

North-east and Chinky: Countenances of Racism in India

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Abstract: *The issue of discrimination and violence experienced by the people from the so called North-East India recently had a brief rendezvous with major Indian media. However, beside few articles in journals and national papers, the issue again failed to engender rigorous theoretical discourses amongst academics. It is observed that without undoing the colonial and consequently the racial connotation of the concept North-East there is a proliferation of academic centres taking the name North-East. This article analyses theoretically the concepts North-East and chinky and brings out their racial characteristics. The growth of the concept North-East from the colonial administrative usage to its contemporary racial nature is captured in the paper.*

Key Terms: North-East | Chinky | Mongoloid | Racism

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Introduction: The so called North-East India does not stand out with cultural homogeneity as one of its features. The regions are indeed a world with different cultures and distinct political aspirations. The various ethnic groups in the regions have their exclusive tales of origins or migrations. Within the regions, while some claim to be autochthons some are considered by other groups to be ‘outsiders’ or ‘foreigners’. In this sense, Sanjib Baruah rightly concluded that the ethnic groups in the regions do not share any common “historical memory or collective consciousness” (2007, pp. 4-5). Duncan McDuie-Ra aptly observed: “Certainly, the Northeast is not a singular category” (2015, p. 2). In this sense, it is more appropriate to use pluralistic analytical concept such as ‘North-East regions’, temporarily ignoring the irrelevance of the term North-East, rather than the popularly singularised concept ‘North-East region’. Virginius Xaxa ruled out homogeneity in North-East, however, he preferred to see some degree of homogeneity to talk about North-East (2015). The so called North-East is regions in the sense of cultures, lands, histories and different peoples the regions nurture. And it is bound to continue as regions as evident from many incongruent political aspirations often attempted to be legitimised through narratives of different origins, distinct histories and political struggles with different and sometime conflicting goals. However, there are also some who prefer to project the so

called North-East as a unitary entity. Thus, the Chief Minister of Nagaland while interacting with students from the regions studying in Delhi in October 2015 exhorted them saying: “You must not consider yourself as a Naga, a Mizo, a Tripuri, or a Manipuri. You must consider yourself as a Northerner and a proud citizen of our great nation India” (*Huieyen Lanpao*, 20th October, 2015). Such exhortation may be understood in the context of a collective feeling and a sense of collective identity as ‘North-East people’ engendered by similar experiences of discrimination and violence because of how they look and where they come from and similar political turmoil in their regions. However, emphasising such pseudo-collective ‘North-East’ identity against the distinct State identities of the people of the regions will not serve the purpose of undoing the stereotypes attached with the regions and the people of the regions. Rather than the ‘North-East’ it is their States that must be distinctly identified and given due respect as parts of India and the people as Indians. The irrelevance of the collective name ‘North-East’ as a single geographical entity comprising the eight states must be realised and ostracised.

The fact that Sikkim was included in India in 1975 and incorporated within Development of North Eastern Region (DONER) in 2002 clearly indicates a process of making of India and the so called ‘North-East’ in particular. While the idea of India and its

associated nationalism are rooted in anti-colonial feelings, 'North-East' on the other hand is originally colonial in nature. The so called 'North-East', in the post-colonial era, is neither a political unit nor a cultural domain. The idea of Bharat or Hindustan or India conventionally evokes a sense of identification pre-dominantly with people who are conventionally grouped as Aryans or Dravidians and often excludes the Mongoloid groups. The so called 'North-East' is also often phenotypically linked with South-East Asian nations and their people. Mongoloid Indians and even the whole regions where they live in are often racially associated with the Mongoloid looks of other Asian countries. Physical features of the Mongoloid Indians are readily available phenotypical features for differentiation and discrimination, and Mongolisation of the regions.

The idea of 'North-East' when closely observed from the colonial days to the contemporary days is found to have undergone broadly three phases of conceptual development. The three North-East of the three phases are Colonial North-East, Strategic 'North-East' and Racial 'North-East'.

