

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, ECONOMICS & MANAGEMENT

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHEAST INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Non-fulfillment of minimum necessary for the maintenance of merely physical efficiency and basic needs brings poverty in population. The requirement of minimum necessary differs in rural and urban areas and place by place on the globe. The failure of promotion of economic growth and population control perpetuated the cycle of poverty. The relation between poverty and human development (HD) is direct but negative. Both are two faces of a coin and hence they are mutually exclusive. Rapid growth of population, inequality in income and degradation of environment are the biggest challenge in Northeast (NE) India. This paper considers for the eradication of poverty by controlling the rapid growth of population, increasing the level of income and restoring the environment sustainability, which brings all round development in NE India.

KEYWORDS

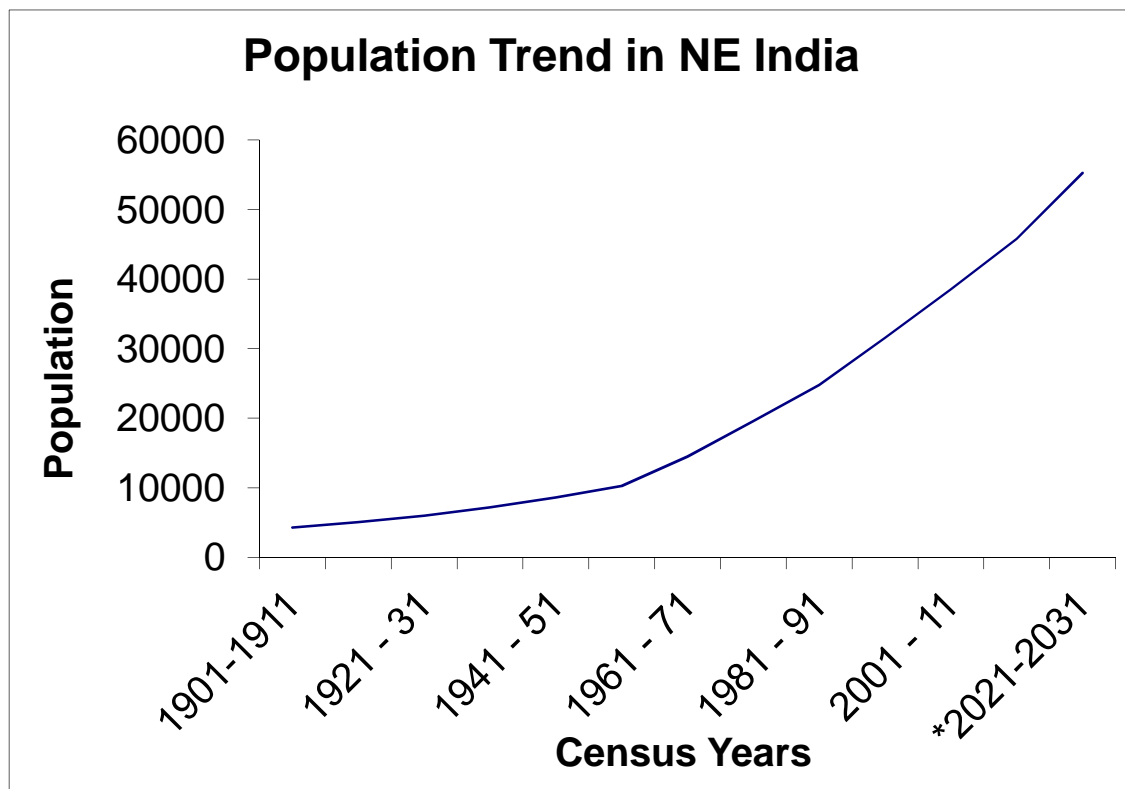
Population and Economic Growth, Anti-poverty Programmes and Policies, Environment Sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

As we know, poverty is the creation of social, political and others factors and its occurrence depends upon place, time and society. When a person's income is not sufficient to obtain minimum necessary for the maintenance of basic needs and merely physical efficiency, poverty then occurs. A person, who fails to obtain the minimum level of calories, falls below the poverty line. Rowntree (1901) defined families in poverty if their total earning is insufficient to meet the 'minimum necessities of merely physical efficiency' under income approach. The concept of poverty reflects failure in many dimensions of human life — unemployment, hunger, illness and health care, homelessness, powerlessness and victimization and social injustice. All of them add up to an assault of human dignity. Human Development Report 1997 recognizes poverty as multidimensional and poverty measures based on the income criterion do not capture deprivation of many kinds. It introduces three types of deprivation – in survival, in education and knowledge and in economic provisioning – as important dimensions of poverty.

