogenous communities is a contemporary phenomenon happening in metropolitan cities. But largely a remote phenomenon in rural towns and cities, therefore there is no law that criminalizes hate speech or an act of racism.

The report seemed to have a three-pronged approach on tackling discrimination that began with legal measures. Respecting the influence of the media, and the public's call for stringent laws and swift acts of justice to be carried out. The report quoted an article in the Times of India, an English language daily, on February 10th, 2014 that ran as its headline, “Racism, our dirty secret”.

The report drew from a paragraph in the article, that stated,

“For the social mindset to change, the law must first treat, and be seen treating, crimes – including non-racist crimes – against northeast Indians seriously. It is how law enforced deals with cases in which ethnic or racial

¹²⁷Ibid 19

minorities are victims and complaints that will determine whether India confines itself to benign discriminations.”¹²⁸

The objective of quoting this article seemed to be the emphasis it put on institutions, especially law and order infrastructures that were allowing a casual racism and discrimination to further fracture the trust deficit, between minorities and the government.

By producing such a detailed account, with a concerted effort to understand the daily lives of northeastern natives in the mainland. The study made some key recommendations, which included firstly, a new law against discrimination.¹²⁹ Secondly, fast track courts and special police squads supervised by the North East Special Police Unit. Third, interventions in education to make the history of the north east region a mandatory course curriculum and stressed on more opportunities for higher education in the north east. Fourth social media outreach, including a Facebook page and use of the mobile messaging application, WhatsApp by ‘nodal police officers to be in constant touch with members.’¹³⁰ And lastly, stressed on the need for integration through the ‘bonding power of sports’ recommending regular national and international events in the northeast region with a stress on the promotion of indigenous games. The report highlighted the loss of a narrative from the northeastern viewpoint that showed how casual discrimination had turned into an ordeal in the mainland, as there were no direct means to confront the situation, or a body to turn to.

¹²⁸Hazra,Indrajit "Racism, Our Dirty Secret - The Times of India." The Times of India. N.p., 10 Feb. 2014. Web. 28 Apr. 2015. <<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/edit-page/Racism-our-dirty-secret/articleshow/30121070.cms>>.

¹²⁹“Either a new law should be promulgated as directed by the High Court of Delhi or the Indian Penal Code should be amended. The offence should be cognizable and non-bailable. The investigation of the FIR should be completed in 60 days by a special squad and investigated by a police officer not below the rank of deputy SP or ACP. A special prosecutor should be appointed to handle all such cases of atrocities. And the trial should be completed in 90 days.”

¹³⁰ Ibid 47

Security Tips Booklet

In comparison to this report, the ‘Security tips for Northeast Students/visitors in Delhi’, which a branch of the New Delhi Police published in 2007, was designed as a pamphlet outlining ways Northeast students could avoid discrimination by changing their behaviors. An Indian Police Service officer Robin Hibu wrote the pamphlet. A decorated Joint Commissioner of Police and Inspector General of Police, himself from the northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh. Seen as the nodal officer for the northeastern community in New Delhi, even being awarded the President of India medal for Meritorious Service in 2010. Hibu assisted the Bezbaruah committee in its proceedings and has argued for an anti-racism law and having ‘dedicated police officers charged with responsibility of monitoring crimes against people from the region in metro cities.’¹³¹ With accolades both national and international, his approach to cultural sensitizing was met with comments in the media coverage of the booklet as ‘inappropriate and offensive’

The problem with having ‘tips’ against encountering discrimination for northeasterners is the idea that they bring it upon themselves. Even Hibu, who wrote and published the booklet had precautionary measures under headings such as: tips on traveling to Delhi, finding accommodation, admission, what to do when in distress, personal safety, food and dress etc, was faced with the criticism of racial profiling and generalizing the attitudes of northeastern youth. Amongst backlash from civil society and student groups, the police department had the pamphlet withdrawn from further publication. However, Hibu defended the pamphlet on the grounds that it was not social profiling, but an earnest measure undertaken to bridge the socio-cultural gap between the northeasterners and people from the mainland, in an article by The Telegraph, an English daily,

¹³¹Bhuyan, Ragini "India Can Stop the Mauling, Harassing, and Killing of Northeasterners-yet Chooses Not to." Quartz. N.p., 23 Oct. 2014. Web. 27 Apr. 2015. <<http://qz.com/285393/india-can-stop-the-mauling-harassing-and-killing-of-northeasterners-yet-chooses-not-to/>>.

titled, “Delhi ‘profiles’ to protect: Police Booklet for Northeast students betrays prejudice”, Hibu in an attempt to explain this bridge of differences, insisted that “visitors from the northeast do not interact enough with the local population’ and went on to explain how this was due to the language barrier and the physical features of the northeastern students.¹³²

The booklet was meant to be for visitors from outside of Delhi both domestic and foreign, as a precautionary measure for traveling, residing and general mingling with local residents, but for the most part was criticized for being directed at stereotypes of northeastern youth, for example the following are paragraphs from the booklet,

“Dress code: When in rooms do as Roman does, Revealing dress be avoided. Avoid lonely road/bylane when dressed scantily. Dress according to sensitivity of the local populace,” As for food habits, “bamboo shoot, Akhuni and other smelly dishes should be prepared without creating ruckus in neighborhood.”¹³³

