

Anti-Narcotics Law Enforcement and Border Management in Northeast India: A Delphi Study on Socio-Economic Impacts and Policy Priorities

Rohan Pramod Botre^a, Anil S. Maheshwari^{b*}

^{a,b}*School of Management, Pimpri Chinchwad University, Pune, India*

*Corresponding author:

Dr. Anil S Maheshwari

Email ID: asmaheshwari73@gmail.com

Affiliation : Professor, Pimpri Chinchwad University, Pune

Abstract

Purpose - The Northeast border regions of India encounter several complex challenges related to border vulnerability, networks, narco-terrorism, enforcement, governance arising from insurgent activities, transnational crimes, porous borders, and ever-evolving geopolitical dynamics. This study aims to systematically identify, prioritize, and analyze key border vulnerability indicators and develop a consensus-based knowledge about their socio-economic impacts and policy priorities in border regions of Northeast India.

Methodology - The study employed the Delphi research design to draw expert-consensus on key border and anti-narcotic law enforcement and governance issues. Professionals and subject-matter experts (total n=18) were drawn from three categories (operational enforcement; policy, legal and strategic; and community or socio-economic impact experts), participating in three Delphi rounds (screening, agreement, consensus-building) for structured consultation. Mixed-methods approach was used to refine expert insights, opinion, and establish consensus.

Findings - Study outcomes revealed real-world experiences and insights on NE India border region vulnerabilities as multi-dimensional constructs. Experts identified and reached final consensus on 26 unique indicators out of total 69, further categorizing into five key dimensions (border vulnerability, organized networks, narco-economy, enforcement and governance, and socio-economic impact). The study also finds governance deficits, limited institutional inter-agency coordination, criminal-insurgent convergence, inadequate infrastructure, and socio-economic marginalization as critical issues surrounding border vulnerabilities. There is also an urgency for an integrated border management approach.

Implications - Theoretical implications include contribution to all four theories addressed in the study, demonstrating inter-connectedness and proposing a holistic understanding by integrating all the five key dimensions. Practical implications are provided based on evidence-based insights for security agencies, policy-makers, and border-governance institutions.

Originality/value - The Delphi panel experts' insights are original and valuable based on their long-term real-world experiences in such border regions. Further, a systematic approach through Delphi iterative rounds for refinement and consensus-building are highly scientific and valuable, contributing to the richness of study outcomes thus contributing to existing body of knowledge. The study proposed a B-O-N-E-S conceptual framework which is novel and supported with evidence-based study. However, this needs further empirical testing using large-scale quantitative data.

Keywords: border vulnerabilities; BONES conceptual framework; Delphi study; narco-insurgency, Northeast India; socio-economic impact.

How to cite this article: Rohan Pramod Botre, Anil S. Maheshwari. Anti-Narcotics Law Enforcement and Border Management in Northeast India: A Delphi Study on Socio-Economic Impacts and Policy Priorities. *Int J Drug Deliv Technol.* 2026;16(88s):394-411. DOI: 10.25258/ijddt.16.88s.40.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Context of Northeast India:

Northeast India (NEI) is a geopolitically vulnerable region sharing over 4,500 km of its international borders with Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, and Bhutan. The region has unique socio-political landscape noticeably exhibited in insurgency, ethnic diversity, and historical marginalization, hence renders anti-narcotics law enforcement and border governance quite challenging. Its proximity to the "Golden Crescent" (Afghanistan, Pakistan,

Iran) and "Golden Triangle" (Myanmar, Thailand, Laos) provides a safe haven and forms a critical node in transnational narcotics trafficking networks. This region shares a porous border over 1643 km with Manipur, Mizoram, and Myanmar, further compounded by weak infrastructure and complexity in legal frameworks, necessitating a multi-layered enforcement and governance approach (Singh & Nunes, 2013). Enormous geographical challenges and border complexity exist, as the

region has difficult terrains (e.g., remote, mountainous borders) including the strategic Siliguri Corridor, mostly facilitating smuggling and hinders enforcement. The extensive porous and poorly monitored borders with Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Bhutan are vulnerable and exploited by traffickers (Rahmati, 2025; Malik, 2015). Current enforcement strategies include intelligence-driven border security by leveraging informant networks, surveillance, and periodic joint operations in support with central and state forces. Due to constraints of resources and fragmented intelligence sharing, most of these strategies are often reactive rather than proactive. Moreover, bureaucratic silos and absence of unified command structures hamper coordination efforts between Assam Rifles, Border Security Force (BSF), central agencies, and state police forces (Chafale *et al.*, 2026). Even though localised community awareness programs are initiated to enhance community-police relations, still their reach is somewhat limited due to social conservatism and current conflict situations (Kermode *et al.*, 2013). Even though few multi-layered approaches (e.g., rehabilitation packages, ceasefire agreements, peace-building mechanisms) have subsided direct violence and enhanced stability, yet these are limited by persistent ethnic clashes, peak rates of drug use, and focus on possession arrests highlight operational gaps (Sinha, 2017; Balhara *et al.*, 2024; Singh & Chadda, 2025).

1.2 The Policy Dilemma: Most of the response strategies to the prevailing crisis has been enforcement-centric. Considering the policy and legal frameworks, the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985, provides a statutory enforcement framework that prohibits production, manufacture, trade, and use of psychotropic substances or narcotic drugs except for scientific or medical purposes. Recent policy initiatives have emphasized interdepartmental coordination and modernization (Nayal & Bahuguna, 2025); however, inconsistent legislative frameworks, fragmented authority, and resource limitations persist, thereby most convictions happening due to possession and not trafficking. Existing governance mechanisms also include high emphasis on border security through physical and electronic fencing, infrastructural development initiatives, and increased border guard forces (Minnaar, 2022; Das, 2022). Though adherence to international protocols and treaties are recognized, these are inconsistently implemented, but these have not addressed the narcotics-insurgency nexus and underlying socio-political tension. Security measures including physical/electronic fencing have on a small-scale restricted illicit cross-border

movements, but are still ineffective in eliminating trafficking because of the persistent regional dynamics (Das, 2022).

1.3 Research Gap(s): Existing literature highlight several research gaps emanating in the context of border security, drug trafficking control, enforcement, and governance in Northeast India border regions. Further investigation and research development is critically necessary for the following highlighted gaps:

- Fragmented enforcement systems, unclear statutory frameworks, and institutional coordination for narcotics control and border security under the NDPS Act. Border management strategies suffer lack of integrated approach, cooperation amongst agencies, while India continues to prioritize “smart border” collaborative frameworks (Das, 2012).
- Inadequate focus on socio-structural contexts highlights exacerbation of HIV transmission risks, and underexplored studies in terms of policy and intervention design (Chakrapani *et al.*, 2011).

