

Globalization and Human Development in North-East India
Global Framework, National Manifestations and Regional Concerns

Dr. Akhil Ranjan Dutta

Abstract

Discourse on globalization has very often focused either on macro framework and trends or micro manifestations without interlinking the both and also without investigating into the political economy of globalization. Present day globalization has its own ideological moorings which are also very often ignored. Present paper is an attempt to address the gap by exploring the interest inherent in global framing of globalization, national manifestation in India in terms of change in policy priorities and the emerging concerns in North-East India under a globalized world. The paper takes 'human development' as a reference point for understanding the fallouts of globalization in the development process in North-East India.

The paper traces the history of experimentation of globalization in Latin America and the ongoing challenges; investigates into the changing role of the nation-state system under globalization and its possible outcomes for North-East India.

The paper argues that despite having agreed to give priority in 'human development' in the developmental agenda the government continues with its obsession for growth. This has, however, been challenged by political developments since 1996 which has forced the government to initiate programmes and policies like NREGA, NRHM and of late a move to enact a food security Act. "Inclusive growth" is the new jargon in policy documents. These policies, however, have remained fragmented, adhoc and time bound in nature. As a result, the outcomes of the interventions have not been satisfactory. Focusing on North-East India the paper argues that the region is under 'resource curse' syndrome under globalization. Arguing for a shift in focus towards 'human development' the paper also brings in the issue of cultural liberty as a crucial dimension for development in the region.

The paper which is based on secondary sources is also theoretical and interrogative in nature.

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Full Paper (Draft) only for presentation and not to be quoted

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1. Let me start with a few lines from Fidel Castro, former President of Cuba. I am deliberately taking Cuba and Fidel Castro because it was Latin America which was the first experimental ground for “Washington Consensus”. As revealed by John Williamson, who was instrumental behind preparing the 10-point policy framework of “Washington Consensus”, the aim of the consensus was to intervene in the anarchic economic situation in different countries of Latin America. Now, again it is the countries in Latin America- whether Brazil, Bolivia, Argentina or Venezuela, who have been the first ones to challenge the policy framework of “Washington Consensus” and globalization. Therefore, the experience and wisdom of Latin America is important for us to critically reflect on the process of globalization. In one of his lectures, delivered in February in 1999 at University of Venezuela, Caracas Castro said: “In our view, globalization is nobody’s whim; it is not even anybody’s invention. Globalization is a law of history. It is a consequence of the development of productive forces.....it is a consequence of scientific and technological development, so much so that even the author of this phrase, Karl Marx, who had great confidence in human talent, possibly was unable to imagine it.” However, the present day world, which is globalized and really globalized is ‘dominated by the ideology, the standards and principles of neo-liberal globalization.’ Summarizing what exactly the neo-liberal globalization is all about he said: ‘...neo-liberal globalization wants to turn all countries, especially all our countries, into private property.’ Elaborating on the outcomes of this globalization, Castro said: “What will be left for us of their enormous resources? Because they have accumulated an immense wealth not only looting and exploiting the world but also working miracle alchemists longed for in the Middle Ages: turning paper into gold. At the same time, they have also turned gold into paper and with it they buy everything, everything but souls- more accurately said- everything but the overwhelming majority of souls. They buy natural resources, factories, whole communication systems, services and so on. They are buying even land around the world assuming being cheaper than in their own countries it is a god investment for the future.” (Fidel Castro, 1999, *On Imperialist Globalization* (Two Speeches), Madhyam Books, New Delhi pp 9-13) One can see that words of Castro are ideologically loaded. I will assert, as has already been pointed out by Castro, globalization itself is a processes heavily

