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Lack of fair industrial policy hampers northeast development



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Industrial development in India has been dependent on political influence and leadership, ever since Independence. As a matter of fact no fair policy could be framed for equal development of all the regions of the country simultaneously. That is why some of the regions remained completely neglected, while others developed beyond limitations, resulting in heavy congestions. Besides, the metropolis and a few big industrial centers of the country, where opportunities are ample for growth, there is vast disparity in establishment of industries in various regions. The industrialization of a particular area depends on the degree of political influence in its favor. Unfortunately, the Northeastern states, including Assam, lack such leadership, which can look after the interest of the general people. Now-a-days leadership is centered along the family interests and there is heavy competition in making wealth by leaders for their future generations. Nobody can expect social service and developmental activities from such self centered leaders.

It is pertinent to mention that most of the industries in the country are set up on the basis of availability of raw materials which is the prime factor for consideration before taking up such projects. In the past after the construction of giant steel plants of Bhilai, Rourkela and Durgapur, demand for such projects in public sector was raised in Bihar (now Jharkhand sector), which gave birth to Bokaro steel city. On demand from Southern states of the country the Salem steel plant came into existence. The Barauni and Mathura oil refineries were set up at long distances from the raw material belts. All these happened due to political influences and pressures from the leaders representing the people of respective areas. Had there been no pressure from the public, the chances of setting up Guwahati and Bongaigaon refineries in Assam were bleak. The commitments in Assam Accord for Numaligarh Refinery and other schemes for development came after the people came out on roads agitating for them. But the leaders in power did not take interest in speedy developments. Most of the industries set up earlier in Assam have now disappeared from the industrial map of the state.

Assam Accord of 1985 could not be fully implemented even after a lapse of twenty six years, because of lack of interest in present leadership. The Northeastern states have huge raw materials like coal, oil, uranium etc; and a number of industries could be established where lakhs of people could be given employment. By this method insurgency spread throughout the region could also be eliminated. There is no need of deploying lakhs of security personnel to combat insurgency. If there are employment opportunities, people would be busy in the work and none would go for illegal acts. Most of the militant groups have taken arms because they did not get suitable employment. Even in case of surrendered militants, who came forward to negotiation table are not satisfied with the treatment meted to them and due to uncertainty prevailing on their rehabilitation. Some of them have gone back to jungles being unsatisfied on the assurances given to them. How can they trust on the leadership which has failed to keep its words?

Lack of education, awareness and extreme poverty added with immaturity of people in maintaining high standards of democracy by keeping the faith above principle leads to their maximum exploitation by the political leaders. Innocent voters are lured by attractive slogans of the leaders before the polls and join this or that group with hopes to get their problems solved, but after the polls those leaders forget their commitments. This situation leads them to an embarrassing situation.



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