CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION
The problems of a geographic area can be analysed through the application of core-periphery model as the concept of political geography has enlarged, encompassing study of various aspect of those politically organised areas - large and small.

Yet, the major thrust of the existing literature on political geography is dismally focussed on the study of advanced capitalist societies at the international level and core at the nation-state level. This trend has left many virgin areas to be explored. In recent times, the globalising and integrationist tendencies have brought about an intensity of interaction within nation-state. In the process, significance of spatial interaction within a nation-state, especially between the 'central' - nucleus - and the outlying 'periphery' has attracted the attention of geographers, sociologists, economists, and political scientists alike.

In spite of Centre's overbearing dominance over the 'states' - administrative units - for overall development, funds and resource allocation, the demarcation of states on ethnic, regional lines have created conflicts between the centre and states. This tension is also influenced by the hierarchical nature of relationship between the core and periphery, and perceptible difference about development, standard of life, levels of industrialisation and state's claim for fair distribution of resources. Ironically, this tension between the core and peripheries has enforced exchanges of information and enriched understanding thus help in integration.

The core-periphery concept reviews several alternative parameters of explanation within which other discipline operates. An interesting point which emerge clearly from various accounts and analyses, especially from a politico geographical
perspective, is to measure the extent of Centre's influences over the periphery on the other hand, how periphery responds to the centre. These factors help in organising towards integration and nation-building.

India is one of the most heterogeneous societies in the world. India is witnessing changes among various groups, culture, language, religion, region and problems of unbalanced development. This phenomenon is visible in the North-East India.

North-East India is in conflict with the centre on the social, economic and geopolitical fronts. At the same time, there are conspicuous regional-cum-ethnic movements against the centre. Geopolitical factors, sense of relative deprivation and feeling of alienation have posed grave problems in the North-East India. In this land-locked, yet geostrategically located part of India, the wide gulf of economic development and accompanying social problems are afflicted by the perpetual insurgent movements and other ethnic conflicts between and among different groups.

This study made an attempt to synthesise the core-periphery relationship in the context of the geopolitical dynamism in the North-East India. By taking Nagaland as the focus of study this study has tried to explore the degree of core-peripheral relationship in various levels that exist between the centre and this peripheral North-East region, as well as within the region.

A: Identification of Basic Core-Periphery Issues and Problems

The Republic of India exemplified classic case of core-periphery dynamics in a
country struggling for national integration, but also a nation plagued by polarisation of diverse social groups. In other words, conflict between dominant mainstream and numerically small ethnic minorities. It is recognised that North-East India as a region is in crisis, a cauldron of ethnic, linguistic and religious groups, in a complex geographical setting. Taking into account these facts, the present study has employed tools and methods of other discipline, to identify the basic issue and an explanation of periphery and centrality.

Notwithstanding the geostrategic significance of North-East India, which shares border extending over 4,827 kms\(^1\) with other countries, only a narrow strip of land (about 20 kms) in the Assam-Bengal connects the region with mainland India. Besides, the rail and road communication network are inadequate to cater to a smooth flow of goods and resources for development of the region. Moreover, perennial floods and heavy rainfall make road, river and air transport impossible, often entire North-East India is totally cut off from the rest of the country.

Geographical isolation, due to the lack of well developed transport and communication network compounded by racial, cultural and linguistic barriers contributed to tendencies of regionalism and separatist feelings and movements in the North-East India.\(^2\)

Ethnically and culturally North-East India has many unique features. It is

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reported that North-East India has 209 Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. apart from the plethora of other ethnic groups. Many ethnic groups in North-East India have their counterpart in Tibet, Yunnan province of China, Thailand, Laos, Kampuchea, Myanmar and Chittagong hill tracts of Bangladesh. Most of the tribal groups of North-East India therefore have close affinity culturally and historically with the people of East Asia.

It has been observed that various ethnic communities in North-East India have shown determination to preserve their separate identity rather than assimilate with the mainland Indian culture. Moreover, the centre’s undue interference in the affairs of the region, and apathy to the demands for protection of tribal identity and heritage have made the people of the North-East question the sincerity of the centre.

An enduring theme in North-East India is the quest for identity: this has manifested in various ways. Insurgency and separatist movements is one of the most perplexing issues for the entire region. It is basically influenced by the ethnic and national consciousness which raises the banner of political participation among competition groups. In this complex process, an interesting observation is the role of the educated unemployed youths who found organisations with separatist overtones and having symbiotic link with the insurgent groups. Rather the insurgent movement in the North-East India is catalysed by the educated unemployed youths.


