

CHAPTER: 1

INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter deals with the historical background of Indo-Myanmar relations. To understand the present Indo-Myanmar relations it is of utmost important to know the historical relations of the two countries. In order to do so, the historical tie of India and Myanmar is thematically divided into two main phase of relations: the pre-colonial and colonial phase. In the first phase the study is further sub-divided into an ancient and medieval period with an attempt to give clarity of the relations over the civilizations. Nonetheless it also covers on how Indian civilization influences in the Myanmarese ways of life. The second phase is explicitly a contextualization of the Indo-Myanmar relations under the colonial hegemony. It dwells on how India and Myanmar comprehensively join hands during the struggles for self-determination and what significance does evolves through this relation. In course of this phase the extent India and Myanmar build mutual ties with one another is also lucidly examine and what benefit does it imbibe for both the countries is another area of interest. The minute understanding of the historical relations is significant in order to understand the post-independence relationships of the two countries. The legacy of the historical relations is always important to understand the present form of relations because it can unearth the depth of relations, India and Myanmar would be possible to maneuver the present ties base on the share historical relations. Without a doubt, the geographical importance of the Northeast is also expounded as it symbolizes a gateway for the two countries since time immemorial.

1.1. Historical Relations of India and Myanmar: *The Pre-Colonial Phase*

Myanmar, earlier known as Burma, is one of the largest Southeast Asian countries in terms of physical geography and it is situated in a very strategic location. Since the ancient time, Myanmar is well known for the transit centre of world particularly for trade and commerce because of its confluence to different popular civilizations in the sub-region through the continental and maritime routes.¹ Nonetheless, though the landscaped was at the luxurious hub of trade and commerce but it, for many civilizations, does not opened door for interaction with others thus it comparatively stand out from the perpetual conflicts of barbarianism. As a result there was no account of external aggression in Myanmar until the colonization of imperial power entered in the eighteen century. The historical account demonstrates of having contact with outside world began with China

¹ H.B Sarkar. (1985). *Cultural Relations between India and Southeast Asian Countries*. Delhi: Indian Council for Cultural Relations and Motilal Banarsidass, p. 247.

and India, however, it was purely of sharing ideas, culture and trade and not of aggression.²

The Myanmar is borders with South China, Chittagong of Bangladesh, three Southeast Asian countries and the Northeast on Indian side with the encirclement by the sea of Bay of Bengal in the south.³ It is an area of 676, 552 km² with long coastline of the Indian ocean forming a natural boundary to the south. Roughly in diamond shape, Myanmar is often compared to a 'kite' with a trailing of tail along one side.⁴ This location gives a strategic advantage and a centre of trade vis-à-vis possess huge untapped natural resources. Thus India's contact with the Myanmarese was to explore and exploit the natural resources besides the influence of Buddhism.

In ancient time, the Indo-Myanmar relation began as early as 500 B.C., when Indian came into contact with the dominant race of Myanmar i.e., the Pyus in the north and the Talaings in the south.⁵ This contact between the two kingdoms both by land and sea had been established in the Maurya period and in all probability by the first century A.D., Tagaung in the north, old Prome on the Irrawaddy and Thaton on the sea coast possessed Indian colonies or at least were strongly subject to Indian influence.⁶ Likely it expanded as there was evident of Vaisnava and Saiva sculptures, Buddhist stupas, brick buildings and terracottas in or closely related to Gupta traditions have been found in the above and other places.⁷ Until the arrival of Indian cultural influence Myanmar was rather embracing traditional pragmatism because contact with China embarks no sustainable development. Once India came into contact with Myanmar it has maintain for a long time taking advantage of the geographical proximity. Hence after the relationships has grown to a sporadic interaction between the two civilizations and expanded enormously in different spectrums such as trade and commerce, cultural exchange,

² Patit Paban Mishra (1973). *Cultural rapprochement between India and Southeast Asia*. Delhi: National Book Organization, pp. 46-47. See also at Christie, Jan Wisseman (1998). The medieval Tamil-language inscription in Southeast Asia and China. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 29 (2), p. 239.

³ The Europa world year book (1997). London, Europa Publications, p. 2321.

⁴ Aung San Suu Kyi (1991). *Freedom from fear and other writings*. Penguin Books, p.39.

⁵ Kapila Vatsyayan (2006). *The cultural heritage of india*. Vol. VII The ARTS, Part one, p. 813.

⁶ Ibid, p. 813.

⁷ Ibid, p. 815.

political integration etc. Ever since the two kingdoms have built intimacy and when it grew the interactions, political and diplomatic relations come to vanguard with each other.

The earliest reference of 'suvarnabhumi' or 'golden land' is found in Buddhist legends where it mentioned that Indian had occupied that land adjoining to the sea coast. This golden isle about which even Ptolemy referred in his 'Geography' is generally accepted as a region in which modern Myanmar falls.⁸ Above that, the name resembles the Pali form of designation. Further, the close connection between the both countries is proved by the reference made by the Chinese text that there was regular trade between India and upper Burma (Myanmar) as early as second century B.C. through the land route.⁹ The influence of Hindu culture can be seen in the name of various cities of Myanmar, where 'Rama' has been applied to several place on Myanmarese coast. For instance, the classic name of the city of Moulmein at that time was 'Ramaapura' and there was also Ramanagar not far from Rangoon.¹⁰ Among the various ethnic communities of Myanmar, Mons were the first to come into contact with Indian culture and civilization, which can also be seen affirmed by their structure of language, which has various Sanskrit and Pali words in it.¹¹

In another account from the Myanmarese legends indicate that Indian were the one to come into contact with their kingdom from different directions. The first and foremost contact began from the sea route in Lower Myanmar via India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands followed by through the land route. Notably, the Indian contact with Myanmar was mostly from the South Indian kingdoms at the inception as these kingdoms has more assessed on the sea to venture new places.¹² In that context, this part of people made their attempt and slowly built trade contact with Myanmar in the delta of Irrawaddy

⁸ P. Arthur Phayre (1883). History of Burma including Burma proper, pegu, Taungu, Tenassirim and Arakan. London, Trubner's & Co. Ludgate Hills, p. 25.

⁹ Uma Shankar Singh (1979). *Burma and India (1948-1962)*. New Delhi: IBH Publishing Co., p. 7.

¹⁰ P. Arthur Phayre (1883). Op.cit. p. 32.

¹¹ Jan Wisseman Christie (1998). The medieval Tamil-language inscription in Southeast Asia and China. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 29 (2), p. 247.

¹² Kenneth R. Hall (1985). Maritime trade and state development in early Southeast Asia. Honolulu: Sage publication, pp. 26-35.

river and adjoining coasts including Tenasserin. As the interaction between the two civilizations grew, without unnoticed, the Indian religion and culture besides other become popular in the form of religion, culture, trade, literature, arts and architecture etc. and the Myanmarese particularly the ethnic minorities got assimilated with the Indian system.¹³ Since the ancient time, huge number of Indian also penetrates into different parts of Myanmar and the places like Thaton, Prome, Pegu, Yangon and Arakan Coast are populated by Indian immigrants.

Even during the medieval period or in the early 11th century, there are many accounts of Myanmarese kings interested to the popularity of Indian concepts and civilizations. From the Anawratha dynasty, Konbaung dynasty to the period of setting up British rule in the sub-region, Myanmar has been closely remain contact with the Indian. The Myanmarese admires the Indian practices viz. administrative system, judicial system, language, cultures, religions, arts and sculptures etc.¹⁴ Many accounts enlightens that the kings of Myanmar from time to time contact with Indian kings. For instance, the marriage of Anawratha with Indian princess of Vaisali is few examples. Similarly, the successors of Anawratha followed his tradition of the fusion of Indian culture.¹⁵ In later years, the Knoabaung dynasty also admired the Indian religious practice, administrative system, culture, language and social practices etc. Jan Wisseman Christie describes that trade also plays a dominant role on integration of south India with Myanmar, particularly the south Indian merchant guild from ninth to fourteenth century on export of cotton textiles.¹⁶ As a result, Myanmar shares with India a part of a common heritage, and it become more unified when Myanmar falls within the suzerainty of British Indian Empire in 1886.

1.2. Influence of Indian Civilization in Myanmar

India has a very strong historical relation with Myanmar from the time immemorial. The relation was in idyllic bliss since the reigned of King Asoka the Great and thence this relationship germinates to a strong bond and continues to shares with each

¹³ Bertie Reginald Pearn (1946). *The Indian in Burma*. Ledbury: Le Play House.

¹⁴ Uma Shankar Singh (1979). *Op.cit.* p. 8-9.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 10. For detail see also at R.C. Majumdar (1965). *Ancient Indian civilization in South-east Asia*. Baroda: Baroda Oriental Institute.

¹⁶ Jan Wisseman Christie (1998). *Op.cit.* p. 244.

other intrinsic values for ages. The historical account also reveals that India maintains cordial relations with the neighbouring kingdoms, and not through its military prowess, although India's power reached its zenith during the Mogul dynasty in the seventeenth century. Some of India's influences with Myanmarese civilization in course of relations before the arrival of colonialism are:

a. Political Influence

India has a great political influence on the Myanmarese civilization since the time of Mauryan dynasty. After the completion of the third Buddhist Council at Pataliputra in 241 B.C., the king Asoka the Great send two of his revered monks Sona and Uttara to Myanmar, at the inception, to spread the gospel of Buddhism but thereafter this visit has spill over to diverse areas of relationship including political relation between the two civilizations.¹⁷ In addition to that, the famous Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang also made a reference of the close connection of India and Myanmar as early as seventh century.¹⁸ Even during the medieval period, there are accounts which the Myanmarese monarchs adopts Indian concepts of kingship, royal duties, powers, court etiquette, divine origin, ministrations of priests at the palace, royal patronage of Buddhist religion, and acceptance of Hindu Code of Manu as the prime source of law.¹⁹ It also elucidates that the king Anawratha (1044-1077 A.D.) was very fond of India and married the princess of Vaisali had bear many symbols dating back to his reign in Sanskrit text have been found in various part of Myanmar and his greatest achievement was the complete transformation of Myanmarese culture by its fusion with hindu based Mon cultures.²⁰ This tradition of the fusion was continued by his son king Kyanzisha (1084-1112 A.D.) who also desired his daughter to marry to Indian prince of Pattikena, however, it ended in tragedy with the death of the prince yet the love episode continue to reflect in the form of poems and songs in Myanmar.²¹ In that way, the Indian political influences have greatly dominated

¹⁷ Kapila Vatsyayan (2006). *The cultural heritage of India*, Vol. VII, The Arts. Kolkata: Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture. Also see at Romila Thapar (1963). *Asoka and the decline of the Mauryas*. New Delhi, Oxford University Press, p. 47.

¹⁸ Rajshekar (1999). *Myanmar's nationalist movement (1906-1948) and India*. (Ph.D. Thesis, CSCSASPS/SIS/JNU), New Delhi, p. 18.

¹⁹ D.R. Sardesai (1982). *Southeast India-Past and Present*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, p. 286.

²⁰ Rajshekhar (1999). *Op.cit.* p. 20.

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 21.

in Myanmarese kingdom. The enthusiasm of Myanmarese kings to follow Indian pattern of politics, beliefs, cultures vis-à-vis architecture was inspired by the practices of Indian kings in India. Another account is that the king Alaungsithu had visited the western province of his dominion and travelled through Arakan that is adjoining to Bengal.²² Thereafter, he made an administrative law reform with regulating weight and measure unit in similar way that is widely practice in India during the time. Even after the Anawratha dynasty was overthrown by Kublai khan in the thirteen century, there are accounts of many contact between India and Myanmar, and in this intercourse the Myanmarese king learned court practice of India such as categorization of peasants, traders, astrologers etc.²³ Even the last dynasty of Myanmar founded by Alaungpaya, commonly called Konbaung dynasty (1752-1885) revived the glories of Myanmarese kingdom and extended its boundaries beyond Arakan to cover Assam and Manipur, which eventually led to first Anglo-Burmese war in 1824. He also followed the Indian pattern of royalty and authorized the compilation of a new Burmese Law Code called 'Manu Kye Dhammathat'.²⁴ There is one important point to note is that in this long interaction of Indian and Myanmarese kings, there was no account of India entering Myanmar as an invader, but as non-violent cultural and political messenger of India civilization. Even at glorious times of Mauryan dynasty when India was the greatest power of Asia, India's political and cultural influences was not as an aggressor but as a mild heart sharing of the good practices.

b. Religious and Cultural Influence

The Indo-Myanmar relations have been guided by the shared religious and cultural factor throughout the recorded history. In the ancient and medieval period, until the colonialism arrived, India and China are two dominant forces of cultural development in the Southeastern Asian world. Thus every society, in the sub-region, emphatically possessed a modest degree of influence either from India or China.²⁵ In this way, India

²² P. Arthur Phayre (1883). Op.cit. pp. 39-40

²³ Rajshekhar (1999). Op.cit. p. 26.