- loaded by ideology. In that sense, an encounter with globalization is an ideological encounter.
2. It is important here to understand the very content and the philosophy of neoliberalism. Let me quote David Harvey, who has very extensively dealt with the context, political economy and also the manifestation of neoliberalism. Harvey says: “Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example the quality and integrity of money....It must also set up those military, defence, police and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force, if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture.” (David Harvey (2005) *Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford, New York) Harvey has also argued that the “neo-liberal theorists are profoundly suspicious of democracy. Governance by majority rule is seen as a potential threat to individual rights and constitutional liberties. Democracy is viewed as a luxury, only possible under conditions of relative affluence coupled with strong middle class presence to guarantee political stability. Neoliberals *therefore tend to prefer governance by experts and elites*. A strong preference exists for government by executive order and by judicial decision rather than by democratic and parliamentary decision making.” (Harvey, *ibid*)
 3. Whereas both Fidel Castro and David Harvey are ideologues against neo-liberal globalization, so it is important to look at the views of somebody who really are not anti-globalization. One among them is Joseph Stiglitz who had extensively written on globalization with a proposition that if fair play is the key globalization can enormous benefits. Stiglitz, who served as the Chairman of President Bill Clinton’s Council of Economic Advisers (1993-97) was also the Chief Economist at the World Bank during 1997-2000. He had won Nobel Prize for Economics in 2001 and is now a critic of globalization from within establishment. In the Preface to *Making Globalization Work* (Stiglitz is still convinced that Globalization can work) Stiglitz wrote: “The end of the Cold War has opened up new opportunities and removed old constraints. The importance of a market economy has now been recognized and the death of communism means that governments can now run away from ideological battles and towards fixing the problems of capitalism. The world would have benefited had the United States used the opportunity to help build an international economic and political system *based on values and principles, such as a trade agreement* designed to promote development in poor countries. Instead, unchecked by competition to ‘win the hearts and minds’ of those in the Third World, the advanced industrial countries actually created a global trade regime that helped their special corporate and financial interests, and

hurt the poorest countries of the world.” .. He continues to argue: ‘My economic research had shown the deep underlying flaws in IMF economics, in “market fundamentalism,” the belief that markets by themselves lead to economic efficiency.’ (Stiglitz, 2006 , xi-xiii)

4. Now let me turn to UNDP. UNDP, under the stewardship of Mahbub-UL-Haq launched Annual Human Development Report in 1990. Is it a coincidence that publication of UNDP Annual HDR and the acceleration of the process of globalization started at the same time? Interestingly, whereas globalization driven by International financial institutions- IMF and World Bank insisted on downsizing the responsibility of the government in social security domains, UNDP critically scrutinized the same and propagated for a pro-active role of the nation-state system. GDP was a much publicized issue under globalization, UNDP propagated for ‘inclusive development’ termed as human development/human security highlighting on achievements in those aspects having implications on life, livelihood and longevity etc.

Defining human development Haq said: “The human development paradigm covers all aspects of development-whether economic growth or international trade, budget deficits or fiscal policy, saving or investment or technology, basic social services or safety nets for the poor. No aspect of the development model falls outside its scope, but the vantage point is the widening of people’s choices and the enrichment of their lives. All aspects of life-economic, political or cultural- are viewed from that perspective.”¹

Haq argues that there is fairly broad agreement on the following aspects of human development:

- Development must put people at the centre of its concerns.
- The purpose of development is to enlarge all human choices, not just income.
- The human development paradigm is concerned both with building up human capabilities (through investment in people) and with using those human capabilities fully (through an enabling framework for growth and employment).
- Human development has four essential pillars: equality, sustainability, productivity and empowerment It regards economic growth as an essential but emphasizes the need to pay attention to its quality and distribution, analyses at length its link with human lives and questions its long term sustainability.
- The human development paradigm defines the ends of development and analyses sensible options for achieving them².

5. Under UNDP paradigm, success of economic development will be measured by HDI- Human Development Index. HDI and economic development may or may not converge. As per the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)’s Annual Human development Report 2009 (HDR 2009), the Human Development Index (HDI)

¹ Mahbub ul Haq (2003) *The Human Development Paradigm* in Sakiko Fukuda-Parr & A.K. Shiv Kumar (ed) Readings in Human Development p 19

² *ibid* p 19

for India in 2007 was 0.612 on the basis of which India is ranked 134 out of 182 countries of the world placing it at the same rank as in 2006. Now the Government of India is careful about these dimensions. It is evident from the Economic Survey 2009-10 wherein a particular chapter titled *Human Development, Poverty and Public Programmes* has been included. The chapter asserts: “The ultimate objective of development planning is human development or increased social welfare and well-being of the people of a nation. This goal is also important because the sustainability of the development process hinges upon the quality of life enjoyed by the people. A healthy and educated population leads to increased productivity which, in turn, can contribute effectively to output growth. Development strategy, therefore, needs to continuously strive for broad-based improvement in standards of living. High growth is essential to generate resources for social spending.” (Economic Survey, Government of India 2009-10). Inclusive growth is now a recurring theme in Government documents. For example in UPA Government’s Report to the People Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India has asserted: “Inclusive growth is the centrepiece of a development process. Fast economic growth has little meaning if it does not lead to the well being of the poor and disadvantaged, if our farmers, workers, our children, students and women.”