NE India contains eight states namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. Sikkim is recently included in NE India. Earlier NE Indian states are popularly known as 'Seven Sisters'. NE India is one such region that exhibits accelerated population growth – both natural (in terms of exponential growth) and artificial (illegal migrants from neighbouring countries) increases – after independence. The population of NE India was 6232 thousand in 1901, after independence it became 14662 thousand in 1951 and 39036.1 thousand in 2001. Population of NE will be 47829.2 thousand in 2011 (1.23 times of 2001 and 11 times of 1901 populations) and 70290.8 thousand in 2031 with an exponential growth. The population of NE will become 11 times in 110 years (from 1901 to 2011) and it will be due to exponential growth and illegal migrants from neighbouring countries. The annual rate of exponential growth in NE India based on 2011 census is higher than that of India's and also of world.

The two generalized land use patterns – one for the plain section and another for the hill section easily discerned. About 80 % of people of the region are directly or indirectly depend on agriculture. Agriculture forms the backbone of the region's economy. The NE region lags far behind the rest of India. Agriculture in the NE region is distinguished from agricultural sector in the rest of India in terms of its features, patterns and performance. Hilly areas of the region depend on rainwater for the irrigation. Jhum or shifting cultivation is a primitive form of agricultural practice in the region. As a result, the minimum requirement of food grain is lacking in this region. The present overall land-man ratio of the region is 0.68 ha, more than double the ratio of India as a whole (0.32 ha). The total cultivable area in NE is only 25 percent of its geographical area, compared to the national average of 59 % and its percentage of cultivable area utilized is only 59, compared to the national average of 73. Lack of irrigation in the hilly NE India has been a constraint to agricultural development. Brahmaputra is a paleo-river and braided river in NE India. Monsoons dominate the climate of India.



* Projected (2011-2021 & 2021-2031)

The winds carry moisture from the Indian Ocean and bring heavy rains from June to September. The monsoon winds blow from the northeast and carry little moisture. Despite the potential for destruction, people welcome the summer monsoons and farmers depend on the rains to irrigate their land in NE India. Additionally, waterpower generates India's electricity, which is provided by the monsoon rains. Incessant rains due to the Northeast monsoon have inundated large tracts of low-lying areas, affect thousands of people and damage the public properties and crops in low-lying areas of this region.

Still, a large part of humanity lives in appalling poverty conditions. Overall, the share of the poor in the human population has never been so low. Of course, this depends crucially on the definition of poor. World Bank defines the poor in terms of absolute purchasing power. Kenny (2006) found that this may not well correspond to a subjective, socially and environmentally conditioned definition of poverty in the sense of deprivation. While a considerable share of the world population still lives in poverty, world income and wealth are very unequally distributed. A recent research by Davis et al. (2006) shows the extent of world inequality in the distribution of personal wealth. Milanovic (2006) suggests that income distributed less unequally than wealth, but still in a markedly unequal way.

POPULATION IN NE INDIA

India is having striking demographic diversity. Substantial differences are visible among states to achieve the basic demographic indicators like male-female, rural-urban, literate-illiterate, etc. India adds every 10 years to its population equivalent of 6 Canada's, 3 France's, 3 UK's or 2.3 Germany's. Table 1 illustrates overall situation of NE Indian states based on 2001 census and projected populations. It is matter of great surprise that population of Nagaland in 2031 will be almost 3.64 times that of 2001 census population and in 2051, it will be over 8 times that of 2001 census population at the present rate of population growth. Population of other states gives little higher growth in NE except Tripura. The least growth of population is observed in Tripura. The population-growth within states and NE as a whole is also higher. Central and Nagaland governments must do some needful steps to lower down rapid growth rate of population especially in Nagaland and NE as a whole.

TABLE 1: OVERALL SITUATION OF NE STATES

States	Population		% of population with India		Sex Ratio *		Population Density	
	2001	2011**	2001	2011**	2001	2011**	2001	2011**
Arunachal Pradesh	1091117	1372696	0.11	0.13	893	905	13	16
Assam	26638407	31612427	2.59	3.07	935	940	340	403
Manipur	2388634	3095416	0.23	0.3	974	995	97	139
Meghalaya	2306069	2985978	0.22	0.29	972	961	103	133
Mizoram	891058	1147402	0.09	0.11	935	951	40	52
Nagaland	1988636	3229511	0.19	0.31	900	925	120	195
Sikkim	540851	695963	0.05	0.07	875	873	76	78
Tripura	3191168	3689785	0.31	0.36	948	956	305	352
NE	39035582	47829178	3.78	4.65	937	943	148	182