What is interesting about these blatant policing measures is how ignorant it is in telling and not cautioning readers who presumably will be northeasterners, to behave within the assigned parameters of social conduct. As it suggests that falling outside of these designated roles of behavior is calling for people within Delhi to be provoked to violence or harassment. It is also understandable that northeastern students took offence to the booklet, as even though the title suggested that it was meant for the consumption of any prospective visitor, the booklet had in its introduction as the title, ‘Words to Seven Sisters (the seven northeastern states)’, and goes on to directly make moral examples of past cases where the police have been involved regarding northeasterners and had a one sided view about it,

“A proud father sent his only daughter in Delhi to make her IAS/IPS but she returned back as drug addict, promising boy landed into police case for drunken brawl, late night parties with loud music landed six

¹³²Dholabhai,Nishit "Front Page Story Delhi ‘profiles’ to Protect - Police Booklet for Northeast Students Betrays Prejudices." The Telegraph - Calcutta : Frontpage. N.p., 7 July 2007. Web. 28 Apr. 2015. <http://www.telegraphindia.com/1070710/asp/frontpage/story_8039584.asp>.

¹³³ Ibid

youngsters into police case, revealing dressed up parties lass was molested and thrown out from moving vehicle badly bruised after being outraged...”¹³⁴

The last example of assault hints directly at cases of rape and physical abuse that followed widespread media coverage in the mainland. Suggesting that these incidents happen on account of disorderly behavior or conduct on the victims of the assault, or abuse and do not directly mention the undertones of racism that outline these events or socio economic backgrounds and context of these incidents. In the same Telegraph article, Malem Ningthouja, a researcher from Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, defines this tone and attitude of the police, as ‘othering’. Which she explains to be ‘identifying them as a separate group, and adds how the booklet goes to show how ‘the police think they are civilizing the people from the northeast.’¹³⁵ The reception of the booklet in the mainland by students of the northeast was met by an outcry of being singled out, as a community, with members of student groups of the northeast questioning why they were the only community singled out for these ‘tips’. In an article in Hindustaan Times, an English language daily an article titled, “Booklet for northeast students sparks ire”, quoted Kiren Rijiju a member of Parliament of the lower house of the parliament calling the tips a cultural imposition. Adding that “if they (the tips) are dictating food habits and dress code it is a cultural imposition.”¹³⁶ Manoj Das, the general secretary of the Assam Association of Delhi, was quoted in the article questioning the choice to have guidelines for students of a particular region, “We cannot have a rule book for a particular section of people. Why are they not having similar guidelines for students of other

¹³⁴ Ibid

¹³⁵ Ibid

¹³⁶ Press Trust of India. "Booklet for Northeast Students Sparks Ire." [Http://www.hindustantimes.com/](http://www.hindustantimes.com/). N.p., 15 July 2007. Web. 28 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.hindustantimes.com/newdelhi/booklet-for-northeast-students-sparks-ire/article1-236756.aspx>>.

states?”¹³⁷ The question forming the overarching reason for protesting the circulation of the booklet: “Why the students from northeast were being profiled, and singled out”.

A familiar cry in the protests held at Delhi, and around metropolitan cities in India after the death of Nido Taniam in January 2014, was the insistence of “we are Indian”. It was alluding to a treatment of being second-class citizen within ones own country, after having been through casual incidents of daily racism, the mainland can be an insensitive place of daily profiling. In contrast to the reception of the Security Tips booklet, the Bezbaruah report, seven years after the withdrawal of the security tips booklet, showcases why the government was pushed to a decision in the aftermath of protests to come up with a comprehensive plan of action to stop incidents of racism going unnoticed. Especially since the site of many of these protests was in the capital. The difference between the booklet and the report was the sensitivity with which the information was gathered prior to the report being published. Simply having a policeman being the face of the community, because he is from the region, does not make him an expert or a researched scholar on the situation. The difference between racism and discrimination is also important to clarify, as harassment through overcharging in public transportation or a comment being passed while walking on the streets, could happen to a student in India without being northeastern. However the verbal taunts which accompany this harassment, of being asked whether you are from this country, or being called derogatory names such as ‘chinki’, show a misplaced sense of identity and belonging in the country, of who is perceived to be ‘really Indian’. The Bezbaruah committee was a turning point, as it was seen as a start to address the uncomfortable idea of racism being prevalent in the country. In addition to the judicial clauses being added to protect northeasterners from racial discrimination, the report met with an overwhelmingly positive response from civil society, parliamentarians and northeastern students alike. The home ministry announced few months after the publication of the

¹³⁷ Ibid

report, the acceptance by the government of the committee's recommendations. With the central government going a step further by asking state governments to enforce the recommendations as well.