Though numerically less, various insurgent groups enjoy the support of the masses, besides maintaining close links with various separatist organisations across the border, human rights groups and foreign agencies. Thus, insurgency network in North-East India has international implication and poses a grave threat to India's security. However, Indian government's policy of excessive use of violent methods to curb insurgency has alienated the masses.\(^5\)

In spite of the semblance of order and regional unity within North-East India, possibility of coexistence among various competing groups is doubtful. In independent India, the region has witnessed violent conflicts among different ethnic groups, between tribals and non-tribals, locals and outsiders. These problems are exacerbated by the unabated influx of refugees from neighbouring countries of Bangladesh, Nepal and Tibet—thus complicating the persisting social, economic, cultural and demographic problems.

The gradual demographic intrusion has reduced the indigenous tribals of Tripura to a minority status in their own soil. In Assam, the rumpus over the foreigner brought instability and turmoil in the state, ultimately leading to a mass movement against the outsiders.\(^6\) To a large extent the raise of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) has been an indirect fall out of the failure of the successive regimes to curb the illegal influx of migrants. In the communally sensitive Meghalaya, the fear and hatred against the outsider are manifested in various ways. Meghalaya today is


even suspicious of indigenous people of the region, let alone aliens coming from Bangladesh and Nepal. Thus through the North-East India a strong undercurrent of antipathy against the "foreigners" is manifested in its hostile attitude. For instance, the Nellie massacre (1983) the Barpeta killings (1993) and the recent attack on the Santhals are violent examples of the region’s hatred and fear against the outsiders.

North-East India is politically and physically a part of the India Union: nevertheless, the real problems are socio-cultural and economic integration. The need of the hour is psychological and emotional integration, which is another aspect of vital importance for achieving a complete national integration.

The entire region is dependent on the funds doled out by the centre. North-East India also lacks scientific and technological innovation. There are very few industries in the region, no proper marketing network for the natural resources and only poor transport and communication network. These factors hamper the development process in the entire region. An unwelcome development in the region is the proliferation of a few individuals who have taken advantages of the Indian regime's policy of "tokenism". These individuals have brought about a consumerist culture. Class distinctions are gradually becoming sharp in the otherwise egalitarian social order of the North-East India. Whatever funds allocated for the development of the region is misappropriated by these few individuals. As a result the overall condition of the general public has not changed much in the last fifty years.

The North East Council was established with the noble intention of coordinating development work, to serve as a via media within the region. Regrettably, the central planners seem to have lost this perspective. Even genuine demands for a permanent
secretariat and steady budgetary allocation for the region seems to have fallen on deaf ears to the central planners.

Even in academic research very little work have been taken up about North-East India and its people. There are very few records, accounts and study materials. As most of these works are done by outsiders who lacks comprehension and understanding of the complex society of the region, their works tend to be sketchy, superficial, biased and present a distorted picture of the region. Thus policy framework based on such accounts is responsible for many ills which have begun to plague North-East India after India’s independence.

The state of Nagaland faces identical problem like any other state in the region. The basic issues and problems in the case of Nagaland are the remoteness of the state and the question of Naga political independence.

Even in the regional context, Nagaland is the eastern most periphery of India. The inhospitable terrain of Nagaland has made accessibility to this strategic borderland difficult. Besides, a long period of neglect on the part of the centre and the centre’s failure to implement proper policy with regard to development work has made the state perpetually dependant on the centre.

One of the most vital issues concerning Nagaland is the unresolved question of political movement. Naga’s struggle for political independence during the British rule has been carried on till today. As a result, armed conflict between the insurgent group and the Indian armed forces are still on. At the same time, the aspiration of the Nagas who are dispersed in various states, even in Myanmar, under a single state is
another major issue.

Core-Periphery Imperatives:

The study of core-periphery paradigm encompasses a wide range of interdisciplinary fields. As two distinct entities both core and periphery competes and complements each other thus influencing geopolitical development in the global, regional and state levels. But due to the unequal development characteristics of the core and periphery, their relationships often produce friction between the two.

According to Tyrel G. Moore, from a geographical perspective, distinction between core area and peripheral area is one of the levels of language and spatial accessibility. Friedmann, envisioned the characteristics of a core as those region which establishes itself as urban or metropolis and the economic centre of action with high potential for innovation and growth. Peripheral regions, on the other hand, experienced lagging growth or stagnation and relied on growth chiefly driven by core area's demands for resources. Hence, level of development in the periphery is directly dependent on the nature of relationship they have with the core. Core-periphery relationship evolved as one of great dependency for peripheries.

In the global context, core and periphery has been synonymously used with various contrasting features of the world particularly in terms of economic criteria.