(i) Colonial North-East: 'North-East' has its origin in the colonial administrative lexicon. It has its origin in Alexander Mackenzie's (2007, p. i) Memorandum on the North-East Frontier of Bengal, prepared in 1869 at the request of Lieutenant-Governor, Sir William Grey. Accordingly, in the aforesaid memorandum:

"The north-east frontier of Bengal is a term used sometimes to denote a boundary line, and sometimes more generally to describe a tract. In the latter sense it embraces the whole of the hill ranges north, east, and south of the Assam Valley, as well as the western slopes of the great mountain system lying between Bengal and independent Burma, with its outlying spurs and ridges" (Mackenzie, 2007, p. 1).

Thus, what we erroneously consider now as 'North-East' was a tract with reference to Bengal which had the Capital of British India, Calcutta, until 1911 when the Capital was shifted from Calcutta to Delhi (De, 2011). The tract, as mentioned in the Memorandum of Mackenzie, 'north-east frontier of Bengal', is to the North-East of Bengal. However, when examined with respect to Delhi the tract no longer is to the North-East of Delhi but it is still erroneously termed as 'North-East India'. With Delhi that defines India in contemporary geopolitics the whole of colonial 'North-East' is to the East of Delhi and not to the North-East of Delhi. Thus, the

present usage of 'North-East India' is colonial and erroneous.

The colonial North-East region was separately administered under the colonial suzerainty. Minimum interactions were allowed with outsiders. In fact, the people from the colonial North-East region settled in plains and hills were administered separately. Nevertheless, the British allowed the Christian missionaries in the hills and discouraged missionaries work in the valley where Hinduism was influential and patronised by the kings. Sanjib Baruah observed that the administrative classification of colonies as excluded and partially excluded areas that prevented the outsiders from entering the tribal regions did not deter the missionaries work (1999). The colonial legacy of Inner Line Regulation of 1873 is still a burning issue in contemporary period. The British enacted the Regulation to ensure more stringent commercial activities between the British subjects and the Frontier Tribes (Chowdhury, 1989, p. 35) and also to regulate 'possession of land and property' beyond the areas earmarked for tea gardens (Mackenzie, 1884, cited in Chowdhury, 1989, p. 35). This contributed towards wider differences between the hill people and the valley people within the regions, and between people from the colonial North-East and other parts of the then British India. The colonial North-East was thus created with colonial motive marked by extraction of resources at the cost of seclusion and isolation of the people of the colonial North-East.

(ii) Strategic 'North-East': It appears that the regions remain India predominantly from a strategic point of view. Thus, the website of the Ministry of Home Affairs, in its North East Division states: "Unlike other parts of the country the North East holds an important position from a *strategic point of view* [italics mine] as these states share their borders with other countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar and China" (Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, 2015). It does not speak of historical and cultural ties or patriotism of the people of the regions. It is this institutionalised outlook of the State towards the regions that nurtures and promotes alienation of the people of the regions from the idea of India and an Indian. It also sustains the idea of the regions as troubled and disturbed.

The idea of 'North-East' is created by the praxis of the State and denying the existence of 'North-East'

is denying the praxis of the Indian State (Akoijam, 2015). North-East which was a colonial administrative creation may be said to have been inherited with almost all its colonial features as it is found to be still extant in the development lexicon and strategic approach of the country. The fact that the list of governors of the States of the regions contains many personalities with police or armed forces backgrounds reflects a lingering colonial suspicion of the Indian State and tainted essence of democratic governance in the regions. The “*Northeast India*”, according to Sanjib Baruah, does not evoke any sense of “historical memory or collective consciousness” (2007, pp. 4-5). The “Northeast India”, Baruah further observes, is a resultant of political manoeuvre aimed at nipping the bud of political movement of the Nagas and the Mizos after India attained independence.

After the independence of India in 1947, the political situations in the Naga Hills were volatile. The Nagas had declared independence on 14th August, 1947. In view of the situations in the hills, the government, even after independence, retained the Inner Line Regulation as the government did not desire to integrate the people forcefully (Chowdhury, 1989, p. 36; also Andrew, 1945, cited in Tadu, 2014, p. 6). J. N. Chowdhury further claimed that it was only in 1951 that the Indian administration was established in the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA), and until 1951 the Indian Government imposed all the colonial restrictions (1989, p. 36). In this sense, the Indian leaders in free India were equally responsible just as the colonisers in segregating and alienating the people of the regions from the rest of the population. The living standard of the people in the regions measured by per capita Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), according to the *North Eastern Region Vision 2020* document, was Rs.18,027 in 2004-05 which was lesser than the national average of Rs. 25,968 by 31 per cent (Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region & North Eastern Council, 2008, p. 6). However, the figure, during the colonial period, in undivided state of Assam was higher by 4 per cent than the national average. This is not to romanticise the colonial rule but to accept the structural discrimination in the regions post-independence. The potential available in the regions was also recognised by the US ambassador to India, Nancy J Powell, who, during her visit in 2012 in Guwahati (*Times of India*, 14 December, 2012) in Assam, voiced for the participation of ‘North East’ in the India-US bilateral

trade relations. Independent India or successive governments cannot be exonerated from owning the responsibility for what ails the regions now economically and politically.