One year after the death of Nido Taniam, 'violence, racial remarks and derogatory gestures' against people from the northeast are a criminal offence and can have a person booked for a jail term of up to five years under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities Act).¹³⁸ The central government announced this in parliament in January of this year, alongside a slew of measures that were within the stipulated time frame that the committee had recommended. An article by the English language daily, The Hindu, included quotes from the Home Minister Rajnath Singh, on the implementation of these recommendations,

"Universities and the National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) have been advised to include in their curriculum the history of the northeast, including participation of community members in the freedom movement. Under the 'Ishan Uday' scheme, 10,000 scholarships of Rs. 3,500 to Rs. 5,000 per month will be granted for undergraduates, under the 'Ishan Vikas' scheme, select students will be taken to the Indian Institute of Technology (IITs), the National Institute of Technology (NIT) and other engineering institutes for exposure/internship, he goes on to add, "the Sports Ministry has taken initiatives to encourage talent from the region such as allocating Rs. 100 crore for a National Sports University in Manipur. The Ministry for the Development of the Northeastern Region had taken a series of measures, including construction of hostels at Jawaharlal Nehru University and four other colleges in Delhi."¹³⁹

These were just a few of the measures, and some of the long term recommendations were still being slowly applied, such as the ones which would need amending legal provisions, which the ministry of law and justice had agreed to. The dialogue which was created in the process of setting up this committee and acting on its recommendations opened up the topic of racism within sections of society that saw themselves outside of this conversation. Take for instance the lead paragraph

¹³⁸ Karishma Kuenzang & Kashika Saxena. "Call a Northeastern 'Chinki', Be Jailed for 5 Yrs - The Times of India." The Times of India. N.p., 6 June 2012. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/people/Call-a-Northeastern-Chinki-be-jailed-for-5-yrs/articleshow/13848316.cms>>.

¹³⁹ Press Trust of India "Racial Remarks against N-E People to Be Made Punishable." The Hindu. N.p., 02 Jan. 2015. Web. 27 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/racial-remarks-against-ne-people-to-be-made-punishable/article6750071.ece>>.

published in an article in The Times of India article, titled, “Call a northeastern ‘Chinki’, be jailed for 5 years”,

“How many times have you heard someone call a person from the North East 'chinki'? How many times have you called someone from the North East 'chinki'? Now is the time to watch your tongue before you stereotype someone, because calling someone 'chinki' can land you in jail for up to five years. The term, even though derogatory, has become synonymous with people from North East because of their mongoloid features.”¹⁴⁰

The paragraph frankly calls out mainland Indians on their casual attitude of ignorance, which the Bezbaruah committee shines a light on. Looking at the many unnoticed faces of racism, as it uncovered prejudice, at the state, national and institutional level. The response to the recommendations issued by Bezbaruah met with some skeptical replies, as some people found the recommendations too stringent or vague, in particular the ones which would change the Indian criminal code of conduct in the proposed sections of 153-C and section 509-A. Which deal with essentially laws to prevent ‘hate crimes’ not solely limited to northeast or a minority, but any event which had racist undertones.¹⁴¹ The issue which comes to the forefront more starkly here is the idea of institutionalized discrimination, which does not just exist towards northerners in the mainland, but also Africans, non-white expatriates, and also at mainlanders who reside in the northeast.

¹⁴⁰ Karishma Kuenzang & Kashika Saxena. "Call a Northeastern 'Chinki', Be Jailed for 5 Yrs - The Times of India." The Times of India. N.p., 6 June 2012. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/people/Call-a-Northeastern-Chinki-be-jailed-for-5-yrs/articleshow/13848316.cms>>.

¹⁴¹ The proposed Section 153-C makes acts causing or likely to cause fear or feeling of insecurity among the community punishable with up to five years’ imprisonment. It also makes offences of such attempts, promotion or participation in violence on grounds of racial features, behavior, culture or way of living. The proposed Section 509-A provides up to three years’ imprisonment for words, gesture or act intended to insult a member of any race.

It is less about racism, and more as a February 4th, article in The Hindu, puts it, “Cultural ignorance and prejudice.”¹⁴² If ‘chinky’ is seen as a derogatory term in the mainland, being ‘indian’ is just as well used in a demeaning fashion. Contemporary agitations in the northeast in states such as Meghalaya and Manipur that are asking for the Inner Liner Permit to be instituted in their states bring this conversation about illegal or foreign nationals residing in the region to the forefront. Due to the Land Transfer Act and laws such as the Inner Liner Permit, foreigners and Indian nationals who are not natives of the northeast, are not allowed to buy land, or reside in parts of the northeast designed to curb influx of outsiders and non tribal’s to the region. The population of non-tribal’s in Meghalaya declined from 20% in 1971 to 13% in 2011, and through the complicated processes of living and residing in the northeast for so called ‘non tribal’s’ even if they may have resided in the region for generations they are not seen as belonging from the region which consequently affects the inclusionary policies of the nation on a whole.¹⁴³ With affirmative action, special statuses and separate laws to govern different regions, peoples and tribes, the ‘unity in diversity’, political rhetoric that India commonly uses, has quite a different reality of ‘inclusion by exclusion’. However, with the two reports from Security Tips in 2007 to Bezbaruah in 2014, one thing is certain, the conversation of defining an Indian is now in the forefront of media and policies, and with the noticeable coverage given to the northeast region. It is bringing along all the conversations that had been to the wayside, and pushing itself to the forefront through it.

