## MAN and SOCIETY

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## Man and Society A Journal of North-East Studies

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## Book Review

ASSAM: THE ACCORD, THE DISCORD by Sangeeta Barooah Pisharoty, Gurgaon: Penguin Random House India, 2019; pp xvii + 443,

Post colonial states often suffer from hastily drawn borders that create more problems than solve. On the eve of independence, India's borders were similarly drawn and one of the persisting crisis is unsolved border disputes. Be it with China, Pakistan, Bangladesh or even Nepal, claims and counterclaims of areas continue. India's Northeastern region which shares borders with Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and Bangladesh has been a hotbed of such disputes — more so owing to the cultural lineage and geographical contiguity. This book tries to trace and understand the causes of turbulence in India's Northeastern part which has ramifications for the South East Asian region. With India amending its citizenship laws and granting leniency to non-Muslim religious minorities from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh, questions of who is an insider, who is an alien became relevant again.

The dispute is not just amidst countries but also within states and the erstwhile state of Assam was further divided responding to the demands of ethnic homeland of smaller ethnic and tribal groups. Since 1963, the state has been reorganised many times to incorporate newer aspirations. Following the ethnic strife of various communities for separate homeland, newer states have been created but more demands have emerged. Starting with a colonial project, the region also witnessed systematic settlement of communities from outside to turn the region into a productive space instead of an abode of 'wasteland'. All these led to a lengthy