8. Ibid, p.216.
Core is identified with the North, First World, or more developed countries, and the peripheries with the South, Third World, or less developed countries of the World. Eastern Europe or the one time Eastern Bloc which falls between these two extreme categories are termed as semi-core. This obscure region positioned between the two extreme regions without proper trait does not play any significant role in the study of core-periphery relationship.

In the contemporary period there is no such direct political control over the world peripheries by the core. The core consists of a few key decision making countries in the world politics as well as in the economic spheres. There is a complete monopoly of the world economic system by the few core countries. Thus, there is an implication of imperialism, colonialism, under development, dependency and acculturation in the present new world order of core-periphery relationship.

Under the hegemonic and hierarchical relationship of core and peripheries, the economic factor is always predominant. By virtue of economic strength, the core countries to dominate and exploit the world peripheries one of the most contentious issue of international politics in recent years has been the claim of the governments of a large majority of the World's states.... that they are not receiving an 'equitable' share of the world's wealth and power.⁹

India, like the rest of the world peripheries, had undergone centuries of colonial rule during which condition for under development was embodied into Indian economy. Historians and academicians have rightly pointed out that the present problem of under

development in India is the legacy of the British rule. In this regard, Israel Milton points out that, no previous invaders, whether those who plundered or those who settled, generated such a process of underdevelopment.\(^{10}\)

This perpetual process of unequal development of core and periphery results into feeble and perplex relationship between the two. Not only a cleavage is being created but there is often crisis and conflict resulting from this unfair relationship of core and periphery.

In the national level the contemporary core-periphery relationship particularly with the North-Eastern part of India can be understood best by reviewing the geopolitical developments of the recent past.

North-East India is not only the least known and the most neglected region but in all sense, it is the most peripheral part of India. Since Independence, this region has been in the national focus for its political unrest and problems related to economic underdevelopment. In spite of the political integration, the region is in conflict with the centripetal tendencies.

Unlike the mainland India, this region is characterised by the unequal composition of multi-ethnic nationalities, multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious groups. Thousands of years of coexistence and interaction have brought homogeneity and commonness among the people of the core region. But the North-Eastern region which became a part of the Republic of India only after India’s

independence had hardly any historical and political link in the past. Thus the North-East region is unable to go along smoothly with the rest of the country.

Even after almost half a century of India's independence, when the rest of the country is under the wheels of rapid development and modernization, this region remain neglected and underdeveloped. Transport and communication is the major problem: additional problem is created by natural and other man-made situations. There is also a communication gap existing between the centre and the state governments. There is lack of common infrastructural and other policy matters regarding the development and integration of the region. The centre's dictatorial and high-handed treatment is often despised by the state politicians. On the other hand the state governments and the people of this region are blamed for not complying to the dictates of the centre and for evasive attitude towards integration.

One of the major areas of centre-state confrontation in Indian federal polity relates to Suo motu the deployment of Central armed forces in the state for public order duties.\(^1\)

The imposition of draconian laws like Armed Forces (Special power) Act 1958, in the entire North-Eastern States\(^2\) has created resentment among the people of the region. The prevalent situation in the North-East India makes its relationship with mainland India a feeble and critical one.

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At the regional context, an investigation into the relationship between Nagaland and the rest of the North-East India can help in understanding the dynamics of core-periphery relationship. However, core-periphery studies and its relationship can be established best in a place where there is dependence and interdependence between the nucleic region and its surrounding borderlands.

North-East India is a land-locked region comprising seven states. It has a history of long period of colonial rule. Prior to the British conquest, the North-East region was almost cut off from the rest of the world, and there was little interaction within the region. In this sense, the concept of core-periphery was emerged only during the British colonial rule. By virtue of location and other historical and political development, Assam become and core for the entire region. Assam played the role of a core even in the post-Independent India for a few decades. But, as the changes occur in the global geopolitics its implication is reflected even in the lowest level: region, state. Particularly after the emergence of different states and union territories in the North-East India, the relevance of the study of core-periphery relationship is becoming less significant. Each and every separate state and union territory has developed direct relationship with the centre. This has drastically minimized the regional interaction and relationships. This also sets in a new trend of development where all the states and union territories are independent and have equal responsibilities for developing its own territorial area.

As far as Nagaland is concerned, the state has a great geostrategic and geopolitical importance in the regional and national context. Looking back, one may recall that the crucial great World War II was ended in Nagaland (Kohima) in 1945.
On several occasions, Nagas prevented the Burmese advancement into the region, thus the Nagas also acted as a sentinel of the North-East region. Another strikingly important aspect from the contemporary geopolitical point of view is the bifurcation of the Nagaland between India and Myanmar. This has resulted into half of the Naga population staying within the region of South Asia and the other half in South-East Asia. Nagaland can act as a bridge between the two great world regions.