¹⁴² Lawrence Liang Golan Naulak. "Cultural Ignorance and Prejudice." Opinion. The Hindu. N.p., 4 Feb. 2014. Web. <<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/cultural-ignorance-and-prejudice/article5649785.ece>>.

¹⁴³ Lawrence Liang. "Racism and the NE - Exclusion and Prejudice: Arjun Rajkhowa." Kafiya. N.p., 15 Feb. 2014. Web. 27 Apr. 2015. <<http://kafiya.org/2014/02/15/racism-and-the-ne-exclusion-and-prejudice-arjun-rajkhowa/>>.

Conclusion

With India being touted as the world's largest democracy, it clearly wants to be seen as a major world power and have a prominent voice in global affairs. For this it needs effective policies to integrate the northeast not with 'armed love' but with more information on the region that leads to understanding and constructive dialogue.¹⁴⁴ A strange paradox appears when the world's largest democracy, is the home of one Asia's oldest unresolved conflicts (the Indian state versus the Naga rebellion of the northeast). And home of the world's longest hunger striker, Irom Chanu Sharmila, who has been on a hunger strike for 14 years to protest the law which is used to contain dissent in the northeast, AFSPA.¹⁴⁵ There is little information on either of these two major political concerns in the rest of the subcontinent, through either the media or information from the government. This goes to show how the region has been almost invisible in the public consciousness of mainland India reflected by the selective media coverage the region receives.

A spotlight on the northeast has been shone at different times, like when a human rights violation captures the attention of the national media. However, with the present government's interest of changing the 'Look East Policy' to 'Act East through the Northeast Policy', political analysts and business pundits are prophesying how this could affect the future of the northeast region and the country itself. The Look East Policy was introduced in 1991 under the government of Prime Minister P.V Narsimha Rao and was implemented in the successive administrations of Prime Ministers Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh. The idea behind it was to increase economic integration and foreign security cooperation with countries of Southeast Asia, giving importance to the neighboring countries of the northeast region. The foreign minister Sushma

¹⁴⁴ Ticktin, Miriam. "Armed Love : Casualties of Care - Oi." University of California Press, Aug. 2011. Web. 26 Apr. 2015. <<http://oxfordindex.oup.com/view/10.1525/california/9780520269040.003.0012>>.

¹⁴⁵ Cited in Sen, Arijit "Marginal On The Map: Hidden Wars And Hidden Media In Northeast India." (2011): . Reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk. Gerda Henkel Foundation. Web.Pg19.

Swaraj, as part of the government of current prime minister Narendra Modi, has stressed on the importance of acting on this policy to Look East, by replacing the name to make it the Act East Policy, emphasizing the need to make security cooperation, political partnerships and increase connectivity through road and rail links an immediate priority.¹⁴⁶ Most of this policy requires the stabilization of the northeast region, to start making inroads into Southeast Asia through the region.

With the northeast having international boundaries with China, Myanmar, Bhutan and Bangladesh, the economic integration between South Asia and South East Asia through the northeast, can prove to be extremely lucrative and counter any foreign territorial claims by neighboring countries, by improving infrastructure, investment and overall development. This is also a soft power veiled counter to the rise of China, and makes the centers renewed interest in the Northeast Region transparent. The center is focused on becoming close to the northeast and reducing hostility and its portrayal of aggression with Asian countries, by building closer ties with its neighbors, and having a greater role to play in the development of Asia as a whole. Getting the northeast connected will be a gateway to connect the greater Asia, both economically and socio-culturally, to India. The region coming to the forefront from a frontier is highlighted with the United States as a part of a new diplomatic thrust expressing a desire to support India's Look East Policy. The United States president Barack Obama in his address to the Indian Parliament on November 8, 2010 said,

“Like your neighbors in Southeast Asia, we want India to not only ‘look East’, we want India to ‘engage east’ because it will increase the security and prosperity of all our nations.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Haokip, Thongkhohal. "India's Look East Policy: Its Evolution and Approach." *South Asian Survey*. September 2011. Accessed April 28, 2015. 18 (2) 239- Pg 239 <http://sas.sagepub.com/content/18/2/239.full.pdf+html>.

¹⁴⁷ Cited in Sen, Arijit "Marginal On The Map: Hidden Wars And Hidden Media In Northeast India." (2011): . Reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk. Gerda Henkel Foundation. Web.Pg 47.

The state of exceptionalism, which was carried on by the use of British colonial policies such as the Inner Line Permit and AFSPA, is reflected further by the selective media coverage on the region. Which in recent years has been an issue journalists and scholars covering the northeast have pointed at, to be a main cause for the lack of integration of the region and its people with the mainland. The media coverage of northeasterners in the mainland is becoming a more and more common phenomenon, increased by the migration of northeasterners to the mainland. People from both the mainland and the northeast are being forced to step out of their imagined communities, and rethink the idea of citizenship. The onus of stopping the violence in the region lies with the government of India and begins with ending the idea of the region being a frontier or 'distant outpost'.

