

## Research Paper

## Economy of North Eastern Region of India

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### ABSTRACT

*The North Eastern Region of India comprises eight states viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. The economy of North Eastern Region is based on agriculture. About 58.6% workers of this region are involved in agricultural activities. Industrial development is rare in this region. Though the region is rich in mineral and natural resources; which yet to be utilized.*

### MINERAL RESOURCE OF DIFFERENT STATES OF NER:

Assam has a host of mineral deposit among which Coal, Limestone, Petroleum, Granite, Silimanite, Iron ore; Quartzite, Feldspar, Clay, Natural Gas, and Oil but not skilful utilisation. The coal reserve is estimated at 371 million tons and the production rate of crude oil is estimated 4.80 mm tons per annum. Assam has potential to tap natural gas about 5.93% million cubic meters per day. Assam has 463 million tons of reserve of limestone; over 400 million tons are located in Umrangshu. The Arunachal Pradesh has a substantial deposit of Minerals, which includes petroleum (Crude) coal, dolomite and limestone. The Manipur accounts for very little extractable mineral. Although reserve of copper, coal, iron, nickel, as well as petroleum oil / natural gas are reported, no estimation or prospecting has been actually undertaken, There are however deposits of semi-precious stones like Lapis Lazuli, Serpentine rocks and Jades, which are being extracted. The state has a vast deposit of coal at an estimated reserve of 564 million tons. Although the reserve for limestone is 4147 million tons; but the currently extractable reserve of limestone is 0.24 - 0.30 million tones. Meghalaya is also known to have reserves of uranium Granite, Sillimanite, Iron ore, Quartzite, Feldspar and Clay. The mineral resources of Mizoram are not fully explored. Some deposits of petroleum, coal, limestone, oil and natural gas are forecasted but no exploration has been conducted. Nagaland has vast deposit of Coal, Limestone, Petroleum, Slate and Marble but due to various problems in Nagaland no exploration has been conducted. The Sikkim has good resource of all the minerals like Zinc, Lead, Copper, Dolomite, Coal, Quartzite, Graphics, and Talc etc. Commercial exploitation of some of these minerals has been made by the Sikkim Mining Corporation. Tripura has substantial reserves of natural gas, Kaolin, Iron Ore, Limestone, Coal. According to ONGC's exploration results, the region has a production potential of 3.5 million cubic meter of gas per day.

### FOREST RESOURCES:

About 54% of the total geographical area of the North Eastern Region is covered by forests although there are inter-state variations. The percentage of forest area is highest in Mizoram about 76 % and lowest in Assam 40%. There are varieties of valuable plants, timbers and wildlife animal and birds in the forest of North Eastern region. Some of the important timbers for trade are Khasi Pine, Sal, Teak, Bamboos, the rubber-yielding plant of *Ficus elastica* Roxb Lac and Gum. Some medicine plants are Ipecac, *Rauvolfia serpentina*, *Cinchona*, *Abromine*, *Chaulmoogra* Oil, *Croton* Oil, *Eucalyptus*, *Castor* Oil, *Chiretta*, *Solanum khasianum*, *Casearia vareca*, *Zanthoxylum armatum*, *Hedyotis scandens*, *Paederia foetida*, *Salix alba*, *Anacardium occidentale*, *Cinnamomum*, *Taxus baccata*. Some wildlife animal namely Primates, the Cats, Civets, Mongooses, Dogs, Bear, Weasels, Bats, Rodents, Elephants, Gaur, Wild Buffalo, Serow, Deer, Pigs monkeys, Hoolock Gibbon, macaques and languor's, Rhesus Macaque and Pangolins are seen roaming in the forests of North East .as and lemurs. In Meghalaya you will also come across and Assamese Macaque. The peculiar Golden Languor, Rhino are also seen in the forest of North East.

### WATER RESOURCES:

The North Eastern Region has large scale of Water resources but yet to be utilized for the welfare of the region. Huge flow of water also creates problem in life, live and livelihood in the form of annual massive flood. The mighty Brahmaputra, Subansiri, Kopili-Kalang, Dhansiri, Jia-Barali, Jia-Dahal, Ranganadi, Buridihing, Dikrong, Dehang, Lohit, Dibang, Sonkhosh, Tipkai, Champamati, Pagladiya, Puthimari, Disang, Dikhow, Jhanji, Kulsi-Deosila, Dudnoi Kisnai, Jinjiram,

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Godhadar, Barnadi, Noanadi, Tangani, Dhansiri, (N), Belsiri, Gabharu, Bhargang, Buri, Ghiladari, Bhahmajan, Moridal, Depota, Bhogdoi, Bharalu, Jinary, Gaurang, Gumti, Manu, Haora, Bhurima, khowai, Dhalai, Juri and Barak are the Major and medium river of North East India. In these rivers, there are potentialities of inland water transport, irrigation for agriculture, hydro-eclectic projects and indigenous fishes.