In the aftermath of liberalisation in India, opening of the Indo-Myanmar Border trade has added new dimension to the geo-economic importance of the border states of Manipur and Nagaland. The state of Nagaland serves as a gateway not only for the North-East region but for the entire country and to the rest of the South-East Asian countries as well.

Separatists and other insurgency movements in North-East India is one of the most serious problems in contemporary India. The Naga insurgents play a pioneering role among the insurgents in the region. They are not only oldest and longest surviving insurgent groups, but they have been able to establish themselves as the most influential one in the entire region. In spite of the smallness in size, marginal location and long period of isolation from the rest of the region, Nagaland is becoming a focal state in the recent years.

As a buffer state the strategic location of Nagaland and the inevitable prospect for her future role in the regional and national context can not be discounted as a mere academic speculation. Changes in the concept of a core have influenced the shift in the

core area in global context. Similar changes are taking place in different levels depending upon the change and development in the geopolitical paradigm.

As a declaration of the India's new economic open door policy Indo-Myanmar border Trade Treaty was signed on April 12, 1995, between India and Myanmar.

**Question of Regional and National Security**

No other part of India has such strategic significance as the North-East India. This land-locked peripheral part of India is flanked by China in the north, Myanmar in the east, Bangladesh in the south and Bhutan in the north west. It is physically impossible to maintain vigil on the 4,825 km frontier. Threat to India's security can come through these porous borders in time of conflict. Moreover, the 20 km strip of "chicken neck", which connects India to North-East makes it vulnerable to be cut off by any hostile country from the mainland India. As India has unresolved border disputes with most of its neighbours, threat to India's security and integrity always looms large in this sector.

Apart from the inhospitable geographical condition the complex ethnic, social, cultural and political composition makes the North-East India volatile. A large percentage of the population are tribals, who speak various dialects and claim to different origin. This makes interaction among various ethnic groups difficult. Even during the colonial period, some part of the region had very limited interaction within the region and had negligible link with the rest of India.

Since independence, India's North-East has been one of the most restive part of the country. The problems and vulnerability of the region has been therefore, a great
concern for security reason. However, in spite of the crucial geopolitical development, and the realities of its geostrategic importance, the policy makers in India have failed to chalk out a forward looking security policy for the North-Eastern region. In the past fifty years, there has been a major flaw regarding security affairs in the North-Eastern sector. This has ensued due to dereliction of the policy makers and partly because of the failure to perceive the importance of this region in the context of the international geopolitical dynamism.

Lack of strategic doctrine, and resource constraints if not skills of the people, are responsible for India’s impotence with the threat from its neighbours and from unforeseen quarters.

Security Doctrine is meant to serve as a military campaign for subduing recalcitrant and smaller and thus, weaker, neighbours and impose pan-Indian solutions to multilateral problems could be suicidal for India. Thus, while fashioning such a policy especially for the east, India must take into account the many parameters that have a bearing on the nation’s security.14

Contemporary geopolitical development reveals that developing countries tend to have more regional conflicts. North-East India with its diverse culture, language, race and ethnic group etc. is a classic example where regional conflicts are prevalent. The basic problem involves boundary disputes between different groups and states. Assam has boundary disputes with almost all her neighbouring states. But, it can be recalled that most of the present states are carved out of erstwhile Assam. There is

also problem between Nagaland and Manipur over the same issue. Sometimes these problems create tension and conflicts between different groups making the region insecure and fretful. The misunderstanding and mistrust among them aggravate the regional problems thereby the region becoming more vulnerable to any outside forces.

The disputed area between Assam-Nagaland boundary has become the chosen spot for the settlement of the illegal immigrants. Refugees from Nepal and particularly the land hungry Bangladeshi immigrants who see this unguarded land as a 'open space' occupy the land and from there they make an easy entry to both the states. Thus the "interlopers" gets the opportunity and benefit from the tussle between the people of this region.

The centre on its part, has never seriously tried to understand the complex situation of the North-East region. The hopes and aspirations of the tribals were totally ignored and suppressed. The Naga issue which started even before India's independence was never dealt with justice. The insurgency movement which started in Nagaland and Mizoram was suppressed with brute forces. Eventually in the wake of large scale movements, statehood was granted to different groups, but then such bloodshed and loss of wealth had already been done great damage to both the centre and the people of this region. It was only after the Sino-Indian border war, in 1962 the region received attention from the policy makers in India.  

