

11.2 Negotiation and Dispute Settlement

11.3 Violence

Devakumar, J.: Caste Clashes and Dalits' Rights Violations in Tamil Nadu. *Social Scientist* 35, 11 & 12 (2007): 39-54.

In this paper, the author reflects on the rise in recent years in the number of cases of violence against Dalits in Tamil Nadu, including numerous cases of rape, murder and human rights violations. The violence is perpetrated not only by the upper castes, but also in many instances by the Other Backward Classes, and the situation is made worse by the lack of resistance by the Dalits. In Tamil Nadu, a large number of clashes have been between Thevars (a backward caste) and the local Dalits. The clashes took on a new dimension as the Dalits started becoming less economically dependent on the Thevars, and they became even more complex after the provision for reservations in the panchayats. The article stresses the similarity in the forms of violence over the years from 1992 to 2001, in spite of the changing economic relations between the Dalits and other castes, thus presenting the problem of anti-Dalit violence as extremely resilient in today's politico-social context.

Dutta, Anuradha: Cost of Insurgency in North-East India. *Man and Society: A Journal of North East Studies* 4 (2007): 1-16.

In this article the author analyses the economic costs of insurgency for both insurgent groups and the state governments of North-East India, related to the overall levels of development in the region. Ethno-nationalist insurgencies have been a major challenge to state authorities in the post-war era of decolonization, but the access of insurgent groups to large resources and modern technology, including sophisticated weapons, along with the enhanced scale and frequency of insurgent activities, are new phenomena that have a great economic cost.

The North-East region of India is one of South Asia's most disturbed areas with more than one hundred insurgent groups operating there. The growth of an underground terrorist economy has a direct influence on the legitimate eco-developmental activities

of state governments and civil society. To finance their various operations, insurgents in the region have taken to extortion, smuggling, small arms business, drug trafficking, etc., with serious implications for business and developmental activities, in addition to law and order concerns. These insurgent groups also forcefully impose illegal taxes in the form of 'protection money', 'patriotic tax', 'business tax', 'industrial tax', etc. Recently, some insurgent groups have begun investing in multi-national companies, while others have started drug production to meet their expenses.

On the other side, the government has spent huge sums on counterinsurgency measures, including on the military and para-military forces, in addition to the massive funds expended to accelerate economic development, given that underdevelopment is regarded as an important factor in the emergence and continuance of insurgency in the region. Altogether, the article illustrates that insurgency increases the cost of doing business, reduces competitiveness and creates an atmosphere where the use of violence is seen as a natural part of day-to-day politics. The solution is for the political leadership, business leaders, development practitioners and leaders of the various ethnic groups to act collectively towards the common goal of political stability, economic productivity and conflict-free development in the North-East region.

Hazarika, Sujata Dutta: Women and Political Voice in Assam: Theory and Praxis. *Man and Society: A Journal of North East Studies* 4 (2007): 73-95.

Taking the example of the state of Assam, this article analyses the level of women's political participation in Northeast India following the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. The paper is based on both secondary data as well as primary interview data collected with the help of local NGOs from three districts of Assam – Sontpur, Cachar and Nalbari.

While the status of women in the North-East region is believed to be relatively high compared to the rest of India, the social status of women in Assam and their level of political participation have been constrained by a combination of their household work burden, financial weakness, cultural barriers, educational backwardness, lack of political consciousness and male-dominated decision-making.

However, the 73rd Amendment of the Indian Constitution providing for a 33 per cent reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) has brought about a sudden increase in women's political participation at this level, potentially enabling women as a cohesive group to influence the process of decision-making. To the contrary, this study illustrates a number of factors that continue to hinder women's empowerment, for instance, their general lack of awareness of the institution of Panchayati Raj, its functioning, structure and composition, as well as their fear of social ostracism. Intervention through self-help groups (SHGs), non-government organizations (NGOs) and government is necessary to generate political awareness among women.

The author concludes that while positive discrimination to ensure women's political participation has been a great step towards women's empowerment a number of obstacles still exist and women in many cases continue to act merely as proxies for men. The social handicaps to women's effective participation, such as their inadequate education, the burden of their reproductive and productive roles, lack of self-confidence and the opposition of entrenched cultural and religious interests, require urgent address to ensure women's effective political empowerment.

Meetei, Nameirakpam Bijen: Rethinking Cultural Identity and Territorial Autonomy in Northeast India. *Eastern Quarterly* 4, 2 (2007): 123-33.

In the light of the prevailing inter-ethnic conflict in the state of Manipur, this article examines the experience of the state of Meghalaya. A demand for territorial autonomy based on ethno-cultural differences is one of the main issues in Northeast India. The author points out, however, that in the case of Manipur, a major community like the Naga, which is demanding an ethnic-based state, is itself an umbrella group consisting of numerous small groups whose people actually speak different languages and have different cultures and traditions. Given that the Naga demands are based on a political agenda rather than social, economic or cultural necessity, would granting territorial autonomy to such an umbrella group actually help to resolve the existing internal differences? Moreover, is it possible to grant territorial autonomy to all aspiring and



ethnically differentiated groups (more than 30) in Manipur, given that there is no district that is entirely inhabited by any single community? On the other hand, dividing Manipur into smaller political units will do more harm than good and provoke the claim of threat to Meetei culture.

Taking the example of Meghalaya, which was also created out of the erstwhile Assam state on the basis of such a demand, the article addresses the emerging conflict between Khasis, Garos and Jaintias within Meghalaya. Alongside the demand for a separate state for Garos and Jaintias, there are also demands for separate reservations in jobs, education and other matters as well. A similar situation could not be prevented in the case of Manipur should the present demands for territorial autonomy be conceded.

In conclusion, the author suggests two possible solutions to demands for ethnic autonomy within Manipur: (i) a western type model of multicultural federation; and (ii) a form of 'consociational' democracy. While the task of developing a multicultural society based on equal respect is not easy, territorial division will also not produce the desired results unless the internal differences among the groups are amicably solved.

See also Nair & Kumar (7.3); Salgoankar (25.1); Thingnam (7.3)