#### **AGRICULTURE:**

As it is stated that this region's economy is highly based in agriculture; but the agricultural sectors of the region is yet to be adopt the scientific method of cultivation. The farmers in semi-scientific way are producing the varieties of crops and food grains; some of these are paddy, wheat, pulses, oilseeds, variety of vegetables, variety of spices, variety of fruits, cereal crops, cardamom, sugarcane, jute, rubber, coffee and tea. It is well known to all that in tea cultivation Assam is world famous, but the indigenous poor cultivators have no significant influence in tea production. As regards land utilisation of total geographical area of 25,505,000 hectares, only 4052000 hectares are cropped area. The per capita forest area is 0.58.

#### **ANIMAL HUSBANDRY:**

Livestock is an important aspect of tribal life in the region. Although the livestock population of the North East states is high, large scale imports, especially of pigs and cattle are made from the neighbouring plains because of the huge demand. Assam has the highest livestock population among the North East states. In the hilly terrains of the NE states, the dependence on livestock for meat is very high. Pigs serve as the primary source of meat in most of the hilly areas and in such areas pigs outnumber cattle.

#### **SERICULTURE:**

The Sericulture; in North East region comprises the culture of four varieties of silk worms' viz. Eri, Muga, Oak Tassar and Mulberry. While the third one is a new introduction other cultures are traditional from time immemorial. Sericulture is not an organised commercial activity as in the case of mulberry. Sericulture is prevalent mainly amongst the tribals in hill districts of Assam and northern hill areas of Meghalaya. Lower Brahmaputra Valley is the traditional home of Eri spinners and weavers producing bulk of Eri yarn and fabric.

#### **TOURISM:**

Indeed it's a virtual paradise for travelers, searching for continuous joy in Pilgrimage, Adventure, Culture, Nature, Heritage, Wildlife, Golf and Polo and many more. All these make a rich Region. It's a land in the twilight of imagination and reality. It's a tourists' delight, anyway. Though North Eastern region possesses rich history, culture and scenic beauty comparable to any other developed tourist spot of the country, very few foreign tourists of the world are exploring this region. The region has to be developed the tourism facilities.

#### **INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT;**

The North Eastern Region is endowed with rich resource potential capable of utilizing industrial development. These are minerals, forest, agriculture, horticulture, and fishery resources. There are a number of promotional and development organizations, both state, regional and national, to aid in the development of industry in the respective states. However, in spite of existence of rich potentials, promotional and development organizations the growth of industries in the region is slow. In the fact the region continues to be industrially backward. The contribution of industries to the state domestic product in the region is negligible. The region declared as category 'A' region for purpose of providing central investment subsidy and transport subsidy. It is also entitled to concessional finance from the all India term leading institutions and preferential treatment for industrial licenses. There are only a few large and medium in the region. And a most of them are located in Assam. The central investment in the industrial sector is primarily confined to oil. There are of course few cement factory, fertilizer plant, cotton yarn units, and pulp and paper projects. The tea and oil industry in Assam developed due to historical factors. The region has great potentiality for development of industries, particularly in the small scale sector.

#### **TRENDS IN GROWTH OF SMALL INDUSTRIES IN NER**

Industrial development in the region may be said to be recent origin. Study carried out by the NISIET in 1978 that pointed out, 90 percent of small scale industries [SSI] entrepreneurs set up their units after 1966. In 1971 the region had 2,653 units as against 1,39,577 in the country accounting for 1.9 percent only there has been an increase in number of SSI in the region since 1971. As on December, 1986 the region had 16,485 SSI units as against 9,61,691 units in the country and account for 1.71% only. Out of these units 7,362 units (44.66%) are located in Assam. The number of SSI units in Assam has gone up to 10,614 in 1987. Though in absolute terms there has been increase in the number of SSI in the region, in percentage term there has been shot fall. This indicates that the growth of SSI in the region. After ten years, during the period of 1997-1998, the number of SSI units of NER has gone up to 53729, in 1998-1999 up to 57193, in 1999-2000 up to 60108, in 2000-2001 up to 63235, in 2001-2002 up to 66939 and in 2002-2003 up to 70579 units. The Assam is in the highest position of SSI unit and the Sikkim is in the lowest position. Thus it is increasing but not yet been sufficient to meet the needs.

The stock resources of north east region should utilized properly for the prosperous development of its 4,55,87,9,82 populations. State governments of this region should be initiated as well as to be undertaking modern scientific measurement to utilize the stored resources. The central government has to be finance with open heart towards the development of this region as like the northern region for reducing the allegation of negligence towards the North East.

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