Consequence of the Sino-Indian war had been the support China extended to various insurgency movements in the North-Eastern region. Other neighbouring

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15. Sarin, p.236.
countries like Myanmar and Bangladesh are also not very friendly with India. Besides, the presence of the Nagas and Kuki Chin groups beyond the international border in Myanmar has a great implication on the geopolitical development in North-East India. The artificial boundary has failed to insulate these people from each other.

The adjoining regions on the east of North-East India are inhabited by various ethnic communities: Kachins, Shans, Chins and Karens who are also waging a war for their independence. They are the world's oldest insurgency movements fighting for independence. The Kachin Independent Army which command the largest insurgency Army in Asia is known to have been supporting the insurgent groups in North-East India. There is also evidence of having a close link among the mongoloid insurgent groups of Karen, Kachins, Mons, Shans, Nagas, Mizos and the Arkanese to name, a few major ones. Over the years there are signs of increased interaction between these separatist groups and the insurgent groups in the North-East India. Such development among the different insurgent groups across the international boundaries have created numerous fissures in the security front.

Apart from political implications, there is also a serious socio-economic concern. A major concern is the spread of drugs and AIDS flowing in from across the borders into the North-East. The North-East has become a new smuggling route for Burmese heroine dealers, a conduit to Nepal and Calcutta and then to the West where profit thrive; but also it is a market where growing numbers of drug addicts seek refuge

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In one more fix.\textsuperscript{17}

In the border states particularly in the case of Manipur the drug addiction has become synonymous with ‘AIDS’ which is fast spreading in the entire region particularly among the youth. According to the reports from the Burmese exiles, a number of heroine factories have been set up along the Nagaland-Myanmar and Mizoram-Myanmar borders. With all these developments, the region is becoming a focal point for South-East Asian trafficking giants who thrive on heroine and other illegal business in the international market through the exit of North-East India.\textsuperscript{18}

Although New Delhi seems to have awaken from its deep slumber, nevertheless, the perception it holds in regard to the security of North-East India is still inept. The centre look upon the insurgency and the fissiparous tendencies as the only threat to security of the region and the nation at large. New Delhi has deputed at least 2,00,000 regular soldier and air force personnel across the borderlands in the North-Eastern Sector.\textsuperscript{19} But since their role motive was to curb the insurgency movements, the question of safeguarding the border, checking trafficking and hundreds and thousands of illegal refugee movements in the borderlands become permanent phenomena in this peripheral North-East India.

The civilian invasion to North-East is one of the most serious threat to the indigenous settlers of the region. Over the years, North-East has become the only

\textsuperscript{17} Hazarika, p.322.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p.323.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p.323.
region where all the beleaguered people are being dumped from the surrounding countries. Myanmar's tough attitude against the Rohingya Muslims, has a serious repercussion on the present refugee influx in North-East India. The repatriated Bangladeshi refugees from Myanmar as well as the direct refugees from Bangladesh make their easy ingress through the loosely guarded border into the region.

Every year hundreds and thousands of refugees are entering the North-East from Nepal, Burma, Tibet and Bangladesh. Ever since the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971, there has been a dramatic change of demography in North-East India. Several waves of migration is taking place into the region legally and illegally. Inspite of the various ramification and problems created by the unabated influx of refugees, the centre has been keeping quite behind the mysterious curtains.

The refugee and other illegal migrants have not only posed a threat to the regional security but much more they have already created all sorts of problems of which some are beyond redemption. The insurgency movement in Assam, Tripura and Meghalaya are basically against the outsiders, which includes the foreign nationals and the people from outside the region as well.

Under the present circumstances of unprecedented influx of Bangladeshi and the undergoing racial fusion that is taking place in the North-East India, there is a genuine fear of losing the local identity in the region. The drastic demographic change in the region is reflected in every aspects in the entire region. According to 1991 census report, Nagaland recorded the highest decadal population growth rate of 56.08 percent

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20. Das, pp.45.
in the country. In Tripura, the indigenous tribals have already been reduced to less than quarter of the population in the state.\textsuperscript{21} Tensions and conflicts are increasing throughout the region. Some of the most gruesome incidents in the modern history of the region i.e., Nellie, Barpeta massacre and the early 1980s killings in Tripura are some of the results created by conflicts between the locals and the recent migrants.

Over the years, the people have developed the feeling of insecurity in their own region. The callousness and the inability of the authorities to assure stability and safety against all these central forces have led to gradual erosion of the administration credibility in the region. In some extreme cases the locals have turned to the insurgents for help in tackling the outsiders issues. No matter what policy the centre adopt to curb the insurgency problems or to bring peace in the region, unless an effective and appropriate security model is applied the present problem will continue in the North-East.