The central government is keeping the region at an arms length through policies that relegate administrative control through councils and ministries. That only further deepens hostility and maintains the unhealthy dependency on the center for economic and security purposes. A nation building agenda inclusive of all of its citizens, in the majority and minority irrespective of physical features, caste, creed and religion, is required. To integrate the northeast means, to bring it to the forefront of policies and media that can serve as a catalyst to accelerate engagement with the region. This may well be a crucial step to bring much needed attention to the northeast that can actually kick start development and directly counter the roots of insurgency.

India's Northeast can work as a driving force for regional development and mutual co-operation between neighbors, to change its landlocked geography in to a positive defining characteristic. This can send a political message of ethnic harmony in a diversified world in an era of globalization. However achieving this goal will require this will require a genuine interest and understanding of the ground realities of the northeast. To turn on its head years of isolation and

ignorance, will require the center to invest more time in understanding the northeast before trying to melt out its agenda for foreign policy in Asia through it.

Bibliography

- "3 Arrested for Beating up Northeast Students in Bangalore." *The Hindu*. October 15, 2014.
 Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/3-arrested-for-beating-up-northeast-students-in-bangalore/article6503332.ece>.
- "Action By BCCC On Complaints Received From 16 April 2014 To 8 December 2014." *International Broadcasting Foundation, India*.
<http://www.ibfindia.com/sites/default/files/Decisions%20taken%20by%20BCCC%2016%20April%202014%20to%208%20dec%202014.pdf>.
- Agrawal, S. "Naga People'S Movement, Of Human ... vs Union Of India on 27 November, 1997."
Indian Kanoon. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://indiankanoon.org/doc/1072165/>.
- Al Jazeera and Agencies. "India Announces Election Dates." - Al Jazeera English. March 6, 2014.
 Accessed April 27, 2015. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/03/indian-announces-election-dates-2014355402213428.html>.
- "Amitabh Bachchan Wins Hearts with New 'KBC 8' Promo." *The Indian Express*. July 10, 2014.
 Accessed April 26, 2015.
<http://indianexpress.com/article/entertainment/bollywood/watch-amitabh-bachchan-wins-hearts-with-new-kbc-8-promo/>.
- "An Analysis of Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958." *An Analysis of Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958*. March 2005. Accessed April 26, 2015.
<http://www.pucl.org/Topics/Law/2005/afspa.htm> (Peoples Union for Civil Liberties).
- The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act*. Publication. Human Rights Watch.
<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2008/india0908/5.htm>.
- "Armed Forces Special Powers Act: The Debate." *Armed Forces Special Powers Act: The Debate*.
 Accessed April 26, 2015.
<http://www.idsa.in/monograph/ArmedForcesSpecialPowersActTheDebate.html>.

"Audit Bureau of Circulations." Audit Bureau of Circulations. 2013.

<http://www.auditbureau.org/news/view/17>.

July-December 2013

Avasthy, Divya. "Who Is Nido Taniam? North-East Student's Death in New Delhi Hate Attack Reveals India's Racial Division." *International Business Times RSS*. February 05, 2014. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/who-nido-taniam-north-east-students-death-new-delhi-hate-attack-reveals-indias-racial-1435218>.

Baruah, Sanjib. "Dividing Line." *The Indian Express*. October 03, 2014. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/dividing-line/2/>.

Baruah, Sanjib. *Durable Disorder: Understanding the Politics of Northeast India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Baruah, Sanjib. *India Against Itself: Assam and the Politics of Nationality*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.

Baruah, Sanjib. "Introduction." In *Post Frontier Blues: Towards a New Policy Framework for the Northeast India*, 1-80. New Delhi: Center for Policy Research, 2007. East-West Center Washington

Baruah, Sanjib. "Routine Emergencies: India's Armed Forces Special Powers Act." In *Civil Wars in South Asia: State, Sovereignty, Development*, by Aparna Sundar and Nandini Sundar, 189-211. New Delhi: Sage, 2014.

Bhargava, Yuthika. "North-east India Sees Spike in Foreign Tourist Visits." *The Hindu*. August 05, 2014. Accessed April 27, 2015. <http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/northeast-india-sees-spike-in-foreign-tourist-visits/article6284568.ece>.

Bhatia, Saloni. "Kohima Question Promo of Kaun Banega Crorepati Upsets Government Official - The Times of India." *The Times of India*. July 25, 2014. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/tv/news/hindi/Kohima-question-promo-of-Kaun-Banega-Crorepati-upsets-Government-official/articleshow/38977901.cms>.