1.4 Research Question(s): This study addresses three research questions:

- **RQ1:** What is the primary expert-identified challenge in current anti-narcotics law enforcement along Northeast India's borders?
- **RQ2:** How do border governance mechanisms (fencing, surveillance, FMR termination) interact with local socio-economic structures (employment, migration, community cohesion)?
- **RQ3:** What is the expert consensus on the most effective policy levers to mitigate adverse socio-economic impacts without compromising border security?

1.5 Significance of the Study: This study makes three contributions. First, a composite "narco-governance" framework is proposed that integrates aspect of border management practices, recognizing organized networks, understanding the narco-economy, enforcement and governance strategies, and impact on socio-economy of the region. Second, the study attempts to demonstrate the application of Delphi approach to solve complex, multi-stakeholder policy problems especially in conflict-prone areas. Third, the objective outcome translates into useful evidence-based policy recommendations for consideration by the concerned Government departments, the

Narcotics Control Bureau, and local bodies of state governments in the border regions.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Theoretical Anchors: The study anchors on four prominent theoretical frameworks that are inter-related and could be integrated for enhancing the desired strategy for better enforcement and governance of anti-narcotic laws and practices:

Securitization Theory - Developed by the Copenhagen School in 1998, the theory is based on constructivist framework. It emphasizes security issues are 'constructed' from speech acts or discursive processes framed for political actors to identify and label existential threats and further develop strategies around it (Baysal, 2020; Stepka, 2022; Silva & Pereira, 2024). It assumes that securitization is context-dependent, audience agency being central, and security being socially-constructed. Most research is found concentrated in Western contexts, with limited studies in Global South. Empirical operationalization is quite challenging, however methodological diversity is required. The core theoretical framework offers a robust lens on securitization, and its strength lies in explaining how security is being labelled and constructed, contested, and finally institutionalized. The framework is flexible for analyzing diverse threat perspectives and policy responses, specifically in rapidly changing global landscape (Stepka, 2022). The theory has further evolved by demonstrating adaptability and relevance by accommodating newer forms of security politics and expands its explanatory power across contexts and domains. For better understanding about persistence and transformation of securitization, it is central to focus on identity (Sjöstedt, 2013) and bureaucratic routines (Grigor'eva, 2024) as important elements for institutionalization, context, and audience agency. Methodological advances in recent studies include discourse and semiotic analysis (Dulebová & Štefančík, 2017); hybrid approaches combining discourse and content analysis with quantitative data (Ari & Çetindişli, 2025); and, pragmatic and sociological views (Williams, 2010). The theory could in this study could help understand how narcotics/drug trade and trafficking in NE India could be linked to insurgency, terrorism, or legitimize for militarized response and framed as existential national security threat, highlighting critical necessity for extraordinary enforcement and governance measures.

Routine Activity Theory (RAT) – This theory developed by Cohen and Felson, is a criminological framework and situational theory that explains crime occurrences through three

key elements - motivated offenders, a suitable target, and an absence of capable guardians. The theory posits that daily routine changes could influence crime rates through alterations in easy availability of these three elements (Branic, 2015; Miró, 2014). It emphasizes that environmental and situational factors create opportunities for criminal activity, rather than focusing on offender characteristics, while the theory can be applied to understand situational crime prevention (Clarke, 2009), cybercrimes (Pratt *et al.*, 2010), white-collar crimes (Pratt *et al.*, 2010), or juvenile delinquency (Mohammad *et al.*, 2020). Application of RAT in the study could illuminate how various traffickers (motivated offenders), unemployed vulnerable youth (suitable targets), and diluted state governance mechanisms present in the NE India border areas (lack of guardianship), collectively interact with the narco-economy.

Border Governance Theory – The theory follows an evolutionary-constructivist approach that concerns regulation, management, and governance of borders, emphasizing on interconnectedness among mobility, territorial control, and power dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, including movement of goods and people. Governance is a multi-action process to address multi-level challenges and notions of cooperation, integration, and state sovereignty (Wong Villanueva *et al.*, 2023; Kunz *et al.*, 2011). This study could explore agencies of border communities, and their socio-economic functions beyond security issues. Given the earlier Free Movement Regime mobility concerns in the Northeast border regions, the role of sustaining trade, cross-border kinship, and cultural exchange could be explored. The theory is suited for studying application and challenges of cross-border cooperation (Dupeyron *et al.*, 2023), or human security and migration (Indraswari, 2024).

Narco-Insurgency Nexus theory – This is suitable for exploring complex relationships and interplay between insurgent movements, armed conflict, narcotics trafficking, and how these often collaborate for gaining mutual benefit to fund their operations, and provide protection for drug operations (Irrera, 2023; Cornell, 2007). The theory has been earlier used to study narco-insurgency dynamics (Bunker, 2013), narco-terror social network analysis (Ünal, 2020), economic and motivational impacts (Cornell, 2007), or security and governance implications (Ajah & Tshimangadzo, 2026). The theory could be useful in this study to eliciting understanding about how revolutionary and communist-inspired movements form breeding grounds for terrorist-cum-organized crime syndicates in operating and generate funding

ecosystem primarily through arms, extortion, and narco-trafficking.

2.2 Pillar 1: Anti-Narcotics Law Enforcement in Northeast India

The NDPS Act, 1985, focusing on drug trafficking context forms India's primary legal instrument. Widely understood, the Northeast India region deeply infested with the issue of narcotics trafficking and intertwined with socio-political and economic challenges of the region. The geo-political vulnerability for drug trafficking is high along the international borders of NE India comprising Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, and Myanmar as a crucial transit route. This is further intensified by proximity to the "Golden Triangle" (Myanmar, Laos, Thailand), which is a key global hub for production of heroin (Ghuman *et al.*, 2023). Insurgency, violence, ethnic conflicts, and organized crimes are critical challenges in the region, often funded by narcotics trafficking. This has led to undermining anti-narcotics law enforcement efforts and complicates governance efforts (Lacina, 2009). Social and structural barriers are evident from injecting drug use as a major HIV transmission route. However, effective interventions are hindered from limited access to sterile needles, fear of police harassment, or inadequate harm reduction initiatives (Chakrapani *et al.*, 2011). Current enforcement and policy measures are instituted through drug offense surveillance systems and community awareness programs (Singh & Chadda, 2025); harm reduction strategies such as needle and syringe programs, though undermined by conflicting drug-control related laws or human rights abuses (Sarin *et al.*, 2011); and regional cooperation through "Act East" policy to improve diplomatic and economic ties, strengthening of anti-narcotics efforts, addressing socio-economic conditions, and enhanced border management (Panda, 2019). A multi-pronged strategy integrating law enforcement efforts, harm reduction programs, and socio-economic growth is crucial for long-term success. In the anti-narcotics law enforcement and governance efforts, multiple agencies (such as Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Border Security Force (BSF), Assam Rifles, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), and Customs) share the responsibility. Joint operations in the past have yielded significant seizures, yet coordination gaps, limited forensic facilities, rivalry among agencies often hinder timely and successful operations.