* Female per 1000 male

** Projected

TABLE 2: PROJECTED POPULATION IN NE INDIA

States	2001	2011	2021	2031
Arunachal Pradesh	1091117	1372696	1691477	2084289
Assam	26638407	31612427	37070945	43471985
Manipur	2388634	3095416	3908241	4934506
Meghalaya	2306069	2985978	3767558	4753716
Mizoram	891058	1147402	1441217	1810269
Nagaland	1988636	3229511	4834029	7235720
Sikkim	540851	695963	895560	1152400
Tripura	3191168	3689785	4229379	4847883
North East	39035582	47829178	57838406	70290768

Based on Census population 1901 and 2001

The sex ratio in 2011 is predicted to be very good (above 900) in all NE states except Sikkim and in each state, an increasing trend is projected except in Meghalaya. Average sex ratio in 2011 will rise from 937 to 943, which is good sign of improvement in sex ratio within NE. Population density and percentage of population with India are estimated to increase in each case in 2011. Table 2 shows the projected populations of NE Indian states for 2011, 2021 and 2031. Goon and Chandra (1982) projected population using migration, fertility, mortality and sex-age composition. They advocated that this technique gives better estimates. But those factors are not applied in projecting population here.

Table 3 shows projected population of NE states from 2021 to 2041 based on census population of 2001 and 2011. Nagaland is not included in projection of population because 2011 census population shows negative population growth rate which is quite impossible for the state in these circumstances. 2011 Census population of Nagaland needs to be verified. The decennial growth rate in Nagaland was above 64 % as per 2001 census and what happened in another 10 years that population growth is reported negative. Projected population for Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim and Tripura in 2041 is 2655868, 48222203, 4371321, 5727461, 1912830, 846026 and 5405092.

TABLE 3: PROJECTED POPULATION IN NE STATES

States	2011	2021	2031	2041
Arunachal Pradesh	1382611	1707999	2123307	2655868
Assam	31169272	36046903	41690914	48222203
Manipur	2721756	3187303	3732598	4371321
Meghalaya	2964007	3691694	4598187	5727461
Mizoram	1091014	1315172	1585859	1912830
Sikkim	607688	670514	7557634	846026
Tripura	3671032	4176163	4750971	5405092

Based on Census population 2001 and 2011

ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY

As we know jhum (or shifting) cultivation is popular for agricultural practice in NE. Table 4 shows situation of shifting cultivation in the region. People cut valuable and pre-matured trees and burn them with other smaller plants in the forest under shifting cultivation, which affects the environment. There is a need to stop this practice for the environmental sustainability. NE India is very rich in respect of forest resources. Time came to protect the trees and other plants in forests and all other places for better livelihood because trees are the best friends of human beings and they (trees) keep the environment healthier and balanced by observing harmful substances present in the air. They (trees) also keep away us from natural calamity such as floods, draughts, cloudbursts, etc. Continued deforestation in NE brings people in deprivation from valuable forest resources like wood products, food and medicines. That is why it is needed to plant more trees in NE India using the principle 'My Earth My Duty'. Table 5 illustrates about geographical area, recorded forest area and forest cover, which shows, the forest area is decreasing year by year in NE India.

TABLE 4: SHIFTING CULTIVATION IN NE INDIA

States	Annual Area under shifting cultivation (sq. kms)	Fallow Period (in yrs)	No. of Families Practicing Shifting Cultivation
Arunachal Pradesh	700	3 – 10	54000
Assam	696	2 – 10	58000
Manipur	900	4 – 7	70000
Meghalaya	530	5 – 7	52290
Mizoram	630	3 – 4	50000
Nagaland	190	5 – 8	116046
Tripura	223	5 – 9	43000
North East	3869	-	443336

Source: Basic Statistics of NER, 2006

TABLE 5: GEOGRAPHICAL AREA, RECORDED FOREST AREA & FOREST COVER (sq km)

States	Geographical Area	Recorded Forest	Forest Cover
Arunachal Pradesh	83743	51540	68019
Assam	78438	27018	27826
Manipur	22327	17418	17219
Meghalaya	22429	9496	16839
Mizoram	21081	16717	18430
Nagaland	16579	8629	13609
Sikkim	7096	5481	3262
Tripura	10486	6292	8093
All India	3287263	774740	678333

Source: Basic Statistics of NE, 2006

Flood and erosion are some other major problems facing NE India and in the last 50 years, erosion by the mighty river Brahmaputra has eaten away half of the river island Majuli, which is considered to be the home of Assamese culture. The old Dibrugarh town suffered major loss due to erosion and even at present, the people of the town are living forcefully in great apprehension. The Brahmaputra is eroding its banks, while; on the other hand, new islands form within the river. These islands reduced the water carrying capacity of the river and increased erosion. There is need for dredging the newly formed islands inside the Brahmaputra and other rivers to increase the water carrying capacity of the river. That is why all major rivers of this region should be interlinked with cemented banks gradually in phase-wise. At the same time, the State and Central governments have asked for suggestions from the experts from the European Union to deal with the problem and hoped that the experts would be able to suggest measures for permanent solution of the problems after a proper scientific study.