²⁴ Uma Shankar Singh (1979). Op. cit. p. 11.

²⁵ John T. McAlister ed. (1973). South East Asia: The politics of national integration. New York: , p.320. See also at Ashin Siri Okkantha (1990). *History of Buddhism in Arakan*. (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Calcutta), Kolkata, p. 32.

has established a historical and cultural links with the Southeast Asia and it has become part of shaping India's policy towards Asian countries. India's traditional culture and religion plays a very important role to accentuate and integrate this part of the world. So far as India and Myanmar are concerned, the people since time immemorial have built friendly contact with each other. The cultural influence of India on Myanmar was part of the process of industrialization or Sankritization for the latter and it was essentially an expansion of Indian conception of royalty.²⁶ Indian expansionism was not delimited in time and space but it was a phenomenon that touches vast and diverse regions and lasted several centuries involving in successive waves and Myanmar was one of the first countries to have fall within the sphere. The process of cultural assimilation in Myanmar started since the pre-Christian era and by seventh century Myanmar embraced Buddhism.²⁷ This impact has touched in various aspects of the Myanmar lives through peaceful cultural and religious teaching. First direct Myanmarese contact with Indian cultures, according to Cady, is seen to have been come through Manipur in 11th century prior to Myanmarese era of expansion. This contact was concerned mainly with tantric elements of Mahayana Buddhism.²⁸ The Indian immigrants who came to Myanmar were people from different profession such as monks, traders, Brahmins and Ksatriyas.²⁹ Following different arts and crafts they came in different waves and left behind Indian culture in the domain of sciences, arts, religions and spiritual aspiration.

The most important part of India that greatly influence on Myanmar was Buddhism, it was a foundation of the cultural association. The religion of Buddhism, by virtue of its tolerant spirit, sympathetic attitudes, rational outlook and progressive nature left a permanent mark on the Myanmarese society.³⁰ The Buddhist missionaries reached the offshore of Myanmar and slowly spread its influence to different parts of Myanmar, mostly in lower Myanmar. Latter it was divided into three sects – Theravada, Mahayana and Tantrayana – and gained tremendous popularity among the ethnic minorities, mostly

²⁶ G. Coedes (1968). *The Indianized states of South East Asia*. Honolulu, pp. 15-16.

²⁷ Ton That Thein (1963). *India and South East Asia: 1947-60*. Geneva, p. 150

²⁸ John F. Cady (1964). *South-East Asia and its historical development*. London: Mac Hill, p. 116.

²⁹ Bipan Chandra, Amalis Tripathi & Barun De (1972). *Freedom Struggle*. New Delhi: National Book Trust, p. 438.

³⁰ R. L. Soni (1952). *A cultural study of Burmese era*. Mandalay: p. 143.

the Mon.³¹ Apart from Buddhism, the Hinduism too had its impact in Myanmar and its influence was seen in old kingdom of Pegu, which was also called as Sri Ksetra, a sacred named of Puri from Orissa.³² Among the other usages borrowed from Hinduism was the practiced of daily washing with holy water of the image in the Arakan temple of Mandalay. Even the Myanmar calendar comes from India where astronomy was studied as a science in ancient days. Moreover, the dancing and musical instruments are the modification of the ancient Indian dancing and musical instrument.³³ In view of all that mentioned above, one can say that the Indian cultural and religious influence got assimilated in every branch of Myanmar life.

c. Linguistic Influence

The linguistic influence of India in Myanmar is dating back to the ancient time. This linguistic assimilation is profoundly regarded by both Indian and Myanmar to account the inseparable bond of the two civilizations. At the inception, the people of Pegu were first influenced by the Indian language and script,³⁴ the city became accustomed to Indian language after the Indian at a remote time crossed the sea and established settlement in the delta of Irrawaddy and on the adjoining coast. The Buddhist legends describes that the country they occupied became known as 'Suvarnabhumi' or 'Golden Land'.³⁵ This name resembles the Pali form of designation. Historian Lassen observes that the country named by that geography, Chryse, means approximately the present Pegu and the 'Thahtun' or 'Thaton' the native name of the ancient capital or more correctly by Phayre Htautun has in the Mon language has the same significance as the Sanskrit name.³⁶ Among the various ethnic communities of Myanmar, Mons were the first to come into contact with Indian as a result there is similarity of the structure of language, which has various Sankrit and Pali words, and one of the interesting features of fusion

³¹ Lokesh Chandra *et.al.* ed. (1971). *India's contribution to world thought and culture*. Madras: , p.439.

Also see at Donald Eugene Smith (1965). *Religion and Politics in Burma*. New Jersey.

³² R. L. Soni (1952). *Op.cit.* p. 145.

³³ S.B. Mookerji (1959). *India and Burma through ages*, vol. 2. Rangoon: Unites Asia, p. 525.

³⁴ Jan Wissemann Christie (1998). *Op. cit.* p. 239-268.

³⁵ Kapila Vatsyayan (2006). *Op. cit.* p. 801.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 812. Also see at Arthur P. Phayre (1969). *History of Burma including Burma Proper, Pegu, Taungu, Tenasserim, and Arakan: From the Earliest Time to the End of the First War with British India*. New York: Trübner & Company.

was that they modeled Thai scripts on the South Indian script name ‘Pallava Grasthi’.³⁷ The other significant was that South Indian script ‘Pallava Grasthi’ was largely applied on the development of Myanmarese linguistic basic through Mon script.³⁸ This linguistic links became a pivotal vehicle for the dissemination of the Indianized Mon culture, Law and literature.

d. Economic Influence

India’s economic influence to the Myanmarese began largely due to availability of abundant resources in Myanmar. Above that Myanmar is a close neighbour with political, cultural and religiously friendly to India thus doing trade with Myanmar has no unforeseen threat to the business. The economic linked started with trading activities and it goes back to the ancient times – trading routes between the two countries are carried forward through land and sea route.³⁹ It is generally held that Indian traders came to Myanmar using largely the sea routes for carrying out their trading activities, and by 50 A.D. Indian traders were found permanent Hindu and Buddhist settlements in the town along the coast of Myanmar.⁴⁰ Thereafter, until the British came, Indian traders played an unhampered role in shaping the economy of Myanmar. Mostly the trade was on gold, jewelries, handicrafts, precious stones, agriculture products and other like sales of idols and other religious items. The Myanmar kings are kind and shown good hospitality to the Indians thus many Indian traders including farmers and moneylenders began to flocked in Myanmar and started colonies in the Coast of Tenasserin.⁴¹ Myanmar has slowly become a centre of Indian traders as it favors profit for the Indian traders in comparison to India. This trader does not indulged in creating animosity like others but confined exclusively on trade. The Indo-Myanmar economic relations took a remarkable turn as a result of the Indian influx to Myanmar. With the conquest of lower Myanmar by the English East Indian Company in 1826 the Indian immigration into Myanmar started on a large scale

³⁷ Janice Stargardt (2000). *Tracing through things: the Oldest Pali Texts and the Early Buddhist Archaeology of India and Burma*. Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.

³⁸ Sardesai, D.R. (1981). *Southeast India-past and present*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, p. 228.

³⁹ N.R. Chakravarti (1971). *Op.cit.* p. 5.

⁴⁰ G. E. Harvey (1924). *Outline of Burmese History*. Calcutta: Longmans.

⁴¹ Kenneth R. Hall (1999). Coinage, Trade and Economy in early South India and Its Southeast Asian Neighbours. *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 36 (4), p. 438.

and it has almost trebled in number between 1861 and 1871.⁴² When Myanmar became a province of British India, thousands of Indian moved into the province of Myanmar. The average Myanmarese of those days was less industrious than the Indian and Chinese.⁴³ Thus the Parsees from Bombay, the Chettiyars and Chulin Muslims from Madras, the Kokka Muslims from Malayalam, the Khojas, the Boras and the Menons from Gujarat and Hindu jewelers and Goldsmiths from northern India particularly controlled the economic and commercial life of Myanmar till 1940.⁴⁴

1.3. Subjugation of Myanmar: A Colonial Phase

Towards the end of eighteenth century and beginning of nineteenth century, the East India Company that has already established in India was drawn into Myanmar affairs as part of their policy to defend its interest in the Northeastern frontier of India as well as prompted by the necessity to defence the Arakan frontier for they are suspicious of Myanmarese king invading Bengal. By the year 1819, the Kingdom of Myanmar and the East India Company led to a collision and this trend continued until India and Myanmar were totally subjugated under their suzerainty. In the same year, the Marathas were crushed thereby giving the British imperial power enough time to concentrate on the eastern borders. Coincidentally, Myanmar also saw the death of King Bodama Paya, leaving Myanmar in the hands of less scrupulous successors thus after 1819 event proved to be equally hostile between the British and Myanmarese kingdom.⁴⁵ With the British paramountcy increased in the sub-region, in the year 1824, the first Anglo-Burmese War broke out and finally the Myanmarese king was defeated with the Treaty of Yandaboo in 1826.⁴⁶ In spite of that Myanmar rebuilds its military power and challenges the infiltration of British colonial power into her kingdom leading to a Second Anglo-Burmese war of 1885, thus the British India brought the Alaungpaya dynasty to an end

⁴² Bertie Reginald Pearn (1946). *The Indian in Burma*. Ledbury: Le Play House, p. 6.

⁴³ K. Krishnamurthy (1962). Indians in Burma. *Economic Weekly*, Bombay, 14 (43), p. 1693.

⁴⁴ Mookerji, S.B. (1959). India and Burma through Ages. *United Asia*, 2, p. 526.

⁴⁵ Uma Shankar Singh (1979). Op.cit. p. 11. For detail see at Scott, J.G. (1924). *Burma: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*. London: Fisher Unwin Ltd., pp. 246-266.

⁴⁶ Under this treaty Myanmar agreed to abstain from all interferences in Northeast India, and with this exposed her weakness. The territorial loss of Myanmar were many but even greater was the blow to her national pride. G. E. Harvey (1946). *British Rule in Burma, 1824-1942*. London: Faber&Faber, p. 10-11.

and annexed all that remained to the kingdom.⁴⁷ The Third Anglo-Burmese War of 1886 marked complete subjugation of Myanmar and earmarked a beginning of the British India rule of Myanmar.

This annexation of Myanmar was endeavored at the extension of complete colonial command over India and its resources. Myanmar for British was the country of strategic importance to their imperialist design which was geographically fallen between the lucrative inland Chinese trade route and making it an important buffer zone between French colonial possessions of mainland Indo-China.⁴⁸ The story of the British conquest to India was long process which took nearly two hundred years from days of East India Company till the proclamation of India as 'Queen Empire' in 1858, but entered to Myanmar was as a colonial master. British view of Myanmar was that culturally, economically and politically it was an extension of India.⁴⁹ Having firmly established its position in middle of 18th century in the eastern part of India, they saw Myanmar as a natural field of grazing ground for their thirst; it was viewing long before the occurrence of first Anglo-Burmese war in 1824.⁵⁰

The strategy to quench this interest got formidable during the civil war of 1753, and that led to the East India Company occupation of the strategic Island of Negrais.⁵¹ It was to check activities in the Bay of Bengal and also to garner Myanmarese trade coming down the Irrawaddy. The King Alaungapaya just protested mildly against the British interference at the inception but after being learned from Mon prisoners about British assistance to the Mon side in the civil war provoked him thus ordered a general massacre of the British official on the Negrais Island. The British who were pre-occupied with the French power in their traditional rivalry in Indian sub-continent for their colonial possession, swallowed humiliation from the Negrais episode and left Myanmar undisturbed for decades. Thereafter the first mission to have come again by any British

⁴⁷ D.G.E. Hall (1955). *A History of South East Asia*. London: Hutchinson University Library, p. 601.

