BPSE-145: Democracy and Development in Northeast India

(TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT)

Assignment Code: BPSE-145/ASST/TMA/2026-27

Marks: 100

Assignment – I

Answer the following questions in about 500 words each. (2 × 20 = 40 marks)

1. Explain the making of Northeast India with reference to its socio-cultural, ethnic and economic profile.

2. Discuss the special constitutional provisions for Northeast India and the role of regional and district councils.

Assignment – II

Answer the following questions in about 250 words each. (3 × 10 = 30 marks)

3. Examine the issues of migration, refugees and citizenship in Northeast India.

4. Discuss autonomy movements and the politics of recognition in Northeast India.

5. Analyse political parties and the party system in Northeast India.

Assignment – III

Answer the following questions in about 100 words each. (5 × 6 = 30 marks)

6. Students' movements

7. Women's movements

8. Environmental movements

9. Human rights movements

10. Distinguish social and human development from economic development in Northeast India.

1. Explain the making of Northeast India with reference to its socio-cultural, ethnic and economic profile.

Answer

Introduction. Northeast India is not a naturally uniform ethnic or cultural unit. It is a historically constituted region whose boundaries and political institutions emerged through interactions among communities, colonial administration, economic exchanges and post-Independence state formation. Today it commonly refers to Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. Its location between the Himalayan foothills, Brahmaputra and Barak valleys, and hill ranges connected with Southeast Asia has shaped its distinctive yet interconnected societies.

Historical formation of the region. Long before modern states, the Brahmaputra valley, Manipur valley and surrounding hills were linked by trade, marriage, movement and conflict. The Ahom kingdom, Manipur's monarchy, Khasi and Jaintia political institutions, tribal village councils and many smaller chiefdoms followed different paths. British expansion after the Treaty of Yandabo (1826) gradually brought substantial areas under colonial rule. Administrators separated several hill areas from the regular provincial system through special regulations and excluded-area arrangements. These boundaries often reflected imperial concerns about frontier security and revenue rather than the everyday social geography of local populations.

At Independence, the territory included Assam, princely Manipur and Tripura, and areas with differentiated administrative arrangements. The Constitution incorporated tribal safeguards while several communities demanded self-government. Nagaland became a state in 1963. The North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 paved the way for Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura to become states in 1972, while Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh later gained statehood in 1987. Sikkim joined India in 1975 and was subsequently included in the institutional understanding of the Northeastern Region. Thus, the present political map is a product of prolonged negotiation, protest and constitutional restructuring, not a single historical event.

Socio-cultural profile. The region contains many languages from Indo-Aryan, Tibeto-Burman and Austroasiatic families, among others. Assamese, Bengali, Meitei, Bodo, Khasi, Garo, Mizo and numerous Naga languages illustrate its plurality. People practise Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, indigenous faiths and combinations of customary and organised religious traditions. Festivals, oral histories, weaving, dance, food and collective institutions remain vital to social life. However, the familiar contrast between supposedly traditional