2.3 Pillar 2: Border Management and Securitization

Border management and securitization are broader interconnected concepts, particularly in

the context of security, migration, and state sovereignty. Border management is aimed at controlling movement of goods, people, and services across borders on one hand, and balancing economic, security, and humanitarian issues on other. The India-Myanmar border has historically been characterized by porosity and cross-border community ties. The Free Movement Regime, established under India's Act East policy, permitted cross-border movement up to 16 km without a visa, underpinning informal trade, and cultural exchange. Integrated border management requires strong coordination between international, central and state agencies ensuring lawful border control, balancing security with trade facilitation, and preserving human rights, even under severe challenges of legal, geographical, or social-security settings (Raimondo, 2025). Collaborative border management approaches are much effective in low-conflict risk regions between neighbouring nations to foster trade, manage shared resources, and combat transnational crimes or trafficking (Lawson & Bersin, 2020; Doyle, 2010). Recent technological innovations and advancements, such as automated border control (ABC) systems, e-gates are effectively used to streamline border crossings while also maintaining tight security, reducing congestion, and enhanced traveller experiences (Noori, 2022). Securitization is another concept of framing specific issues (e.g., migration) as existential threats, creating an urgency to address through extraordinary measures. These could be linked to threats like terrorism, socio-economic instability, or crimes, thereby leading to militarization and technologized border management controls (Saisin *et al.*, 2023).

2.4 Pillar 3: Socio-Economic Impacts on Border Communities

Border communities in the Northeast India region often experience unique socio-economic dynamics that are influenced by geopolitical tensions, cross-border trade, infrastructure development, and other cultural interactions. Positive socio-economic effects are realised from cross-border trade activities (e.g., Indo-Myanmar trade in Moreh region) translating into significant improvements in education, occupation, and regular income, thus boosting economies and local development (Gairola & Ganguly, 2022). Similar outcomes are seen from informal cross-border trade in Serikin and Sarawak (Malaysia) and Kalimantan (Indonesia) stimulating better local economic activity, creating more employment, and improving their standards of living (Abd Hair Awang *et al.*, 2013). Cross-border cooperation could foster resilience and cooperation among border communities, thereby mitigating

economic crises (e.g., cross border work in the Saar-Lor-Lux region) and supporting economic development during industrial restructuring (Belkacem & Pigeron-Piroth, 2011) leading to comparative advantage and economies of scale. Cultural and social integration is seen through ethnic proximity and cultural empathy among Krayan-Ba'Kelalan and Kalimantan region along Indonesia-Malaysia border that promotes sustainable development and economic equality via informal cross-border interactions (Arifin *et al.*, 2024). Several negative socio-economic consequences are also seen in geopolitical tensions (e.g., India-China eastern-Ladakh region, Russia-Ukraine Belgorod Oblast region), which disrupt regular socio-economic activities (Choldan, 2024; Zayats *et al.*, 2017). Further, border closures cause significant social and economic disruptions (Spennemann, 2021).

2.5 Synthesis and Identification of the Study Gaps

An in-depth review of existing literature specifically focusing on Northeast India border regions highlight several recurring challenges and critical gaps concerning border region governance, development, and research; spanning across political, environmental, socio-economic, and methodological dimensions. Synthesis of key issues and study gaps include - (a) *socio-economic challenges* - infrastructure deficits hindering economic growth and human development (Lili *et al.*, 2024; Bangun *et al.*, 2024), economic inequalities with limited access to opportunities or resources (Bangun *et al.*, 2024), community health and wellness (Ríos-González, 2024); (b) *governance and policy gaps* - fragmented legal and policy frameworks prioritizing national security over border region local requirements, leading to ineffective governance (Lili *et al.*, 2024; Bangun *et al.*, 2024), lack of coordination for border management relating to migration, cross-border trade, or security as evidenced in ASEAN regions (Kobayashi *et al.*, 2017), over-emphasis on militarization or securitization of border management versus welfare and economic development goals which often gets undermined (Bangun *et al.*, 2024); (c) *security and migration challenges* - border regions are vulnerable to transnational crimes involving human and drug trafficking, or illegal trade mostly due to inadequate security infrastructure and measures (Lili *et al.*, 2024; Bangun *et al.*, 2024), undocumented migration or exodus due to porous borders, socio-political instability in neighbouring border regions (e.g. Asia-Pacific and South Africa) (Kaur & Metcalfe, 2006); (d) *environmental and resource constraints* - often due to urbanization or climate change caused by environmental stressors which degrade natural

resources and constrain local economies and create critical sustainability gaps (Bharadwaj *et al.*, 2026). These form the response to *RQ1* in our study which highlight the study gaps and challenges for current anti-narcotics law enforcement along NE India borders.

To effectively address the identified research study gaps, an inductive (qualitative approach) study involving the Delphi method is ideally suited. The Delphi technique, developed by RAND Corporation during late 1940s, provides a systematic and structured approach to reach mutual consensus among heterogeneous experts group (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963). It is also valuable in situations where critical variables/factors cannot be readily observed or counted, and even the available datapoints may not be available or remain incomplete, as seen from review of existing literature published on the theme or topic of interest (e.g., anti-narcotics law enforcement, governance, and socio-economic impact of border regions of Northeast India studies).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design: An inductive research approach employing two-phase sequential qualitative design was employed. The first phase conducted a systematic literature review (SLR) exploring top-quality research study documents published in top journals indexed in Scopus, and Web of Science databases on the study theme. This phase aimed in reviewing and identifying initial keywords and indicators for the study across five key domains, such as border management, organized networks, narco-economy, anti-narcotics law enforcement and governance, and socio-economic impacts, especially focusing on border regions. Next, in the second phase, a three-round e-Delphi study was initiated and implemented to screen initial keywords/indicators, achieve benchmark agreement, and build final expert consensus on these indicators as well as developing the conceptual framework.

3.2 Rationale for the Delphi Method: Delphi is a systematic and iterative approach implemented to achieve consensus among the Delphi panel experts using multiple rounds of inquiry through questionnaires and seeking controlled feedback. In this study, the Delphi method is fairly suited and adapted for three key reasons. First, the research questions emanating from the problem statement on the core topic of interest requires superior integration of domain knowledge across multiple disciplines (e.g., border security, anti-narcotics law enforcement, governance, socio-economics, etc.) that rarely interact in such conventional research settings. Second, the high sensitivity involved in narcotics law enforcement particularly in conflict-affected border regions of

Northeast India makes it quite challenging to conduct direct observation or collect primary data. Third, the Delphi method is an iterative structure involving controlled feedback between rounds, and provides good degrees of freedom for experts to reconsider their existing positions in the light of group perspectives. This allows reduction in biases or influence of dominant individuals and polarization. Also, the outcomes expected are indicator validation and conceptual framework refinements.

