

CHAPTER: 3

INDO-MYANMAR RELATIONS: FROM 1962 TO 1992

The Indo-Myanmar relation, during this period, is not as cordial as expected due to many factors. One of the most noticeable factor to the culmination of awful relations began with when military coup d'état in Myanmar by overthrowing the popular government at their despondent. Though the junta claims legitimacy as a last resort to save the unity and integrity, India being an advocator of democracy, on other side, argues the arbitrary act of military junta and demand for the return of popular government. Hence Myanmar accused India for the proactive intervention in its internal affairs and similarly India blames the junta for out-rightly suppressing the popular mandate. This issue marred other economic, strategic, diplomatic and socio-cultural bonds of the two countries that have been inherited over civilizations. To the contrary, it ghastly sparked to other issues leading the relations to near depleted condition. Though there was an attempt for rapprochement by either side, the bond of contention always engraves the bilateral relations. Thus the relations, during this three decade, encountered a mixture of tension and lukewarm ties. The India's northeast, being lies at the fault line, experienced unspeakable agony from the casket relations of India and Myanmar. The chapter thus focus on the military coup d'état in Myanmar, its administrative functioning, evolvment of mass protest and, condition of Indo-Myanmar relations. The chapter also briefly highlights the position of Northeast in this interface of relations.

3.1. Factors for the Military Coup d'état in Myanmar

The factors for military takeover of parliamentary democracy in Myanmar have many factors. It began as early as 1958 when the popular government fails to tackle insurmountable issues arises in the country. The situation became so complex that it was no longer possible to resolves through democratic means thus shake the unity and integrity of the country. Concern over the situation grew cross-section of the political parties as well to the armed force. The military started accusing the government for incapability to contain the growing security dilemma.³⁵⁰ As the paralysis continued, the economy greatly fallen and more impatience grew among the society. At the same time, ethnic groups across Myanmar started demanding greater autonomy. Despite that fact, the Myanmarese government under the leadership of U Nu remained totally incapable to recuperate this ridden affair of the state.³⁵¹ Consequently, the cross-section of

³⁵⁰ Martin Smith (1999). *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*. Bangkok: White Lotus, p. 175.

³⁵¹ Maung Maung (1969). *Burma and General Ne Win*. London: Asia Publishing House, p. 257.

Myanmarese regardless of professions suffered due to the crisis. Unceasingly there was a pandemic of high expenditure, price rise, low wage and countless other problems, instead of giving priority to the crisis, the politicians particularly from the ruling AFPFL party were fighting each other on their selfish vested interest. This situation became paramount for a paradigm shift of power, but neither the citizens nor the military interfered over the political crisis at the inception.³⁵² Finally the AFPFL split and U Nu could no longer claim his position to run the government. Thus the administration was relinquished to the military in 1958 for a Caretaker Government.³⁵³

During the Caretaker government, the country was brought back to certain degree of stability and renewed hope for its democratic future. Many appraised for saving the democracy and protection of unity and integrity of a nation. In February 1960, a general election was conducted in which U Nu and his new party called 'Clean AFPFL' won two-third majority of the popular votes and 200 of 250 seats in the Chamber of Deputies.³⁵⁴ Subsequently, U Nu ascended the office and formed a relatively small cabinet as compare to earlier one to run a new government. The Clean AFPFL with assurance to established strong democracy and its way of life. During the inaugural speech, U Nu promised that 'an ideal of democracy will be preserve and strengthen with an objective to create opportunity to all'. Lucidly he also describes that the exploitation of British ruled was so severe that merely one term be too short to accomplice of such a gigantic task, but assured that there is no repetition of the past mistake repeated and promised all necessary activity to build an all round development.³⁵⁵ But in a short span, a resounding voice of unhappiness started blaming on the non-improvement of economy.

On other hand, the ethnic groups started its demand for more autonomy and grew louder with the backing of the Communist party. The Clean AFPFL government to deal the issues appointed a committee but it fails to bring solution. U Nu also applied moral

³⁵² Martin Smith (1999). Op.cit. p. 176.

³⁵³ The AFPFL was split on April 30, 1958 into two factions: U Nu supported by U Tin, U Raschid and others named as 'Clean AFPFL' and other group led by U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein adopted as 'Stable AFPFL'. See at William C. Johnstone (1963). *Burma's foreign policy: A study in neutralism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 120.

³⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 148.