The regions constitute less than 8 per cent of the total geographical areas of India with a population which is less than 4 per cent of India’s population (Bhaumik, 2009). The name ‘North-East’ has been used for administrative convenience since the colonial days. Developmental activities in Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Tripura and Meghalaya are also carried out under the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DONER) established in September 2001. According to *North Eastern Region Vision 2020 Volume 1*, 96 per cent of the boundaries of the regions form international borders (Ministry of DONER & North Eastern Council, 2008, p. 2). The demography of India changes as it moves beyond West Bengal. With more than 220 different tribes and communities (Goswami, 2010, p. 9) in this regions, attempt to homogenise the cultural complexity and unify the developmental approach in the regions without rectifying the historical and political anomalies is certainly a baffling political blunder.

What went wrong in independent India? Sustained armed conflicts and rapid infrastructural developments have rendered the people marginalised. Strategic developments overshadowed social development. According to Rimi Tadu, Arunachal Pradesh already has two third state-owned forests with six airports under construction and 154 Mega Hydro dams proposed (2014, p. 13). The regions are immensely exploited economically and dominated and oppressed militarily. Heavy military presence is often looked at by the people of the regions as strategy of economic exploitation and not for peace and security. The structural alienation of the people of the regions during the colonial period and excessive military presence in post-independence era certainly percolates down to discrimination in the present days. Citing the opinion of *Outlook*, *BBC Monitoring* attributed the isolation of the regions of India to ‘violence and a conspicuous presence of Indian troops’ (*BBC Monitoring*, 11 February, 2014). The regions, in view of the heavy military presence even during peace time, appear to be earmarked military training zones with undeclared wars against non-state armed groups with several civil casualties.

Differential military treatment is clearly evident when one juxtaposes the approaches of the Government towards Maoism and political problems in the regions. Such differential military treatment compels one to exhume the implicit racial propensity in the governmentality of the State towards the regions. A former high ranking official in the Indian army, observing “political and administrative failure and corruption through a toxic combination of mal-governance, misgovernance and non-governance in the northeast and Kashmir”, (Vombatkere, 2013) points to the serious problem with the governmentality of the Indian State. Such frequent post-service critiques from former high ranking military personnel came as a response to a statement reportedly made by P Chidambaram at a Seminar in Institute of Defence Studies, New Delhi when he was the Finance Minister of India in which he pointed out the refusal of the Indian armed forces to make amendments to the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958 and make it “more humanitarian” (Fernandes, 2013). However, exonerating the army from such political tussle, a former army Major General (Vombatkere, 2013) stated that “MoD [Ministry of Defence] controls the Army, while the Army can only advise MoD.” Such blame game exposes the lackadaisical attitude of the Government towards the people of the regions and an implied position of the people of the regions as expendables within the parlance of Indian strategic policies. In view of the comment of P Chidambaram, if not true for the whole nation, it may be stated unequivocally that governance, at least in the regions and Kashmir, is the prerogative of the armed forces.

Deployment of military under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958, according to a former Indian army Major General, was and is to assist the civil administration and to ensure “internal security” (Vombatkere, 2014). The former Major General further stated: “Soldiers use weapons against the soldiers of another state during armed conflict, but cannot use their weapons even against unarmed civilians of the opposite country.” According to former Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh, Naxalism is the “the greatest internal security threat to our country” (*The Hindu*, 11th October, 2009) and therefore there is a need to ensure internal security in Naxal-affected areas. Terming the problems of the Maoists as “a socio-economic problem; an issue concerning lack of infrastructure and others” a former Indian army Chief who later became a Union Minister strongly ruled out the need to deploy armed