3.3 Expert Panel Definition and Recruitment:

The expert panel selection is done using purposive sampling technique. Each panel member at the baseline are qualified graduates, with over 7+ years of work experience with adequate domain expertise, diverse composition, and relevant to the research interest. The following inclusion/exclusion criteria was defined for selection and recruitment of Delphi experts' panel. The selected expert must possess adequate professional work experience (preferably over seven years in NE India border region) at least in any one of these domains: (a) anti-narcotics law enforcement official with direct involvement in drugs-related matters, (b) border security or management official, (c) civil administration, (d) academic researcher on NE India's drug crises, border management, or socio-economic development, or (e) public health official involved in service delivery. The Delphi panel was recruited through purposive sampling strategy that comprised of n=18 experts (six experts, three groups) stratified expert categories, such as Group A-Operational Enforcement experts; Group B-Policy/Legal/Strategic experts, and Group C-Community & Socio-economic Impact experts. Also, informed consent and voluntary participation in the Delphi study as per protocol was received. Appropriate ethics permission to conduct the study was sought in advance from Narcotics Control Bureau office.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis - Delphi Rounds:

The core problem being addressed in this study is how anti-narcotics law enforcement, organized networks, and border management and governance have impact on the socio-economic conditions of the border communities along the NE India border regions. Hence, a consensus is required from experts in the domain about key indicators/factors that have influence over the ecosystem and how they are related. Delphi is an expert-driven domain, and existing literature does not provide adequate empirical agreement, hence the same is explored through the Delphi study. The scope of the exploration is limited to anti-narcotics law enforcement and governance, NE India border region management, and

associated socio-economic impact on these border communities.

Round 1 (Exploratory/Screening): Each participant was provided with the first questionnaire with open-ended question(s) and a composite listing of 69 pre-defined key variables/indicators derived from prior systematic literature review process. The expert was required to analyze each indicator and suggest whether to retain or remove any such variable/indicator understood to be relevant/irrelevant respectively, including identification of any duplicates, synonymous, or near-duplicate terms. Also, the member could suggest inclusion of additional variables that seem to have been inadvertently missing from the list and expert believes it to be critical for the study theme or topic of interest, including suitable reasoning or open-ended comments for such a decision.

Round 2 (Evaluation/Agreement Rating):

Participants were given a structured questionnaire that listed the set of retained or additionally suggested variable(s)/indicator(s) finalized through Round 1 outcomes. Each variable/indicator was required to be rated using a five-point Likert agreement scale [1-Strongly Disagree ... 5-Strongly Agree]. Upon finalized submissions, the group-wise mean and standard deviations and similarly total mean and standard deviations (for all three groups) would be calculated. This would be compared with a preset qualifier benchmark (i.e. consensus criteria of mean ≥ 3.5 or $\geq 70\%$ agreement) for further re-evaluation/consideration in light of the group feedback towards Round-3 as the final consensus-building exercise.

Round 3 (Refinement/Final Consensus):

In this final round, each participant received controlled feedback on the group statistics (i.e., mean scores, std. dev, benchmark) and their own assessments of individual previous responses from Round 2. The Delphi group is expected to re-rate items desired items, and provide their final consensus after mutual discussions, categorize the items, and provide comments (if any) for finalizing unique items and conceptual framework for further quantitative study. This helps in enhancing convergence through group consensus. The quantitative indicators of consensus include the mean scores, standard deviations

3.5 Ethical Considerations: Appropriate informed consent, anonymization of responses, and removal of any identifying information of the participant was done from the dataset. Confidentiality of individual responses, safety and security of sensitive data was assured and implemented with utmost care. Also, the research work contains only non-sensitive datapoints.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics (Demographics)- A preliminary brief description about the intended study with a request invitation to participate in the Delphi study was elicited with 29 experts from various domains relevant to the study. However, only 21 participants consented voluntarily for such participation, of which n=18 were finally recruited into three group categories with six members each required for the Delphi rounds. The response rates were 100% (18/18) across all the three rounds and the average professional experience was 22.23% (higher average due to most participants being senior professionals with great work experiences ranging between 8 and 34 years). The Delphi panel was comprised as follows (refer Table 1):

Table 1. Delphi Panel Composition

Group (Members)	Expertise	Designation/Service/Domain	Average Work Exp. (years)
A (Six)	Operational Enforcement	BSF, CRPF, Mizoram Excise and Narcotics, CID, DRI	26.17
B (Six)	Policy, Legal & Strategic	CID, Lawyer - NDPS (District Court), NCB, Assam Rifles, Mizoram Police	21.5
C (Six)	Community & Socio-Economic Impact	Thutak Nunpuitu Team (TNT), Psychiatrist, Medical Officer, Central Young Mizo Association, DC-Aizawl	19.0
Total =18			22.23

Source: Compiled by researcher

4.2 Round 1 Results: At the end of Round 1 after initial screening, out of the 69 indicators listed based on SLR outcomes, 22 were retained while 47 earmarked for removal. Open-ended comments and based on real-world experiences of the experts, this led to generation of additional 11 indicators recommended for inclusion. Four factors that were synonymous or near similar were merged into two indicators. A total of 31 indicators were finalized at the end of this round for further incorporation into Round 2.

4.3 Round 2 Results: The 31 retained indicators from Round 1 were listed into the questionnaire with 5-point Likert scale (agreement) rating. The individual and group-wise mean scores with standard deviation were calculated item-wise, and overall group-wise. In this round, 8 indicators could not achieve the minimum mean ≥ 3.5 or $\geq 70\%$ agreement score, however, three of these had mean scores of 3.44, 3.44, and 3.39 fairly closer to the desired 3.5 benchmark. A summary scoring sheet for all the 31 items with the overall mean and S.D scores were compiled, earmarking items missing or reaching the benchmark standards. This was further subjected to Round 3 to build a final group consensus for identifying unique indicators for the study.

4.4 Round 3 Results - Consensus Evolution: In this round, the summary list of retained indicators with mean and SD scores were provided to the members. The panel was requested to compare and contrast their individual ratings with the group ratings, engage in discussions with the group members, and provide their final consensus after initiating re-rating of indicators if any. The panel concluded by providing revised ratings for the three indicators with mean values 3.67, 3.78, and 3.77 respectively and included for retention. The final consensus list after stability of responses were achieved was done. The panel also assisted in categorizing the 26 unique items into five core categories, drawing relationships among the constructs, relevant to the theme. Finally, the list of 26 unique items after reaching strong final consensus were retained and compiled into following categories:

- Border Vulnerability** [Border Vulnerability, International border adjacency, Border Porosity & Terrain Complexity, Informal crossing points] – 4 indicators;
- Organized Networks** [Trafficking Network Structure, Narco-Terror Nexus, Human Courier Systems, Illicit Financial Networks] – 4 indicators;
- Narco-economy** [Trafficking Scale & Operations, Routing & Logistics Complexity, Concealment & Transport Mechanisms, Digital Trafficking Ecosystem, Precursor Chemicals & Synthetic Drugs, Economic Dependence, Socio-economic Normalization] – 7 indicators;
- Enforcement & Governance** [Governance Capacity, Enforcement Capability, Operational Constraints, Asset seizure mechanisms, Coordination & Intelligence Integration, Legal & Policy Effectiveness] - 6 indicators;

- e) **Socio-economic Impact** [Drug Use Addiction Prevalence, Community Vulnerability, Public Health & Social Impact, Rehabilitation Ecosystem, Economic Vulnerability] – 5 indicators

The 26 unique indicators surpassing the minimum mean ≥ 3.5 or $\geq 70\%$ agreement benchmark scores at the final consensus are listed in [Table 3](#).