³⁵⁵ Maung Maung (1969). Op.cit. p. 283.

re-armament and appeal the public to change their heart and embrace the enemy to live in love and happiness forever. Unfortunately this moral fiber does not contain anyone instead created disgruntlement and frustration. To resolve the problem, U Nu engaged with the opposition, but this action has made the opposition to think he was leaning on them. Moreover, there was expectation from the party men for an invitation to deal the matter collectively unfortunately that does not happened.³⁵⁶ As a result, disgruntlement over the U Nu leadership rose within the party mostly among the young party men.

Realizing the fragile situation within the party, U Nu in an attempt to win back the party members pushed a constitutional amendment in Parliament on August 26, 1961 declaring that Buddhism being professed by the great majority to be state religion.³⁵⁷ In the past, though it had a special position but was not recognized as a state religion. With this recognition under the new ‘State Religion Protection Act’, special facilities were given to Buddhism This policy has whipped up angered among the non-Buddhist and there was huge protestation and condemnation across the ethnic populated areas.³⁵⁸ Gradually tension mounted and to quell it had needed heavy security measures. When the first amendment was passed the Buddhist were praising U Nu as ‘Protector of Buddhism’, but when the second amendment guaranteed to other religions the monks called him a traitor.³⁵⁹ The mixing of religion with politics led to another chaos in the country – an instance of rioting incident started to dominate a centre-stage in the country.

Meanwhile, the demand for more rights, equality and privileged has started from the states. At the inception, it was rather a mild one but slowly it intensified leading to an adverse situation. This movement started in the minority dominated areas and threatens the government to succession. There was no option for U Nu except to appease the rising secessionism. Consequently, a state for Shan and Kayah was granted under the provision of the constitution. The byproduct of this allows other ethnic groups to demand the same

³⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 283.

³⁵⁷ William C. Johnstone (1963). Op.cit. p. 149.

³⁵⁸ Maung Maung (1969). Op.cit. p. 289

³⁵⁹ E. Sarkisyanz (1965). *Buddhist backgrounds of the Burmese revolution*. Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, p. 232.

right for the establishment of their own states.³⁶⁰ For example, the Arakanese and Mon demands for the establishment of their separate states. The Clean AFPFL's government faced insurmountable problems from different quarters, and it became difficult to function the administration in efficient manner due to widespread of demonstrations started from ethnic group down to labour union.³⁶¹ All groups were asking for more, none offered to give back or compromise. For instance, the civil servants wanted constitutional guarantees and when U Nu promised them, sooner than later, the businessmen started its protest against the government's proposal for 'nationalization' of the import trade. Subsequently, the labourers seek better wage, and civil society protest over price inflation on household commodities.³⁶² In February, 1962 the states again started another demand to re-write the constitution in view to set a pure federal country. The leaders during the conference in Rangoon said 'Now' or 'Never'.³⁶³ By the time, General Ne Win realizes that things had gone far enough and it was time to step in and save the situation. Thus, the army under General Ne Win had coup d'état Myanmar on the mid-night of March 1, 1962.³⁶⁴

3.2. Collapse of Democracy in Myanmar: *The Indian Standpoint*

With the military coup d'état, the parliamentary democratic system in Myanmar is collapsed and began to adopt a new form of system that is totalitarian in nature. Under this new regime, General Ne Win became a de facto head of the state on the intervening night of March 1 and 2, 1962.³⁶⁵ There was a cultural programme organized to honour the visiting Chinese ballet troupe and all section of people including U Nu and General Ne Win were part of the audience and it fairly went till late night. When the programme ended, General Ne Win had also exchange greetings with the performers and beaming smiles among the crowds. At around midnight he ordered the troops to controlled Rangoon, and then arrested the Prime Minister U Nu along with some ministers and

³⁶⁰ David I. Steinberg (1981). *Burma's Road toward Development: Growth and Ideology under Military Rule*. Colorado: Westview Press, p. 21.

³⁶¹ Ibid, p. 21.

³⁶² Maung Maung (1969). Op.cit. p. 291.

³⁶³ Ibid, p. 291.

³⁶⁴ I.P. Khosla (1998). Myanmar: Cohesion and Liberalism. *Strategic Analysis*, XXI (11), p. 1647.