forces in Maoist affected areas (*Indian Express*, 25th October, 2015). When he was asked why he did not allow deployment of army in the Naxal-affected areas, he reportedly recollected having told, when he was the Chief of the Army, former Home Minister of the Government of India that “the job of the armed forces is not to fire on their own countrymen”. So, if the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958 is for maintaining internal security and the armies or the Armed Forces are not suppose to kill unarmed people of even an enemy country or fellow countrymen why is the Act, that empowers even a non-commissioned officer to shoot and kill a person on mere suspicion ground, imposed only in the regions and in Kashmir? And why is Mizoram the only Indian state to have been bombed by the Indian Air Force in 1966 while the Armed Forces Special Powers Act 1958 was imposed in Mizoram in 1967 (Barman, 2013)? Which Act of the Parliament of the Indian Republic in 1966 empowered the Indian Air Force to bomb Mizoram? Such is the state of exception which is strategically and racially exceptional in the regions. This also brings into the Indian political discourse the question raised by Walter Fernandes (*The Hindu*, 12 February, 2013): “who rules India?” Who are these people in these regions for *The Indians*? “When power operates at a distance, people are not necessarily aware of how their conduct is being conducted or why, so the question of consent does not arise” (Li, 2007, p. 275). Merely including the regions in the Indian political map and conducting Parliamentary or Assembly elections do not make the people of the regions fully Indians.

Mmhonlumo Kikon, Human rights activist from Nagaland, noted that ‘Northeast’ was found in the Indian lexicon only during the early 1970s. According to Kikon (Chandra, 2010), the term ‘Northeast’ “...club together a diversity of about more than 200 indigenous communities into one basket called the Northeast.” He sees loss of cultures and identities of the people from the regions in this process. He further observed that it is also found to be used in ‘geo-political policy-making’. The global economic forces taking the form of Look East Policy serves the strategic purpose. It legitimises heavy military presence to ensure peace and stability for prosperous economic relations with the South-East Asian countries.

(iii) Racial ‘North-East’: Subir Bhaumik observed that “the North East is where India looks less and

less India and more and more like the highlands of South East Asia” (2009, p. 259). There is a propensity amongst many fellow Indians outside the regions to perceive the regions to be dominated by people with Mongoloid features. Many Indians from outside the regions deridingly associate Mongoloid Indians with Chinese. And the ‘North-East’ is callously associated with oriental looks and thus racialised. And many from the regions, besides Mongoloids, are blatantly associated with “tainted character”, violence, savagery and insurgency (also see Barzun, 1937, cited in Thounaojam, 2012, p. 10). Thus, ‘North-East’ is also ascribed with immorality.

Mongoloid Indians are often mocked and abused racially by calling them with names like “chinky”, “chini”, “nepali”, “bahadur” “chinese”, etc. Chinky appears to be the most commonly used name to call the Mongoloid Indians. Rather than asking “Where are you from?”, the Mongoloid Indians are often asked: *Kya aap Nepal se ho?* (Are you from Nepal?); *Kya aap China se ho?* (Are you from China?). Such questions may seemingly appear to be consequence of ignorance. Such questions are not alien even to those Mongoloid Indians who were born and brought up in India outside the regions. When one analyses critically one may find the racial origin of such questions. It is due to the racist attitude of the person that such questions are asked to someone with Mongoloid features.

Where does one trace the origin of such callous racial mentality of some fellow Indians towards Mongoloid Indians? Do we have a part of the answer in the Hindu varna system? This does not necessarily mean that the culprits of racism are only Hindus. Racism has no religion. Nevertheless great reformer like Swami Dayananda Saraswati, founder of Arya Samaj, in the early 1860s stood by the view that Hindus were descendants of Aryas (Baber, 2004, p. 706) thus linking to particular racial stock of people. GS Ghurye unambiguously reveals the racial origin of the caste system which is prominent in Hindu society. The Indian Aryans, as observed by Ghurye while tracing the origins of caste system, came “across people, who were very dark in colour and had rather snub noses, they described the earlier settlers as ‘dark colour’, as people without noses, and applied to them the term ‘dasa’ which in Iranian stood for ‘enemy’” (1969, p.165). Ghurye also observed: “This racial origin of the principal features of the caste system is further supported by the early term ‘varna’ meaning colour used to specify the