Table 3: List of Unique Indicators reaching Final Consensus (Delphi-Round 3)

ROUNDS	Indicator/Factor	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group A, B, C	Category*
1	Asset seizure mechanisms	383	098	408	408	E
2	Border Vulnerability	383	075	408	408	B
3	Community Vulnerability	408	089	408	408	S
4	Digital Trafficking Ecos	408	100	308	308	N

System	Indicator/Factor	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group A, B, C	Category*
5	Enforcement Capability	183	403	052	403	E
6	Governance Capacity	187	419	068	408	E
7	Illicit Financial Networks	183	387	051	408	O
8	Informal cross-border points	187	419	083	408	B
9	International border adjacency	187	417	050	408	B

10	Narcotics Nexus	18	40	30	40	30	40	30	0	O
11	Border Porosity & Territorial Complexity	18	36	05	38	04	35	06	07	B
12	Precursors or Chemicals & Synthetic Drugs	18	46	05	35	08	41	07	45	N
13	Rehabilitation Ecosystem	18	38	09	38	09	45	05	46	S
14	Socio-economic	18	38	07	36	05	38	07	03	N

	on om ic Normalization									
15	Economic Vulnerability	18	46	05	36	03	10	35	08	S
16	Trafficking Network Structure	18	43	05	42	04	07	35	01	O
17	Trafficking Scale & Operations	18	36	08	32	03	07	38	05	N
18	Routing & Logistics Complexity	18	41	09	38	03	08	43	02	N

19	Co nc eal me nt & Tr an sp ort M ec ha nis ms	18	433	082	417	098	367	052	406	077	N
20	Op era tio nal Co nst rai nts	18	383	098	400	063	383	075	389	079	E
21	Co or din ati on & Int elli ge nc e Int egr ati on	18	417	075	467	052	417	098	433	075	E
22	Le gal & Po lic y Eff ect ive ne ss	18	450	055	367	082	417	075	411	071	E
23	Dr ug Us	18	4.	0.	3.	0.	3.	0.	3.	0.	S
24	Ad dic tio n Pr ev ale nc e	18	505	572	682	867	672	822	944	733	
25	Pu bli c He alt h & So cia l Im pa ct	18	400	089	383	098	400	089	394	092	S
26	Ec on om ic De pe nd en ce	18	367	082	433	082	400	089	400	084	N
26	Hu ma n Co uri er Sy ste ms	18	350	055	400	089	383	075	388	077	O

*B=Border Vulnerability; O=Organized Networks; N=Narco-economy; E=Enforcement & Governance; and S=Socio-economic Impact

5. Discussion

5.1 Key findings: The study generated five critical findings on the topic of research interest through expert consensus which address RQ2 in our study discussed as follows:

First, border vulnerabilities are characterized by systemic contexts, such as informational, institutional, and socio-economic constructs, rather than mere geographic conditions (such as border porosity and terrain complexity). Even

though large stretches of the India-Myanmar and India-Bangladesh borders (International border adjacency) stretch through dense forests, river valleys, mountainous terrain, or even remote settlements, informal crossing points are at large as it is quite difficult to fence or effectively monitor these sections (border securitization issues), thereby increasing vulnerabilities of insurgency, arms smuggling, drug trafficking, refugee influx, and difficult terrain conditions. Also, the Siliguri Corridor (*aka* Chicken neck) forms a strategic chokepoint, posing connectivity risk into entire NE India region. Territorial disputes and military tension (e.g. India-China) further add to these vulnerabilities.

Second, organized networks for narco-terror nexus towards drug trafficking, illicit financial networks, and human courier systems are prominent in the border regions. Several insurgent groups use these border regions as safe haven for militancy acts. Border instability occurs mostly with cross-border movements making border security efforts quite vulnerable.

Third, the narco-economy ecosystem is quite complex. Drug trafficking scale and operations are on the high, as entire Northeast India lies adjacent to the popularly known “Golden Triangle” region (Thailand-Laos-Myanmar). Pre-cursor chemicals, synthetic drugs, including methamphetamine and heroin are produced and smuggled in large scale through the India-Myanmar border regions. These also finance the insurgent and organized criminal networks. Porous borders alleviate illegal movement of explosives, small arms and ammunition, human trafficking, and contraband goods, with criminal syndicates most often exploiting difficult terrain and weak surveillance conditions.

Fourth, enforcement and governance mechanisms have fairly evolved over the decades, yet remains weak. Several operation constraints affect the enforcement capability and governance capacities, making continuous monitoring a challenging factor due to geographic vulnerabilities, weak communication networks, surveillance systems, inadequate manpower and resource constraints. Multiple law enforcement agencies are involved in border management (such as border security force, Assam rifles, intelligence agencies, customs, state police, and local administration, etc.) leading to inter-agency coordination challenges. Information-sharing and coordinated responses among these agencies could be mostly delayed or overlapping their jurisdictions, thus affecting coordination and intelligence integration efforts. These enforcement and governance gaps are exploited by cross-border criminal networks. Other governance issues relate to lack of administrative reach to remote areas, economic

development deficits, citizenship and identity issues, tribal and ethnic complexity, humanitarian aid and refugee management challenges, and even diplomatic cross-border issues.

Fifth, the socio-economic impact due to border vulnerabilities in the NE India region are quite multifaceted. It creates serious social and economic vulnerabilities impacting on border communities for their livelihoods, public health, rehabilitation, social cohesion, and overall regional economic growth. Economic development is affected from reduced investments, illegal and informal economies, increased cost of governance. Their employment and livelihoods suffer from limited opportunities, agricultural disruptions, and exodus/migration for employment elsewhere. The social impact is drastic due to demographic changes, community and ethnic conflicts, and weak social cohesion. Public health consequences are undermined by drug use addiction prevalence and substance abuse, and acute shortage of health services professionals or facilities across the border regions. This also reduced the education and human capital development goals. All of these lead to reduced quality of life, largely impacting their socio-economic conditions.