³⁶⁵ Mya Maung (1998). *The Burma Road to Capitalism: Economic Growth versus Democracy*. London: Praeger, p. 25.

leaders of minority groups.³⁶⁶ The next morning at around 8.30 am General Ne Win announced the political transition in radio that;

‘I have to inform you, citizens of the Union that the armed forces have taken over the responsibility and the task of keeping the country’s safety, owing to the greatly deteriorating conditions in the Union. I appeal to you to carry on with your daily tasks as usual, without fear or anxiety. I also call upon the government servants to continue to attend their duties without any interruption. I urge the education authorities and the students who are in the midst of their examinations to carry on with their work. We shall do our best to promote the happiness and wellbeing of all the people of the Union’.³⁶⁷

By noon the people of Rangoon and the Myanmar knew the returned of General Ne Win but everyone went about their business calmly, and even the school students took their examinations peacefully. Many international relations scholars highlight that the paradigm shift in Myanmar is due to the weakness of the United States and capitalist policy to convince the military general to remain neutral. India, being a friendly neighbour, was worried of the transition in Myanmar and support to resolve the internal crisis at the earliest. One of the reasons of this takeover was that military were against making Buddhism a state religion, not because they were not Buddhists, but because they felt it increase pressures that might destroy the unity of the country.³⁶⁸ Minimally, they wanted the formal establishment of Buddhism limited to only in Central Myanmar where there is major population followed Buddhism vis-à-vis against the introduction of Buddhist Sabbath as day of rest for it changed every week making business and social life difficult. They also abhorred the ban on slaughter of cattle ostensibly introduced by U Nu as a good Buddhist act.³⁶⁹ The second reason was they do not want to create Myanmar a loose federalized form of constitution with power equally shares between the

³⁶⁶ David I. Steinberg (1981). Op.cit. p. 22.

³⁶⁷ Maung Maung (1969). Op.cit. p. 292.

³⁶⁸ I.P. Khosla (1998). Op. Cit. p. 1649.

³⁶⁹ It reinstated the earlier practise of raising animals for meat and also abolished the Sabbath day of leave. See at Frank N. Trager (1966). *Burma: From Kingdom to Republic – A Historical and Political Analysis*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press, p. 199.

minorities and Burmese majority areas. When the federal movement was started, General Ne Win and tatmadaw (Myanmar army) were looking with anathema who in over decades of constant fighting under the slogan of ‘one voice, one command’ and had come to see themselves as the lone protector of the Union’s integrity and the ‘Federal Movement’ as merely another guise for the insurgents’ separatist demand.³⁷⁰

Immediately the Constitution was kept in abeyance, though not formally suspended or abrogated, followed with the dissolution and abolition of the Council of Ministers, Parliament; Supreme Court and the High Court was enforced with immediate effect. Consequently, the President, Chief Justice and other key leaders too were arrested. In this way the parliamentary democracy in Myanmar was curtailed and no one had the authority to challenge the despotic action.³⁷¹ Thereafter the military junta formed a Revolutionary Council to look after the affairs of the state. This body has no opposition and all the administrative works were functioned at the dictate of the General Ne Win and senior military officers. In less than two months, the military junta purportedly published one visionary document called ‘The Burmese way to Socialism’.³⁷² This document emphasizes on vision to bring forward change – though large section of Myanmarese was unhappy to the abrogation of democracy – section of people are fond with the document because it proposed a unique way of economic development to be achieved in a millennium. For example, Ba Maw who was a prewar Myanmarese politician lauds the document that ‘adoption of socialist model was good, but because it was Burmese it was better’.³⁷³ Likewise ‘The Burmese Way to Socialism’ symbolizes the search for a valid position whether it is in economics, international relations, politics or culture, and this is needed to study in countless way because it stress on the ‘Burmeseness’ and encapsulates a single overriding theme in Myanmar history and reestablishment of the Myanmarese identity.³⁷⁴

³⁷⁰ Martin Smith (1999). Op.cit. p. 196.

³⁷¹ I.P. Khosla (1998). Op. Cit. p. 1647.

³⁷² Frank N. Trager (1966). Op.cit. pp. 198-200.

³⁷³ Ba Maw (1968). *Breakthrough in Burma*. London, Asia Publishing House, p. 187.

³⁷⁴ Maung Maung (1969). Op. Cit. p. 298.

The military in Myanmar has a unique history of its own since the nationalist movement and that moral fiber endorsed them to act in such a vehement way to destroy the democracy in the country. General Ne Win was one of the ‘Thirty Thakins,’³⁷⁵ also known as ‘inner circle’ of Burma Freedom Bloc, who are deeply obsessed for the consolidation of Myanmar as a nation thus this feeling gave him to play a greater role in the future of the country. This self claim image as the only actor to hold the state structure together was reinforced. With the overthrow of the parliamentary democracy, General Ne Win installed a military government and attempted to legitimize its rules by emphasizing its role in unifying the country.