⁴⁸ John F. Cady (1954). *The Roots of French Imperialism in Eastern Asia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

⁴⁹ Uma Shankar Singh (1979). *Op.cit.* p. 14.

⁵⁰ John F. Cady (1958). *A History of Modern Burma*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

⁵¹ Frank N. Trager (1966). *Burma: From kingdom to republic-A historical and political analysis*. Westport: Greenwood press, p. 13.

officials was captain Micheal Symes⁵² in 1795 to investigate the possibility of establishing trade communication between India and China through Myanmar. But Symes had other ulterior design that was more than establishing trade relations. It clearly reflected in the comments to his master at India and England that; ‘I am decidedly of opinion that a paramount influence in the government and administration of Ava, obtain it how we may, is now become indispensably necessary to the interest and security of the British possession in the East’.⁵³ But the British project the first Anglo-Burmese War was as aggressiveness on part of the Myanmarese king and their want pugnacity ended with Arakan and Tenasserim passing under the British rule. In the same way the Second Anglo-Burmese War of 1852 added the province of Pegu to the British empire and, finally the third Anglo-Burmese War of 1885-86 led to surrender of the whole country and end of the Myanmar sovereignty and monarchy.⁵⁴

In the first two annexations, despite the lost it had no much effect on the Myanmarese pride. It is said that as long as the last King Thibaw reigned at Mandalay in his royal capital the symbol and pride of freedom and liberty remained intact.⁵⁵ The people still looked to the king with respect and reverence and they were proud for he still ruled and thus showed no great anxiety among the subjects. In contrary, the Talaings (Mons), the Arakanese, the Karins and the rest minorities had at first been glad to see the British as memories of anarchy and extortion faded though they are not sure of the future. But hardly any native of Myanmar was pleased by the outcome of the third Anglo-Burmese war.⁵⁶ The third Anglo-Burmese war came as a rude shock to most of the Myanmarese people and face the new circumstances with experience of complete political conquest followed by cultural bondage or subjugation. The Lower Myanmar which were earlier consisted of three commissionership viz. Pegu, Tenassarim and Arakan until 1862 were combined to a single province called British Burma (Myanmar) and

⁵² He was a captain in His Majesty’s Seventy-Six Regiment and was sent as his first embassy to king Bodawpaya. See Frank N. Trager (1966). Op.cit. p. 21.

⁵³ D.R. Sardesai (1977). *British Trade and Expansion in Southeast Asia, 1830-1914*, New Delhi: Allied Publication, p. 102. Also see at Frank N. Trager (1966). Op.cit. p. 31.

⁵⁴ J.G. Scott (1924). *Burma: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*. London: Fisher Unwin Ltd.

⁵⁵ Charles Lee Keeton (1974). *King Thebaw and the Ecological Rape of Burma: The Political and Commercial Struggle between British India and French Indo-China in Burma 1878-1886*. Delhi: Manohar Book Service.

⁵⁶ Aung San Suu Kyi (1991). *Freedom from Fear and Other Writings*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, p. 85.

placed under a chief commissioner with headquarters' at Rangoon. After the annexation of upper and central Myanmar in 1886, the entire country was made a single province and immediately, Myanmar became politically and administratively a part of India.⁵⁷

In the first phase, contacts with the villages in Myanmar were disrupted with the adoption of its new revenue policy. The social balances stabilizing pre-British Myanmar, with its egalitarian character of society based on Theraveda, suppression and economic exploitation ultimately became the genesis of the rise of nationalize and forceful spirit to demand independence.⁵⁸ So the cause of nationalist resurgence in Myanmar could be seen in the very nature of British rule in Myanmar. The decline of Myanmar culture and tradition under the British rule occurred in many ways. They came to assume the role of first citizen of the world with the unquestioned rights to the destinies of the less fortune. The British were exporting to their dominion a kind of package civilization, offered in competition with the local products, and backed by powerful service arrangements. Sometimes this was a conscious policy though it was instinctive or even incidental.⁵⁹

Under this imposition, the artisans and craftsmen which were earlier patronized by the monarchy disappeared with the growth of cheaper manufactured imports and subsequently the high literacy competence in the local language and literatures gradually disappeared with the disappearance of its masters and English became language of law courts and the government in new administrative set up. The administrative tactics of the colonial system reached out the villages bringing irreversible changes and destroying the natural fabric of countryside of self-sustaining economy into subservient economy on urban centers.⁶⁰ So the ball of discontent and discord was set against the British colonial rule and triggered revolt against them.

1.4. Colonial Exploitation and Rise of Rebellion in Myanmar

The seed of freedom struggle in Myanmar and India is germinated as a result of the economic and social condition created by the British imperial power. It enunciated a

⁵⁷ D.G.E. Hall (1955). Op.cit. p. 605.

⁵⁸ Maung Maung (1957). *Burma: In the Family of Nations*. Amsterdam: Djambatan, p. 82.

⁵⁹ Aung San Suu Kyi (1991). Op. cit. p. 86.

⁶⁰ E. Sarkisyanz (1965). *Buddhist backgrounds of the Burmese revolution*. Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, p. 148.

new system for economic prosperity by uprooting the tradition system of agricultural cultivation and established the new business or merchant class for exploitation.⁶¹ The self-sufficient village economy got supplanted with the liberal 'laissez faire' principle and even these principles were applied with double standard benefitting more for the colonial master and mercantile community. The economic exploitation, although did not spark the nationalist resurgence immediately, but postulate as one important factor to the course of freedom struggle. In the pre colonial era, the Myanmarese was happy and prosperous in its own way. The Myanmarese peasantry and laboring class owing to high wages are well fed, well dressed, housed and their standards of living might bear a comparison with the peasantry of most European countries.⁶²

After the complete subjugation of Myanmar in 1886, Myanmar went through an agricultural revolution and the process started after the second Anglo-Burmese war in 1852 but the British administrators and mercantile community got firm ground after the Third Anglo-Burmese War.⁶³ Consequently, after having the complete control a vast tract of fertile land was cleared for rice cultivation in which thousands of Myanmarese people died clearing the dense jungle in the malaria ridden swamp areas. The rice exports had been a prohibited item before the British conquest but the rules was changed to serve the British economic interest and in between 1830 and 1940 the acreage under rich cultivation in Myanmar increased about 15 times.⁶⁴ If this phenomenal growth in acreage and agricultural productions would have taken place in any European country or in any independent nations the benefits would have gone to the real farmers or cultivators but Myanmar having under foreign rule can't think of reaping the benefits. In contrary, the agricultural real wages in Myanmar fell by 20 percent,⁶⁵ and the Myanmarese own consumption of rice had fallen by nearly 25 percent during the period 1921-1941.⁶⁶ So, the motive of British in transforming the agricultural economy was not with a view to improve and ensured the welfare but to force Myanmarese to play its assigned role in

⁶¹ Uma Shankar Singh 1979. Op. cit. p. 10.

⁶² Frank N. Trager (1966). *Burma: From Kingdom to Republic – A Historical and Political Analysis*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press, p. 142.

⁶³ Woodman, Dorothy (1962). *The Making of Burma*. London: Cresset Press, p. 275.

⁶⁴ E. Sarkisyanz (1965). Op. cit. p. 138.

⁶⁵ J. Furnivall (1957). *An introduction to the political economy of Burma*. Rangoon, p. 77.

⁶⁶ E. Sarkisyanz (1965). Op. cit. p. 141.

colonial economy. This exploitative act gradually extended from Rangoon to over the rest of country touching every potential sectors of production. In this way they manage by 1894 to force down the average price of all productions, particularly the rice values when the price of rice was rising in the world market.⁶⁷ The high revenue rates and its rigid methods of collection the peasant's cultivation had often led to borrow money to pay their dues with very high interest rates. There was a middleman between the farmers and colonial master, and this money-lending community i.e., Chettyars had the support of colonial administration thus they could easily manipulate the administrative machinery to their advantage.⁶⁸

The government needed the Chettyars, as much as the latter were, to collect agriculture produce and brought to the ports for exports. In due course of time they occupied the dominant position in the Myanmarese agricultural economy. The British Indian legal system has enforced supplanting the old customary law and imposed upon the untrained Myanmarese masses. Earlier the customary law was that all who had taken part in cultivation were entitled to a first claim upon its produced but British court disregarded such priority and new legality was no longer an oral customary law familiar to the people, but a foreign law written in a foreign language which became incomprehensible to the people and require a lawyers class of intermediaries to interpret it. Thus, the introduction of British Indian law made further alienation to the farmers through mortgaging land.⁶⁹ The farmers, not being realized the impact of exorbitant rate of interest, frequently borrowed more than they needed for cultivation and spent the surplus on none productive purpose thus it brought more hardship in their lives. The British, on other hand, change the traditional cultivation system to rice economy. To carry forward, large number of Indian labour immigrants start bustling in Myanmar because the local population are largely lazy, irresponsible, incapable and content with what can be gain by the minimum toil.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Peter Ady (1951). Economic basis of unrest in Burma. *Foreign Affairs*, XXIX, p. 477.

⁶⁸ E. Sarkisyanz (1965). Op. cit. p. 1.

⁶⁹ Rajshekar (1999). Op.cit. p. 33.

⁷⁰ Sanamani Yambem (1973). Op.cit. p. 6.

The Myanmarese peasants who made possible the rapid expansion of rice cultivation benefit little or leasend from the economic development and under the regime relatively few agriculturists in the newly developed rice cultivation areas of Myanmar escaped indebtedness from the moneylenders. Much of the land was in the hands of moneylenders and traders, so the indebtedness is general and cultivating owners are often merely creation. Under the Census of 1921, only one and half percent agriculturist owned their own land, 27 percent by landless agricultural laborers and 22 percent tenants.⁷¹ The farmers consequently with the fall of rice price during the world depression worsened their condition and resulted in the mass dispassion of Myanmar rice cultivators. Before the end of the British rule in 1941 about two-third of the rice land was held by non-agriculturists. This demonstrates the perennial failure of successive projects and proposal to protect the Myanmarese agriculturists by legislation until the last year of British rule. All the proposals to protect the Myanmarese peasants by legislative measures, with monotonous regularity were failed to achieve its desire goals from the decisive government authorities and mercantile community.⁷² This later on became instrumental in fomenting unrest among the peasants against colonial rule. Even writer like Cady (1958) is critical in analyzing British colonial policy and says that ‘modern administration that British colonial system imposed for the sake of efficiency and economic progress created rules unintelligible to the simpler people, and applied them largely for the purpose of extortion.’⁷³ This exploitative rule sparked serious discontent and resentment among the Myanmarese people. The growing discontent of the peasants formed the backbone of the peasant rebellions. The peasants’ resistance movement offered by Saya San in early 1930s was actually the culmination of the earlier movements of monk U Ottama, Boh Hlaing, Bo Yit and others.⁷⁴

The peasant revolt of 1930-31, commonly known as the ‘Saya Sen rebellion’ or the ‘Galon Rebellion’ was the result of long history of economic distress faced by the

⁷¹ N.R. Chakravarti (1971). *The Indian Minority in Burma*. London, p. 15. See details at Census of India (1921). Vol. XII, Burma, Part I, p. 114.

⁷² E. Sarkisyanz 1965. Op. cit. p.

⁷³ John F. Cady (1958). *A History of Modern Burma*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, p.140.