orders in society” (1969, p. 176). Well-defined divisions in terms of classes among the Aryans, when they entered India, were speculated by Ghurye in which intermarriage between them was observed to be rare though not forbidden (1969, p. 172). But the practice of untouchability peculiar only in Hindu system (Ghurye, 1969, p. 180) may be said to have begun in the attempts of the Aryans to keep the ‘dasa’ or the aborigines, whom they found to be very dark, away from their Aryan society. Ghurye observed that “[t]he ideal theory of castes laid down certain duties as common to all of them and some as specific to each” (1969, p. 81), however, the origin of caste linked to racism is unambiguous from his discussion on the social intercourse between the ‘dasa’ and the Aryans. The Mongoloid groups of the ‘North-East’ regions were once known as *Kiratas* (Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 2002) by the Indo-Arya speakers who went to the regions (Roy Burman, 2002). The term ‘Kirata’ was used to identify the non-Aryan tribes different from the “tribes of Austric origin, the Sabaras, Pulindas, Nishadas and Bhillis” (Elwin, 2009, p. 315). The term kirata was used in ancient Sanskrit texts to identify, apparently in generic and disparaging manner, the hunter people living in the mountains (Schlemmer, 2004, cited in Schlemmer, 2010, p. 53). Later, observing the “common political and geographical situation” of the people, the term began to be used to identify all those “living outside any influence of a state or of the Hindu civilization.” And kirant which is derived from kirata is used to refer to groups described as ‘savages’ (Schlemmer, 2010, p. 53). Such naming of other groups, according to Ghurye, “is the first step towards distinction” (1969, p. 52) and may be said to be followed by discrimination and violence.

The narrow corridor, also known as Chicken’s Neck, with a width of 20 km at its slimmest separates the regions from the rest of the nation (Hazarika, 2011, p. xiv). This narrow stretch of land may be called the Mongoloid Laxman Rekha. The Mongoloid Laxman Rekha may be understood as the internal boundary or racial boundary beyond which the Mongoloid Indians experience discrimination, violence and racial abuses in other parts of India because of who they are and the racialised regions they come from.

Problematising “chinky”: Mongoloid Indians are easily identified as chinky. The name chinky is not appreciated by them except for an outstanding exception like Dr. Vijita Ningombam who claimed

in her article titled ‘If someone calls me a chinky, I smile!!’: “...I have an oriental look and I’m from Manipur. And yes I call myself a “chinky” (2014) and she further stated “If someone calls me a chinky, I smile at them. Because I know they noticed me because I look different”. She finally concluded her article saying, “Let me proclaim before the world once again that I am proud to be chinky”. However, for many Mongoloid Indians it is an abusive name. For them it is a racist name. There are several unreported instances of verbal and physical fights as results of the use of the name chinky. The name chinky has definitely become a serious problem for Mongoloid Indians. It has marred their self-respect and Indian identity. Mmhone Kikon, Human rights activist from Nagaland, traced the genesis of the use of the term chinky in Indian context and claimed that “During the 1962 Indo-China war there were lots of instances especially in North India where any person looking like a Chinese was termed as ‘Chinky’” (Chandra, 2010). He sees it as a pejorative racist term.

According to Chambers 20th Dictionary, New Edition, Chinky is colloquially and offensively used to refer to Chinese (Kirkpatrick ed., 1984, p. 220). According to Cambridge International Dictionary of English, it is a British taboo slang used in offensive sense to mean “a Chinese person” (Procter, 1995, p. 227). It is also found in British slang which is used to mean “a restaurant serving Chinese food” (Procter, 1995, p. 227). Chink is defined as “a contemptuous or patronizing term” by Webster’s New World College Dictionary, New Millennium (Agnes, 2000, p. 256). Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English defines chink as “a very offensive word for a Chinese person” (Hornby, 2005, p. 257). The term Chinky is not found in any of the native Indian languages or dialects or pidgins.