3.3. Revolutionary Council: *Seeking Legitimacy?*

The military junta, after coup d’état, quickly set an administration and get the country moving toward a new direction. To look after the welfare of state, a new government was formed under the aegis of Revolutionary Council (RC), which is totally controlled by the tatmadaw.³⁷⁶ Immediately it also set up Council of Ministers (CoM) to deal the current affairs of state. With the enforcement of the new system, the old parliamentary system was abolished without any consideration followed by replacement of State Councils (SC) with the State Affairs Councils (SAC) and General Ne Win became as the chairman of the RC as the repository head of sovereign powers of the state. The arrangement of such structure is necessary even in totalitarianism because for proper functionalization of the government activities without the structure would be awful hurdles. Under the RC, General Ne Win starts operationalize the powers and channelize direct communication with the people. On April 30, 1962, the RC released a visionary document and this document envisioned the goals of junta to attain political stability, economic growth, social harmony and religious integration in the future. It is indeed the first exertion to claim legitimacy of the junta.³⁷⁷ To instilled people’s faith on them, the RC holds discussion at different interval on the subject concerns like law and order,

³⁷⁵ 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. 199.

³⁷⁶ Josef Silverstein (1977). *Burma: Military Rule and the Politics of Stagnation*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 88.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 91.

economic and social welfare policies before the implementation.³⁷⁸ In replica of the prime minister position, General Ne Win would give his assent if it is satisfactory on all the subjects. Without a doubt, General Ne Win was fully aware of the lacuna of governance and taught his members to uphold their position with responsibility for power without responsibility is no less to corruption and one who holds power should maintain trust of the citizen and be an instrument for building a better life for the people. In order to abide by the principle of trust, General Ne Win and other RC members tried to posture their selfless interest sacrificing for the betterment of Myanmar people vis-à-vis the people were allowed to participate in decision-making process on numerous matters. This act can be substantiated when General Ne Win invited the three principal political parties – Pyidaungsu, Clean AFPFL and NUF – for the joint meeting with RC on March 4, 1962.³⁷⁹ During the meeting, all political parties were asked to forge and march forward to achieve the socialist goals. In contrary to the act of coup d'état, the tatmadaw urged all the political parties that the goal of the RC are nothing abominable and all are welcome regardless of different political affiliation toward marching Myanmar to a progressive development. In the same speech, he also ascertained that;

“if you do not, please do not hinder us. You have had a full opportunity to do things in your way for over a decade. Now give us chance to do it our way.”³⁸⁰

With this General Ne Win was seeking from the political spectrum the legitimacy of military junta in Myanmar. Candidly the Clean AFPFL leader U Nu expressed that they recognize the legitimacy of tatmadaw and extended supports in the present task, and also appeal to conduct election at a suitable time in the future and made returned of democracy in the country.³⁸¹ Unfortunately, the RC was deeply disillusioned with democracy and question to bring it back was far from imagination. The intention of the RC against the parliamentary democracy was pretty cleared when they released a Vision Document. It stated that parliamentary democracy is already experimented and totally it failed to serve the interest of Myanmar due to its very defects, weaknesses and loopholes,

³⁷⁸ Maung Maung (1969). Op.cit. p. 295.

³⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 295.

³⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 295.

³⁸¹ Ibid, p. 196.

abuses of power, absences of mature public opinion and lose sight.³⁸² The new course, therefore, has developed in conformity with the existing conditions and environment and the ever changing circumstances. The RC have made many reference to ideas from Theravada Buddhism and Marxist terminology but the basic purpose was to show that centralism, a concentration of power in the state, was the necessary prerequisite for material progress.³⁸³ The RC proclaimed that without centralism Myanmar will not remain the same form as it is today for the society are tend towards anarchy. An utmost priority of a nation was to maintain unity and integrity of a country and that sense of oneness would bind all the peoples into a nation with a spirit of patriotism. The RC made it clear that achieving unity through centralism as the instrument would continue for some time until the ideology is more widely accepted.

Meanwhile, to create consent among the cross-section of society at ground level the RC enunciate a new ideology incorporating socialist aims as the basis of legitimacy to replace military junta.³⁸⁴ Apparently after the release of 'The Burmese Way to Socialism', the RC established a single political party in the name of Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) to implement the goals of the vision document. It is an act of transferring power from the direct control of military to the civilian government but unfortunately the BSPP is a cadre organization of the military elites created in the form of political party.³⁸⁵ Subsequently when the BSPP replaced the RC, there was confusion lumping among the people to whether it was a returned of democracy or continuity of the military junta and under this dilemma many public have enrolled in the party. To strengthen his position, General Ne Win released another document 'The System of Correlation of Man and Environment' and this document signaled a total break away from the idea of democracy and liberalism which Myanmar is much endure. The primary objective was to bring the people under his whims to consolidate the power of state, but it rather led to chaos and peoples movement.³⁸⁶

³⁸² Martin Smith (1999). Op.cit. p.199.