⁷⁴ U Maung Maung (1980). *From Sangha to Laity: Nationalist Movements of Burma 1920-1940*. Delhi: Manohar Publications.

peasants under the British colonization.⁷⁵ The world economic depression was already in shambles and the stringent rules imposed by colonial master even made it worst for the peasants. Hence the rebellion started from the village areas and huge participation of peasants to overthrow of British rule corroborates the fact that the seeds of discontent lie in agrarian distress of the peasants. Under the leadership of Saya Sen started on the night of 22nd December 1930, in Tharrawaddy district of Lower Burma (Myanmar) and soon enveloped the whole countryside. Next day a small railway station named Inywa, on the other side of Tharrawaddy town, was attacked and destroyed the telegraph instrument, symbol of the British rule, and even Fields-Clarke, a forest engineer, was murdered.⁷⁶ The rebels became widespread and its activities were intense in areas such as Pyapon, Henzada, Insein, Pegu, Toungoo, Prome, Thayetmyo districts and Nawngkio township of Hsipaw state and Northern Shan states. One important reason of Galon revolt was that Acting Governor Sir J.A. Maung Gyi flatly rejected a popular petition to reduce taxes, at a durbar held in Tharrawaddy town. In retaliation, following day a rebellion took place in Tharrawaddy with the prime target to forestry service and some hundred forestry houses were burned during the course of rebellion.⁷⁷ In this war, the colonial forces suffered only thirty-nine casualties but killed or wounded about 3000 rebels, and about 8300 to 9000 Myanmarese were arrested, 350 convicted and 128 hanged. By the end of 1931, betrayed by his own men and the leader of the rebellion Saya Sen got arrested by Thonze police near Nawngkwan jungle and was convicted of seditious treason and executed on 28th November 1931.⁷⁸

1.5. Growth of Literature and Intellectuals in Myanmar

The growth of intellectual led to the rise of literature and this further led to the rise of nationalism in Myanmar. Undoubtedly, the literature plays a significant role in the struggle of nationalist movement both in India and Myanmar. It is in fact a cornerstone

⁷⁵ John F. Cady (1958). Op.cit. p. 306.

⁷⁶ Rushbook William (1972). Op. cit. p. 131.

⁷⁷ John F. Cady (1964). *South-East Asia and its historical development*. London: Mac Hill, p. 312.

⁷⁸ *ibid*, p. 317.

for the nationalist movement; though the movement in India began in nineteenth century⁷⁹, Myanmar embarks only after the peasant struggle and agrarian discontent in twentieth century. When nationalist idea began to emerge among the intellectuals, literature in different Myanmarese and Indian languages entered its modern phase, more and more writers began to employ literature for patriotic purpose. The emergence of modern literature coincided to a large measure with the evolution of those feelings and aspiration, which constituted the foundation of the Myanmarese national movement.⁸⁰ Most of the writers believe that because they belonged to an enslaved country, it was their duty to create literature of a kind that would contribute to the all round regeneration of their society and pave the way for national liberation. The Myanmarese literature under colonialism is a vast subject, as like India, but the objective here is not to cover the broad ground but to simply analyze the important itinerant figure who contributed to the nationalist resurgence in Myanmar. One of the most important writers was Thakin Kodaw Hmaing also known as ‘Rabindranath Tagore of Burma’,⁸¹ who inspired thousands of Myanmarese through the writing called ‘Tikas’. Thakin Kodaw Hmaing was born in 1875 and received a traditional monastic education at a younger age in upper Myanmar. As a young boy at Mandalay, he witnessed cruel occasion when the British troops took away king Thibaw and his queen from the Royal palace. For him being strong attachment to the monarchic tradition was a great tragedy⁸² and this traumatize event later mentioned in his writings when he popularized the Myanmarese historical heritage in his Glass Palace Chronicle of the Myanmar’s king.⁸³ Hmaing’s writing portrays the ‘Wunthanu’ spirit and gave awareness of the problems created by colonization and the desire to protect traditional values. The popularization of Myanmar past and its plight under the colonialization was a prominent contribution to the movement that followed the

⁷⁹ In the 19th century, the popular writers in India were Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya, Govardhanram Madhavram Tripathi, Bharatendu Harishchandra and Vishnu Krishna Chiplunkar. Later in 20th century writers like Premchand, Saratchandra among others are largely popular.

⁸⁰ Aung San Suu Kyi (1987). Socio-Political Currents in Burmese Literature 1910-1940. In Ryuji Okudaira, Teruko Saito & Than Tun (Eds.), *Burma and Japan: Basic Studies on their Cultural and Social Structure*. Tokyo: The Burma Studies Group Japan, p. 66.

⁸¹ E. Sarkisyanz 1965. Op. cit. p. 126.

⁸² Aung San Suu Kyi (1991). Op.cit. p. 146.

⁸³ E. Sarkisyanz 1965. Op. cit. p. 127.

students' strike in the University of Rangoon against the new university Act of 1920.⁸⁴ In the same year, he published 'Tikas' completely reflecting his keen interest in nationalist activity,⁸⁵ and evince joy over the journey of YMBA delegation to London, and protest of 'All Burma Conference' against the Craddock scheme and the new university act. Simultaneously, he exults over the patriotic spirit behind the Saya San rebellion. The writing also expressed anguish and indignation over the arrest of nationalist leaders like U Ottama and quarrels among the members of GCBA. The released of 'Thakin Tika' in 1935 directly reflect his disillusionment with the older generation of politicians and he later joined with the young nationalists of the 'Dohbama Asianyone'.⁸⁶

Others who played an important role in raising patriotic nationalism through literature in Myanmar are Thippan Maung Wa, Zwagyi, Min Thu Wun, Maha Hswe, Aung San, Soe, Nu, Than Tun and Thein Pe Myint and others.⁸⁷ The first three were famous for their short stories and poems which are compiled mostly in Khitsan stories and poems in the early 1930s. It combined modern spirit of innovation thus they could be better described as writers of the renaissance tradition because their writings were popular among the people as it carried the country in the spirit of renaissance. The spirit of the struggle against the imperialistic rule was pursued by Maha Hswe through his impeccable writings skills. In his novel 'Thabon-Gyi' and 'Sithtwet Thu', highlights the patriots to sacrifice their own-self and loved ones for the cause of freedom, reflecting on the spirit of peasant revolution in 1930.⁸⁸

Aung San, Soe, Nu, Than Tun and Thein Pe Myint were prolific writers and versatile organizers of masses against unjust colonial rule. All of them became politicians in the course of struggle for independence has imbibed with leftist ideologies. Soe used Buddhist terminology to interpret communist works, Nu tried to show that communism and Buddhism were, in fact, not incompatible.⁸⁹ Aung San, Than Tun and Thein Pe

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 127.

⁸⁵ Rajshekar (1999). Op.cit. p. 54.

⁸⁶ Yi Daw Khin (1988). *The Dobama Movement in Burma (1930-1938)*. Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program Cornell University, p. 2.

⁸⁷ Aung San Suu Kyi (1991). Op. cit. p. 122.

⁸⁸ Rajshekar (1999). Op.cit. p. 58.

⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 62.

Myint too searched for ideas to fit the needs of Myanmarese nationalism. Leaving aside the question of how far they succeeded in their endeavor, they sowed seed of the Myanmarese need to translate foreign concepts into their language, literary and metaphorically. All of them believed in forging strong links between thought and action.⁹⁰ Aung San's thought and action was to a great extent influenced by the Gandhian philosophy. He said:

'we are fully prepared to follow men who are able and willing to be leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru and Tilak of India....let anybody appear who can be such a leader, who dares to be like such a leader. We are waiting'.⁹¹

Another prolific leftist writer Thein Pe Myint commonly known as Tet Hpongyi, without analyzing his work would be incomplete, also plays a significant roles in Modern Myanmarese literature. In his novel 'Khin Myo Chit' he describes about a young Myanmarese Muslim girl who was unable to give up her religion to marry the young Buddhist man she loves and nor could she ask him to convert as this would have an adverse effect on his nationalist activities. In an act of supreme sacrifice, the couple decided to part and the girl dies of a broken heart, leaving a letter urging the young man to carry on with the struggle for independence.⁹² Though the story has a tragic end of love affairs but its message has imprint on the Myanmarese mind to rise above even love for the cause of independence.

In this way there was a strong links between literature and nationalism in Myanmar and it has also equally implied in the Indian struggle for independence. The literary movement under colonial rule reveals a strong link between nationalism and intellectual developments in Myanmar and India because the regressive policies of colonial power affect the people directly to core of their livelihood. Although the Indian literary movement against British colonialism started earlier when compared to Myanmar

⁹⁰ Aung San Suu Kyi (1991). Op. cit. p.131.

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 128.

⁹² Ibid, pp. 156-7.

literary movement but both has synonymously resemble in productions of ideas and patriotic writings against the colonialism.

1.6. Myanmar Nationalist Movement: *Influence of Gandhian Techniques*

The year of 1906 was a landmark year in the history of modern Myanmar. It was in this year that the first organized modern political association based on the model of Young Men's Christian Association, a Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) was formed by the Rangoon college students like Maung Ba Pe, Maung Maung Gyi, Maung Hla Pe, Maung Sein Hla Aung, Maung Ba Dun and their friends in Rangoon.⁹³ The YMBA is not the first organized association in Myanmar nor should it be mistaken for a modern religious institution that grew into a political organization. Even before YMBA the organizations like 'Buddha Sasana Naggaha Athin' (Mission Association) was formed in 1897 but the association remained limited in scope, it was only with the establishment of YMBA that an organization of national character emerged on the Myanmar political scene.⁹⁴ The other associations which existed before the YMBA were Buddha Kalyana Meitta Athin of Myingyan in 1897; Sasanadara Athin of Moulmien in 1899; Asoka Society of Bassien in 1902; Rangoon College Buddhist Association in 1904; Abidhamma Thankait Associations in 1905; Foreign Mission Societies and Thathana Hita Athins in almost all towns of Myanmar.⁹⁵ Earlier the YMBA was also formed in Arakan in 1902 but it was totally different from the YMBA of 1906 established in Rangoon. Quickly after it was formed, the YMBA tried to give a respectable shape to Myanmarese identity⁹⁶ and became in future course, a training ground for Myanmar's nationalistic statesmen. The YMBA since then strives for one cause of commonality because of the indifferent and calloused behaviour of British colonial administrators. The founder members of the YMBA represented the early generation of Myanmarese, who had grown up after the fall of Mandalay and received their education in the English oriented system of missionary and government schools.⁹⁷ The early aims was to promote 'Amyo, Bartha,

⁹³ Maung Maung U. (1979). *From Sangha to Laity-Nationalist Movement of Burma (1920-1940)*, (Monographs of South Asia no. 4). Canberra: Australian National University, p. 1.

⁹⁴ Rajshekar (1999). Op.cit. p. 81.

⁹⁵ Maung Maung U. (1979). Op. Cit. p. 2.

⁹⁶ E. Sarkisyanz (1965). Op. cit. p. 129.

⁹⁷ Aung San Suu Kyi (1991). Op. cit. p. 113.

thathana and Pyinnyar' meaning to promote feeling of one nation, language, sanana, Buddhist spiritual realm and education among the Myanmarese people. In two years YMBA gained more vitality and vigor by the entry of young barrister like Maung May Oung, Maung Pu, Maung San Ba Ba, Maung Ba Si, Maung Thein Maung and Maung Sein Hla Aung during its Queen Victoria Memorial High School Conference in west Rangoon on 19 April 1908.⁹⁸

On 20 March 1910, the YMBA for the first time successfully held an all Myanmar meeting of its associations in which about 20 associations participated it. Thereafter, it was decided to form a 'General Council' to direct and administer the YMBA association all over Myanmar. At the inception, it was focused only on minor religious and social matters such as issues concerning not celebrating expensive ceremonies of 'Shinbyu' (novitiates), weddings, pongyibyans (funeral of rahans or monks), ahlus (religious offerings), personal economy, good self-conduct, temperance and help in Buddhist education in schools, and financing of Buddhist schools etc.⁹⁹ However, at its second conference in 1914, a bold step of tacit agitation was taken calling on the government and people to adopt the full moon of Kason (Buddha Day) as a holy day. But the government outrightly rejected the plea thus it organized many public meetings for enlisting their demands and this was overwhelmingly supported by the masses. During the third conference in 1915, YMBA became a little bolder and decided to send MoU to demand stop of Ashin-Asoya-min (worship the sovereign governor) practice; respect Wuttakanmye (Sasana Lord); exempt land tax; appoint a minister for Buddhist Sasana; appoint Dhammakatikas (lecturers) to teach Buddhism in schools; grant power of writing wills to Buddhists; prevent sale of liquor; encourage salt-making; enforce compulsory education; and holding primary school mathematics examinations for poor children etc.¹⁰⁰ During this conference YMBA decided not to follow the collision course with the colonial master but pressurize demand of their needs. This exhibited deep awareness of the Myanmarese problem like the moderate phase of Indian National Congress.