Improvement of access to clean and safe water and sanitation is the most significant environment priority for the poor in NE India. Inadequate protection and conservation of environment bring substantial direct and indirect impacts on health and livelihoods by increasing the vulnerability of poor people throughout the NE. The most sufferers from environment health problems among poor are especially the women and children. Urban population suffers from faecal contamination of water and food due to poor or non-existence of excreta disposal systems. Most of the major rivers' water near cities and industrial areas became faecal contaminated and this brings various types of diseases in NE. Increasing demand of fresh water will be short due to high growth in population.

PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES

The government of India (GI) officially took a lead in April 1950 appointing a committee to formulate India's population policy. The committee recommended a programme for 'Family Limitation and Population Control Terms' considering a single goal to control population through reducing birth rate and then modified the programme entitled 'Family Planning Programme', which was basically motivational, educational and clinical services with a desire to space and limit family size. Thus India became the first nation in the world to start and implement the family planning programme through formulating its National Policy on population control. New government then changed the name of 'Family Planning Programme' to 'Family Welfare Programme'. The new policy put in rising minimum age at marriage of 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys, which came into operation in October 1978 and continuing till date.

Planned economic development requires data about various aspects of socio-economic conditions at different levels. Indicators of development related directly or indirectly to the size and structure of the population in NE. Another important requirement in the NE is educational planning, which needs enrolment projections for many of the investment decisions. For example, the number of children enrolled will decide opening or upgrading new schools and requirement of number of teachers in NE. None of these tasks accomplished efficiently unless the planner has an adequate idea of how many students will enter the system, how many will proceed through various grades and what number will graduate? This is ever more important keeping in view of the requirements of programmes like 'District Primary Education Programme' and 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' that envisage developing plans in a decentralized mode with an emphasis on disaggregated target setting in NE.

Important anti-poverty programmes, which are in vogue in India, are MNAREGA, SwarnaJayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana, Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana, Employment Assurance Scheme, National Social Assistant Programme (NSAP), Prime Minister Rozgar (employment) Yozana, Rural Employment Generation Programme, Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yozana, National Food for Work Programme, Anpurna, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and incentives given for family planning sterilization. The main features of the three components of NSAP are National Old Age Pension Yojana, National Family Benefit Scheme and National Maternity Benefit Scheme. There is a need to enhance the amount of incentive for the family planning sterilization of male and female to control the rapid growth of population. Good impact of this is visible in rural areas. Practice of contraceptives should be encouraged through awareness. Education related programmes are District Primary Education Programme, Mid-day Meal Programme and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. UNDP India is a key partner of the Government of India on the job guarantee programme.

Land reforms are required for achieving redistributive justice and for attaining higher levels of agricultural production and income in rural areas. The successful implementation of land reforms is responsibility rests with concerned state government. Programmes and policies related to anti-poverty and anti-population growth are available in India and NE. Now there is need to implement those nicely without any discrimination and free from all sorts of corruptions. Maximum amount of such programmes and policies will go to the beneficiary of people for whom they (programmes and policies) are made.

ANALYSIS

The huge income inequality, many socio-cultural and economic factors, and unequal distribution of land, wealth and other resources bring the high poverty rate. Eradication of poverty is still one of the primary aims of economic and social policies in NE India. Thus, poverty requires its measurement for the formulation of anti-poverty programmes and policies. Removal of poverty has been one of the major objectives of NE Indian developmental strategy. Chakravarty & Majumder (2007) and Ravallion (1996) found that poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon and its analysis needs more dimensions than income. With the spread of irrigation, white and green revolutions, many job opportunities are possible in the agricultural sector. The industries, in both public and the private sector, did provide some jobs. Unable to find proper jobs in cities, many people started working as rickshaw pullers, taxi and auto drivers, vendors, construction workers, domestic servants etc. With irregular incomes, these people could not afford expensive housing. They started living in slums on the outskirts of the cities and the problems of poverty; largely a rural phenomenon also became the feature of the urban sector.

