

## BOOK REVIEW

**Yumnum, A. (ed.). *Northeast India: Selected Regional Issues.***

**Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, 2011.**

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This useful edited collection describes the various issues of the North East Region of India (NER). This book was supported by the Advisory Council of Manipur University, which saw the significant contemporary aspects of NER, and is edited by Amar Yumnam.

It covers the following issues of NER:

1. Economic Development of NER, by E. Bijoykumar Singh & Amar Yumna.
2. Demographic Picture of NER, by M. Hemanta Meitei & N. Deva Sigh.
3. Society and Culture of Manipur, by M. C. Arun.
4. History and Polity, by N. Joykumar Singh & S. Mangi Singh.
5. The Manipur Women and Changing World, by Vijaylakshmi Brara & Seromena Asem.

The editor (Yumnum, 2011, p. 3) summarizes the whole book with the following questions:

1. What do we understand by economic development?
2. What has been the status of this region?
3. What strategies should be adopted to streamline the process of development in this region?

Regarding the first question, we could answer that sustainable economic development should be concentrated on increasing income, and be accompanied by a general rise in the well - being and economic capabilities of people. It is also suggested that proper utilization of natural resources holds the key to development of a nation or a region. **These key factors should be translated into the eradication of poverty and place more importance on health care or institutions for maintenance of local peace and order.**

The indicators of regional development, such as literacy rates, infant mortality rates, poverty rates, real capital NSDP (i.e., state income measured in constant prices), per capita electricity consumption and road length in kilometer per 1,000 sq. km of geographical area, are highly desirable. Meanwhile, there should be a fall in infant mortality rates and poverty rates.

Regarding what strategies should be adopted to streamline the process of development in this region, **Peace, Progress and Prosperity in the North East Region of Vision 2020 was released by the Prime Minister of India in New Delhi on 2 July 2008.** This document announced the outline of development policies aimed at reducing the development gap, and reducing the infrastructure and connectivity deficit by the year 2020. The important strategies are omni directional, which urged regional and

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sub-regional connectivity and cooperation among the ASEAN Community, SAARC (South East Asian Association of Regional Cooperation), the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi - Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (AFTA), Mekong-Ganga Cooperation, and so on.

One very important aspect that is different from the Southeast Asian countries are **the roles of women in this region. In particular, women can bring different perspectives to negotiate issues that might otherwise be ignored** by the government (ibid., p.140). There are many strong Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) who can bring the demands of the people to the government to solve many problems.

Yumnum (2011, p.29) concludes that “NER can escape from its present condition of underdevelopment and insurgency, only when several underlying problems are solved first. While the overarching policy framework has been expanded to include Vision for the Northeast India. It is necessary also to strengthen the political will of the concerned Central Government Ministries and State Governments to initiate and implement the policy recommendation).”

I agree with Yumnum’s ideas, but more emphasis should be placed on politics and we should carefully consider the important issues that can foster progress and sustainable development. We should also consider local and international problems, and look forward to future development while sustaining the local culture in this globalized era. Non-violence should be implemented effectively for the insurgency movement within and outside the region, together with the responsibilities of the central government and the region itself.

**In my opinion, this book is very well written and the strong points of many issues will provide examples for Northeastern Thailand because many aspects are similar, including the history, culture, and the way of life.**