⁹⁸ Maung Maung U. (1979). Op. Cit. p. 3.

⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 5.

When the Morley-Minto reform was introduced under the Government of India Act 1909, it did not generate much interest among YMBA leadership unlike the Indian National Congress (INC). Even in India though some moderates of INC earlier welcomed the proposed reform as liberal was, however, after a closer look extremely critical of the excessive concessions to Muslims.¹⁰¹ Later on Pandit Nehru also expressed his displeasure to the reform and wrote that political barrier is created round the minorities at time of unifying and amalgamating process.¹⁰² After that the Secretary of State for India Montague put forward a declaration on 20 August 1917, followed by the Montague-Chalmsford Report or so called Government of India Act 1919, the YMBA became busy with constitutional improvements for Myanmar and hence turned toward significant changes in its course of action. It was reflected in 5th Pinyinana Conference of 1917 at which political resolutions were openly taken and measures like sending a delegation to meet Montague. In this path, a women's wing called Young Women Buddhist Association (YWBA) was formed in 1918, and other women's association got started, with a view to re-enforce the men's associations in the protest actions against colonial rule.¹⁰³ When Montague-Chalmsford produced the report in which Myanmar was set aside for separate considerations under the clause "the desire for elective institutions has not developed in Burma."¹⁰⁴ Thus the proposal to exempt Myanmar from the reform aroused strong protest and Myanmar political leaders under the umbrella of YMBA sent deputation to Calcutta to meet the Joint Select Committee as they did not visit Myanmar. Being seen the nature of protest movement, the Lt. Governor Craddock of Myanmar has agreed for the recommendation of reforms. Under the new reform called 'Craddock Scheme' has made a small improvement on district council type

¹⁰¹Tarakanath Das (1921). The progress of non-violent revolution in India. *Jr. Of International Relations*, XII, p. 204. For detail see also at Sumit Sarkar (1983). *Modern India 1885-1947*. Madras; Macmillan.

¹⁰² Grover and Grover (1999). *A New Look at Modern India History*. Delhi: S Chand & Company, p. 546.

¹⁰³ Maung Maung U (1979). Op. Cit. p. 13.

¹⁰⁴ The report of Joint Select Committee on the Government of India Bill 1919 exempted Myanmar from the reform act saying Myanmar was only by accident falls within the responsibility of the Governor-General of India for they are as distinct from the Indian in race and language or from the British. Based on the above statement, Montague-Chelmsford Reforms Proposal 1918 did not included Myanmar. When the new proposals are published, there will be opportunity for the Governor and people of Myanmar chose as applicable to their case. Therefore it set aside the problem of Myanmar's political evolution for separate and future considerations. See at Parliament Paper 1919, p. 62, and also at Major Christian (1945). *Burma and the Japanese Invader*. Bombay: Bombay Press.

administration but not on what it should be therefore the protest continued leading to finally got the heinous clause discarded by the Government of India.¹⁰⁵

In 1920, the political climate of Myanmar was surcharged due to unrepresentative character of 1919 reform. The YMBA has formally changed from its original name to GCBA (General Council of Buddhist Association) in order to associate larger numbers of other section of people.¹⁰⁶ The General Council of YMBA sends a delegation U Ba Pe, Maung Pu and U Tun Shun to London to Joint Select Committee. They were supported from Myanmar by continued agitation in the form of more public meetings in different towns, especially in Rangoon. But the delegation fails to have dialogue from the Joint Select Committee however met Montague, Secretary of State for India, to present their grievances and rejection of the Craddock scheme.¹⁰⁷ The Myanmar case was aptly presented by Maung Pu, a prominent GCBA leader, before the Joint Select Committee on 19 August 1919, and presented his argument that Myanmar asks for equality of treatment with the other province of India, and further reiterates that Myanmar is not criticizing the provisions of the Government of India Bill but merely asking whatever constitutional reform is granted to the other provinces, it should apply through its whole extent.

When the delegation returned in 1920, it had obtained promise of a constitution analogous to India that Myanmar opinion should be consulted before any bill concerning Myanmar administration was formulated and that Myanmar would soon become a Governor's province.¹⁰⁸ In addition they got promises for the return of the western gateway and stairs of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda by the military in Myanmar to the Pagoda Trustees.¹⁰⁹ Though the leaders was not satisfied with the implementation of the reform process, and as time dragged on, the movement under its leadership of U Ottama became more intensified and influenced by the happening in the neighboring country India. India had also shown keen interest and support to the nationalist struggle in Myanmar because it couldn't afford to remain indifferent to the prevailing situation in

¹⁰⁵ Maung Maung U (1979). Op. Cit. p. 84.

¹⁰⁶ D.R. Sardesai (1981). *Southeast India-Past and Present*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, p. 281.

¹⁰⁷ Maung Maung U. (1979). Op. Cit. p. 17.

¹⁰⁸ Report of the YMBA (1920). Sagaing Han Tin II. Reproduction of YMBA's report submitted to the Selbourne Committee. Rangoon: YMBA Publication, p. 303.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 311.

Myanmar and so All India Congress Committee at its meeting at Bezwada on 31 March 1921 congratulated the Myanmarese people in their struggle for freedom.¹¹⁰ Even Gandhiji felt genuine sympathy for the Myanmarese people and wanted to see independent from the British imperialism. The excerpt of Gandhiji:

“I have never been able to take pride in the fact that Burma has been made part of British India. It never was and never should be. The Burmese have a civilization of their own”.¹¹¹

On other hand, the GCBA in 1920 had started differences of opinion regarding the 1919 reforms, but unanimity against the passing of Rowlatt Act of 1919 like India¹¹² because this act instrumentalized to repress the growing nationalist activities. Thus GCBA was turning towards a radical organization under the leadership of U Ottama and vehemently opposed the Rowlatt Act. Even the moderate leadership under U Ba Pe and U Pu were critical of the brutal act though they were in favour of participating into Legislature Council election under the diarchy – to promote this idea of council entry they formed a ‘Burma Reform League’ on the pattern of National Liberation Federation of India of Surendranath Banerjee.¹¹³ The GCBA, under the leadership of U Ottama, opposed the idea of entry to Council but despite the disagreement of opinion, U Ottama did not speak against U Ba Pe. The freedom movement in Myanmar continues till 1930 revolves around U Ottama’s action and strategies, his political maturity to understand the Myanmar politics and social fabrics inspired many and reaches to the rural populations, men and women, youth and Sangha. He was thus the man who turned GCBA into a mass political organization like Gandhi did for the INC in India. He was not only successful in organizing mass meetings but also implemented Gandhian technique in course of political struggle against British rule.

¹¹⁰ Birendra Prasad (1979). *Indian nationalism and Asia (1900-1947)*. Delhi: B.R. Publication, p. 92.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 92.

¹¹² Sumit Sarkar (1983). *Modern India 1885-1947*. Madras; Macmillan, p. 187.

¹¹³ Fukui, Haruchiko ed. (1985). *Political Parties of Asia and the Pacific*. London: Greenwood Historical Encyclopaedia, p. 120.

During the time of U Ottama leadership, Gandhiji visited Myanmar in 1929,¹¹⁴ it was principally for the propagation of Khadi and collecting fund from Gujarat Vidhyapith for the Lajpat Rai Memorial Fund but his visit plays an important role in the course of freedom struggle in Myanmar. The day he arrived was welcomed by the Rangoon Municipal Corporation and GCBA, and consequently public meeting was organized with large gathering of over 50,000 people. While speaking on this occasion Gandhiji expressed gratitude for the great honour extended by the Myanmar people whenever he come to Myanmar it was engross with love, generosity and liberal-heartedness.¹¹⁵ The Myanmar people were anxious to learn the new techniques of struggle against foreign domination and exploitation. The Myanmar addressed him as a noble son of great India, from whom they received religion and culture, as an exponent of non-violent and non-cooperation unfolded before the world as proof against all violence.¹¹⁶ On another occasion when he was invited by GCBA on 8 March 1929 to speak on the boycott method, Gandhiji is said to have suggested for boycott of all foreign cloths but not necessarily the British cloth alone because the quarrel is not with the British people but with the imperialistic spirit of exploitation. A world leader, like Gandhiji, was not only concerned with the problem of his own country but to ameliorate the condition of other nationalities too. The secretary of GCBA, during the discussion complained about the Indian capitalists of helping the European exploitation, Gandhiji said that even India was not free from such people who while eating the country's salt betrayed the country. Therefore, in words of assurance, Gandhi said that even if the behaviour of the entire local Indian community adopted an unjust attitude towards Myanmar, India would never countenance it.¹¹⁷ In the next day while addressing Indian community in Rangoon, he cautioned and the excerpt:

¹¹⁴ See at Collected Work of Gandhi (1970). Vol. XL, February-May 1929. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Press, p. 104. For the first time in the year 1901 to meet his lifelong friend and companion P. J. Mehta, and then he visited Rangoon in 1915 to have a deeper look on the situations of Myanmar. Thereafter he received many invitations from Myanmar leaders and intellectuals but paucity of time and engagement with the Indian Freedom struggle programme he could manage to come only in 1929.

¹¹⁵ The Hindustan Times, 11 March, 1929.

¹¹⁶ D.G. Tendulkar (1951). Mahatma – Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Vol. II (1920-1929). Bombay: Vithalbhai K. Jhaveri.

¹¹⁷ D.G. Tendulkar (1951). Op. Cit. p. 456.

‘there had been a complaint against you that the Indian community here do not share Myanmarese a lot....hope that there is exaggeration in it but afraid that there is some grain of truth because it has witnessed similar habit of the Indian in Ceylon and South Africa. I must ask you to earn your bread and more than that is amass wealth. There is an additional reason for the Hindus to do so, they are Indians and follow Buddhism, which is an offshoot of Hinduism. So you should feel sorry’.¹¹⁸

When a large number of phoongyis were leading in Myanmar freedom struggle under the leadership of Ottama and while speaking to them Gandhi reminded them of the great responsibility of independence struggle and said that history shows the priesthood has not always influenced with political matters because often unworthy ambition prompt the priesthood as it had moved unsurcuplous men to take part in politics, and if the Phoongyis aspire to lead the political movement they shoulder a tremendous responsibility.¹¹⁹ Gandhi was also asked many questions by the people following him during his toured in different parts of Myanmar. On one account the question of what line of action would he consider Myanmar should adopt in view of present political condition in Myanmar? Gandhi replied the conditions in India and Myanmar are much the same, and therefore the same remedy is to recommend to both non-violent and non-cooperation. Within the short visit, Gandhi was not only welcomed with enthusiasm in Rangoon but at every place in Myanmar wherever he went like Moulmein, Paungde, Prome, Thaton, Mandalay and Martaban. Gandhi said that ‘though the Hindus and Myanmarese reside far from each other, they are the descendants of the same stock; for King Abhiraja of the Shakya Clan of India founded the first kingdom at Taguang about 88 Buddhist eras and from then Indians and Myanmarese were inseparable brethren’.¹²⁰ In this way the Myanmarese struggle for freedom is influenced by Gandhi teaching. Even after he left Myanmar, they followed the techniques implied by him until the Myanmarese got independent in 1948.

¹¹⁸ Collected Work of Gandhi (1929). pp. 116-17.

¹¹⁹ D.G. Tendulkar (1951). Op. Cit. p. 463.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 465.

