CHAPTER – 10
THE REGIONAL TREND

I. General Observations:

It stands to reason that the issues related to culture change should not and cannot be studied in isolation but should be viewed against the backdrop of the whole of north-eastern region. As such we take up here for a general survey the situation prevailing in respect of the tribal communities of the different parts of the North-eastern region. It can be added that the general pattern of culture change involving the tribals in the broader Indian perspective can be said to be theoretically tenable for all the tribal groups, although empirically there are various specificities.

It is felt that the incorporation of a resume of the description of the recent developments given in the Chapter-4 would be of great value here. This will help as the spring board for further elaboration of the relevant points with the help of specific illustrations.

As we have mentioned earlier, the north-eastern region represents a picture of diversity, particularly in respect of tribal communities. Apart from the fact that the largest number of different tribal communities live in the hills and plains of the region, here we have a situation in which the tribal and the non-tribal, the acculturated and integrated, the sanskritized and non-sanskritized, the highly refined and the patently primitive – all co-exist in a remarkable state of juxtaposition. What is equally remarkable is
the presence of markedly tribal racial and cultural strands in the physical
and cultural fabrics of the non-tribal societies. Particularly in Assam, the
process of assimilation of various tribal groups into the non-tribal Assamese-
Hindu fold is continuing even today. For example, a substantial number of
the major Assamese caste Koch or Rajbangshi is made up of descendents
of assimilated tribals, a large section of such tribal groups such as the Rabha,
the Sonowal have moved close to the Assamese-Hindu society. They are
hardly distinguishable as tribals. Because of this living process of
transformation, it is often very difficult to draw the line of distinction
between the tribal and the non-tribal in respect of the Assamese Hindu
society.

Apart from this, there are a number of tribal communities in
the region which are either directly affiliated to Buddhism and others which
have been influenced by the Buddhistic ways through contact with the former.
The Monpas and the Sherlukpens of Arunachal Pradesh belong to the
Lamaistic Buddhism of the Tibetan order and those like the Khamtis, the
Phake, the Khamyang and the Aiton etc. of Assam are followers of Hinayana
Buddhism of Burmese order. Many of these groups, particularly those living
in the plains of Assam or in the adjoining foothills have been conditioned
in various degrees by their contact with the Assamese-Hindu society.

In respect of the role of Islam the picture is almost like that
of the all India pattern. However, one noteworthy fact is that one of the
earliest converts to Islam in these parts was a Bodo tribal by the name of
Ali Mech and at least two deities of the present day Bodo pantheon viz,
Nabab Badshah and Pir Deu are of definite IIsmaic links. Momin is believed
to be originated from Muslim gentleman of priestly status.
But Christianity came in a big way to the tribal population of the North-eastern region which resulted into spectacular transformation in these communities, while the bulk of the tribal communities in Mizoram, Nagaland and Meghalaya have embraced Christianity, more and more sections of the tribal populations in Assam and Manipur have been coming under its influence. Christianity has brought in a new kind of orientation in the way and attitudes of the concerned groups, and new equations are being sought at different levels, national, state and local, and at various fronts – religious, socio-cultural and political.

Finally, there is now the most powerful and visible impact of modernization. Development for whatever it is worth – has been bringing in various doses of urbanization, industrialization improved transport and communications, better educational facilities and so on to the tribal areas. But the invasion of consumerist market economy and western culture has resulted into such changes that not only in tribal life styles but also in the tribal ethos underwent major metamorphosis. Such changes have of course, made the heaviest dent on the Christian sections, but others have by no means been left untouched, at least in the matter of the ‘desired’ life style.

The most prominent change in the North-East has been the new consciousness and ethnic assertion. This situation has manifested itself in a tendency that has been taking shape in various kinds developments. There have been feelings that the tribals have been neglected and deprived of their due rights and privileges and that the large scale presence of ‘outsiders’ in the economic and even in administrative fronts have been causing a threat to the future of these communities. In a number of cases heaving influx of illegal immigrants has disturbed the balance the demographic pattern in
such a manner that the indigenous communities are facing the prospects of being reduced to minorities even in their own homeland.