5.2 Unexpected Findings: Two unexpected findings were also derived from the Delphi outcomes.

First, the most debated border management issue among the panel members was the policy debate on Free Movement Regime (FMR) between India-Myanmar. On one hand, the FMR allowed border-recognized communities to traditionally cross borders without a visa for limited purposes (e.g., Kukis, Nagas, Mizos) as they owned ancestral property spanning both countries. However, this facility also became vulnerable creating security (e.g., insurgency, arms smuggling, drug trafficking, migration, etc.), governance (e.g., administrative, weaker institutional capacity, inter-agency coordination, documentation, identification, etc.), and socio-economic (e.g., informal trade, smuggling, unregulated commerce, etc.) issues. Accordingly, few experts believed restoration of FMR, while others were divided whether security costs would outweigh such benefits.

Second, the panel while had expectations that enhanced border deployments should improve border security; however, the discussion reached a tie leading to an understanding that more security forces would not always mean better security delivered. It was noted that even though there is substantial presence of multiple-security agencies, still the narcotic trafficking and illegal crossings at border continue at large. Rather than militarization of the border regions, there is need

for ‘whole-of-government’ approach for quality enforcement and governance measures, along with enhanced inter-agency coordination for local intelligence and community operations. Also, future border management policies must prioritize controlling over narcotics and organized crimes, rather than concentrating only on insurgency structures.

5.3 Theoretical Contributions: This study makes three theoretical contributions –

Securitization – The study proposed a ‘differential securitization’ strategy as drugs and migration are politically and highly securitized. Less securitization is received for development deficit issues even though these have long-term socio-economic impacts. All border threats must not be securitized equally, as objectives and impact for each region differs. Excessive militarization and enforcement could undermine local community trust, and human-centric security concerns often could get neglected. Over-securitization effects are impacted from security-development imbalance in border regions. Border security narratives amongst tribal communities identify threats and co-produced in different connotations and understanding by local communities, and are quite different from the state. It is proposed that border securitization in NE India region is often shaped through competing securitization narratives that involve border communities, state agencies, and regional political actors.

Routine Activity Theory (RAT)- For the border study context, the motivated offenders are insurgents and smugglers, suitable targets being migrants, drugs, and arms routes, while weak guardianship evident in governance gaps and difficult terrains. Border vulnerabilities must therefore be conceptualized as crime opportunity structures, not purely security failure. Also, guardianship concept must expand beyond the state formal law enforcement structures to include tribal community leaders, village councils, community intelligence networks, and even the civil society elements. In terms of digital and networked crimes, several advanced/emerging technologies support encrypted communications, digital financial transactions, or even social media recruitment opportunities. It is proposed that RAT must adapt to such transnational border crime ecosystems, where capable guardianship is co-produced by state institutions and community-centric governance systems.

Border Governance Theory – The study identifies border governance to be poly-centric, rather than state-centric. A multi-governance model is crucial and important as several agencies/institutions from central/state are involved. It is proposed that quality of

governance could be a strong predictor of border vulnerability than its permeability. It is evidenced that more than border fencing issues, the border concerns about poor road infrastructure, weaker institutions, and unemployment issues are more critical.

Narco-Insurgency Nexus Theory – There is a growing concern about hybrid criminal-insurgency networks along border regions. Also, traditional definitions of insurgents and criminal networks are highly blurred. There is an urgent need to move beyond narco-insurgency to criminal-insurgency convergence. Financial incentives have promising advantages over political ideologies. It is found that illicit economic opportunities may be sustained due to persistent insurgency. Much more, governance failure must be identified as intervening variable/indicator, given the fact of weaker institutions, high corruption, and limited economic opportunities in border regions. Accordingly, the narcotics and insurgency relationship is mediated through quality of governance, especially in weakly governed border spaces.

5.4 Integrated Theoretical contribution - The comprehensive Delphi study outcomes have been much more enlightened on the theme, and potential contributes in generation of a newer integrated conceptual framework – preferably operationalized and theorized as “**B-O-N-E-S framework for Border Management**”. These comprise: **B**-Border vulnerability; **O**-Organized networks; **N**-Narco-economy; **E**-Enforcement & Governance; and, **S**-Socio-economic impact. A proposed conceptual BONES framework is depicted in Figure 1.

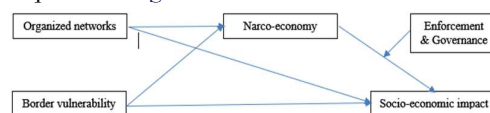


Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual B-O-N-E-S framework for Border Management

(Source: Conceptualised by researcher based on Delphi outcomes)

5.5 Implications of the Study

This study seeking expert consensus explored RQ3 to resolve most effective policy levers for mitigating adverse socio-economic impacts without compromising border security requirement. The implications of the study highlight useful directions as:

Theoretical – The study advances border security literature demonstrating that border vulnerabilities are practically multi-dimensional and less explicable through traditional military-security frameworks. There is need for paradigm shift from state-centric border security perspectives to a broader enforcement and governance framework perspective that

integrates institutional, social, and economic factors. The earlier discussed theoretical contributions to securitization, routine activity, border governance, and narco-insurgency nexus theories potential contribute to existing theories.

Policy – Integrated border management policies and strategies are desired over traditional fencing and military force deployments alone. A multi-layered consolidated approach is necessary for security, governance, development, and diplomacy issues, which must be simultaneously addressed. Policies must reflect and include enhanced cross-border cooperation initiatives to enforce and govern border issues, with adequate resource allocations.

Governance – There is need for improved institutional presence in border regions through strengthened administrative capacities. Better coordination among multi-agencies with focus on community-based governance, and whole-of-government approach must be reflected in governance matters and policy.

Socio-economic – Economic development is critical and contributes to border security and stability. Several development initiatives could reduce border vulnerabilities. There is more need for human security focus and reduction of illicit economies through establishing alternate livelihood initiatives.

Security and enforcement: More emphasis is required on collective intelligence and information sharing between enforcement agencies. Adopting and integration of more advanced/emerging technologies (e.g., drones, satellite surveillance systems, Artificial Intelligence integrated systems, and even integrated border management systems) could benefit in dismantling transnational criminal/trafficking networks. Prioritized attention must be given to high-risk border regions.

Methodological – Expert consensus is highly valuable and demonstrated its useful through Delphi method. Where empirical data is limited or incomplete, Delphi provides a systematic and structured approach for prioritizing indicators through iteration and group consensus. It established a strong framework for future research on border vulnerabilities.

5.6 Limitations of the Study: This study has numerous limitations:

- Modest Delphi panel size (n=18 experts), but consistent with Delphi norms
- Limited generalizability of NE India region specific study to other contexts
- Anti-narcotics law enforcement topic is sensitive and may have restricted experts to self-censor (e.g., issues of corruption, political nexus, etc.)