1.7. Indian Migration to Myanmar: *A Moved of Social Integration?*

The beginning of Indian immigration to Myanmar, therefore, on any appreciable scale may be dated to 1852.¹²¹ Prior to that the Indian connection with Myanmar was no marked of political or socio-economic consequences and it was only after the annexation of the Irrawaddy Delta which radically changed the situation. The development of the Irrawaddy delta required labour which was more than what Myanmar could supply, this was met by seasonal migration from Bengal and Madras. The development of Irrawaddy Delta was mainly for a cash crop with overseas trade and overseas interest. It was foreign to the Myanmarese not only by way of the new cash crop system but because of the interest involved.¹²² The growth of Indian population in Myanmar did takes place at great speed and this can be estimated from the first census which took place in Myanmar in 1881. On this matter, Chakravarti (1971) describes that the Indian population have increased from 243, 123 in 1881 to 918,000 in 1941 but the migration of Indian has a record of all time high in 1931 with a figure of little more than a million. Among this population it is estimated that only about two percent can be considered as permanent residence in Myanmar and the rest were the migratory type on a seasonal basis.¹²³

The Indian immigrants can be broadly divided into three categories – the first are capitalist and big businessmen; the second were the professionals namely engineers, teachers, doctors and lawyers; and the third category is the labour class. By the beginning of 1930 and after the introduction of dyarchy in 1923, however, the number of Indians employed in government offices and agencies greatly reduced in size with the enforcement of new system. Under the new law, no Indian who is not domiciled in Myanmar could enter services under the government or local bodies except for the class IV services.¹²⁴ The labour class both skilled and unskilled continued to remain in large but due to lack of detailed classification of jobs or salaries scale according to specific industries and non-existence of registration, accurate figures regarding the occupations of the Indians are not available. According to the 1931 census which gives some data about

¹²¹ B.R. Pearn (1946). *The Indians in Burma*. Ledbury, p. 6.

¹²² E.H.G. Pearn (1950). *South East Asia*. London: India-Burma Association, p. 189.

¹²³ N.R. Chakravarti (1971). *The Indian Minority in Burma*. London: p-8.

¹²⁴ Frank N. Trager (1966). *Burma: From Kingdom to Republic – A Historical and Political Analysis*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press, p. 48.

the Indian occupation in Myanmar who has entered under “Earners and Working dependents” are: production of raw materials were about 175,000; exploitation of minerals are 15,000; industry particularly in transport and trade are 302,000; public administration, liberal art and professions are 38,235 and those involves in other occupations including domestic service are 54, 803.¹²⁵

In the subsequent decadal studies under the Baxler Commission Report of 1941, the Indian immigration in Myanmar are approximately 530,874 engaging in different professions such as skilled and unskilled, agriculture, trade, craftsmen and clerical activities.¹²⁶ Apart from this general activity in agriculture and other professions, the Indian immigrants had its own real moved class namely the Chettyars, who is widely considered as the wealthiest of the Indian populations in Myanmar. Unexpectedly the Chettyars had come in huge proportion to Myanmar by the year 1937. As a wealthy community, the capital investments in agriculture alone by this community crossed to over five hundred million rupees and the remaining investment roughly two hundred fifty million rupees was largely on urban property and banking.¹²⁷ Thus by the end of the war, approximately 3 million acres of Myanmar paddy lands were already owned by Indian mainly the Chettyar community and the rest are said to have owned in sectors such as buildings and entertainment in Rangoon.¹²⁸ Therefore from the time the first Indian started going over to Myanmar till the time the war broke out in the Far East in 1941, the Indian populations in Myanmar was on the increase sporadically and the Indian populations consisted almost 7 percent of the total populations of Myanmar. But after the war it suddenly decline in the Indian population and about 50,000 Indians fled the country due to war of which approximately 10,000 are believed to have perished on the way.¹²⁹ After the war, due to restriction in immigration, insecurity and the adverse economic conditions in the country the number vastly declined. Indians, however, while they were there had a major share and played a very significant role in the economic

¹²⁵ Census of Government of India 1931

¹²⁶ James Baxler (1941). *Report on Indian Immigration*, Rangoon, p-106.

¹²⁷ J. R. Andrus (1948). *Burmese Economic Life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 75.

¹²⁸ C. Kondapi (1951). *Indian Overseas*. New Delhi, p. 464.

¹²⁹ Varginia Thompson & Adloff (1955). *Minority problems in Southeast Asia*. California: Oxford publication, p. 75.

development of Myanmar without causing the common problems of social tension generally associated with any plural society. This diaspora, in short, has endures social integration between the Indian and Myanmarese.

1.8. Japanese Occupation of Myanmar: *Roles of Indian National Army*

In August 1940, after the arrest of Ba Maw, the two leaders of Freedom Bloc Aung San and Hla Myaing left Myanmar to seek international assistance and they got in touched with Japanese war time hero Colonel Keiji Suzuki thus went to Tokyo to accomplish the task of Myanmar's independence.¹³⁰ In Tokyo, Aung San established a mutual understanding and in the course of time, Suzuki extended support to Myanmar.¹³¹ On other side, Japanese enjoyed the advantage of the strong admiration from the Myanmar nationalists because of the role Japanese acted as a liberator of Asia, kindred Buddhist country, and fascinating combination of military victory and economic achievement. As a result, between the English and the Japanese, the Myanmarese nationalist favored the latter.¹³² After a brief journey, Aung San returned in February 1941 and brought a proposition from the Japanese establishment to extend arms and financial support for an uprising against colonialism in Myanmar. To begin with the initiatives, it planned a military training for a select group of young men and the 'thirty comrade' was formed to accomplish the task of independence of Myanmar.¹³³ Immediately the thirty young men become a core tier of the Burmese Independence Army (BIA). In this group some prominent leaders were Aung San, Hla Pe, Tun Oke, Aung Than, Ne Win and the others were selected for the specialize training in military tactic, high command and administration on Hainan Island, under the active supervision of Suzuki who later known as Bo Mogyo. The comrades were assigned different tasked of organizing governmental agencies – tasked of recruitment for the BIA was given to

¹³⁰ Frank N. Trager (1971). *Burma: Japanese Military Administration-Selected Documents, 1941-1945*. Translated by Won Zoon Yoon, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, p.

¹³¹ Josef Silverstein (1972). *The political legacy of Aung San*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 46-47.

¹³² Thakin Nu (1954). *Burma under the Japanese*. London: MacMillan, p. 2.

¹³³ Maung Maung (1957). (1957). *Burma: In the Family of Nations*. Amsterdam: Djambatan, p. 92. Also see at Mya Maung (1990). *The Burma Road: From the Union of Burma to Myanmar*. *Asian Survey*, 30 (6), 96-112.

Thakin Tun Oke and to direct military aid was assigned to Thakin Aung San.¹³⁴ The BIA, a force comprising the trainees, Thai National of Myanmarese origins and member of the Minami Kikan, was officially launched in Bangkok in December, 1941. Finally the Japanese army with the support of BIA entered Myanmar via Myawaddy pass directly east of Moulmein. Immediately they overrun Tenasserin and then encountered their first serious resistance with the British at Moulmein but the British defence was far from adequate and by the time the rainy season broke in late May 1942, the Japanese victory was complete.¹³⁵ The marching of BIA alongside the Japanese troops was an occasion of great pride and joy to the Myanmarese people, who felt that at last their national honour had been vindicated. The revolutionary nationalists displayed genuine enthusiasm for the triumph of the invaders and slogan “Burma for the Burmese” and “Asia for the Asiatic” carried a powerful appeal to embark for effectiveness in the campaign.¹³⁶ Within a limited time the British were chased out from the land of Myanmar and within two weeks of the British evacuation from Rangoon, Suzuki installed Thakin Tun Oke as Chief Administrator of the Myanmar Government on 23 March, 1942.¹³⁷ But it was in de facto controlled of the Japanese. While Suzuki, the father of the BIA, himself seems to have find difficulties with the military administration over the role to be played in the future.¹³⁸ On other side, Aung San and other officers were languishing that the BIA command should be transferred to local officer. In this regard, they met Ba Maw and talked to Suzuki over the matter and consequently Aung San was appointed as Commander-in-Chief.¹³⁹ In July 1942 Suzuki left Myanmar and in his place General Lida was appointed as Commander of the Japanese forces in Myanmar. In the same month, BIA was reorganized and remained as the Burma Defence Army (BDA) with Aung San as the Commander-in-Chief. In this intervening period, Ba Maw escaped from the prison on 13 April 1942 and after having a torturous journey for a few days successfully established contact with Japanese military establishment. In June 1942, a meeting was organized at Maymyo, in which Ba Maw participated and after long session a Burmese Provincial

¹³⁴ Aung San Suu Kyi (1991). *Freedom From Fear and Other Writings*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, p. 15.

¹³⁵ John F. Cady (1964). *South-East Asia and its historical development*. London: Mac Hill, p. 438.

¹³⁶ Thakin Nu (1954). *Op.cit.* p. 7.

¹³⁷ Ba Maw (1968). *Breakthrough in Burma*. London, Asia Publishing House, p. 173.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 213.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, 132.

Administrative Committee (BPAC) was formed and Ba Maw was appointed as head. Subsequently, on 1 August 1942 General Lida inaugurated the Myanmar administration with Ba Maw appointed as chief administrator.¹⁴⁰

On other hand, the formation of Indian National Army was first conceived in Malaysia by Mohan Sing, an Indian officer of the British Indian Army, when he instead of joining the retreating British army, went to the Japanese and seek help, and shortly in September 1942, the first division of INA was formed with 16, 300 men.¹⁴¹ The second phase of INA began when Subhas Chandra Bose took command of the organization on 2 July 1943. In the independence struggle of India and its association with the Myanmar leaders particularly with Ba Maw are important landmarks in Indian as well as Myanmar struggle for freedom during the Second World War. The INA got new vigor when Subhas Chandra Bose took supreme command on the invitation of Rash Behari Bose.¹⁴² Immediately after the change of guard, there was a perception change across all board and momentum growing towards the Subhas Bose line of action was more appealing than the Gandhiji idea of non-violence movement. Consequently, a Freedom Bloc, an ultranationalist organization, was established in Myanmar under Ba Maw in 1940 on line of Forward Bloc, which was established by Subhas Bose in May 1939.¹⁴³ The first time Subhas Bose and Ba Maw met in Singapore in July 1943, and Ba Maw describes this occasion in his memoir that Subhash Bose sensational appearance in Southeast Asia was tremendous and it made against believe more in Asian unity and strength. It further writes that Subhas Bose ‘symbolize of the long and passionate Indian resolution that at last found its way into the wider Asian revolution which would change Asia’.¹⁴⁴ The emergence of Subhash Bose and INA shows India turning away from its passive philosophy to the more realistic.

¹⁴⁰ As mentioned earlier, he already had a good rapport with Japanese establishment since 1939 and Japanese were also in the need for a trustworthy administratively experienced person who can take command over the politically fluid situation of Myanmar and Ba Maw was the fittest person for this tasks. See at John F. Cady (1964). Op.cit. p. 416.

¹⁴¹ K.K. Ghosh (1969). *The Indian National Army –Second front of Indian independence Movement*. Meerut: Meerakshi Prakashan, p. 134.

¹⁴² *ibid*, p. 134.

¹⁴³ John F. Cady (1964). *Op. Cit.* p. 416.

¹⁴⁴ Ba Maw (1968). *Op.cit.* p. 349.

