

AIM

The aim of this paper is to describe the setting up and functioning of North Eastern Council.

WAY THIS STUDY

The creation of North Eastern Council raised lot of controversy both in the Parliament and the Press. Diagonally opposite views were expressed. Though at that time I was not serving in the North East and as such was not directly involved with it, it still roused lot of interest in me because of my close association in the past with the State/Union Territories covered by it. This interest was further reinforced when in 1973 I was again posted to Arunachal Pradesh Secretariat and had the opportunity to attend some of its meetings. Though by then active discussion of NEC in the press had practically ceased, doubts were voiced at times in different forums about its usefulness. I felt that there was a need for some one to have a close and dispassionate look at it as to form an objective view about it.

The matter rested there till such time the question of a study came up on this course. As no study had been carried out about the North Eastern Council so far, encouraged by Professor A.P.Barnabas, I decided to undertake this study as a part of the Advanced Professional Programme in Public Administration at the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

The present study is based on the records of the parliamentary debates, Ministry of Home Affairs, and North Eastern Council and interviews with the officials of Ministry of Home Affairs.

North Eastern Council, Governments of Arunachal, Assam, Nagaland, and Meghalaya and few non-officials of these States. At this stage, I also want to place on record my gratitude to both the Ministry of Home Affairs and the North Eastern Council for all the help extended to me.

LIMITATIONS

Because of non-availability of funds, I could not visit most of the constituent units where it would have been possible to meet more officials and non-officials and gauge their reactions at final hand. Similarly, the paucity of time and inadequacy of ministerial assistance have combined to force me to very much restrict the scope and size of the study.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The study has been organized into four chapters. Chapter two gives description of North Eastern Region and its politics which naturally forms a historical back drop to the birth of North Eastern Council, its role and its constitution. Without this it will not be possible to fully understand the subject and the rationale of North Eastern Council. Chapter three deals with the North Eastern Council including its constitution, necessity, functions, salient characteristics, reservations and organisational growth. Chapter four reviews its activities to date. Chapter five contains its evaluation and certain suggestions.