- Bhatia, Saloni. "What Irks the Crazyies in the Audience? Odd BCCC Complaints - The Times of India." *The Times of India*. January 3, 2015. Accessed April 26, 2015.
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/tv/news/hindi/What-irks-the-crazyies-in-the-audience-Odd-BCCC-complaints/articleshow/45732313.cms>.
- Bhuyan, Ragini. "India Can Stop the Mauling, Harassing, and Killing of Northeasterners-yet Chooses Not to." *Quartz*. October 23, 2014. Accessed April 27, 2015.
<http://qz.com/285393/india-can-stop-the-mauling-harassing-and-killing-of-northeasterners-yet-chooses-not-to/>.
- "Briefing: The Armed Forces Special Powers Act: A Renewed Debate in India on Human Rights and National Security." *Amnesty International India*, September 2013, 1-17.
<http://www.amnestyusa.org/sites/default/files/asa200422013en.pdf>.
- Chadha, Vivek. "Low Intensity Conflicts in India: An Analysis." [Http://www.ipcs.org/](http://www.ipcs.org/). 2005. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://www.ipcs.org/books-review/india/low-intensity-conflicts-in-india-an-analysis-206.html>.
- Chandra, Abhimanyu. "China Urged to Accept Arunachal as Part of India, but Indians Can't Enter State without Permits." *Scroll.in*. September 17, 2014. Accessed April 26, 2015.
<http://www.scroll.in/article/679148/China-urged-to-accept-Arunachal-as-part-of-India,-but-Indians-can't-enter-state-without-permits>.
- "Conflict-induced Displacement." *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre*. April 20, 2015. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://www.internal-displacement.org/south-and-south-east-asia/india/figures-analysis>.
- Das, Nairita. "Northeast People Indeed Assaulted, Threatened in Bangalore." *Oneindia*. August 18, 2012. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://www.oneindia.com/2012/08/18/northeast-people-assaulted-threatened-in-bangalore-kar-1055896.html>.
- Das, Pushpita, Dr. "North East India: Strategic and Developmental Imperatives." *Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses*. Accessed April 26, 2015.
<http://www.idsa.in/event/NorthEastIndiaStrategicandDevelopmentalImperatives.html>.

Das, Samir Kumar. *Conflict and Peace in India's Northeast: The Role of Civil Society*. 42nd ed. Vol. Policy Studies. Washington, D.C.: East-West Center Washington, 2007.

<http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs/ps042.pdf>.

"Development and Growth in Northeast India: The Natural Resources, Water, and Environment Nexus." World Bank. Accessed April 26, 2015.

http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01062/WEB/0__CO-13.HTM.

Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region's website

Dholabhai, Nishit. "Delhi 'profiles' to Protect - Police Booklet for Northeast Students Betrays Prejudices." *The Telegraph - Calcutta : Frontpage*. July 7, 2007. Accessed April 28, 2015.

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1070710/asp/frontpage/story_8039584.asp.

Dholabhai, Nishit. "Nido Was for India: Mom." *The Telegraph*. February 15, 2014. Accessed April 28, 2015.

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1140215/jsp/frontpage/story_17941115.jsp#.VT_taK1Viko.

"Driven by Rumours Exodus of NE People Continues from Karnataka." *Hindustantimes*. August 17, 2012. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/driven-by-rumours-exodus-of-ne-people-continues-from-karnataka/article1-914830.aspx>.

"Exodus of Northeastern People Hits Businesses in Bangalore." *Business Standard*. August 17, 2012. Accessed April 26, 2015. http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/exodus-of-northeastern-people-hits-businesses-in-bangalore-112081702027_1.html.

Fisher, Max. "A Fascinating Map of the World's Most and Least Racially Tolerant Countries."

Washington Post. May 15, 2013. Accessed April 26, 2015.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/05/15/a-fascinating-map-of-the-worlds-most-and-least-racially-tolerant-countries/>.

Gohain, Hiren. "Post-Colonial Trauma?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 41, no. 43/44 (2006): 4537.

Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4418856?ref=no-x-route:8c257406e673933d6dec1fc770760e53>.

- Gohain, Manash Pratim. "2014 Not a Good Year for NE People Living in Delhi - The Times of India." *The Times of India*. January 4, 2015. Accessed April 26, 2015.
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/2014-not-a-good-year-for-NE-people-living-in-Delhi/articleshow/45746623.cms>.
- Government of India. "2009-2010 Annual Report."
http://mha.nic.in/hindi/sites/upload_files/mhahindi/files/pdf/AR%28E%290910.pdf.
- Haokip, Thongkhohal. "India's Look East Policy: Its Evolution and Approach." *South Asian Survey*. September 2011. Accessed April 28, 2015.
<http://sas.sagepub.com/content/18/2/239.full.pdf+html>.
- Hayes, Ben. "The Other Burma: Conflict, Counter-insurgency and Human Rights in Northeast India." *Transnational Institute*, October 11, 2012, 1-32. <http://www.tni.org/report/other-burma>.
- Hazra, Indrajit. "Racism, Our Dirty Secret - The Times of India." *The Times of India*. February 10, 2014. Accessed April 28, 2015. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/edit-page/Racism-our-dirty-secret/articleshow/30121070.cms>.
- India. Education Sector. Social Sector Statistics. *Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region*. Compiled by Economic Adviser. 2011. Accessed April 25, 2014.
<http://mdoner.gov.in/content/literacy-rates-2001-2011-%E2%80%93gender>.
- "India: Repeal Armed Forces Special Powers Act." Human Rights Watch. October 19, 2011. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/10/19/india-repeal-armed-forces-special-powers-act>.
- "Indian Version of 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?' Launches with Focus on North East India Racial Discrimination with Campaign via Leo Burnett." *Campaign Brief Asia*. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://www.campaignbrief.com/asia/2014/07/indian-version-of-who-wants-to.html>.