As per figures made available by the Planning Commission of India, the percentage of people living below the poverty line has declined from 51.3% in 1977-78 to 26.1% in 1999-2000. This indicates that schemes like Swarn Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana, Employment Assurance Scheme, Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme, MNAREGA, PMGSY and etcetera have had its impact. But the problem is that in NE India the rate of employment generation has failed to match the rate of population growth and more often than not, employment generation is

confused with poverty alleviation. Agriculture provides employment to more than sixty percent of all the states' population. But lack of proper irrigation facilities, ignorance on the part of the farmers about scientific cultivation techniques, over dependence on the monsoons and absence of proper storage facilities have hampered the growth of this sector and it is very well reflected in its meager contribution to the state domestic product. Other than the opportunities generated by the various government schemes, the growth in job opportunities in the government sector is nothing to write home about. In fact, this sector has totally failed to create job opportunities in sync with the rise in population.

TABLE 6: STATEWISE POVERTY RATIO

States	1973-74	1993-94	1999-2000
Arunachal Pradesh	51.93	39.35	33.47
Assam	51.21	40.86	36.09
Manipur	49.96	33.78	28.54
Meghalaya	50.32	25.66	19.47
Mizoram	50.32	25.66	19.47
Nagaland	50.81	37.92	32.67
Tripura	51.00	39.01	34.44
All India	54.88	35.97	26.10

Source: Basic Statistics of NER, 2006

There is requirement of special cares for projects or industries generating a minimum of 1000 regular employment. Table 6 shows poverty situation in NE India. Poverty ratio in all states except Meghalaya and Mizoram is greater than that of all India. Special care on poverty reduction is required to give in NE. Measurement of poverty can split into two interrelated items, viz. the identification of the poor and aggregation of the poverty characteristics of different people into one overall measure, or one ranking.

The world's trend in population growth is a major concern before all nations and their political leaders. Due to unhealthy population explosion, the natural resources are eroding and diluting all economical, political and social gains. The uneven and rapid increasing population demands the basic needs such as food, shelter, education, health, transport, work and fresh air. That is why it became very essential to study the growth rate of population under control for enjoying the reasonable standard of life. Jain (1998) suggested that broader public policies to affect human behavioural change have generally not been very successful in developing countries. He further suggested that this was often due to the absence of a charismatic leader who could generate public sympathy for unpopular causes. Bongaarts and Bruce (1999) advocated 'Well-designed population policies are broad in scope, socially desirable and ethically sound. They appeal to a variety of constituencies, including those seeking to eliminate discrimination against women and improve the lives of children and those seeking to reduce fertility and population growth. Mutually reinforcing investments in family planning, reproductive health and a range of socioeconomic measures operate beneficially at both the macro and micro levels: the same measures will slow population growth, increase productivity and improve individual health and welfare'. The recent rapid increase in human population over the past two centuries has raised concerns that humans are beginning to overpopulate the Earth and that the planet may not be able to sustain present or larger numbers of inhabitants.

Scholars, policy makers, academicians, educationists and religious leaders have been discussing about the relationship between population and development. This is true that the relationship between population and development is negative. If population will increase rapidly, the economic growth is affected and hence the development is also affected. Population is increasing exponentially but the production of food and other related resources is not increasing in that proportion and this exacerbates starvation in the population. An increasing population has negative implications for resources (including food) and economic growth. NE has high population growth rate and a good policy needed to bring down total fertility rate. The policy may be successful but population size would probably overshoot the desired limits before settling down at an acceptable level. High population growth rate leads to a young age distribution. This young people would lead to a large number of births. In NE India, the population problem is increasingly distressing, affecting more people increasingly crammed together, with greater consumption, desire and with newer and ever costlier resources. If net reproduction rate (NRR) is greater than unity, the population will grow positively and there is an increase in population. If NRR is equal to unity, then no population growth (negligible) obtained and the population will be stable. If NRR is less than unity, the population will grow negatively and there is a decrease in population. Thus, we have to maintain the NRR close to unity.

Life expectancy at birth for males and females increased to 55.3 years and 56.3 years respectively. Both male and female child mortality would decline by 60 %. Declining fertility and mortality produces a transition towards the ageing of the population. Maintain net migration around current levels for several decades. Use more reliable baseline data. This requires further investments in censuses, surveys, and vital registration. Update projections quickly as new information on current demographic trends becomes available. In 1952, India was the first country in the world to launch a national programme, emphasizing family planning to the extent necessary for reducing birth rates to stabilize the population at a level consistent with the requirement of national economy. After 1952, a similar drop in birth rates did however, not accompany sharp declines in death rates.

The National Population Policy (NPP) 2000 provides a policy framework for advancing goals and prioritizing strategies during the next decade, to meet the reproductive and child health needs of the people of India including NE and to achieve net replacement levels by 2015. It based upon the need to address issues of child survival, maternal health, and contraception, while increasing outreach and coverage of a comprehensive package of reproductive and child health services by government, industry and the voluntary non-government sector, working in partnership. The medium-term objective is to bring the total fertility rate to replacement levels by 2015, through vigorous implementation of inter sectoral operational strategies. The long-term objective is to achieve a stable population by 2045 at a level consistent with the requirements of sustainable economic growth, social development and environmental protection.