Thus various combinations of these factors played important roles in different communities. The growing sense of resentment and frustration among the youth has found expression in a kind of intolerance – often leading to extremism and even militancy and terrorism.

We are highlighting below some major developments involving the tribal communities – both in the hills and on the plains – of different states of North-East India with particular focus on the ethnic movements.

II. Focus on Individual State

Assam:

The Assam Movement based on the issue of the expulsion of illegal immigrants, which started in the late 70's in the form of a students' movement had touched initially both the tribals and the non-tribals. But, later on due to various circumstances some of the tribal groups dissociated themselves from the Assam movement. At one point of time the Assam movement lost it's sense of direction and many enthusiastic young men and women actively involved in the movement got dissolution and joined the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), a militant outfit with it's goal of 'liberating' Assam from the 'colonial' Indian rule and establishing an independent Assam.

However, keeping the Assam movement in mind as the model, a number of tribal groups, later started their own movements along ethnic lines. Now the famous Bodo Movement offers the most outstanding example of this new trend of development started in the form of a protest against the administration of Assam and the dominant section of the population i.e.
the caste Hindu Assamese population regarding various issues. Initially it was a socio-cultural movement with implications for economic development and preservation of cultural identity. Aiming for the redressal of their grievances, they formed an organization called The Plains Tribal Council of Assam in 1968 and demanded a separate homeland to be named (PTCA). Then the demands were limited – facilities in education, health and economic development was their first priority. With the establishment of Bodo Sahitya Sabha, the movement took a new turn as the people registered a demand for introduction of Bodo language as an optional subject along with Sanskrit and Pali in the schools of Assam followed by the demand for the use of Bodo language as a medium of instruction in the schools of Bodo dominated areas. The issue of adoption of a script for the Bodo language also added fuel to the fire. In course of time, the demand took two different forms – one, more autonomy for the Bodo majority areas within the existing constitutional framework, and other self determined groups through militancy. Here also the student front called ABSU was at the forefront in the beginning. In 1986 an organization called Bodo Security Force (BSF) was formed. They promised to ensure the protection and promotion of the Bodo People. In doing so they caused terror to the non-tribal communities living in the Bodo dominated area. They came out as a ruthless and inexorable force formed for their cause. Later, the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) another Bodoland outfit has been formed. The large-scale settlements of immigrant Muslims and also of Adibasis in the Bodo areas has also been a potent factor.

Through a long series of talks between the movement leaders and the central and state governments a kind of settlement has been hammered
out with the prospects of the creation of a Bodoland Autonomous Council (with some necessary modifications in the Constitution). However, some of the militant outfits were not ready to accept such compromised position.

Side by side, the non-Bodo communities have combined to oppose the grant of such authority to the Bodos fearing that their interests would be in jeopardy.

Finally, in line with the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, the issue has been more or less amicably settled and an accord has been signed. As a result the Bodoland Autonomous Council has been created.

Significantly, some other tribal groups of the plains of Assam have also been influenced by the Bodo movement and are becoming more and more restive and demanding not only economic and cultural protection but also autonomy in various degrees. For example, the Rabhas, the Misings, the Tiwas etc.

The cases of the tribals of the hill districts of Assam have some extra dimensions. Like the Bodos, the hill people also felt that the Assamese leadership had not been giving due attention to the causes of the hill tribal people and were rather ignoring them. An anti-Assamese feeling grew among these people when other hills people of Assam got separated from the mainstream during late sixties and early seventies. The Karbi Students Association started expressing their grievances in a separatist line from time to time.

A committee called Karbi Anglong and N.C. Hills Autonomous State Demand Committee (KANCHSDCOM) was formed during early seventies to demand a separate autonomous state for the hills people. It was
a central committee for both the districts. Similarly, Karbi Anglong Autonomous State Demand Committee was formed in the Karbi interest. Again in 1986 a separate organization named Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) was formed and went under the influence of leftist party CPI(ML). The Karbi Student Association and Women group of ASDC became their constituent force. They pressurized the non-ASDC people to follow their agenda. Thus a beginning of unrest brewed up in the hill district. In the process, a parallel outfit took shape under the name and style of Karbi National Volunteers (KNV) and it took to arms. They stirred the people and brought a sense of fear among them.