- Joshi, Murli Manohar, Dr., ed. "BJP Election Manifesto 2014:Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat." *Manifesto Eng.*, 2014, 1-42. Accessed April 25, 2015.
<http://bjpelectionmanifesto.com/pdf/manifesto2014.pdf>.
- Kazmin, Amy. "Exodus Shows Alienation of India's Northeast." *Washington Post*. August 17, 2012. Accessed March 28, 2015. http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/exodus-shows-alienation-of-indias-northeast/2012/08/17/63bae21e-e88d-11e1-a3d2-2a05679928ef_story.html.
- Kuenzang, Karishma, and Kashika Saxena. "Call a Northeastern 'Chinki', Be Jailed for 5 Yrs - The Times of India." *The Times of India*. June 6, 2012. Accessed April 26, 2015.
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/people/Call-a-Northeastern-Chinki-be-jailed-for-5-yrs/articleshow/13848316.cms>.
- Liang, Lawrence, and Golan Naulak. "Cultural Ignorance and Prejudice." *Opinion*. February 4, 2014. *The Hindu*. <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/cultural-ignorance-and-prejudice/article5649785.ece>.
- Liang, Lawrence. "Racism and the NE - Exclusion and Prejudice: Arjun Rajkhowa." *Kafila*. February 15, 2014. Accessed April 27, 2015. <http://kafila.org/2014/02/15/racism-and-the-ne-exclusion-and-prejudice-arjun-rajkhowa/>.
- "Live Parliament Session: Lok Sabha Adjourned for the Day after Uproar over Nido Taniam's Death." *Indiatoday*. February 5, 2014. Accessed April 26, 2015.
<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/parliament-adjourned-telangana-winter-session-andhra-pradesh/1/341795.html>.
- Mander, Harsh. "In Divided Neighbourhoods." *The Hindu*. July 26, 2014. Accessed April 26, 2015.
<http://www.thehindu.com/features/magazine/mag-columns/in-divided-neighbourhoods/article6252411.ece>.
- Mead, Walter Russel. "Modi Looks East." *The American Interest*. December 02, 2014. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2014/12/02/modi-looks-east/>.

Ministry of Home Affairs, and Government of India. "North East Division."

[Http://mha.nic.in/northeast_new#a](http://mha.nic.in/northeast_new#a). Accessed April 25, 2015.

http://mha.nic.in/northeast_new#b.

Ministry of Home Affairs. "Foreigners Protected Areas Order, '958." *Inner Line Permit*.

Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, and Office of The Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India. "Census India." Census India. Accessed April 26, 2015.

http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/Census_Data_Online/Social_and_cultural/Religion.aspx.

Myint-U, Thant. *Where China Meets India: Burma and the New Crossroads of Asia*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012.

Nayak, Purusottam. "Status And Trend Of Human Development In N.E. Region Of India."

Planning Commission Government of India. Accessed April 26, 2015.

<http://planningcommission.nic.in/>.

"A Neglected Crisis." *The Economist*. August 25, 2012. Accessed April 26, 2015.

<http://www.economist.com/node/21560901>.

"North East India." Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati. Accessed April 26, 2015.

http://www.iitg.ernet.in/rcilts/phaseI/n_e.html.

Introduction to North Eastern Languages

North East Network. "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women." *Pakistan Horizon* 47, no. 3 (1994): 167-82. Accessed April 25, 2015.

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CEDAW/Womenconflictsituations/NortheastNetwork.pdf>.

Panda, Ankit. "Geography's Curse: India's Vulnerable 'Chicken's Neck'" *The Diplomat*. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://thediplomat.com/2013/11/geographys-curse-indias-vulnerable-chickens-neck/>.

Parashar, Swati. "The Siege Within | Book Review by Swati Parashar." Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies. 2005. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://www.ipcs.org/books-review/india/low-intensity-conflicts-in-india-an-analysis-206.html>.

Press Trust of India. "Booklet for Northeast Students Sparks Ire."

[Http://www.hindustantimes.com/](http://www.hindustantimes.com/). July 15, 2007. Accessed April 28, 2015.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/newdelhi/booklet-for-northeast-students-sparks-ire/article1-236756.aspx>.

Purkayastha, Banasree. "The Best Ads 2014." The Financial Express. December 16, 2014. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://www.financialexpress.com/article/industry/the-best-ads-2014/19507/>.

"Racial Remarks against N-E People to Be Made Punishable." The Hindu. January 02, 2015. Accessed April 27, 2015. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/racial-remarks-against-ne-people-to-be-made-punishable/article6750071.ece>.

"Report of the Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri M.P Bezbaruah to Look into the Concerns of the People of the North East Living in Other Parts of the Country." http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/ReportOfMPBezbaruahCommittee.PDF

Sahni, Ajai. "Survey of Conflicts & Resolution in India's Northeast Ajai Sahni#." Survey of Conflict & Resolution in India's Northeast. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume12/Article3.htm>.

Salman, Osama. "2014 Review: 5 Viral Social Media Experiments." Hindustantimes. December 29, 2014. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://www.hindustantimes.com/socialmedia-updates/2014-review-5-viral-social-media-experiments/article1-1301376.aspx>.