From the above definitions of chinky derived from dictionaries and its use in Indian context we do not see any healthy or friendly use of the term. It is inherently offensive, slang, contemptuous, patronising and disrespectful in nature. It is also clear from the dictionaries that chinky is particularly used against Chinese who belong to Mongoloid racial group. Defining the term chinky in the footnote, Bapu P. Remesh stated “‘Chinki’ is a racial slur referring mainly to a person of Chinese ethnicity but sometimes generalised to refer to any person of East Asian descent. The usage of the word is often considered as an ethnic insult” (2012, p. 21). Also

considering the source of the term chinky which is not found in any Indian native languages or dialects or in any local common lexicons, the role of the educated Indians in the popular use of the term chinky cannot be ruled out. In the Indian context, when it is used for Indians with Mongoloid features, it is safe to conclude that the term chinky is purely racist. Anand Teltumbde while discussing the issues of race and caste in India also posed a question: “Is it not a fact that because of their Chinese like facial features the people of the north-east are deridingly called *chinkish*, *chaptas*, *chini-macau* in mainland India?” (2009, p. 16). Chinky bears racial connotation and is a racial term, and the one who uses it abusively is undeniably a racist.

Mongoloid Indians are also abused with name like *chini*. *Chini* is used in India even by politicians and diplomats as political lexicon, without any racial flavor, to refer to Chinese, thus the slogan “*Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai*” (India and China are brothers). There is certainly an implicit current of crude thought that stigmatises every Mongoloid Indians as being loyal to Chinese identity. And Binalakshmi Nepram, a social activist, reportedly stated:

“I have also found from my sources that there are people in political spheres who are equating the entire people of north-east as being pro-China. Hence, there has been a talk of cutting them into pieces and throwing them into (river) Ganga. We are very very saddened by this because we also consider ourselves as citizens of this country. This is not the India that we belonged to. This is not the India which is enshrined in the Constitution. We are not loyal to China, we are loyal to this country, we are part of this country” (*Morung Express*, 2014).

Indian lawmakers sensed the problems associated with the use of the term chinky. Thus, a young Member of Parliament of Lok Sabha from Arunachal Pradesh, Ninong Ering, stated, “The use of words like ‘chinky’ should not be allowed” (Dholabhai, 2014). Under the same News, Kiren Rijiju, who was then a former Member of Parliament from Arunachal Pradesh in early 2014 also acknowledged the problem associated with the term chinky. He reportedly stated that like in the US where there were laws against racism, India needed one to address the issue of racism.

The use of the term chinki/ chinky is perceived in different sense. A girl student from one of the states of the regions studying in Delhi University feels that she was taken as “easy” when she was called chinky

(Kuenzang & Saxena, 2012). This perception of the girl student is substantiated by the finding of the Bezbaruah Committee that found that girls from the regions are perceived by the local people in Indian cities to have “tainted character” (2014). We see here gender dimension in the perception of the use of the term chinky. Social profiling has rendered the regions’ girls vulnerable in the eyes of perpetrators of violence and discrimination. The concept of gendered racism was analysed by feminist researchers who found difference in the experiences of racism experienced by men and women (Zinn & Dill, 1996, cited in Wingfield, 2007, p. 197). Certainly there could be a difference in the sense of perception of the term (chinky) between males and females who are targeted by the term chinky. Gendered racism immensely affected the black men who were considered to be lustful, brutal rapists and such stereotypes justified repressive violence and even lynching of black men to protect the chastity of white womanhood (Olsen, 2001, cited in Wingfield, 2007, p. 198). Chinky in India too has gender dimension. Indian females with Mongoloid features may be said to suffer double stigma. Besides being called chinky because of how they look they are also considered to be morally loose in nature. Thus,

chinky has physical and moral dimensions when used to abuse females with Mongoloid features.

The *Times of India* in June 2012, during the hectic days of college admission process in Delhi, carried a news with a heading “Call a Northeastern Chinki, be jailed for 5 yrs” (Kuenzang & Saxena, 2012). Mixed reactions were reportedly proffered by the peoples of the regions. While some endorsed the idea of sending to jail those who call them chinki, some sensed negative implications of such a step.

Conclusion: While ‘North-East’ is used even officially chinky is found to be originally and inherently racial in nature. However, ‘North-East’ has been used sometime to club together people from the regions irrespective of their different cultures, states and communities. This undermines the significance of the eight states that comprise the so called ‘North-East’. In this process ‘North-East’ gradually acquires a racial nature often associated with Mongoloid Indians. The categorisation of ‘North-East’ as a racial region is re-enforced with the use of the term chinky used to describe the Mongoloid Indians found mostly in the so called ‘North-East’

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