Another group called Peoples Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) grew up in later period and took to arms. For the rising of several armed groups the non-Karbi people and the divided groups of Karbi people themselves fell in the ditch of trouble. In the meantime, KNV and UPDA got united in Sept. 1999 and they formed a new party called Karbi People Force (KPF). The activists of this group is causing unrest in the district. Killings have been frequent there. The Karbi People causes constraint to the non-Karbi people. Therefore, the situation is reeling on unrest at present, centering round the demand for autonomous state.

Similarly, Dimaraji Revival Demand Committee (DRDC) and Dima Halam Daogah (DHD) have been formed during mid-nineties to demand a separate Dimasa State comprising of Dimasa inhabited areas of Karbi Anglong, N.C. Hills and Nagaland.

Thus it is found that various interests have been working at cross-purposes and have given rise to a most complex situation, which almost defies rational analysis.
Meghalaya:

A kind of Khasi nationalism of consciousness about the preservation of Khasi religions and cultural identity had started much in the later part of the 19th century as a protest against the invasion of Christianity. This was known as Seng Khasi movement.

During the last few decades of the British rule in India, demand for an autonomous hill state grew with British support. After Independence, following the setting up of commission for the state reorganization in 1953, the hill leaders belonging to different tribes and denominations came together to form Eastern India Tribal Union. This Union later gave birth to All Party Hill Leader’s Conference (APHLC). They demanded a separate state where English would be the official language as well as the medium of instruction. In 1968 APHLC organized a nonviolent Satyagraha and as a result the Autonomous State of Meghalaya within Assam comprising Khasi and Jaintia Hill district and Garo Hill district was created. But within a short time the demand for full statehood became strong, particularly after the creation of Nagaland as a separate state. Gradually the pressure became very much intensified. Thus in 1972 Meghalaya got full statehood and since then APHLC assumed the status of a regional political party.

At the time of the creation of separate state of Meghalaya, the entire tribal populations i.e. the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo – had extended their support. During recent decades, the youths have tried to reorganize that spirit for achieving various socio-political goals. But it seems that the device has failed to bring in the desired results. The resentment and frustration among the common people remained simmering and particularly the younger generation soon grew disillusioned. They became more and more restive and
rallied together to register their discontent. A few years ago a joint body of Khasis and Garos called Hynniewtrep Achik Liberation Council (HALC) was formed. Later on, the Garo section of the body dissociated itself from this HALC because of internal strife and a separate body for the Achik National Volunteer Force was formed. Both these bodies have gradually assumed more and more militant postures and have virtually turned into terrorist outfits.

**Nagaland:**

In case of Nagaland a common wave Naga-Nationalism came into being after the introduction of Christianity. Embracing Christianity the different Naga groups who had their distinct identity got a platform to unite themselves as fellow believers and as a result a kind of Pan-Naga identity emerged.

The Naga elites who were educated in the institutions run by the Christian Missionaries established Naga Club at Kohima and Mokokchung in 1918. It can be considered as the first conscious attempt to promote intertribal solidarity. Later on in 1923 Lotha Council and in 1928 Ao Council were formed which re-established socio-culturally distinctive identity of the Naga people that gradually led to the Naga solidarity movement. In 1945, Naga Hills District Tribal Council was formed which had given a twist to the Naga solidarity movement.

In 1946, it was renamed being influenced by the idea of Pan-naga nationhood as Naga National Council. It was followed by a series of developments. The Naga elite declared their demand for formation of independent Naga land on 14th August of 1947. Then continuous political and social disturbances lasted for a decade. Ultimately the Naga Peace
Organizing Committee and the Church authorities came forward to settle the unrest. As a result, successive Naga People's Convention and negotiation with the Govt. of India followed, ultimately culminating into the creation of Nagaland as a separate state in 1963. But even after independence, the disturbances continued under the leadership of A.Z. Phizo, the leader of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland. Though it splitted into two groups, the movement is still continuing unchecked. Some negotiations are going on with these groups. But the stumbling block has been the demand for inclusion of all Naga inhabited areas of neighbouring states that have hanging fire and is likely to do so in the foreseeable future.

