



COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MARXIST)
21st Congress
Samar Mukherjee Nagar
Visakhapatnam, April 14-19, 2015

Resolution

On the North East Region

The 21st Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses its deep concern over the continuing state of underdevelopment and backwardness in the North-Eastern region of the country.

The North-East has suffered apathy and neglect right from the British colonial period. Since Independence, a similar attitude of neglect and discrimination by successive governments has continued to hamstring the development of this region. The 21st Congress also takes note of the geo-political significance of the region, and the consequent need to create favourable conditions for economic, social and cultural development.

The 21st Congress notes that this state of backwardness exists despite there being no dearth of natural, mineral, and human resources in the region. These have been exploited but never utilised for the development of the region. The major obstacle to the progress of the region has been the lack of investment in basic infrastructure by the Central government. Such infrastructure is essential to fully realise the natural resources with which the region is richly endowed.

There is an urgent need for the all-round development of all forms of transport and telecommunications connectivity in the region. Further, the region's development needs a quantum leap in power generation.

Such urgent development of infrastructure will also pave the way for specifically addressing the particular requirements of agriculture and other allied sectors of economy. The potential for development of tourism in the region, with its rich and exquisite natural beauty, is unlimited.

In the past, governments at the Centre had formally used the catch phrase "Look East" to demonstrate their claim of giving importance to the region. Such slogans remained largely unrealised because of a lack of matching action and commitment of financial resources. The present Modi government has begun to raise the new slogan of "Act East" to replace the "Look East" of earlier years. No concrete measures in this regard have been spelt out as yet.

The 21st Congress, while resolving to campaign and struggle for the development of the North East, holds that all projects must be on the basis of the consent and cooperation of the people. Mega projects planned without any scientific study or impact assessment will do more harm.

In this backdrop of continued neglect and apathy, conditions that spawn extremism have disrupted the peace and tranquility of the region. The problems of the region and of extremism have been further exacerbated by the activities of agencies such as the CIA and the ISI.

Sectarian identity politics have taken a turn for the worse, especially in Assam, where ethnic clashes and conflicts have become the order of the day. In the BTAD and adjoining areas, frequent incidents by extremist elements of ethnic and communal violence continue to inflict immense pain and suffering on thousands of innocent people belonging to both Bodo and non-Bodo groups. Muslims of the State and Adivasis are subjected to gruesome attacks and killings perpetrated by heavily armed Bodo extremist outfits. Extremist forces have also attacked poor migrant workers. In this charged situation, the BJP and Sangh Parivar are trying to divide the people further on communal lines.

The 21st Congress of the CPI(M) condemns the use of the draconian Armed Forces Special Powers Act. This Act has been used for extra judicial killings and assaults on ordinary citizens, including women and children.

The 21st Congress also notes that, given the rich diversity and plurality of the region, it is extremely important to address the sense of alienation among the people of the North-East in order to take forward the process of integration. In this context, it is shocking that North East citizens residing in other parts of India have been targets of racial attacks, which intensify feelings of alienation.

This Party Congress strongly protests the new Government's move to discontinue, if not actually abrogate, the very important "Special Category States" status to the States of the North-Eastern Region. This will scuttle specific financial facilities that have proved useful in a context of completely inadequate support from the Union Government. Such a measure will have a disastrous impact on the interests of the region and its people.

The 21st Congress of the CPI(M), taking note of all these factors, demands that:

- the Government of India take urgent steps to ensure the development of vital infrastructure and connectivity for the North-Eastern Region;
- the Government of India immediately abandon any move to withdraw the special category status to the North-Eastern States and enable them to avail the financial benefits and facilities that are vital in sustaining the development of this backward region;
- AFSPA must be repealed.
- The government of India should declare annual floods and erosion in Assam to be a national problem.
- the Central Government take appropriate steps to protect the rights of the people of the North-East in all parts of the country.