Sanga, Zodin, and Khelen Thokchom. "China Slogan in Nido Backlash." The Telegraph. February 13, 2014. Accessed April 26, 2015. http://www.telegraphindia.com/1140213/jsp/northeast/story_17929762.jsp#.VSxAGxPF_UI.

- "Santosh Hegde Commission Submits Report on Manipur Extra Judicial Killings." Human Rights Law Network. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://www.hrln.org/hrln/criminal-justice/reports/1501-santosh-hegde-commission-submits-report-on-manipur-extra-judicial-killings.html>.
- Saxena, Poonam. "Five Crore Question: What Makes KBC Work?" Hindustantimes. November 19, 2011. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://www.hindustantimes.com/television/five-crore-question-what-makes-kbc-work/article1-771297.aspx>.
- Sen, Arijit. "Marginal On The Map: Hidden Wars And Hidden Media In Northeast India." *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*, 2011, 1-61. https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Marginal%20on%20the%20map_%20Hidden%20wars%20and%20hidden%20media%20in%20northeast%20India.pdf.
- Shah, Gouri. "The Best Ads 2014." The Financial Express. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://www.financialexpress.com/article/industry/the-best-ads-2014/19507/>.
- Shah, Gouri. "New KBC Ad Campaign Takes on Racial Discrimination." Livemint.com. July 10, 2014. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://www.livemint.com/Consumer/XaKBHtHAyum6GierRoytJ/New-KBC-ad-takes-on-racial-discrimination.html>.
- Sharma, Chandan Kr. "The State and the Ethnicisation of Space in Northeast India." *The State and the Ethnicisation of Space in Northeast India*. 2012. Accessed April 26, 2015. https://www.academia.edu/4194071/The_State_and_the_Ethnicisation_of_Space_in_Northeast_India.
- Sonwalkar, Prasun, Ag Noorani, "Contested Nation", Jstor (Economic And Political Weekly), March, and 1 – 8. 09 Feb 2010. "Mediating Otherness: India's English-language Press and the Northeast." *Contemporary South Asia* 13, no. 4 (2004): 389-402. December 2004. Accessed April 20, 2015.
- Sony. "KBC 2014 Launch Film - Kohima." YouTube. July 8, 2014. Accessed April 27, 2015. <https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=QVlyDOW2jC8>.

- Sundararaman, Shankari. "Modi in Myanmar: From 'Look East' to 'Act East'." Institute of Peace & Conflict Studies. November 17, 2014. Accessed April 25, 2015.
<http://www.ipcs.org/article/india-the-world/modi-in-myanmar-from-look-east-to-act-east-4742.html>.
- TAM Peoplemeter System. "Top 10 Television Shows in India in 2011!" Trak.in Info Channel. January 03, 2012. Accessed April 28, 2015. <http://trak.in/info/925-top-10-television-shows-india-2011/>.
- Tewari, Saumya. "KBC Kohima: Winning Hearts." Afaqs. July 14, 2014. Accessed April 26, 2015.
http://www.afaqs.com/news/story/41368_KBC-Kohima-Winning-Hearts.
- Thapar, Karan. "The Ugly Indian: How We Are Racist to Our People."
<http://www.hindustantimes.com/>. February 10, 2014. Accessed April 27, 2015.
<http://www.hindustantimes.com/karantapar/the-sad-but-inescapable-truth-is-we-are-guilty-of-racism/article1-1182080.aspx>.
- Tharoor, Ishaan. "India's Northeast: How a Troubled Region May Be a Global Flashpoint | TIME.com." World Indias Northeast How a Troubled Region May Be a Global Flashpoint Comments. August 22, 2012. Accessed April 26, 2015.
<http://world.time.com/2012/08/22/indias-northeast-how-a-troubled-region-may-be-a-global-flashpoint/>.
- "These Fellows Must Be Eliminated" Relentless Violence and Impunity in Manipur.* Report. Human Rights Watch, 2008. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2008/india0908/5.htm>.
- Tickin, Miriam. "Armed Love : Casualties of Care - Oi." Armed Love : Casualties of Care - Oi. August 2011. Accessed April 26, 2015.
<http://oxfordindex.oup.com/view/10.1525/california/9780520269040.003.0012>.
- Tun, Soe Zeya. "Myanmar's Naga People." Reuters. Accessed April 26, 2015.
<http://widerimage.reuters.com/story/myanmars-naga-people>.
- Varma, Subodh. "7 of 8 Northeast States Lag behind Average India Income." The Times of India. November 2, 2009. Accessed April 26, 2015.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/7-of-8-Northeast-states-lag-behind-average-India-income/articleshow/5187537.cms>.

"Vision Document | Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, North East India." Vision Document | Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, North East India. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://mdoner.gov.in/content/vision-document>.

Walker, Anthony R. "Reviewed Work: The Nagas: Hill Peoples of Northeast India: Society, Culture and the Colonial Encounter by Julian Jacobs, Alan Macfarlane, Sarah Harrison, Anita Herle." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, (Mar., 1993), 24, no. No.1 (1993): 150-52. [http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/20071511.pdf?acceptTC=true\(%20Jacobs%201990\)](http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/20071511.pdf?acceptTC=true(%20Jacobs%201990)).