6. There are instances where high economic growth has not necessarily brought human development. India is an example of this kind of experience. In the post economic reform era Indian has experienced high economic growth in terms of GDP. This has, however, not necessarily resulted in human development.

Undernutrition among Children Under Five Years in Selected Countries (%)

Dominican Republic 2007: -----	4
Swaziland 2006-07:-----	7
Zimbabwe 2005-06: -----	16
Cameroon 2004: -----	19
Kenya 2003:-----	20
Malawi 2004:-----	22
Guinea 2005:-----	26
Nigeria 2003:-----	29
Mali 2006:-----	32
Cambodia 2005-06:-----	36
Ethiopia 2005:-----	39
Madagascar 2003-04:-----	41
Niger 2006:-----	44
Nepal 2006:-----	45
Bangladesh 2007: -----	46
India 2005-06:-----	48

Source: National Family Health Survey (NFHS) India 2005-06

7. It is under such circumstances that the Government of India, which has been following policies of Globalization since 1991, has now shifted its attention towards 'inclusive growth'. There are, of course, political compulsions behind such shift. Main compulsion being erosion of legitimacy of mainstream political parties, particularly of the Congress Party manifested through its poor electoral performance since 1996. BJP-led NDA government fought the election on the motto *Shining India* and lost it IN 2004. It happened so primarily because the policies of the Government under globalization shone only 25.0 crore people of India, for the other 80.0 crore people, the economy has not shone brightly. (Stiglitz, 2006). The Congress-led UPA Government, which came to power in 2004 with Left Parties supporting from outside had shifted its focus from GDP to 'inclusive growth'. It is evident from the series of policy initiatives of the Government. Remarkable among them have been National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA, 2008) and National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), 2005 and also Right to Information (RTI) Act 2005. As perceived by the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, the goal is not merely generating rural employment. Rather, it aims at transforming the most neglected countryside making it sustainable which will in the long run check the migration to the urban areas. Accordingly the Act outlines various schemes which will generate sustainable livelihood for the rural poor. As per the Clause (1) of the schedule the schemes in priority will be the following:

- (i) Water conservation and water harvesting;
- (ii) Drought proofing (including afforestation and plantation)
- (iii) Irrigation canals including micro and minor irrigation works;
- (iv) Irrigation facility to the ST/SC households;
- (v) Renovation of traditional water bodies;
- (vi) Land development;
- (vii) Flood control and protection of works including drainage in water logged areas;
- (viii) Rural connectivity to provide all-weather access; and
- (ix) Any other work which may be notified by the Central Government in consultation with the state governments.

Jean Dreze (2009) informs that in 2007-08, the programme generated 144 crore person-days of employment, according to official data. In other words, about four million persons were employed on an average day. Over the year, 34 million households participated in the NREGA. "Assuming an average household size of five, this is equivalent, say, to the population of Bangladesh. The scale of the programme is even larger today, with the NREGA budget shooting up to Rs.25,000 crore or so in 2008-09 (from around Rs.16,000 crore in 2007-08). Nothing comparable has been done before." (Jean Dreze, Frontline, February 2009)

In the 2009-10 Budget speech the Union Home Minister Pranab Mukherjee, while highlighting the success of NREGA asserted: "It is widely acknowledged that the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), first implemented in Feb 2006, has been a magnificent success. During 2008-09, NREGA provided opportunities for

4.47 crore households as against 3.39 crore households covered in 2007-08.....I propose an allocation of Rs. 39,100 crore for the year 2009-10 for NREGA which marks an increase of 144% over 2008-09 Budget estimates.”

6. Since 2004 UPA Government has been presenting an Annual Report named Report to the People that outlines the policies, schemes and achievements of the Government towards delivering service to the people. I have mentioned the words of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in 2009-10 Report. Echoing the shift in paradigm UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi has said: “It is the responsibility of every government to ensure that their legislative agenda has at its core, a genuine concern for the well-being of the common man that is reflective of their hopes and aspirations.”