Manipur:

Manipur was a native state before independence with a monarch, assisted by a Durbar (Council of Advisers). According to an agreement between the king and the British Government in 1907, a political Agent of the Governor of Assam would preside over the Durbar. After the Second World War, the people of Manipur demanded a ‘responsible government’. The Govt. of Manipur Act of 1947 envisaged the setting up of a legislature and a Ministry of six elected members, headed by a nominee of the Maharaja.

After Independence of India, the state was taken over by the Govt. of India on 15th October 1948 and with the coming into force of India's Constitution, Manipur became a part “C” state. The principles enunciated in relation to the Part ‘C’ states originally were that they should be merged with a neighbouring Part ‘A’ state, but the State Reorganization Commission recommended that Manipur should remain separate existence. The reasons were – firstly, that it was a border state, secondly, it was an independent territory at least since the British rule; and thirdly, it would be a burden
on Assam if Manipur (along with Tripura) was amalgamated with it. Manipur was, therefore, constituted into a centrally administered territory and under provisions of the Territorial Councils Act of 1956, was given a substantial measure of local self-government – though not the power to legislate. Obviously the people of Manipur were not satisfied with this arrangement and made repeated representations to New Delhi, demanding greater measure of a responsible government. The full statehood was announced for Manipur in September 1970. Ultimately Manipur became a full-fledged state on January 1972 with six district councils in its hill areas. The state of Manipur has two major physiographic regions, the Manipur River valley and a large surrounding tract of mountains. Hills constitute almost 90 percent of Manipur’s total area.

About two thirds of the people are the Meithei, who occupy the Manipur Valley and are largely Hindu. Indigenous hill tribes, such as the Nagas in the north and the Kukis in the south, make up the rest of the population of the state. There are numerous clans and sections of tribal population who speak the language of Tibeto-Burman family. Manipuri, along with English is the official language of the state.

The history of insurgency had its roots in the 19th century in Manipur in the form of various wars and movements. In 1886 Bara Chouba Singh rebelled against Churachand Singh, but it was suppressed. Several other uprisings were there but he successfully overcame all of them.

In the British period the Thadous declared war against the British administration. Because of certain rules and systems including tax system that were introduced by the British administration against the interest of the Thadous, they started resentment. Finally the burnt down of villages
and granaries by the Vice-President of Durbar infuriated the tribe and they resorted to insurgency. The uprising of Thadon insurgency was the most tremendous one, which the British had to face for one generation.

The intra-tribal conflict among the Kabui Naga groups facilitated their subjugation by the British. Later they realized that the discussion among them was responsible for their political slavery. They were against many oppressive laws and practically became rival to the British.

In 1938, Hijam Irawat Singh founded a leftist movement by establishing Praja Mandlas, Kishan Sabhas, Mahila Sanmilan and Chatra Sammitis. Though a Marxist, he was essentially a nationalist and opposed to the merger of Manipur with the Indian Union. He desired that Manipur should be independent with membership in the U.N. Several other also argued that Manipur has for all practical purposes, become a colony of the Indian Capitalists. The 1960's witnessed the growth of insurgency of different kinds. Meitei State Committee followed by United Liberation Front, Peoples Liberation Army (PLA). The economic unrest among the Meitei youth was one important reason which gave rise to terrorism in Manipur alongwith ethnic movement.

After gaining full statehood, the Meities still continued their terrorist activities. The underground Meitei concentrated their operations in the valley region but the Tangkul, Kuki, Mao, Hmar and Haokip tribes took deep root in the hilly areas of Manipur. T. Muivah, being a Tungkhul Naga and the leader of NSCN faction, used Ukhrul district as a base for the NSCN. The terrorist organizations are well spread out in Manipur and were very strong. In fact, terrorism has been taken as a means of income by a large number of youths of the state. Moreover, political, social, economic and
ethnic factors together have added interest to indulge in terrorism in Manipur.

