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**Book Review**  
**Of Durable Disorder By Sanjib Baruah**

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# DURABLE DISORDER: UNDERSTANDING THE POLITICS OF NORTH EAST INDIA

**SANJIB BARUAH**

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**Book- Durable Disorder- Understanding the Politics of North East India.****Author- Sanjib Baruah.****No. of Pages- 255.****Price of the book- Rs 316.****Published in- 2005 by Oxford University Press.****REVIEW-**

North-east India, apart from the rising militancy issues, is one of the most beautiful and naturally rich areas of India. Many writers have done extensive study on this part of India. Sanjib Baruah is one among such writer who has provided a thorough study on the politics and the rising of militancy in the area. His 'Durable Disorder' which is a compilation of journal articles, lectures and conference papers, provides the reader a deep insight on militancy, insurgency, followed by counter insurgency operations, the life and times of ULFA and the conflicts between the Indian government and the North-east states.

The book is divided into ten chapters which deal with the understanding of the causes, meaning and significance of a pattern of political violence in different parts of North-east India. Baruah provided several arguments in the book which are scattered in a systematic way in different chapters of the book. The first chapter begins with his assertion that in North-east states one ethnic group of militia gives rise to the formation of another ethnic militia to provide themselves with security. He extensively dealt with the history and development particularly sustainable development of Arunachal Pradesh earlier known as North East Frontier Agency which was exposed to the vulnerabilities during the 1962 war after which the central government took many initiatives like hydro-electric project, DONER, etc. for its development.

Further he talked about Manipur's administration which has a de facto parallel structure of governance from Delhi controlling its counter insurgency operations. It is evident that Sardar Vallabhai Patel used the policy of carrot and stick for Manipur's merger with India for which the people in the state does not regard the merger as legal and constitutional, thus, giving rise to insurgency in the state. He also tried to focus on resolving the Naga conflict but not at the expense of Manipur. Nagaland came into being in 1963 after a 16 point agreement between the central government and the Naga People's Convention which was denounced by the NSCN-IM which demanded for bringing together all the nagas into one political unit. Here the government promised "without territorial limits" to the NSCN-IM which was further denounced by Manipur which have majority naga tribes. Baruah also talked about going beyond militarism to stop the insurgent militias as the policy of counter insurgency operations being successful was quite debatable which was evident from the Mizo Accord of 1986 which demanded of bringing an end to Mizo insurgency but there are enough happening in Mizoram and the surrounded areas where people share ethnic affinities with Mizos.

Baruah wrote about the immense contribution of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika in promoting and protecting the autonomy and distinctiveness of Assamese language and culture. In one of his chapters he argued about the use of land by the assamese people which followed the Paik system of the Ahom administration, and thus are not interested in long term land titles which changed with the arrival of the east Bengali peasants and the policy to settle them in the belts where the Assamese traditionally used for shifting cultivation. He has provided an insight on the rise of ULFA in 1979, to regain the lost independence of Assam and becoming more powerful, and SULFA, operating as counter insurgency against the ULFA during the final years of AGP rule. The ULFA became more powerful and the Indian government had to conduct army operations in 1990 and 1991 which resulted in severe human rights violation and it was successful in dividing the ULFA into SULFA (the surrendered one) and the continued militants. He gave an insight on India's Look East Policy which promises opportunities for accessing to global market and technology, to go beyond the landlocked condition and to create a transnational space for a less territorialized version of the politics of recognition those animate ethno-national conflicts of North-east.

The book has provided a deep insight on various political issues and conflicts that took place in NE India's history. It includes the important movements- their causes, the steps of central government to mitigate the problems and the consequences of the militant insurgencies and the counter insurgency operations. He has taken various references, primary as well as secondary data to provide weightage to his arguments like from newspapers- The Times of India, Assam Tribune, etc. Scholars like- Joseph Errington, Theda Skocpol, Fearon Laitin, Tanya Dabi's research on functioning of local government institutions in Arunachal Pradesh, Paul Collier's thesis which explained North-east insurgencies, the NSCN-IM website and many more authentic sources. He has deeply analyzed various books, papers and journals related to the political issues and development in North-east.

Thus, the book focuses on all the aspects of development in NE India and its sweet and sour relation with the central government. The author has broadly tried to provide an understanding on how the hill people are treated by the lowlands. He specifically used J.C. Scott's term 'illegible space' to refer to the hills as non-state space from the perspective of the states of the lowland. He sought to make arguments on India's Inner Line Permit policy which in the words of famous anthropologist Christophe von Furer-Haimendorf was that the policy of ILP was supported by the Apa Tani tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and they would not entertain lifting the protective barrier to uncontrolled influx of population from the plains. He further gave an understanding of the conflict between the citizens and the denizens which are the non-tribal's of Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh. Therefore, the book seeks to integrate in itself a proper and clear understanding about various initiatives taken by the central government to mitigate the problem of insurgency militias in the whole of North-east India along-with giving a clear background of the reasons the states of North-east India gave rise and support to the militancy.