The complex socio-cultural determinants of women's health and nutrition have cumulative effects over a lifetime. Discriminatory childcare leads to malnutrition and impaired physical development of the girl child. The positive effect of good health and nutrition on the labour productivity of the poor well documented. To the extent that women over-represented among the poor, interventions for improving women's health and nutrition are critical for poverty reduction.

Programmes for safe motherhood, universal immunization, child survival and oral rehydration combined into an integrated reproductive and child health programme. Empowering women for improved health, education, working and nutrition is required in whole India including NE India. Infant mortality is a sensitive indicator of human development. High mortality and morbidity among infants and children below 5 years occurs because of inadequate care, asphyxia during birth, premature birth, low birth weight, acute respiratory infections, diarrhea, vaccine preventable diseases, malnutrition and deficiencies of nutrients, including vitamin A. Infant mortality rates should significantly decline in recent future. In both rural and urban areas there continue to be unmet needs for contraceptives, supplies and equipment for integrated service delivery, mobility of health providers and patients, and comprehensive information. It is important to strengthen, energize and make accountable the cutting edge of health infrastructure at the village, sub centre and primary health centre levels. This is also important to improve facilities for referral transportation, to encourage, strengthen local initiatives for ambulance services at village, and block levels,

to increase innovative social marketing schemes for affordable products and services and to improve advocacy in locally relevant and acceptable dialects. Future trends in population size, age structure, births and other demographic variables are of interest to a wide range of analysts, including policymakers, scientists and planners in industry and government.

Tribal population often has high levels of morbidity arising from poor nutrition, particularly in situations where they are involuntarily displaced or resettled. Frequently, they have low levels of literacy, coupled with high infant, child and maternal mortality. They remain under-served in the coverage of reproductive and child health services. These communities need special attention in terms of basic health and reproductive and child health services. Special needs of tribal groups, which need to address, include the provision of mobile clinics in NE. Information and counseling on infertility, regular supply of standardized medication will be included, and family welfare messages must be focused and disseminated everywhere including the remote corners of NE and in local dialects. This will ensure that the messages conveyed effectively. These need to strengthen and their outreach widened with locally relevant and locally comprehensible media and messages. There is need to undertake a massive campaign on population related issues via academicians, artists, popular film stars, doctors, vaidyas, hakims, nurses, local midwives, women's organizations and youth organizations in NE.

Rapid growth of population exacerbates the poverty and lowers the per capita income and hence the corresponding reduction of human development index (HDI) and gender-related development index (GDI) is obtained. Poverty and a degraded environment are closely inter-related, especially where people depend for their livelihoods primarily on the natural resource base of their immediate environment. Restoring natural systems and improving natural resource management practices at the grassroots level are central to a strategy to eliminate poverty. Removal of poverty is therefore a prerequisite for the protection of the environment. Poverty magnifies problem of hunger and malnutrition. The problem further compounded by the inequitable access of the poor to the food that is available. It is therefore necessary to strengthen the public distribution system to overcome this inequity. While conventional economic development leads to the elimination of several traditional occupations, the process of sustainable development, guided by the need to protect and conserve the environment, leads to the creation of new jobs and of opportunities for the reorientation of traditional skills to new occupations.

Population ageing is primarily due to the result of decline in fertility and secondarily decline in mortality and age structure of population becomes older, with a growing number and proportion. The future population size and age-sex structure of any geographical area depend on three demographic components: fertility, mortality and net international migration. As no policies to increase the mortality of a population are socially desirable, there are, in theory, two possible ways of retarding or reversing demographic ageing. First, a reversal of declines of fertility would lead the age structure of the population back towards a younger one, thus slowing down the ageing process. However, the recent experience of low-fertility countries suggests that there is no reason to assume that their fertility will return anytime soon to the above-replacement level.

