
11.2 INTRODUCTION

North East India is an ethnically and culturally diverse region with an abundance of natural resources. However, this resource rich region is ironically having to grapple with the problem of insurgency over a long period of time resulting in human rights violations and negation of a peaceful environment for development. In this unit, we shall discuss the issues relating to insurgency in North East India.

11.3 OVERVIEW OF CONFLICT IN NORTH EAST INDIA

India's North East region has been a land of thousand mutinies which have been taking place since pre-independence times. The insurgencies in North East are a reflection of its social, cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity, terrain, socio-economic development, politico-economic conditions, historical evolution and changes in the environment of the area.

A look at the demographic mosaic of northeastern India would show that this region is a home to a curious amalgam of cross-cutting societies. What adds to the problem of this plurality is the fact that the tendency for ethno-political assertion is high among almost all the groups. This is primarily because the political boundaries in most cases do not coincide with the existing social boundaries. The northeastern units of the Indian federation, in spite of having several political dimensions have not been able to cater to the demands of all the ethnic categories demanding for recognition of their distinctive identities.

This is however, reflected in the pattern of conflicts, and in the stance of insurgent groups which remain divergent and ever changing. These range

Insurgencies In North-East India-ULFA, NDFB, NSCN

from secession to autonomy, movements against foreigners and immigrants, ethnic integration, etc, still the common factor is resorting to violence in articulation and mobilization of the demands.

Conflicts in the region can be broadly grouped under the following categories :

- **National conflicts** : Involving concept of a distinct 'homeland' as a separate nation and pursuit of the realization of that goal by use of various methods both violent as well as non violent. Example: ULFA's demand for a sovereign Asom, NSCN's demand for Greater Nagaland.
- **Ethnic conflicts** : Involving assertion of numerically smaller and less dominant tribal groups against the political and cultural hold of the dominant tribal group. In Assam this also takes the form of tension between local and migrant communities.
- **Sub-regional conflicts** : Involving movements which ask for recognition of sub-regional aspirations and often come in direct conflict with the State Governments or even the autonomous Councils. Example: UPDS in Assam