A probable solution for the refugees and other illegal migrants in the region would be a firm and clear cut policy. Security should be tightened and strict vigilance should be maintained. Along the border, identity card should be issued to identify the illegal entry. The more the presence of foreign nationals in the region, the greater the security risks are, therefore, repatriation should be arranged from time to time with mutual understanding with the concerned countries. India should help neighbouring countries to enhance the economic condition. India need to initiate bilateral negotiations in the regional and international fora to help improve the economic and diplomatic relations in the region.

\textsuperscript{21} Das, pp.278-80.
Considering the geostrategic and geopolitical significance of the North-East region, India cannot afford to ignore the security of this region. It is against all the above mentioned background that a shift in the centre's security policy is required for the North-East region. Only when a region is secured, then only a country can have peace and stability, and these can be achieved only when both mental and physical fear are well controlled and free from all the threats from within and outside.

**An Assessment of the Core-periphery Relationship in North-East India and its Prospect**

Modern nation-states are witnessing a phenomenon of unbalanced development in the exercise and distribution of power and resources allocation between the centre and periphery. Thus, the focus of core-periphery relationship calls for an objective and systematic approach. A proper assessment of the core-periphery relationship can pave way to rectify the polarisation between the centre and periphery and usher in an era of balanced development.

Regional development is directly linked to core-periphery relationship, and the extent at which this relationship is reciprocated. While the present topic is studied from the geopolitical perspective, an interdisciplinary approach is taken into consideration. However, not deviating from the setting of political geography as "the study of political phenomenon in the areal context". 22 Within this parameters India's North-East region, with a focus on Nagaland, is studied using the conceptual approach.

In spite of the crucial role played by the core-periphery in the development of a country or a region, the existing pattern of the core-periphery relationship is very daunting whether it be in the global, national or regional level. In most of the developing countries, India particularly, the economic and political power is confined to a few section of a dominant region, centre or group. There is also a strong centralized system of government manned and controlled by a few upper class of the society; thus, the changes of political regime had never occurred in response to pressure from the general masses. Thus a few powerful people of the heartland India controls the destiny of entire India. That is the reason there is hardly any peripheral region in India where the people are not perplexed and distraught at the so-called "mainstream" or the policy of the centre.

India seems to be a united, composite nation-state, but as we study closely the country is greatly diverse in many aspects-geographically, culturally, economically, political class wise. This is due to historical and geopolitical development that has been taking place for hundreds of years. And it has remain unchanged in the post-independent India.

In the past fifty years series of arrangements and re-arrangement have taken place in India. There has been a centrifugal tendencies in the peripheral areas. particularly, in the case of those region which joined mainland India only in the

post-independence period. North-East India is one such region, which is only known for no better reason than the persisting underdevelopment and social, ethnic and cultural turmoil over the years. The insurgency and separatist movements in North-East India have given entirely different dimension and the emergence of various outfits and their link with the international agencies. These circumstances have alarmed policy makers and the security personnel. With all these developments, a major security problem in India today is not the overt military aggression from India's neighbours or other powers, but the tacit and covert support for internal political dissidence.

The objective of examining the core-periphery relationship of North-East India is due to the very definition of political geography. It defines that the "Kernel" of political geography is political area.²⁴ In this pursuit, variety of core-periphery paradigm, ranging from Immanuel wallerstien, Samir Amin, Edward Shils, J. Friedmann and an evaluation of the concept of core presented by Friedrich Ratzel and Drewethy Whittlesey have been applied to evaluate the core-periphery relationship in North-East India, and the North-East as a peripheral part of the mainland India.

In a federation, a number of distinct, separate or autonomous political units mutually agree to merge together to from a nation-state with a single, central or federal government. The federating unit delegates some of the powers to the centre, while retaining a degree of generated region autonomy.²⁵ Federalism is thus

essentially a compromise between centripetal and centrifugal forces that are operative at the same time.26

North-East India which is composed of members of smaller ethnic nationalities has been showing a political awakening and a growing sense of economic deprivation. At the same time, the entire region is experiencing an upsurge of various nationality groups in the recent years. But, in India there is a misperception regarding the term nationality and demands for self-determination of nationalities of small communities. The emergence of the bourgeoisie in modern India, particularly during and after the Indian national movement, have entirely different perception on the integration of India as a nation. For them, the national character of India was defined in terms of Brahmanic Hindu, Aryan and Sanskrit derived element.27 Therefore, there is a fear among the nationalist in the mainland India that by recognising the smaller nationalities, the separatism and secessionism will gain ground which will ultimately led to the disintegration of the mother country.