Tripura:

Tripura, which derived its name either from a deity known as Tripureswari, or from a tribal word *tuipra* – meaning water, or form the Tipra tribe, enjoyed a special status among the princely states because it had no treaty obligations to the British Raj. Though Tripura was conquered by the British in 1761, no political agent was posted in the state until 1871. Tripura’s accession to India after Independence was also voluntary because the last Maharaja, who died in 1947, had expressed his intention to merge his kingdom with India after Independence. It was designated a Union Territory in 1956 and it acquired full status as a state in 1972.

There are 19 hill tribes – mostly Hindu or Hinduized, 2 Buddhist tribes – Chakma and Magh and a scattering of 6 tea garden tribes. There are some Mizos, Kukis, Garos and miscellaneous groups. The Raang are classed as a ‘primitive’ tribe. The major tribes belong to the Tibeto-Burman group and the Tripuris who are the dominant group belongs to the Bodo-stock.

Tripura has become a trouble-prone state for the last few decades. The trouble of Tripura grew intense for the ill feeling that persisted among the tribals of the state against the non-tribals coming from the erstwhile East Pakistan. Because of the continuous influx of Bengali people from the other side of the border, the demographic balance was disturbed which led the majority population of the tribal background to fall down to a state of minority in their own state. This change had caused serious fear and doubt in the psyche of the tribal people of Tripura.
The indigenous people noticed that they had been gradually deprived of their land and identity. The Bengali language also gradually spread in the state and it has become the medium of instruction in schools. Changes in the existing society together generated new impulses and a mixed expectations with much discontent.

This discontentment of the tribal people had led them to agitational activities. The first manifestation of counter-action against the immigrant population was the forming of 'Sengkrak', a militant organization of tibals in the year 1947. This organization was later out-lowed and gradually new organizations came up, such as, Paharia Union, Adivasi Samiti under Chakma influence and Tripura Rajya Adivasi Sangha. Later all these merged together to work under the name and style Adivasi Sansad. During the late sixties, the educated tribal elite formed the Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti (TUJS). The activities of the Samiti put pressure on the Government for restoration of their land taken by non-tribal immigrants. They also demanded reservation of seats in the legislative council.

On the other hand, to uphold the Bengali interest, a Bengali militant group was formed as Amra Bangali. This group took to under-ground activities and committed a number of violent acts during late seventies.

After the uprising of Assam movement for expulsion of foreigners, similar kind of sentiment also developed among the indigenous people of Tripura. The TUJS resolved that the foreigners who had entered Tripura after October 15, 1947 be expelled from the state. The underground activities committed frequent terrorist attacks during the period between 1981 to 1988. After a gap, All Tripura Tribal Force again emerged – under the leadership of Bijoy Harangkhwral. He led a strong secessionist
movement for a tribal homeland. Finally it ended with the Rajiv Bijoy Accord of 1988. Of course, still now various extremist organization have been operating in the state. The basic discontentment among the tribal people of Tripura is actually internal and basically socio-economic and ethnic revivalist in nature and not separatist.

**Mizoram:**

The inhabitants of Mizoram are now known by the generic name of Mizo or Mizou which literally means people (*mi*) (of the hills *zo*). There are a number of separate tribes under the general ethnic broad group called Mizo. Historically, there has been considerable admixture of different tribes in this area, ultimately leading to three main sub-groups – Lushais, Pawis and Lakhers.

The generic term Mizo or Mizou was already in use when the British came to this land. The Mizos included the following tribes – Ralte, Paite, Dulien, Poi, Sukte, Pankhup, Jahao, Tanai, Molbem, Taute, Lakher, Dalang, Mar, Khuangli, Falam, Leillul and Tangur. Although a number of languages were spoken in the Lushai Hills, the main language was Lushai. Other languages of the Kuki-Chin groups spoken by the different tribes were Zahao, Lakher, Hmar, Paite, Lai and Ralte.