8. These policy shifts have not taken place with the change in approach of the Government under political compulsions alone. These have been made possible by social movements that have emerged as strong political forces in the country in last few decades. The government is now on move towards enacting the Food Security Act, which is also under scrutiny from different social/civil society groups. The other point that needs attention is that these policy initiatives have mostly been fragmented, adhoc and also time bound in nature. For example, emphasis on reducing IMR and MMR has not been accompanied by a comprehensive agenda to attack malnutrition.

9. Now let me bring some statistical information to understand the fallouts of globalization in the economy. Authentic sources have shown that in the employment sector, it is the unorganized informal labour force which has increased both in the organized and unorganized sectors. This is evident from the following table.

1999-2000

Sector/Worker	Total Employment (Million) Informal/Unorganized Sector	Total Employment (Million) Formal/Organized Sector	Total
Informal/Unorganized Sector	341.3 (99.6%)	1.4 (0.4%)	342.6 (100%)
Formal/Organized Sector	20.5 (37.8%)	33.7 (62.2%)	54.1 (100%)
Total	361.07 (91.2%)	35.0 (8.8%)	396.8 (100%)

2004-05

Sector/Worker	Total Employment (Million)	Total Employment (Million)	Total
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	Informal/Unorganized Sector	Formal/Organized Sector	
Informal/Unorganized Sector	393.5 (99.6)	1.4(0.4)	394.9(100%)
Formal/Organized Sector	29.1(46.6)	33.4(53.4)	62.6(100%)
Total	422.6(92.4)	34.9(7.6)	457.5(100%)

Source: NSS 61st Round 2004-05 and NSS 55th Round, 1999-2000

Data in the table reveal that while the total employment in the economy has increased from 396.8 million in 1999-2000 to 457.5 million in 2004-05, this increase has been in the informal/unorganized sector where the workforce has increased from 361.7 million (91.2%) in 1999-2000 to 422.6 million (92.4%) in 2004-05. The increase even in the organized sector has been informal in nature. Only about 0.4% of workers were receiving social security funds and this proportion has not changed since 199-2000. (J. John and R S tiwari, 2010, *The World Bank and Labour in India* in *The World Bank and India*, Orient BlackSwan).

10. Independent Peoples’ Tribunal on World Bank in India which has published *The World Bank in India: Undermining Sovereignty, Distorting Development* (2010) provides authentic information in regard to the impact of the process of globalization in all domains of development. The book reveals that the World Bank has used sophisticated jargons to bring its legitimacy in intervention. However, the real fallouts have been very serious and mostly negative as far as common people are concerned.

11. The present Paper on *Globalization and Human Development in North-East India: Global Framework, National Manifestations and Regional Concerns* has taken into account this political economy of globalization into background while scrutinizing the impact of globalization on the economy of the region. I must re-emphasize on the fact that we need to move from the econometric model of development towards human development or human security in our endeavour towards understanding these impacts. At the same time we need to understand that the region in North-East India has its complex dynamics which invite due attention from the scholars while analyzing the impact of globalization. I will draw your attention towards some crucial dimensions of the region which need to be kept in background for such a scrutiny.

12. In North-East India, there has been an obsession with ‘national security’ from the moment of inception of Independent Indian state. This obsession, rather than helping the region to grow has created gross sense of human insecurity. However, this is only one dimension of human insecurity in the region. The gross human insecurity that we witness in the region today has been caused by multiple factors. Important among them are the following:

- a. Geopolitical setting of the region and Indian state's obsession with 'territorial integrity' in the region. This has resulted in growing militarization at the cost of human security.
- b. The nation-building paradigm of the Indian state which has failed to appreciate the core concerns of the ethnically diverse communities of the region.
- c. The development paradigm of the Indian state and its growing non-convergence with the land-people relationship in the region.
- d. Abundance of natural resources and contestation for appropriation and exploitation by state and private forces.
- e. Mal-governance- failure in delivering the basic needs by the government and growing corruption
- f. Proliferation drugs and arms through the porous borders.
- g. Growing fragmentation of the ethnic/identity movements and increasing tendencies of self-obsession among different ethnic groups.
- h. Insurgency and fake Insurgency
- i. Illegal migration
- j. Emerging Patent regime and its negative fall out for the resourceful region.

