

Socio-Economic Factors and Conflicts in North-Eastern Region of India

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Abstract

According to the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre's plan of action, the highest priority in counter-terrorism strategy is poverty eradication with equitable and sustainable economic development. Given this context, an empirical analysis of the association between insurgency attacks and socio-economic indicators is carried out for the eight North-Eastern states of India. Very few studies exist for a high insurgency region of this country and this study is an attempt to fill that gap.

The findings from this study show that from 1980 to 2017, higher per capita income is associated with fewer insurgencies, implying that when the economy is performing well, the opportunity cost of participating in the conflicts is low. On the other hand, for states and years, when there is a higher social sector expenditure as a share of the total expenditure, the insurgency is lower, implying that access to basic amenities provided as public goods improves well-being and reduces inequality and perhaps in turn reduces inter-group conflicts.

Contrary to findings from studies in the Maoist regions, we find that a welfare program like NREGS is not associated with insurgency attacks across these states from 2006 to 2017.

Based on the weather data from 2013 to 2018, a higher standard deviation of monthly rainfall is positively associated with the number of insurgency attacks again implying that loss of work and income increases the scope for insurgency attacks. However, the temperature remains insignificant in its association with insurgency attacks, perhaps due to less variation in it across these regions given the short time span of years covered in this study and more so in a region where precipitation is very high and quite varied.

Keywords: *Insurgency, North East India, Economic Development, Social Sector Expenditure, Rainfall*

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