In the traditional Mizo social structure the position of the Chief (called Lal) was considered highly important. The chief had the exclusive territory and unrestricted powers. The chief was at times a despot, but he had to rule according to custom; otherwise the subjects would leave the arbitrary chief and move over to another chief. Although theoretically the chiefs were all-powerful, in practical exercises of their authority, they were assisted, aided and advised by a group of elders (*Upas*).
During the Lushai expedition in 1888-89 and the Chin-Lushai expedition in 1889-90 the British administrative norms for the Lushia Hills were formulated and a decision was taken to post a civil administrator. The Lushai Hills territory was divided into two parts – the North Lushai Hills and the South Lushai Hills. North Lushai Hills was placed under the Govt. of Assam while South Lushai hills became a district under the Chittagong Division of the Bengal Province. The Lushai Hills were formally included in British India under proclamations by the Foreign Department in 1895. Sometime later the two districts were combined into one and placed under the chief commission of Assam.

The British Government, through the introduction of an intermediate tier of Chief’s Council indirectly tried to weaken the authority of the chiefs. It was not accepted by the people and some of the chiefs were rebellious. However, the intervention of the Christian Missionaries in the religious and cultural front had helped the British rulers to achieve their goals. Rv. William Williams, a young Presbyterian who had been working in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, was the first Christian Missionary to visit Lushai Hills. By proselytisation and a persuasion movement, the spread of Christianity was extra-ordinarily rapid in the Mizo Hills. In 1901 there were only 26 Christians in the entire Mizo Hills. Now about all the Mizos are Christians. Spread of Christianity and spread of education in Mizoram were complementary to each other. The educational system sponsored by the missionaries created a privileged classes- a neo elite in the Mizo society.

The first impact of Christianity was on the religious beliefs, customs and usages of the Mizos. The transformation is now virtually complete. Only through revivalist movements of selected elements Mizo
culture, like traditional music, dances and drum beats, have come to be incorporated in the accepted code of religious behaviour in the Mizo Christian society. In other aspects also, now there is a tendency towards mixture of both traditional and new ways of life.

According to the Government of India Act, 1935, the Lushai Hills along with the other hill districts of Assam became Excluded Area. This had two effects. First, the Mizos were kept out of the national life. The political developments in the rest of the country did not touch the Excluded Areas. Secondly, the funding for such areas being from the provincial budget there were very limited resources available for these areas. In 1924, a group of Mizos demanded that representation of the Lushai Hills to the Assam Legislature should be allowed. The World Wars brought the Mizos into the wider arena of the country and the world. After the Second World War the issue of independence of India from British rule loomed large. The wave of political processes also reached the Lushai Hills.

The first political party in the Lushai Hills came into existence when the political future of the country was being decided. It was widely felt by the common people that the British administration was trying to adopt a policy of isolated independence for the Lushai Hills working through the chiefs. An anti-chief movement was building up. The people resented and demanded that in the District Conference be named Mizo Common Peoples Union and commoners should get more seats than the chiefs. A political party was born in 1946 with these demands. To enlist the support of the elite and the enlightened chiefs, the name of the party was later changed to Mizo Union. In their first general Assembly held in Aizawl, Mizo Union demanded that a chief should rule the village not through the Upas appointed at his discretion, but elected by the people.
The Mizo Union in its memorandum submitted to the Bordoloi Sub-committee demanded the following –

(1) The Mizo inhabited areas of the neighbouring districts should be included in the Lushai Hills districts.

(2) Lushais should be called Mizos.

(3) Internal administration should be left to the Mizos.

(4) Liberal financial assistance should be given.