13. Now, the important question before us, has globalization provided any solution to the gross insecurity caused by those factors? In other words has there been a paradigm shift on the part of the Indian state towards the region under globalization? There have been some changes, for example the initiation of Look East Policy which had promised to convert this periphery of the country into a new centre of transnational relationship with the South and South-East Asian countries. There are many people in the region, for example Sanjib Baruah, who had been very enthusiastic about the Look East Policy. However, except for initial enthusiasm, the policy has not moved ahead with. The region continues to remain a 'periphery' of the country in all alleged senses.

14 Let me now very shortly focus on the employment scenario in the region. Kalyan Das (2009), who extensively analysed the NSSO data on employment in the region, shows that under economic reforms there has indeed been a shift in occupation from the agricultural sector to some tertiary sector. However, it has not succeeded in elimination of poverty in true sense. Das argues : "The sectors, which show increasing trends in offering opportunities to rural people, are now the construction and the transport sector, mostly in the non-motorised sector. Construction, trade, hotel and restaurant sectors and transport sector have shown significant growth in recent times in terms of workforce in urban areas of the region. The public administration and community services have increasingly offered lesser opportunities to the labour force in both rural and urban areas (Tables 1 and 2)." He also asserts that "People need access to resources for survival and for this there is a rush to grab any form of jobs whatever be the payment or return. Lower end jobs thus provide a scope for easy entry into the workforce."

Table 1: Percentage distribution of usually working persons in principal status by broad industry divisions – Rural

		Agri	Mining	Mfg	Utility	Const.	Trade & restaurants	transport	Finance, business	Pub.adm
Arunachal	1993-4	86.4	0.1	0.8	0.8	2.6	0.2	1.6	0.4	6.8
	2004-5	81.9	0.0	0.4	0.9	4.1	2.2	0.6	0.6	9.2
Assam	1993-4	79.2	0.2	3.5	0.3	0.7	6.9	1.3	0.3	7.7
	2004-5	71.2	0.3	3.1	0.2	2.8	10.2	2.8	0.2	9.3
Manipur	1993-4	63.8	0.1	12.3	0.3	2.8	4.5	1.5	1.0	13.7
	2004-5	67.8	0.6	7.7	0.0	3.5	7.0	2.4	0.2	10.8
Meghalaya	1993-4	86.0	0.5	1.0	0.3	1.6	3.8	1.1	0.0	5.8
	2004-5	81.9	1.3	3.5	0.4	2.3	5.4	1.1	0.0	4.2
Mizoram	1993-4	88.9	0.0	0.5	0.2	1.2	1.9	0.1	0.1	7.1
	2004-5	87.5	0.0	0.8	0.0	1.0	3.5	0.5	0.2	6.6
Nagaland	1993-4	74.9	0.6	0.2	0.3	1.8	4.5	0.6	0.0	17.1
	2004-5	77.2	0.0	2.0	0.5	1.9	4.7	1.7	0.3	11.5
Tripura	1993-4	47.6	0.0	5.4	0.2	6.8	10.7	3.2	4.0	26.3
	2004-5	42.8	0.0	4.9	0.0	11.6	11.1	3.8	0.1	25.8

Source: NSSO 50th and 61st rounds on Employment and Unemployment

Table 2: Percentage distribution of usually working persons in principal status by board industry divisions – Urban

		Agri	Mining	Mfg	Utility	Const.	Trade	transport	financial	Pub.adm
Arunachal	1993-4	7.4	0.0	13.3	3.6	9.3	15.0	5.3	2.9	42.5
	2004-5	11.2	0.0	3.6	0.2	8.1	22.7	2.4	1.3	50.4
Assam	1993-4	2.6	6.3	10.4	0.6	2.8	19.0	7.5	2.0	38.6
	2004-5	3.8	1.4	10.4	2.9	5.8	28.6	13.4	2.5	32.5
Manipur	1993-4	27.1	0.0	14.4	1.2	2.6	13.7	3.1	2.2	33.3
	2004-5	25.9	0.0	13.7	0.0	4.8	19.7	4.4	1.4	30.0
Meghalaya	1993-4	2.3	0.1	2.2	0.6	8.0	25.2	1.7	1.8	56.9
	2004-5	2.0	0.2	5.5	1.7	4.8	15.3	4.5	1.7	64.3
Mizoram	1993-4	41.1	0.1	4.4	0.3	4.8	14.0	1.3	0.1	33.1
	2004-5	36.2	0.1	5.1	0.0	4.9	17.1	2.6	1.2	32.8
Nagaland	1993-4	5.4	0.5	4.1	0.4	7.8	22.0	3.7	1.7	53.5
	2004-5	9.1	0.0	5.7	1.5	3.9	40.1	5.5	0.9	33.3
Tripura	1993-4	5.2	0.7	8.7	0.3	2.8	17.3	6.0	3.9	53.8
	2004-5	4.2	0.0	7.2	0.5	6.6	27.2	4.4	1.9	48.1