Before taking command of the INA, Subhas Bose had spent almost two years in Mandalay prison from January 1925 to May 1927 under the seditious act against British Empire. So Myanmar was not a new place and during this period of imprisonment at Mandalay, he learned very closely about the plight and sufferings of Myanmar people under the colonial rule and had desired that one day Myanmar would fly her flag of independence. When Myanmar was declared independent on 1 August 1943 by Japan, unexpectedly he was present in Rangoon thus exchanged facilitations with Ba Maw, and cemented the ties of friendship and sympathy between India and Myanmar. While speaking on this historic occasion of Myanmar's independence, Subhas Bose describes that 'today Myanmar is an independent state and everyone is breathing the atmosphere of that liberated country and now happy that India's next door neighbour Myanmar is free'.¹⁴⁵

The INA was, on other hand, ready for the first assault to realize their goal of independence. To onslaught the final call, Subhash Bose again visited Myanmar in September 1943 to inspect the arrangement and in course visited with Ba Maw to the Mausoleum of Bahadur Shah, last emperor of free India, to pay homage. Consequently, a meeting was organized in which he said it was a strange coincidence that the remains of the India's last emperor rest on the soil of Myanmar and that of Myanmar rest on the soil of India. In concluding remarks, he quotes the Bahadur Shah couplet "as long as the last particle of faith exists in the soul of India's freedom fighters, the sword of India shall continue to penetrate the heart of London".¹⁴⁶ Ba Maw also accolade and expressed his utmost support and said;

'yes if that is your battle call, if you are marching to Delhi, it is befitting that you shall gather together at the tomb of the last great Indian emperor, the last man who represented the Delhi dynasty. I wish to join you and I am certain, members

¹⁴⁵ K.S. Giani (1947). Indian Independence Movement in East Asia. Lahore: Singh Bros, p. 45.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 60.

of my government also wish to join you, in paying reverence to this last hero of past India. We Burmese will march with you in that spirit'.¹⁴⁷

Soon when Subhas Bose returned, the stage was set for the formation of the Provincial government of free India, and while speaking on the occasion, he eulogize that with this formation India's independence movement has obtained all the pre-conditions of success and it will end when INA crosses the frontier of India and the national flag is hoisted in New Delhi. Thereafter the INA declared war on Britian and the United States, it was recognized by the Axis powers and Myanmar. In that course Subhash Bose requested Ba Maw for permission to shift INA's headquarters to Myanmar, true to his words Ba Maw accepted enthusiastically. Thus on 6 January 1944, the INA shifted their based to Myanmar from Singapore till the final defeat of Japanese in 1945.¹⁴⁸

The INA started its campaign for Delhi fighting bravely against the British force at different sectors on Indian eastern frontline and reached Arakan in the South and the Chin Hills right up to Kohima and the plains of Imphal in the north. All things were moving in their favour till 18 April 1944 but because of the difference of opinion with the Japanese commander over the question that who will enter first Imphal, the operation got delayed and re-enforcements of British came into the area, led to the slowdown of Japanese offensive due to lack of planes and tanks, and so Imphal was lost and a long disastrous retreat began.¹⁴⁹ With the defeat of Japanese in 1945 the last hope to achieve freedom through INA got completely shattered. Though INA failed in achieving its desired goal, it did proved that Indian soldiers were not merely machinery but a patriot too and hence the British could no longer depend for the subjugation of own motherland. The Japanese unruly behaviour and racist tendency not only halted the INA success but it also generated mass unrest in Myanmar. Later on it turned into a mass resistance movement against the Japanese in Myanmar under Aung San's leadership and the soldiers of Nippon became a dreaded word. Observing the defeat, Ba Maw also describes that failure of Subhash Bose campaign that;

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 61.

¹⁴⁸ Ba Maw (1968). Op.cit. p. 352.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 355.

‘Like me he had to deal with some of the grossest racists and militarists in the Japanese army; in fact, his difficulties were greater because India was outside the Japanese concept of Greater Eastern Asia and so their interest in it was less’.¹⁵⁰

Thus Aung San who brought Japanese to Myanmar became the first man to revolt against them. He formed an Anti-Fascist party with a slogan “Rise Up and Attack the Fascist Dacoits”.¹⁵¹ This revolt resulted to a big blow for the Japanese forces both from the Myanmar side as well as Allied force. After the defeat of Japanese the old question of independence of Myanmar cropped up among the Myanmar leaders, and slowly modalities had to be negotiated with the British Empire.

1.9. Roles of India during Myanmar Negotiation for Freedom

India always regarded Myanmar as one of the brothers, and this feeling inherited due to the long shared relations between the two for civilizations. When Myanmar were fighting alongside the British forces against the Japanese forces in May 1945, India’s Vijay Lakshmi Pandit, on behalf of the India League of America and the National Committee for India’s Freedom, submitted a memorandum to the San Francisco Conference on 4 May 1945 calling for an immediate declaration of India’s freedom and also demanded the freedom of Myanmar. Under this line Jawaharlal Nehru stressed the need of the freedom of Myanmar at the earliest.¹⁵² On other hand, the Anti-Fascist Organization (AFO) got expanded to include organizations and individual representing a broad spectrum of social and political interests in August 1945 and renamed as Anti-Fascist People’s Freedom League (AFPFL).¹⁵³ The other task for Aung San to resolve was the future of Myanmar Army, which later renamed as Patriotic Burmese Forces (PBF). But the Government of Myanmar in exile that was set up in India under Sir Paw Tun was against any cooperation with the AFPFL instead wanted to declare the AFPFL illegal and arrest Aung San as a traitor. In spite of that Lord Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander for South-East Asia saw that to achieve a peaceful settlement in

¹⁵⁰ Ba Maw (1968). Op. Cit. p. 355.

¹⁵¹ Josef Silverstein (1972). *The Political Legacy of Aung San*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 49. Also at John F. Cady (1958). *A History of Modern Burma*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

¹⁵² Amriota Bazar Patrika (1945, June 26). Demand for immediate declaration of free Burma. *Amriota Bazar Patrika, Delhi*.

¹⁵³ Maung Maung (1957). Op.cit. p. 107.

Myanmar it would be essential to win the cooperation of the man the people had come to regard as their deliverer, and Aung San was fittest person for him to settle Myanmar problem. In May 1945 the British government had declared its future policy towards Myanmar in the form of a white paper.¹⁵⁴ In this, the Governor's direct rule for three years was announced and in due course to hold elections and restoration of a Burmese Council Legislature were promised, but all procedures has to followed only after the Council and Legislature had been restored. The AFPFL was thus expecting the provincial government to be set up after the allied victory but that was dashed to the mud. Hence they flatly rejected the proposal and made it clear to Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith who returned as the Governor of Myanmar.¹⁵⁵

At this juncture, the Indian leaders who had stood both in weal or woe with the Myanmar people expressed their resentment against the White Paper and expressed their solidarity with AFPFL. The first comment come from India's prominent leader Jawaharlal Nehru with criticism upon the White Paper on 25 June 1945, at Bombay and openly says that it seem to be a completely unsatisfactory document if the British government desired to meet the wishes of the Myanmar people, the document need to revise at the earliest.¹⁵⁶ It was this instance of sympathy for Myanmar and other Southeast Asian countries that prompted the Congress Working Committee in June 1945 to instruct the Congress participants in the Simla Conference to make it crystal clear that upon the conclusion of the war in Southeast Asia, the Indian government should not support a policy continuing imperialist control in the Southeast Asia of which Myanmar formed an integral part. As a result of unprecedented criticism, the Civil Government was restored in October 1945 and Dorman-Smith arrived back in Rangoon as a Governor.¹⁵⁷ At the same time, Aung San and the AFPFL did not dismiss the possibility of another armed resurgence against the colonialist in case the British government fails to give independence on their terms. When the Governor was initiating to constitute Governor's Council, the AFPFL demanded to include all their demands including seven

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 109.

¹⁵⁵ John F. Cady (1976). *The United States and Burma*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, p. 523.

¹⁵⁶ *Pandit Nehru criticism with the White Paper* (1945, June 26). *Amrita Bazar Patrika, Delhi*.

¹⁵⁷ Aung San Suu Kyi (1991). *Op. Cit.* p. 25.

representatives out of the eleven seats. In contrary, the Governor Dorman-Smith outrightly rejected any of those demand thus the first rift of opinion broke out between the Governor and the AFPFL.¹⁵⁸ To protest against the Governor as well as to chart their new strategy for the demand of Constituent Assembly and movement for freedom, a massive rally was held at Shwe Dagon Pagoda. During the rally Aung San was unanimously appointed as the President of AFPFL in January, 1946.¹⁵⁹ Unfortunately the Governor Dorman-Smith reluctant to concede any of the AFPFL and failed to create a consensus with the Myanmarese leaders towards realization of goal of independence and his strained relations with AFPFL led to his departure for London in June 1946. Consequently, the British Prime Minister Clement Attlee then send Sir Hurbert Rance in August 1946, to deal with the recognized nationalist leaders of Myanmar in accordance with the pattern already adopted in India for the preparation of a negotiated settlement. Rance was somehow reasonable for the Myanmar leaders because he had earlier served in Myanmar, as head of the military administration, and was in good term with a number of AFPFL leaders particularly with Aung San and U Nu.¹⁶⁰

Even after the coming of Governor Rance, the general strike continued to hold and led to the resignation of Governor's Executive Council. But at the situation Governor Rance acted promptly to enlist the support of Myanmarese leaders and soon on 27 September dissolved the old Governor's Council and constituted new council having wider representation. Instantly, General Aung San was made Deputy Chairman in the New Council and was put in-charge of the Department of Defence and External Affairs, and rest of the eleven men council included five members of the AFPFL.¹⁶¹ General Aung San, despite that, viewed the new development with cautious optimism and warned the people not to imagine an end of all problems. In the best interest for his nation, on 10 November 1946, at his capacity and on behalf of AFPFL demanded four point agenda to redressed soon: to held election of the Constituent Assembly in April 1947; accord representatives of the frontier ethnic groups in the assembly; accord full independence

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 25.

¹⁵⁹ John F. Cady (1958). Op. Cit. p. 525.

¹⁶⁰ Aung San Suu Kyi (1991). Op. Cit. p. 28.

¹⁶¹ John F. Cady (1958). Op. Cit. p. 538.

before 31 January 1947; and agree to re-examination of the project schemes within the same time period. Immediately after these demands General Aung San made toured to frontier areas to enlist the support of different minority groups.¹⁶² On 20 December 1946, the Parliamentary debate started in London upon which the Myanmar case was discussed and without delayed the Prime Minister Clement Attlee announced that an election for Myanmar Constituent Assembly would be held in April 1947 as per demand. Attlee also quickly calls representative of Myanmar from the Executive Council to London to reconsider the provisions of White Paper of 1945 and to discuss the implementation of constitutional pledges given to Myanmar by successive governments. At the discretionary power, Attlee has coupled this proposal with recent developments in India to which large criticism was rendered from the opposition. However, Clement Attlee wisely denounced and placed Myanmar in the same category with developments in India prior to any Myanmar election or formulation of settled views as gratuitous.¹⁶³

Indian leaders and congress party extended support the rights of Myanmar people to realize their goal of full independence.¹⁶⁴ It was first come from Rajendra Prasad on 5 October 1945 describing that if India came out of empire no other part of Asia could remain under any European power for any length of time.¹⁶⁵ The Indian National Congress also during its 54th session in November 1946 collectively voice to support the Myanmar demands, and J.B. Kriplani as President of the INC said,

‘....ethnically and historically Myanmar is not a part of India but in context of a common subjection and a common struggle for freedom from foreign imperialism have forged a spiritual link between the two and the experience of the last war has shown how vital the two are to each other for their existence as free countries. Thus, India and Myanmar will be in a position to fulfill their historical mission in the creation of a federation of free Asiatic nations that would constitute a

¹⁶² Ibid, 539.

¹⁶³ Ibid, p. 540.

¹⁶⁴ Birendra Prasad (1979). *Indian Nationalism and Asia (1900-1947)*. Delhi: B.R. Publication, p. 193.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid*, p. 193.

powerful bulwark against imperialism and exploitation, whether of the western or the eastern type'.¹⁶⁶

The British Prime Minister Attlee on 20 December 1946 invited the AFPFL leaders thus after prolonged discussion and on 1 January 1947, a six member delegations consisting of Thakins Aung San, Mya, and Ba Sein, U Tin Tut, U Ba Pe and U Saw departed for London. On their journey, the AFPFL leaders stop by in New Delhi and hold consultative meetings with important Congress dignitaries and Pandit Nehru wished him success in his mission. At the same time, Nehru also declared that a co-operation between India and Myanmar would not only enhance stronger bilateral relations but would be highly beneficial for the peace of the continent.¹⁶⁷ Finally, after prolonged discussion between the representative and Attless, it was agreed upon for the interim government to have full ministerial authority, and thence the allied army was to be slowly withdrawn from the Myanmar and replaced by the local military forces under the control of the Myanmar government. To expedite matters, it was agreed that the Constituent Assembly would be elected not by adult franchise but under the machinery of 1935 Act, including communal electorates, and meanwhile prepare for Myanmar's independence whether within or outside the commonwealth.¹⁶⁸

This agreement however fails to satisfy the aspirations of minority groups. The communist accused Aung San for being betrayed the country and become the collaborators with the British but it affects no much on the position of AFPFL on the process of constitutional development. In April 1947, elections of the Constituent Assembly were held and AFPFL won more than 170 of the non-communal seats compared to 10 for opposition. But unfortunately on 19 July 1947, Aung San and several of his cabinet colleagues got assassinated at the instigation of U Saw.¹⁶⁹ The dead of Aung San at such juncture was a great national loss but the nation's trail and turbulence was to go with the peace of time and the vice president of AFPFL U Nu became a new

¹⁶⁶ A.M. Zaidi (1989). *Congress Presidential Address 1940-1985* (Vol. V., pp. 69-70). New Delhi: Indian Institute of Applied Political Research, p. 70.