As independence was drawing near, there were sharp differences of popular opinion regarding the future of the Lushai Hills. The Mizo Union was in favour of staying with India, but a secessionist group came up in the party favouring Lushai Hills joining Burma. Ultimately the group, supported by the chiefs, formed a new party called United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO). After Independence an Advisory Council was elected in the Lushai Hills to advise the Superintendent. Six autonomous districts with District Councils came up in Assam – the Lushai Hills being one such district. In 1953 the UMFO passed a resolution for the formation of a hill state consisting of Manipur, Tripura, the autonomous districts of Assam and North-Eastern Frontier Agency. When in 1954 the States Reorganization Commission visited Assam, the Mizo Union and UMFO pleaded for and demanded a separate hill state for the Mizos. However, the Commission recommended continuation of the hill districts in Assam and a review of the working of the District Councils. As a result, resentment started among the people and a number of political parties and organizations were formed e.g., Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU), Mizo National Front (MNF). Later MNF became an armed outfit and insurgency started. In 1966 March MNF declared independence for Mizoram. The declaration was signed by Laldenga, the MNF supreme, and sixty others.
A provisional Government of the Mizo National Front started operating from East Pakistan and directing subversive activities in Mizo and Cachar districts. As a measure of anti insurgency operation, Protected and progressive villages (PPV) were constituted in the Mizo District. The entire Mizo District was declared disturbed area. While insurgency was going on in Mizo Hills, political process was continuing for finding a way to meet the aspiration the hill people of Assam.

In the Mizo District Council which was being run by the United Mizo parliamentary Party consisting of the Mizo Union and the Mizoram Congress; a resolution was passed stressing the need for peace and tranquility in the area and for formation of Mizoram as a state in 1971. In July 1971 the Government of India offered the status of Union Territory to Mizoram. However, MNF continued their militant activities. The rebels concentrated in Aizwal and Lunglei towns. The situation in Mizoram was very fluid and life was becoming insecure not only for the non-Mizos but also for a large number of loyal Mizos. The MNF also started a campaign to reform the Mizo society. In 1975 Laldenga expressed his desire to come to a settlement with the Government of India, which would ensure religious and cultural safeguards for the Mizos. But such talks did not prove to be fruitful. These process continued – for a decade. Finally in 1986 Laldenga amended the constitution of MNF making it a political party and the Mizoram accord was signed and got full statehood.

Practically there is no militancy in Mizoram today and it happens to be the most peaceful state of the N.E. region. Even the present Chief Minister sometimes volunteers to act as a mediator between the Government of India and the militant outfits of other N.E. States. This is a remarkable situation. However some points cannot be lost sight of –
1. The Mizos are still rather suspicious about the motives of the non-Mizos, particularly those residing or operating in Mizoram. Often there are flare-ups and quite Mizoram notices on non-Mizos.

2. The Mizos are rather intolerant about the presence of such groups, as Ranghols and particularly Chakmas who are also permanently settled in Mizoram. Sometime ago a great number of Rangkhol had to seek refuge in neighbouring Tripura. The Chakmas who originally came over from the Chittagong tract of present Bangladesh are still not accepted by the Mizos as legitimate residents of Mizoram. They have to face various social and administrative hurdles.

Arunachal Pradesh:

Arunachal Pradesh, which is the present name of the former North-East Frontier Agnecy (NEFA), was never before a politically compact area until the area was reorganized in October 1951 and christened, acronymically, as NEFA. The term, “North-East Frontier Agnecy” had actually been coined and attached to the hilly, north-eastern tribal areas following, ultimately, an expedition in the Adi (Siang) territory in 1911-12. Even after that, far from bringing the whole area into a consolidated one, the British did not spread their administration into the interiors of any of the territories either.

The Simla Convention of 1914, which in the process of delimitation of the Indo-Tibetan frontier, gave the then NEFA region north of Darrang and both north and east of Lakhimpur districts a shape-though notional yet.
After Independence, it was in 1951 that the plains portions of the Sela sub-Agency, Subansiri Area, Abor Hills district, Mishmi Hills district and Tirap Frontier Tract were transferred to the administrative jurisdiction of the State Government of Assam, Keeping the remaining areas – including the Tuensang Frontier Tract – within the jurisdiction of NEFA, administered by the Governor of Assam, as representative of the Govt. of India, through an Adviser. The whole region was divided into six Frontier divisions – Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit, Tirap and Tuensang (which was later amalgamated with the Naga Hills).

