



**Social Capital, Local Governance and Sustainable Development: A Study of
Some Indigenous Communities of North-East India**

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Social Capital means a mutual understanding among the existing members of a civil society. Civic traditions and stock of social capital are necessary ingredients for blooming democracy, building resilience and sustainable development. On the other hand, local governance means a continuous flow of administration, where state itself transferred its power and energy to the grassroots level democratic institutions. It is needless to mention that democracy, decentralization and collective decisions are the three basic components of sustainable development.

N-E India is the highest literacy zone in India and the richest ecosystem in the world. The region is famous for outstanding bio-diversity along with an endangered threatened species. The region touches the border of Bangladesh, China, Myanmar, Nepal, Bhutan. So, the political significance of the region is gradually developing.

N-E India is one of the best governed Zone in South-East Asian politics even some unexpected experiences in Manipur. In N-E India, democratic institutions in grassroots level are more functional rather than other parts of the Indian sub-continent and even in the South - East Asian politics.

In N-E India, there are 10

Autonomous District Councils are functioning in seven states and about 225 tribal groups are governed themselves by A.D.C. It is a unique and wonderful evidence in democratic politics as compare to the other states in South East Asia.

Therefore, the issue of collective actions and role of local governance regarding the issue of environmental justice and sustainable development are somewhat distinct in this context. However, no systematic studies of performance of local governance and its impact on preservation of bio-diversity and sustainable development are being observed. This is the significance of the present research work.

The study is primarily concerned with the following issues: Mention some characteristics of indigenous communities of Lusai Hills in Arakan Hill tracks, located in the Indo Myanmar border. Secondly, the paper is keen to highlight the issue on how social capital can perform a significant contribution to protect bio- diversity and bolstering sustainable development? Is there any systematic relationship in between democracy, decentralization and sustainable development? How does the indigenous culture generally protect the bio- diversity in N-E India? Culture of globalization and its

adverse effect on bio- diversity and social life of the inhabitants in N-E India is another area of understanding. Do we need alternative models of development that tends to prioritize sustainable development by ensuring democratic decentralization process?

Research Methodology:

The study is based on survey research, archival research as well as in state government news and information. Apart from these newspapers reports, Governments Gazettes, relevant books and journals are used.

Conclusion:

It is generally observed that democracy prompt to preserve bio-diversity

and sustainable development. Professor Amartya Sen identified Republic of Batswana as an ‘Oasis of Africa’, where the democratic government of Republic of Batswana successfully carried out the programme of preservation of bio- diversity and sustainable development. It is never enough to build-up democratic instructions’ or simple declaration of the programme of stainable development but the proper maintenance of these institutions is vital. In the first place we are more or less in advanced position but in the second we have long way to go. The success of local government and sustainable development in N-E India is solely dependent on the success of collective decision-making process as well as on the equilibrium of these two aspects.