- Delphi study captured expert opinion at particular single point in time, however, rapidly changing ecosystems along India-Myanmar border could demand time-bound responses
- Representation from affected communities (e.g. drug users and their family members) in the study reflects institutional rather than lived-experience perspectives

6. Conclusion

The study was systematically approached employing the Delphi study method involving highly qualified expert consensus to investigate multidimensional issues and border vulnerabilities persistent in Northeast India border regions. Primarily, the structure literature review provided raw inputs on key indicators relevant to the theme, and subsequent Delphi approach helped reach consensus on unique and key indicators for the study. The study findings elicited after expert consensus and discussions reveal that border vulnerability concerns extend beyond traditional apprehensions of territorial security. These are rather deeply rooted within enforcement and governance, socio-economic conditions, and transnational border relations and dynamics. While border geography, insurgents, trafficking networks, and illegal cross-border migration are serious concerns, the study demonstrates that such threats are further amplified from weak institutional frameworks, development deficits, weak inter-agency coordination, uneven socio-economic development, and inadequate administrative reach are drivers of current insecurity concerns. The study also highlights growing nexus between organized criminal and insurgent networks, drug trafficking, organized crimes, indicating much more hybrid criminal-insurgent ecosystems. This underscores a critical need to reform security and development dimensions for border regions through integrated response systems. From a theoretical perspective, the study contributed to all four theoretical perspectives as discussed earlier. The study concludes that Northeast India border region is highly sensitive to border vulnerabilities and requires a paradigm shift from earlier security-centric to much more integrated framework combining enforcement, governance, community participation, local economic development, institutional coordination, and regional cooperation. The findings provide strong foundation for evidence-based policy-making, development of integrated and comprehensive border management strategies capable to address the current complex realities of NE India border region and ecosystems. Future scholarly inquiry may pursue quantitative validation of such Delphi findings, development

of a border vulnerability index, investigate other border regions also, conduct longitudinal studies of emerging border threats, advanced technology and smart border management systems, and include more community perspectives on border security and governance aspects. Such research outcomes could contribute to better and holistic understanding of real-world border vulnerabilities, improve and support sustainable and evidence-based policies for border governance.

Acknowledgements

The authors gratefully acknowledge all the professionals and subject-matter experts who participated in the Delphi study panel. Their voluntary participation, valuable time, professional experience, and insightful contributions were instrumental in achieving expert consensus and enriching the quality of this research. The authors sincerely appreciate their willingness to share their knowledge and perspectives throughout the Delphi process. Due to ethical reasons the names and designations of Delphi experts are kept anonymous and personal responses confidential in view of national security aspects.

References

- Abd Hair Awang, J. S., Bakar, N. R. A., Abdullah, M. Y., & Liu, O. P. (2013). Informal cross-border trade Sarawak (Malaysia)-Kalimantan (Indonesia): A catalyst for border community's development. *Asian Social Science*, 9(4), 167-173.
- Ajah, B. O., & Tshimangadzo, O. M. (2026). State Failure and the Rise of Organised Crime: A Case Study of Governance Gaps in Nigeria. *African Renaissance*, 23(1), 123.
- Ari, T., & Çetindişli, Ö. G. (2025). Revisiting Securitization Theory within the context of North Korea: A theoretical analysis of the success of Trump's policy. *All Azimuth: A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace*, 14(2), 210-235.
- Arifin, M. A. N., Putro, H. P. H., & Firman, T. (2024). Territorial politics in cross-border local development strategies in the Krayan-Ba'Kelalan region at the Indonesia-Malaysia border. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 39(2), 281-305.
- Balhara, Y. P. S., Sarkar, S., & Rajguru, A. J. (2024). Drug-related offences in India: Observations and insights from the secondary analysis of the data from the National Crimes Record Bureau. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine*, 46(6), 527-534.
- Baysal, B. (2020). 20 years of securitization: Strengths, limitations and a new dual framework. *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi*, 17(67), 3-20.
- Belkacem, R., & Pigeron-Piroth, I. (2011). Travail frontalier et développement transfrontalier au sein de la Grande Région Saar-Lor-Lux. *Géo-Regards: Revue Neuchâteloise de Géographie*, (4).
- Branic, N. (2015). Routine activities theory. *The encyclopedia of crime and punishment*, 1-3.
- Bunker, R. (Ed.). (2013). *Criminal insurgencies in Mexico and the Americas: the gangs and cartels wage war*. Routledge.
- Chafale, J., Avthankar, A., Shelke, N., Khan, T. H., Vanam, H., & Pimpalkar, A. (2026, February). Spatio-Temporal Modelling and Ensemble Risk Forecasting of Drug-Trafficking Surveillance Using NDPS Records in India. In *2026 International Conference on Emerging Systems and Intelligent Computing (ESIC)* (pp. 222-227). IEEE.
- Chakrapani, V., Newman, P. A., Shunmugam, M., & Dubrow, R. (2011). Social-structural contexts of needle and syringe sharing behaviours of HIV-positive injecting drug users in Manipur, India: a mixed methods investigation. *Harm Reduction Journal*, 8(1), 9.
- Chakrapani, V., Newman, P. A., Shunmugam, M., & Dubrow, R. (2011). Social-structural contexts of needle and syringe sharing behaviours of HIV-positive injecting drug users in Manipur, India: a mixed methods investigation. *Harm Reduction Journal*, 8(1), 9.
- Choldan, T. (2024). Impact of India-China Border Conflicts on the Changpas of Eastern Ladakh. *Strategic Analysis*, 48(2), 83-95.
- Clarke, R. V. (2009). Situational crime prevention: Theoretical background and current practice. In *Handbook on crime and deviance* (pp. 259-276). New York, NY: Springer New York.
- Cornell, S. E. (2007). Narcotics and armed conflict: Interaction and implications. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 30(3), 207-227.
- Dalkey, N., & Helmer, O. (1963). An experimental application of the Delphi method to the use of experts. *Management science*, 9(3), 458-467.
- Das, P. (2022). *India's approach to border management: from barriers to bridges*. Routledge.
- Doyle, T. (2010). Collaborative border management. *World Customs Journal*, 4(1), 15-22.
- Dulebová, I., & Štefančík, R. (2017). Securitization theory of the Copenhagen school from the perspective of discourse analysis and political linguistics. *XLinguae*, 10(2), 51-62.
- Dupeyron, B., Noferini, A., & Payan, T. (Eds.). (2023). *Agents and structures in cross-border governance: North American and European perspectives*. University of Toronto Press.
- Gairola, G., & Ganguly, A. N. (2022). Cross-Border Trade in Moreh, Manipur: A Study of Socio-Economic Transformation. *Journal of Pharmaceutical Negative Results*, 13(4).
- Ghuman, R. S., Singh, J., & Kaur, G. (2023). *Dynamics of drug addiction and abuse in India*. Routledge India.
- Grigor'eva, K. S. (2024). Others as Security Threats: Securitizing Discourses, Social Magic, and the Bureaucratic Field. *Changing Societies & Personalities*. 2024. Vol. 8. Iss. 2: *Demographic Well-Being as a Factor of Social Development*, 8(2), 418-442.

