PREFACE

India adopted economic policy reform programme in the year 1991, which focused on liberalization, openness, transparency and globalization. Since then Indian economy is going through a transition phase where restructuring of various sectors has taken place. Rationalization in trade policy was also a central focus of much of India's reform effort in the early stages. Trade policy prior to the reforms was characterized by multiple controls of high tariffs and pervasive import restrictions. Over the years, export sector has undergone fundamental shifts to correct the earlier anti-export bias through the withdrawal of quantitative restrictions, reduction and rationalization of tariffs, liberalization in trade and payments regime and improved access to export incentives. The focus of trade policy reforms in India has been on openness with a basic thrust on outward orientation export promotion activity and improving competitiveness of Indian industry to meet global market requirements.

The era of globalization and liberalization has opened up the economy of North East India as well. This region is bountifully endowed with bio-diversity, hydro-potential, oil and gas, coal, limestone and other mineral resources. It is also rich in forest resources which include rubber, cane and bamboo timber, hardwood, medical plants and herbs. There are few of industries in North East India where most of them are engaged in manufacturing of food products, wood and wood-based items and non-metallic mineral products. Tea and petroleum are the two important industries. The other sectors include cement, paper, sugar, jute, fertilizers, plywood, handicraft and handlooms. Thus, owing to its richness in resources, North East India is a very significant part of the country as far as trading is concerned.
But in spite of such richness in North East India, the potential for its exports has not been explored to the fullest extent. This region has marketable surplus of resources. If even a part of those surplus resources could be exported, it would boost the economy tremendously. The potential for North East India’s export calls for an introspection with regard to trade policy. Synergy between policies and strategies with regard to export trade is expected to realize North East India’s strong potential and enhance the overall competitiveness of its exports. A few studies have been conducted on organization level in this field. But these are not enough to proceed with the present job which is an attempt against such a backdrop, to examine the promotion of export trade. This study covers an empirical analysis with special reference to North East India for a period beginning from 1991 to 2005. The objectives of the study have been outlined as (a) to ascertain the present status of export trade from North East India and to analyze its changing pattern; (b) to document the process of global integration and analyze the impact of liberalization on exports trade from North East India; (c) to study and analyze the impact of policy level interventions; (d) to find out the impediments to export trade from North East India and (e) to suggest some pragmatic measures for removal of impediments and promotion of export trade from the region.

The present researcher considers it a relevant topic of research as export trading has special significance to the economies of North East India and the research study would therefore proof to be of immense help to the policy makers and the various states of the North East India.

Aptitude for carrying out research work has been stimulated by a participation in a workshop on ‘Research Methodology’ conducted by the Department of Commerce, Gauhati University in the month of July 2007.
The present researcher was privileged enough to deliver a talk on the potentiality of export trade following the opening of Nathula pass on an invitation from Department of Commerce and Industries, Government of Sikkim in the capital town of Gangtok. The responses received from the audience in the workshop have enriched the perception of the present researcher and some of the foreign trade related matters ventilated in it were duly incorporated in the present thesis.

Keeping in mind the macro nature of the scope of study, a multi pronged methodology has been planned. It involves collecting primary as well as secondary information. Primary information was governed mostly by the questionnaire distributed among the exporters and officials of different institutions. Moreover, personal visit has been made to different Land Custom Stations and Inland Container Depot all over the region. Secondary information was gathered from office of the Commissioner of Customs, Shillong, Meghalaya; Government publications and records; journals; magazines; internet and newspaper. Further, in search of detailed information, different libraries within and outside the region have been visited.

The present study is categorized into six chapters. The first chapter entitled Introduction is introductory in nature and spells out the parameters of the study in both theoretical and practical framework. This chapter has reviewed the available literature on export trade as a whole and North East India in particular. It also highlights the objectives, research queries, methodologies and layout of the study. An outline description of historical perspective of international trade in North East India, profile of different states of North East India along with the authorized trade outlets from the region are presented in second chapter entitled North East India: a Brief Profile. Chapter three entitled Trade Agreements and Export Promotion Measures provides an overview of the changes in trade policy of India in the context of latest policy measures. It also examines the specific schemes and incentives for promotion of export trade from North East India.
The analysis and findings related to the study encompassing the broad objectives set in Chapter 1 are sketched in fourth chapter entitled *Analysis and Findings*. The prospects and problems of export trade from North East India have been diagnosed and incorporated in fifth chapter entitled *Prospects and Problems of Export Trade from North East India*. The concluding sixth chapter entitled *Conclusions and Recommendations* gives a brief summary of main findings and some workable suggestions for further improvement of export trade as a whole.

Three appendices are affixed. Appendices include copy of the questionnaire-I meant for exporters of North East India as Appendix I; copy of the questionnaire-II meant for officials of North East India as Appendix II and comprehensive commodity composition of export from different land custom stations of North East India as Appendix III.

Bibliography in the form of references is appended at the end of each chapter.

Finally, as no research work is out of limitations, so the same may seem to be happened with this assignment. Although the research scholar made all possible efforts to reduce the magnitude of errors but still the prevalence of printers devil cannot be ruled out. However, for all the shortcomings the researcher alone bears the moral responsibility.

Place: Guwahati, Assam
Date: [Signature]

(Anindita Adhikary)