Source: NSSO 50th and 61st rounds on Employment and Unemployment

Das has also opined that “it is quite apparent that workers in lower end jobs cannot share the benefits of the progressing world of the present environment where the State is gradually withdrawing from its responsibility of delivering services to the people. The workers in lower end jobs are viewed as surplus labour.” (Kalayan Das, *Issues of Livelihood Security in North-East India and the Role of the State in Akhil Ranjan Dutta* (edited, 2009), *Human Security in North-East India: Issues and Policies*)

15. One of the important developments in the recent past has been the commissioning of more than 150 river dams in North-East India to generate more than 50,000 MW electricity. Joseph Stiglitz, in his book *Making Globalization Work* (2006) said with concrete evidences that under the emerging global economy the resources of the third world countries have proved to be ‘curses’ rather than ‘blessings’ due to exploitation by corporate houses. North-East India is not at all an exception in this regard. Our resources-

forests, oil, coal and now water have been targeted by the corporate world in such a way that the people in the region are really under the syndrome of 'resource curse.' There have been allegations that the government, bound by the constitutional oath to protect and preserve the interests of its people have indeed connived with the corporate houses in their mission of looting and exploiting the resources of the people.

Questions have been raised like why the Government of India is so determined to produce more than 50,000 MW electricity in North-East India by constructing more than 150 river dams despite so many protests from the region? In a situation, where the region needs maximum of around 4000 MW electricity under any ambitious estimate even for next 50 years for industrialization and other modern endeavours why 50,000 MW? I would like to remind you that when the people in the country opposed the nuclear deal with the USA in 2008 the government said that it is necessary to generate clean energy and to feed the emerging economy in the world i.e. India. If that is true, why the Government has again been so adamant in generating hydro electricity even at the cost of life and livelihood of the people of the region who are mostly driven by organic relationship with the nature- land, forest and rivers?

16. There has been much hype about converting this region into a tourist destination. Exporting the handicrafts and other indigenous manufacturing items has also been propagated. It is indeed a welcome move. However, the authentic reports prepared either by UNDP or any other research organizations would reveal that the trade regime in the world is so unfair that there is no guarantee of North-East India's handicrafts or any other products will get sustainable and profit making market in the globe. There is also no guarantee that the state will come forward to provide required subsidies and policy changes in this regard. There might have been some individual successes which are now used as show cases. However, Individual achievements are not synonymous with that of success of the entire region.

17. I would like to highlight on another crucial issue- cultural liberty and development. The trajectory of the resistance against nation-building process by many ethnic groups in the region exposes the myth of homogeneity in 'nation' and 'national development'. What is usually defined as development, for example industrialization, modernization, urbanization etc. may be extremely erroneous for many communities in North-East India. Even, the notion of representational democracy practised by India today has been alien to many tribal communities in the region. *Jhoom*- shifting cultivation has widely been recognized as wastage of forest and resources. However, the folklorists and cultural researchers find great value in shifting cultivation once they place it within the dynamics of cultural communities. I am neither supporting nor opposing shifting cultivation. However, outright rejection of the same by the 'modernists' may not entirely be correct. Recognizing this dimension UNDP through its Report titled *Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World* (2004) has argued that 'cultural liberty is central to live as they would like. The advance of cultural liberty must be a central aspect of human development, and this requires going beyond social, political and economic opportunities since they do not guarantee cultural liberty.'

18. While coming to an end of my presentation, I would suggest that we should not be swamped away by the hegemonic understanding of globalization while analysing its impact in North-East India. We need to develop our critical approach to the phenomena of globalization itself and we should keep the cultural and ethnic dimensions of the region in background while analyzing the impact of globalization on North-East India.

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