Women, while continuing to perform their traditional domestic roles are increasingly involved in earning livelihoods. In many poor households they are often the principal or the sole breadwinners. A major thrust at the policy level is necessary to ensure equity and justice for them. Literacy and a basic education are essential for enabling the poor to access the benefits offered by development initiatives and market opportunities. Basic education is therefore a precondition for sustainable development. The integration of agriculture with land and water management and with ecosystem conservation is essential for both environmental sustainability and agricultural production. There is need to establish well-defined and enforceable rights (including customary rights) and security to ensure equal access to land, water and other natural and biological resources. It should ensure that this applies, in particular, to indigenous communities, women and other disadvantaged groups living in poverty. The traditional approaches to natural resource management such as sacred groves and ponds, water harvesting and management systems, etc., should revive by creating institutional mechanisms, which recapture the ecological wisdom and the spirit of community management inherent in those systems. On the other hand, for development to be locally appropriate and sustainable, it must guide by local considerations, which lie in cultural diversity and traditions. Therefore, recognition at the policy level, of the significance of diversity, and the need to preserve it, is an important precondition for sustainable development. Gender parity and women's empowerment is central to obtain development goal. Some positive trend in gender equality is seen but there are still many areas of concern. About two-thirds of women in the developing world work in the informal sector or unpaid workers in the home. Gender equality is a condition for inclusive, democratic, violence-free and sustainable development. Vijayapriya and Venmathi (2011) concluded that if both husband and wife work, they should share equally in the housework and childcare. They suggested for opening childcare facilities so that women can take jobs outside the home.

Human health in its broadest sense of physical, mental and spiritual well being is largely dependent on the access of the citizen to a healthy environment. For a healthy, productive and fulfilling life every individual should have the physical and economic access to a balanced diet, safe drinking water, clean air, sanitation, environmental hygiene, primary health care and education. Access to safe drinking water and a healthy environment should be a fundamental right of every citizen. Citizens of NE India continue to be vulnerable to a double burden of diseases. Traditional diseases such as malaria and cholera, caused by unsafe drinking water and lack of environmental hygiene, have not yet controlled. In addition, people are now falling prey to modern diseases such as cancer, AIDS and swine flue and stress-related disorders. Basic health and educational facilities in NE India need to strengthen. The role of public health services must give preventive health care equal emphasis as curative health care. People should be empowered through education and awareness to participate in managing preventive health care related to environmental sanitation and hygiene.

Mechanisms must put in place to make available to NE India the latest technologies at reasonable cost. The paramount importance of education in effecting social change is recognized. Mainstream education must now realign to promote awareness, attitudes, concerns and skills that will lead to sustainable development in NE India. Basic education, which promotes functional literacy, livelihood skills and understanding of the immediate environment and values of responsible citizenship, is a precondition for sustainable development. Such education must be available to every child as a fundamental right without any discrimination based on economic class, geographical location or cultural identity in NE India. To enhance effectiveness of people's participation in local governance and representatives of community groups must form. Appropriate capacity building would enable them to undertake local development activities according to community priorities, monitor project implementation and manage community assets. Effective enforcement is lacking in respect of laws relevant to contemporary concerns and conducive to governance. This calls for a thorough review of laws, elimination of those, which are outmoded, and simplification of the procedures for implementing those, which are relevant. Agricultural and social scenario need appropriate strategy for development of the NE region.

I alter the focus of the discussion by utilizing social development as the criterion for good government. The HDI used as the measure of social development. While per-capita GDP is correlated with (though does not directly measure) longevity and education, the HDI directly measures per-capita income, longevity and education. Further, while GDP measures productivity taken together, the HDI reflects the types of goods and services that constitute GDP. Wallace (2004) found that according to Amartya Sen, a major contributor to the HDI's development, the HDI is '...the most widely accepted measure of comparative international welfare'. Thus, unlike per-capita GDP, the HDI is able to distinguish between standard of living and income. For example, a country with a very high GDP per-capita such as Kuwait has a lower HDI rank because of a relatively lower level of educational attainment. Uruguay has roughly half the GDP per-capita of Kuwait but has a higher HDI rank. Some of the tribal areas suffer from problems like lack of health care facilities, adequate communication, educational institutions, etc. and poverty is a major problem in those areas. Because of lack of adequate development, these areas have become ideal hunting ground for the rebellious elements to flourish and they have been able to lure away youths into their fold.

Main industries in the region are tea-based, crude oil and natural gas, silk, bamboo and handicrafts. The region heavily forested and has plentiful rainfall. There are beautiful wildlife sanctuaries, tea-estates and mighty rivers like Brahmaputra. The region is home to one-horned rhinoceros, elephants and other endangered wildlife. For security reasons, including inter-tribal tensions, widespread insurgencies and disputed borders with neighbouring China, there are restrictions on foreigners visiting the area, hampering the development of the potentially profitable tourism industry.

Just as economic development has implications for the pace of population growth, so the latter has implications for the rate of economic development. A large population means that there is less to go around per person, so that per capita income is depressed. Negative and positive effects coexist between population growth and economic development. The simplest negative effect comes from the observation that population growth eats away at a given level of resources or income, leaving less per head to go around. The positive effect is that population growth creates economic necessity, which forces the adoption or creation of new ideas that expand carrying capacity.