In order to safeguard their own interest they try to assimilate the weaker and the smaller groups into their mainstream culture in the name of integration. This imposition of the core on the peripheral lot creates resentment and conflicts between the two groups.

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It is well justified to argue that only with an understanding of the historical and geopolitical development under which these regions were brought within the India's administrative framework can the basic issue involved be highlighted and fairly studied.

The problem for a smooth core-peripheral relationship between the North-Eastern region and the mainland India does not lie only due to lack of communication or geographical peripherality. The crux of the problem lies in the utter dereliction of the region from the framework of national Economic development. Another key issue is the unresolved political issue among many ethnic, cultural groups. Further, the symptom of identity crisis among the smaller groups have closely surfaced in the contemporary geopolitical development of the region.

There has been a major dispute among the giant powers of China, India and Burma over this peripheral North Eastern-region. Though the boundary settlements, which had taken up during the British rule had brought some understanding, but was never completed to the satisfaction of all the powers, nor could it solve the ethnographic problem of this region. Over the years, with the increase in geopolitical importance, this meeting point of the South and South-East Asia is gaining more significance, both from regional as well as international point of view.

The people of this region have become more aware to assert their rights and heritage through various movements. Lately, there is a strong resurgence and unrest particularly among the politically divided and scattered ethnic groups and nationalities across the states and international boundaries. In North-East India with a few exception, most of the present insurgency movements are primarily ethnic.
movements. Thus, there is a direct link of the centre and periphery relationship over the unsolved ethnic, nationality issues.

It is undeniably difficult to maintain a balance in the economic development in a large geographical and multinational country like India. But the aberrant economic disparity between the North-East India and the mainland India has resulted into disparate relationship between the two regions. In spite of the rich natural and mineral resource deposits and other potential areas the region has, there is a problem of underutilization and exploitation of these resources, thus North-East India lags far behind developmental only few pockets of the region have been bettered. A portion are left out and remains as it was in the pre-industrial period. In such circumstances cordial relationship fails to develop and mutual trust between the periphery region migrate to the core areas for jobs and other better amenities. The case of North-East India it is the reverse. There's a silent exodus going on in the entire region. People from the mainland migrate for jobs and for other business purposes. The gradual domination over the economy and the fusion of their dominant culture has been viewed as a threat to their identity. This situation is further exacerbated by the influx of illegal migrants across international border. The case of North-East India is that the issue of insurgency and the relationship in the region.

The movement strains the relationship between the centre and the North-East region.
counter-insurgency movements in the region. North-East India has been known as a region of trouble spot. There were too few and too little sincere efforts, but too large a force to suppress the movements. Few agreements and accords are made for the solution of the insurgency problems, with the exception of Mizoram Accord, none of the Accords bear any permanent solution. In some cases it had adverse impact mainly due to the centre imposing attitude. For example, signing of Shillong Accord between the centre and a few Naga underground members have created great confusion and mistrust between the Nagas and the centre. This led to more complication of the Naga political issue and deepening the crisis between the Nagas and the government of India. Furthermore, the repressive policy of the Centre to curb the insurgency problem and on the other hand, the unholy nexus between the pseudo-politician and the different insurgent outfits in the region has adversely affected the relationship between North-East region and the centre.

North-East India which has numerous ethnic groups who shares the common aspiration of preserving their own identity and culture. However, within the region itself, it has history of conflict between the dominant groups of the plains and tribals. Ever since the establishment of the different administrative unit, the predominance of the core area has drastically reduced to one of equal partnership within the region. Or in one sense the characteristics of a core region is shown by the seven states in different aspects. Assam had the disposition of a core in the region due its past cultural and economic influence. By virtue of its size and close relations with the mainland culture, Assam is still considered the most important state by the centre.
The present geopolitical evolution indicate a shift in the core area as a result of the global geopolitical dynamism. These development has penetrated into various new fields which were either neglected or unexplored in the past. The change in the global geopolitics have exacerbated the geopolitical process at the national and regional levels.

The focus given by the neighbouring South-East Asian countries on the buffer zone of the geographically peripheral part of the North-East India has once again affirm the geostrategic importance of the frontier states like Nagaland, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh.

Nagaland has become a major gateway to economically blooming South-East Asia. Besides, Nagaland, with its long history of political movement since the British period has the oldest insurgent groups operating in the region. This long struggle for political freedom and the expansion of their network in the international fora has made the Naga insurgents the lodestar of the insurgent groups in the North-East India. Therefore, a solution to the Naga insurgency problem will greatly determine the entire insurgency problem in the region.