After Chinese incursion in 1962, it became necessary to bring in a change in the pattern of administration in NEFA. Indeed, the administrative machinery was immediately restructured. The Governor with the help of a committee consider the expansion and development of local self government in the territory. The committee recommended a three-tier Panchayat system - Gram Panchayat, Anchal Samity and Zila Parishad besides an Advisory Council' at the central level of the territory. They also recommended that the administration of NEFA should be a concern of the Home Ministry instead of the Ministry of External Affairs.

NEFA became a Union Territory under the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act of 1971 and renamed as Arunachal Pradesh. And ultimately in 1987 it was given full statehood.

In the case of Arunachal Pradesh, development along ethnic lines was rather difficult. There are as many as 82 tribes and sub-tribes with different linguistic, religious and cultural affiliations with little commonness and cohesion among themselves. However, after the administrative measures of the government as well as conscious efforts of committed social
organizations and individuals, a notion of Arunachali identity has been steadily emerging. The introduction of the uniform government agencies and institutions as well as spread of modern education has brought in a relatively greater-consciousness about the viability and the effectiveness of this Arunachali identity. With the help of an example of Donyi-poloism we can give a clear picture of the situation.

Among the Tani group of tribes of Arunachal Pradesh comprising Adis, the Nishis, the Apatanis and a few others, Donyi (Sun) and Polo (Moon) happen to be two highly venerated and often dreaded divine figures. They are believed to be the searching pair of eyes, the tangible manifestations of some superior power 'unknown and unknowable'. However, there was hardly any organized or cohesive formulation of a theological nature. In the early seventies a determined move was started to give it a concrete shape of the cult of Donyi-Polo and a relentless campaign was conducted almost single handedly by an Adi gentleman. There were of course, oppositions from certain quarters. However, the Donyi-Polo movement gradually gathered momentum and finally received popular and official support.

The religious aspirations of the Adi tribes seems to have been fulfilled. Today Donyi-Poloism has not only been accepted as a powerful cult but is also being vigorously projected as an organized religion with its own philosophy, code of rituals and such attendant paraphernalia as temple and image. At the same time a thrising Donyi-Polo Mission, with active government support behind it, a part from commenting the religious bon of the Tani group of tribes, the further aim at Doryi-Polism as the rallying point for the unit of all the different ethnic groups of Arunachal Pradesh, thus to consolidate the newly emergent Arunachali identity seeking wider recognition.
At the same time each individual tribe is highlighting its own cultural heritage with the active support of the administration. But so far no insurgency movement having its origin within Arunachal Pradesh itself have been observed. Yet atleast two developments deserve serious notice:

(1) The whole of Arunachal Pradesh is a restricted territory and any non-resident of Arunachal Pradesh needs a special permit even to entire it's territory. There are various restrictions on 'outsiders'; so far as employment, carrying out of business and possession of land and property are concerned. The tacit operating principle seems to be "Arunachal for Arunachalis". Some decades ago groups of Chakma and Hajong refugees were settled in some parts of Arunachal Paradesh by the Govt. of India. Ever since this has been a cause for resentment of the Arunachali tribals although Chakmas and Hajongs also happen to be tribes. There has been a consistent demand that these settlers from outside are a potential threat to the interest of the indigenous Arunchalese and that they should be removed from their territory. At the time of the last Lok Sabha election there was a hue and cry about the inclusion of their names in the electoral rolls.

(2) As mentioned earlier, no insurgency movement is known to have originated independently in any local tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. But since about a decade or so back, the NSCN (Muivah?) has been active in the Tirap and Changlang districts among such tribes as the Noktes, the Wanchus and the Tangsas whose habitat is contiguous to the Naga territory and whom the NSCN outfit claims to be the Nagas. These groups have not only been systematically brain washed but have been forced to join hands with the Naga insurgents. The impact seems to have been considerably effective and thus it can be said that the seeds of insurgency have been sown within Arunachal also.
Another fact that can be mentioned in this connection is that the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) frequently take shelter in the hilly terrains of Arunachal Pradesh and take strategic position to strike on their targets in the Assam plains.

From the above discussion it is evident that there are certain common patterns discernible in the process of culture-change that have been going on in the various parts of North East India, particularly in the field of ethnic movements. At the same time, the effects have not been uniform everywhere and there are many elements of local specificity.

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