- Indraswari, F. (2024). Rethinking border management: A human security approach to combating human trafficking in the Mekong subregion. *Journal of ASEAN Studies*, 12(2), 353-382.
- Irrera, D. (2023). Criminality and Delinquency: The Impact on Regional and Global Security. In *Routledge Handbook of the Future of Warfare* (pp. 284-294). Routledge.
- Kermode, M., Deutschmann, P., Arunkumar, M. C., & Manning, G. (2013). Injecting drug use and HIV in northeast India: negotiating a public health response in a complex environment. In *Health, Culture and Religion in South Asia* (pp. 47-57). Routledge.
- Kunz, R., Lavenex, S., & Panizzon, M. (Eds.). (2011). *Multilayered migration governance*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Lacina, B. (2009). The problem of political stability in Northeast India: Local ethnic autocracy and the rule of law. *Asian survey*, 49(6), 998-1020.
- Lawson, C., & Bersin, A. (2020). Collaborative border management. *World Customs Journal*, 14(1), 31-40.
- Malik, H. Y. (2015). Siliguri: A geopolitical manoeuvre corridor in the Eastern Himalayan region for China and India. *Contemporary Chinese Political Economy and Strategic Relations*, 1(3), 699.
- Minnaar, A. (2022). Border security: An essential but effective tool in combatting cross-border crime. In *The Handbook of Security* (pp. 357-378). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Miró, F. (2014). Routine activity theory. *The encyclopedia of theoretical criminology*, 1-7.
- Mohammad, T., Nooraini, I., & Hussin, N. A. M. (2020). Operationalizing routine activity theory in juvenile delinquency: A social work perspective. *International Social Work*, 63(2), 220-231.
- Nayal, M., & Bahuguna, R. (2025). Modernising drug law enforcement in India through legal-tech: comparative insights from Australia and the UK. *Digital Policy, Regulation and Governance*, 1-20.
- Noori, S. (2022). Suspicious infrastructures: automating border control and the multiplication of mistrust through biometric e-gates. *Geopolitics*, 27(4), 1117-1139.
- Panda, N. B. (2019). Beyond 'Frontier': Cultural genealogy of India's Look East/Act East policy in Northeast India from a contemporary perspective. In *Northeast India and India's Act East Policy* (pp. 87-102). Routledge.
- Pratt, T. C., Holtfreter, K., & Reisig, M. D. (2010). Routine online activity and internet fraud targeting: Extending the generality of routine activity theory. *Journal of research in crime and delinquency*, 47(3), 267-296.
- Rahmati, F. (2025). Strategic Location of Siliguri Corridor and Its Issues. In *The Solidarity Approach in Geography: Cases from the Indian Subcontinent* (pp. 239-246). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Raimondo, G. (2025). Integrated Border Management. In *Elgar Concise Encyclopedia of Migration and Asylum Law* (pp. 221-227). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Saisin, A., Somboonboorana, S., Laishram, R. S., & Chaisingkananont, S. (2023). Securitization in Moreh town of Manipur State, India and the impact of the Myanmar political conflict. *Research in Globalization*, 7, 100150.
- Sarin, E., Samson, L., Sweat, M., & Beyrer, C. (2011). Human rights abuses and suicidal ideation among male injecting drug users in Delhi, India. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 22(2), 161-166.
- Silva, C. C. V., & Pereira, A. E. (2024). Securitization theory and its empirical application: a literature review. *Revista de Sociologia e Política*, 32, e019.
- Singh, N. K., & Nunes, W. (2013). Drug trafficking and narco-terrorism as security threats: a study of India's North-east. *India Quarterly*, 69(1), 65-82.
- Singh, S., & Chadda, R. (2025). Drug control: initiatives from India. *BJPsych International*, 22(2), 55-58.
- Singh, S., & Chadda, R. (2025). Drug control: initiatives from India. *BJPsych International*, 22(2), 55-58.
- Sinha, S. (2017). The Strategic Use of Peace: Non-State Armed Groups and Subnational Peacebuilding Mechanisms in Northeastern India. *Democracy and Security*, 13(4), 273-303.
- Sjöstedt, R. (2013). Ideas, identities and internalization: Explaining securitizing moves. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 48(1), 143-164.
- Spennemann, D. H. (2021). "No entry into New South Wales": COVID-19 and the historic and contemporary trajectories of the effects of border closures on an Australian cross-border community. *Land*, 10(6), 610.
- Stępk, M. (2022). The Copenhagen school and beyond. A closer look at securitisation

- theory. In *Identifying Security Logics in the EU Policy Discourse: The "Migration Crisis" and the EU* (pp. 17-31). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Ünal, M. C. (2020). Deciphering the crime-terror Nexus: an empirical analysis of the structural characteristics of terrorists in Narco-terror networks. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 73(2), 181-216.
- Williams, M. C. (2010). The continuing evolution of securitization theory. In *Securitization Theory* (pp. 226-236). Routledge.
- Wong Villanueva, J. L., Kidokoro, T., & Seta, F. (2023). A governance theory for cross-border regions: Identifying principles and processes with grounded theory. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 38(1), 95-118.
- Zayats, D. V., Zotova, M. V., Turov, N. L., & Klyuchnikov, M. I. (2017). Crisis of Russian-Ukrainian Relations: Consequences for Cross-Border Cooperation in Belgorod Oblast. *Izvestiya Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk. Seriya Geograficheskaya*, (5), 42-56.
- Bharadwaj, K., Sharma, S., & de Sousa, B. B. (2026). An Analytical Study on Cross-Border Logistics of the India-Bhutan Border Region: A Comprehensive Systematic Literature Review. *AI-Enabled Strategies for Sustainable Cross-Border Logistics*, 143-164.
- Kaur, A., & Metcalfe, I. (Eds.). (2006). *Mobility, labour migration and border controls in Asia*. Springer.
- Kobayashi, K., Rashid, K. A., Furuichi, M., & Anderson, W. P. (Eds.). (2017). *Economic integration and regional development: The ASEAN economic community*. Routledge.
- Ríos-González, C. M. (2024). Border Health: Challenges and Opportunities for Border Community Wellness. *Medicina clínica y social*, 8(1), 124-128.
- Bangun, B. H., Kinanti, F. M., & Darajati, M. R. (2024). Economic security in border areas: The fulfillment of community welfare. *Lampung Journal of International Law*, 6(2), 69-82.
- Lili, P., Nurlukman, A. D., Amiludin, A., & Aditya, T. (2024). Enhancing security, economy, and education: A policy analysis of the Indonesia-Malaysia border region. *Lex Scientia Law Review*, 8(2), 743-776.