To educate women has many advantages in the societies. The educated mothers are able to take better care of themselves and their families and children. Education also promotes better antenatal lifestyles and educated parents place greater emphasis on child quality than the child quantity. They prefer, in general, fewer but better educated, healthier and well-nourished children. The education reduces the number of children a couple has by encouraging contraception. It also minimizes the fear of adopting such new technologies and also makes individuals think and realize. Planning is a systematic attempt by the government to analyze the existing situation, sort out the requirements and choose the measures needed to accomplish the selected goals to transform the society deliberately. Singh (2011) gave an example that 'Bihar government has been implementing the programmes and policies available in nice way assuming as prime duty and as a result Bihar achieved annual growth rate of development above 11 % in the financial year 2008-09'. Government should have strong will-power and then implement the programmes and policies available in nice way considering as prime duty and free from all sort of corruptions and discriminations.

In view of wider concept of development, indicators of development now not confined to only per capita income. In addition to it, indicators like 'Gini coefficient of income distribution' and 'Percentage of population below poverty line' are used. The important dimensions of social development like literacy, infant mortality rate, expectation of life and composite indices like Physical Quality of Life (PQLI), HDI and GDI are used. NFHS 1992-93 report shows that total fertility rate reduced as the level of education increased in different religions and for total population.

During the summer monsoon months June-September, Brahmaputra River experiences severe flood, which occurs year after year cause deaths and destruction in the Assam valley and neighbouring areas. Floods are an evil so far as they cause the destruction of lives and properties but floods are potentials resources and blessings. The utilization of surplus floodwater may be for purposes of irrigation, power development, navigation, etc. Such type of utilization achieved comes under flood conservation for beneficial use and thereby eliminating the death and destruction. Rao (1975) suggests that the Brahmaputra has an annual average runoff of 510000 million m³ and a total length of about 2900 km, draining an area 580000² km in Tibet, India and Bangladesh and it occupies 8th rank in a list of 34 major rivers on the globe for their annual average runoff. The Brahmaputra basin is one of the largest river basins in NE India. The enormous water resources of it not fully utilized and usually most of its floodwater is being lost into the Bay of Bengal through Bangladesh after causing enormous damage in Assam and Bangladesh. This, of course, requires implementation of water projects in the entire region for developmental of the area.

NE region is rich in natural and human resources, both of which have not been effectively trapped. Ministry of Development of NE Region is seen as a catalyst in mobilizing focus and efforts in accelerating development in the region. Government of India had established a Ministry dedicated solely for the development of the NE. Allocation of budget yearly for NE is 10 % of total budget of India. This is the region of highest rainfall in India and Cherrapunji is a place in Meghalaya where highest rainfall is recorded in the world each year. Meghalaya is also called 'Abode of Cloud'. Dhar and Shobha (2000) discussed that during the summer monsoon months June - September, the Brahmaputra River experienced severe floods occurring year after year causing death and destruction in the Assam valley and neighbouring Bangladesh. Government should study well about it and then take positive steps to control the death and destruction in the region.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Being human being and then academican it is our prime duty to improve quality of lives in the NE India for all. This is possible only by reducing the rate of population growth, increasing the per capita income, level of education, expectancy of life and health care, lowering the infant mortality rate, and eliminating discriminations and all sorts of corruptions and environmental pollutions from NE India. Government should make programmes and policies and then implement those policies seriously and nicely to combat the poverty from NE India.

An urge is required to have at most one girl child (with low fecundity) in each family and use of contraception for controlling the rapid growth of population. Encouragement by enhancing the amount of sterilization for both or either spouse in each family is required.

There is need to implement the existing programmes and policies related to anti-poverty and controlling population in nice way and with full will-power in NE India without any discrimination and corruption.

HCR for rural areas in NE India indicates us to take much care of people in the rural area to combat the poverty. Working for both the spouse in each household should promote for the betterment of their income and lives in the NE. Government should bring scheme so that each person gets work for minimum eight months in a year.

Government should also bring scheme to expand education for all, eliminate the environment pollutions, empower women and remove discrimination and corruption from society and restore social justice in NE. Educating women and adults has many advantages in the societies.

The Brahmaputra and all major rivers in this area should interlink with concrete banks as far as possible and practicable in phase manner. A good and scientific excreta disposal system is required in NE. No one should allow disposing faecal contamination in rivers, ponds, lakes or open air.

Special emphasis on tapping the tourism potential under 'Tourism Policy' and increasing the total cultivable area and percentage of cultivable area utilized is required to promote better livelihood in the NE region. Plantation of more trees in NE states should be promoted and law should be made to punish people who cut trees and forests.

All round development needs restoration of peace in NE region and technology needs to be recast for combating terrorism and internal and local miscreants. Positive and fruitful steps are required to stop illegal migrants from neighbouring countries in the NE region.

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