¹⁶⁷ Birendra Prasad (1979). *Op. Cit.* p. 202.

¹⁶⁸ John F. Cady (1958). *Op. Cit.* p. 541.

¹⁶⁹ D.R. Sardesai (1981). *Southeast India-Past and Present*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, p. 286.

leader and the Constituent Assembly under U Nu's leadership completed its work and the document was formally adopted and enacted on 24 September 1947,¹⁷⁰ which subsequently became as U Nu-Attlee treaty and Myanmar was formally recognized as independence state on 4 January 1948.

1.10. Indo-Myanmar Trading Activities before Independence

The trading was one of the bond that has sustains India and Myanmar for many centuries and it remain a very important factor to maintain close friendship between the two countries. Since the third Anglo-Burmese war in 1886 Myanmar became part of the British India province and in most cases the Myanmarese economic history was indifferent from India. So long as Myanmar remains under the integrated British India, it has been guided and controlled by the monetary system of the British India and there was no control of the provincial government of Myanmar over matters relating to economic administration. Moreover, Myanmar continued to avail free trade facilities with India till it was separated as different entity on April 1, 1937.¹⁷¹ Even after the separation, trade was the vital aspect of Indo-Myanmar economic relations and it has many reasons. The first factor was because of geographical proximity; the second was due to joint administration; thirdly it was out of complimentary character of the economy between India and Myanmar; and fourthly, it was the presence of a large number of Indian trading community's of Chettiyars was another factor in the augmentation of trade between the two countries.¹⁷² Generally, the mentioned push and pull factors, before independence, India was the major trading partner of Myanmar and being the nearest neighbour India fulfilled Myanmar's requirements in items such as jute, tobacco, textiles and betel nuts etc. On other hand, India being rich in mineral resources it also export to Myanmar items such as Iron, steel and coal, and consumer goods like hardwires, drugs and medicines etc.¹⁷³ Similarly, Myanmar on its part has also supplied items that are of immediate necessities for India such as rice, petroleum products and timber etc. The nature, value and volume of trade between India and Myanmar during the years 1909-1927 was quite considerable. Experts of the international trade have opined that during the period 1909-

¹⁷⁰ John F. Cady (1958). Op. Cit. p. 542.

¹⁷¹ Chakravarti (1971). Op. Cit. p. 69.

¹⁷² B.R. Pearn (1946). *The Indian in Burma*. Ledbury: Le Play House, p. 6.

¹⁷³ Annual Commercial Report (1977). P. 20.

24 describes that Indo-Myanmar trading activities are complimentary to each other. For instance, India's most preferred item of export was jute bags and Myanmar to India was rice. The depression of 1930s adversely affected the trade between India and Myanmar that suddenly caused a great decline in the value of trade.¹⁷⁴ Besides, Japanese rules in Myanmar during that period led to massive decline of trade between India and Myanmar. After that India and Myanmar resorted to increase the volume of exports and imports commodities. India began to export large amount of Cotton goods to Myanmar and import large quantities of oils and rice from Myanmar. This, to some extent, helped in controlling the deflation.¹⁷⁵

During this period India and Myanmar encountered unhealthy nature of trade, yet it did not undergo any significant change even after Myanmar separated from India but both continued to remain the leading trade-partner. As a result, India's trade with Myanmar remain amounted to three-fifth of the latter's total foreign trade.¹⁷⁶ The trade was controlled by the private firms owned by persons with British and Indian nationalities. Consequently, the internal distribution and sale of imported goods was monopolized by the Indians though the products from Europe were handled mainly by the British Importing Firms.¹⁷⁷ Thus the trade was regulated by the India and Myanmar Trade Regulation Order 1937. The main objective of this Trade Regulation Order was to avoid undue disruption of trade between India and Myanmar; it at first included provisions for non-imposition of export and import duties in excess of duties already existing before the separation.¹⁷⁸ Secondly, reduction of pre-existing duties on imports or exports was subject to the prior consent of Governor of India but reduction or abolition of goods not produced in Myanmar required two months notice by the Governor-General of India. A similar kind of procedure was stipulated for goods not manufactured in India.

¹⁷⁴ B.N. Ganguli (1956). *India's Economic Relations with the Far Eastern and Pacific Countries in the Present Century*. Calcutta, p. 34.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 36.

¹⁷⁶ Chakravarti (1971). *Op.cit.* p. 74.

¹⁷⁷ B.C.A. Cook (1957). *Burma: Economic and Commercial Conditions in Burma*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, p. 26.

¹⁷⁸ CMD 4985 (1935). *Trade and immigration relations between India and Burma after the separation of Burma*. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, p. 2.

This order, nevertheless, maintained the continuity of Myanmar's free and balanced trade with India for the next few years.

In course of the trade relations, there occurred two important developments, and this started getting critical on the bilateral trade and more particularly to the Trade Regulations Order of 1937. The reason was due to the emergence of strong feelings of nationalism among the Myanmarese gave rise to anti-Indian fever further led to anti-Indian riots. More so the ensuing Second World War resulted in budgetary difficulties.¹⁷⁹ Amidst these problems, the Government of Myanmar on 31st March 1940 gave notice to India expressing desire to open negotiations for a new trade agreement thus on 31st March 1941, both sides accepted in principle to proposed new trade agreements. In the meantime, both countries intended to maintain in operation the existing position in all matters covered by the Trade Indian Information of 1941. Consequently, a new trade agreement was signed on April 3, 1941, and this marked the end of the system of Free Trade between the two countries, and commenced a policy of mutual preferential treatment.¹⁸⁰ In order to carry forward the new policy, three-decker tariff system was introduced under which the lowest tariff were to be confined to goods of Indian and Myanmarese origin. The middle tariff was applicable to goods of empire countries, and the highest rate applicable to goods of non-empire countries. The introduction of this new tariff imposition was to raise sufficient amount of revenues.¹⁸¹ In course of time, the Second World War disrupted the trading activities between India and Myanmar, and unfortunately the latter could not benefit much from this agreement because its economy was adversely sickened and brought great setback to Myanmar economic infrastructure.¹⁸² At the pre-war period, Myanmar was one of the largest rice exporting

¹⁷⁹ Virginia Thompson & Richard Adloff (1955). *Minority problems in South East Asia*. California: Cresset Press, p. 79.

¹⁸⁰ B.N. Ganguli (1956). *India's economic relations with the Far East and Pacific countries in the present century*. Calcutta, pp. 31-33.

¹⁸¹ RBI Report (1941). *Report on currency and finance 1940-41*. Bombay, p. 9.

¹⁸² *Economic Survey of Burma (1951)*. Rangoon: Ministry of Finance and Revenue, pp. 2-3.

country in the world.¹⁸³ It was only after the independence gained by the two countries, that a new trend emerged in the trading activities between India and Myanmar.

1.11. Contextualization of Northeast in Indo-Myanmar Relations

Prior to the British annexation, India's Northeast was an independent entity and it was secured from all forms of security. There are three popular kingdoms viz. Ahom kingdom, Manipuri kingdom and Tripuri kingdom, along with mosaic of ethnic groups living in some form of autonomy. Geographically, the northeast frontier is protected by the great Himalayas in the north, East by the river Irrawaddy, west by the great Brahmaputra river and the south is protected by the Bay of Bengal. The region was largely peaceful and every ethnic group are socially and economically inter-dependent to each other and the popular means of interaction was through trade in barter system.¹⁸⁴ For instance, the interaction between Assamese and Nagas was one that could truly counts that either side dwindled in harmony. Similarly, the Manipuri kingdom with the tribals of hills is another instance that the people of northeast region are comparatively peaceful. Although most of this people have roots to the South China and Southeast Asian region, account of no contact after their permanent settlement in the region. The people are largely dependent on agriculture and the fertile soils gifts them surplus of production which required no dependency to the outside world. During the time, neither the Indian nor the Myanmar had any record of interaction to the northeast due to porous geographical location except military ventured by Mandalay king to Assam and Myanmar but it was occasional and held no history of permanent domination. The 'seven years of devastation', in contrary, was a result of Manipuri-Burmese battle.¹⁸⁵ Hence after the Northeast frontier was no account of military expedition except the cultural and religious penetration from either side of India and Myanmar. Generally, the Northeast was strategically a very secure region protected by mother earth but unfortunately, with the surrendered of Myanmar from 1826 in the first Anglo-Burmese War; the princely

¹⁸³ United Nations (1949). *Economic Survey of Asia and the Far East 1948*, New York, Department of Public Information, p. 88.

¹⁸⁴ Johnstone, James (2002). *Manipur and the Naga Hills* (New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, p. 4.

¹⁸⁵ Gangmumei Kabui (1988). *The lost territory of Manipur: Cession of Kabaw valley*. InmSanajaoba, Naorem ed. (1988). *Minipur past and present: The heritage and ordeals of a civilization*, (Vol. 1, History, Polity & Law). Delhi: Mittal Publications, p. 8.

state of Assam and Manipuri were handed over to the British colonial master by the Myanmarese king without the wishes of indigenous people.¹⁸⁶ The Kabaw valley was under the occupation of Manipuri Raja Gambhir Singh after the Myanmarese suzerainty was driven away but after the Anglo-Burmese war, a 'Boundary Commission' was set up and it was granted to Myanmar.¹⁸⁷ Though the British brought this region under their administrative control, nevertheless the insularity of this region remained. Consequently many of the tribal communities of the hills of Northeast India started demanding political autonomy and separate statehood. It is also important to reminisce that just after India's independence the northeast was comprised of the province of Assam, Manipur, Tripura and the Northeast Frontier tracts. Suddenly, there was reorganization of states on the basis of language and it paves the way for political reorganization of the region. Thus, Nagaland was first born as independent state out of Assam covering Naga hill district of Assam and Tuensang frontier division of NEFA in 1963.¹⁸⁸ The NEFA after separated and bifurcation was placed under the administration of the Union of Government immediately in the post independence period, which subsequently came to be known as North East Frontier Agency in 1954. In 1972 it was declared as UT along with the Lushai hills and later granted full-fledged state to both with renamed as Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram respectively in 1987.¹⁸⁹ The truncated state of Assam is presently confined only to the Brahmaputra and the Barak valley and the two hills district of Karbi Anglong and NC hills. Manipur and Tripura were two princely states which were integrated into India in the year 1949. Both Manipur and Tripura became Group C states and had territorial councils. They acquired the status of UT in 1962 and became full-fledged in 1972.¹⁹⁰ Finally, the Northeast frontier became a geographical importance for both India and Myanmar in the post independence era as it poses as a buffer zone to either side.

¹⁸⁶ *ibid*, p. 27.

¹⁸⁷ D. G. E. Hall (1966). Anglo-Burmese Conflicts in the 19th Century: A Reassessment. *Asia*, 6, pp. 35-52.

¹⁸⁸ P. N. Luthra (1974). Nagaland: From a District to a State. Shillong: Director of Information and Public Relations.

¹⁸⁹ Jayanta Madhab (2006). Unbounding the Frontier: Enabling the North-East. *Dialogue*, 7 (3), p. 65.

¹⁹⁰ Alexander Mackenzie (2001). The North East Frontier of India (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, p. 71.