The observation in the Thesis based on the contemporary geopolitical dynamism suggest that there is definitely a change in the role of a core. All the states in North-East India are geographically and politically a separate entity. Yet all equally share the common burden: geo-economic underdevelopment, problem of communication, alienation and insurgency. In a true sense, there is not state that can claim the status of a core in regional context. In the recent unfolding of regionalism, the driving force seems to have evolved naturally from all the groups without any
dominant force. The North East Council, the only widely known governmental agency in the region where the states are member is equally represented and participate in policy formulation by all the seven states as equal partners.

Considering all these facts and realities, one can assume that the classical core-periphery model and its relationship does not quite exist in the context of North-East India. By and large, the entire North-East region forms a peripheral part of the mainland India. Therefore, while investigating certain issue and problems in North-East India within the framework of core and periphery, it is inevitable to investigate the relationship between this peripheral region and the centre where the crux of the problem lies.

Though the present relationship between the centre and the North-East India is somewhat strained it does not mean that there is no scope for enhancing the relationship. In fact, the rapid change in the perception of the people with the gradual socio-economic development in region is opening space for improvement in various fields.

The core-periphery approach has produced a clearer, spatial illustration of regional dynamism and differences and the pattern of relationship that exist in regional and national levels. This study has identified where central assistance is most required and, where and how improvement should be carried out in a more pragmatic approach. There is also a need for drastic change in the present policies and administration pattern in the North-East India, and to make an attempt on the possibilities of reducing the vertical and horizontal imbalances and qualitative improvement in respect to political powers, economic and other pertinent issues.
Experiments throughout the world has shown that centralised policies to uplift backward peripheral region have not been successful. Moreover, looking at the contemporary trend of globalisation, economic development depends on inter-regional and intra-regional economic integration within and between the countries. Therefore, under the philosophy of liberalisation, the North-East region should be fully integrated into the economic mainstream of the country and the world at large.

The opening of Indo-Myanmar border trade treaty of April 12, 1995, has given a new dimension to this peripheral North-East region. With this development, the North-East India has become a gateway to the most economically flourishing regions of the East and South East Asia. There is a scope, in near future, that North-East region may play a vital role in bridging the gulf between the two great regions of the world. Historically North-East region has played the role of a buffer zone during the World War II; its geostrategic significance in the modern times, in fact, has acquired a new dimension particularly in the present, global liberalized age.

North-East India is also a region of various competing races and ethnic nationalities. Greater part of the region comprises tribals of Mongoloid stock who have their origin in the East and South East Asia. Not only in their appearances, but they have a close cultural and historical affinity which is well acknowledged by their counterpart across the frontiers. Considering all these aspects, importance should be given to the North-East region. Not only in the economic front the North-East India can play an important role of an ambassador in both cultural and political fronts, provided proper incentives are laid out.
The Centre has always viewed the insurgency problem in North-East India as the wayward behaviour of the peripheral region. Ignoring the factor that had led to the emergence of insurgency, the policy makers have adopted a suppressive policy. Thus, both the Centre and this ailing region have not gained anything but misunderstanding, distrust and cleavage in their relationships. All the policies of mighty armed forces and accords have proved futile. Perhaps, a sincere effort towards understanding and identification of the problem and effort to resolve through peaceful negotiations is the only way to bring permanent solution to the vexed insurgency problem. Peace still eludes Nagaland, due to lack of mutual confidence, sincerity commitment, and of failure to understand the crux of the problem between the Centre and separatist groups.

One of the greatest obstacle in the existing core-periphery relationship is the problem of integration. A prejudiced perception about the North-East region, the unethical policy of national integration, together with the unresolved nationality question, and the patronising and colonial attitude of the Centre towards the region is reciprocated with skepticism, mistrust, hostility and alienation.

The grievances of this peripheral region should be approach through traditional channels rather than amending the constitution. A humanist approach will be more meaningful, where equality, mutual trust and reciprocity are maintained at all levels. For, a fruitful integration will be achieved only when political, economic and emotional integration is perfected.
Development of a region and nation depend greatly upon the participation of all section of the people. Therefore, the enhancement in the relationship between the peripheral North-East India and the mainland India would definitely mean the progress of the country and the vice-versa.

Every problem in political geography is largely an interdisciplinary issue where theory and practice come together. Hence, the solution lies in corresponding application of both the aspects. As such, core-periphery model employed for the study of the geopolitical dynamism in North-East India and Nagaland hold great potential for an evaluation of future studies. It is also hoped that the present deliberation on the most neglected peripheral regional studies will help in invigorating the core-periphery relationship in various fields of studies and political geography in particular.