³⁸³ David I. Steinberg (1981). Op.cit. p. 23.

³⁸⁴ I.P. Khosla (1998). Op. Cit. p. 1650.

³⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 1650.

³⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 1650.

3.4. Nationalization under BSPP: *Impact on Indian Diaspora*

When the question of restoring democracy was raising the RC cornered the popular demand and began to solidify its power. There was no sign of bringing back the civilian government instead consolidating power by projecting their short and long term vision. During the course of enforcing its dictate the rights and freedom of citizens has been curtailed and this act angered general public, particularly the students' community. In July 1962, a large number of students come out in protest across Yangon against the repressive governance of the military junta. The demonstration went out of control thus to stop the military opened fired killing innocent demonstrators and wounding several – this killing further intensified public anger.³⁸⁷ Finally, General Ne Win has finally agreed upon the promised he made and installed a new political party called the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) but with this introduction it imposed another stringent action by banning all political parties except BSPP in accordance of new law enforced in 1964.³⁸⁸ The astonishment was that at the times of BSPP formation into a mass political party, it had only 24 members and these members were not merely an ordinary officials but senior military officials with influential status. The BSPP therefore sought the masses to support BSPP in order to effectively carry forward its welfare activities. This canvass lead to the growth of large number of potential party members, party affiliated organizations and subsidiary mass movement. In order to further expand the influence, non-voting candidates were also encouraged for the party members or sympathizers. On one hand, to woo the people, it opened party office in every township units and village in the form of 'People Peasants Council' in 1967 while on other side the process of membership applications started one year after the coup, but three years later it had only 99638 candidate members and 167447 sympathizers.³⁸⁹ In the process, the BSPP also established a Lazan Youth Organization in 1967.³⁹⁰ The government has used these organizational networks to control and cajole the populace for

³⁸⁷ David I. Steinberg (1981). Op.cit. p. 24.

³⁸⁸ The new law further said that democracy does not suit Myanmar due to different political nature and adopting such would lead to breakdown of nation. See at Taylor, Robert H. (1998). Myanmar: Army Politics and the Prospects for Democratization. *Asian Affairs*, 85 (1), pp. 3-12.

³⁸⁹ Martin Smith (1999). Op.cit. p. 200.

³⁹⁰ Josef Silverstein (1977). Burma: Military Rule and the Politics of Stagnation. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 160.

political ends. There was an improved in its members and diversified to different parts of the country but still there was a weak participation among the masses hence in 1969 General Ne Win made a massive reform inviting all citizenry to cooperate and unite in the process of nation-building.

In order to convince the people, General Ne Win highlights that the earlier regime ruled by few military elites was a mere transitional one, but the future of Myanmar lies in the spirit of popular will. This appealed resemble the call for the return of democracy and people started hoping over hope. In 1971 the BSPP organized a first Congress and large number of delegations participated with an aspiration that decision for conducting general election would be taken but it only agreed upon an introduction of new constitution initiative for economic reformation thus disheartened majority of delegations. Immediately a new constitution was promulgated on January 3, 1974 and apart from that the political arrest to about 9000 are released who were jailed since the 1960s to assured the people that BSPP is working for the popular interest.³⁹¹ In order to show its clean image the BSPP in 1976 carry out major purge of party members on charge of corruption, miss-governance, and over various charges related to discipline in duty.³⁹² This action was an attempt to give message to the masses that BSPP is serious towards the welfare of the state, and it has somehow improved the membership, yet there continued a huge imbalance of participation between the armed personnel and general public. In the same year, it emerged another unrest by the students and workers thus led to close down universities and other institutes.³⁹³ Subsequently, the press was completely under government control since the regime began hardening its political view because the media was used as a propaganda tool against the junta. So the BSPP banned foreign newspapers in China, Indian and Pakistani languages, and local newspaper is monitored by the government agencies. Another soft coercion was that BSPP screened all the text books to eliminate capitalist or other non-Marxist views. No one was granted easily, even

³⁹¹ Andrew Selth (2002). *Burma's armed force: Power without glory*. Connecticut: N. Eastbridge, p. 122.

³⁹² Win Min (2008). *Looking Inside the Burmese Military*. *Asian Survey*, XLVIII (6), p. 1022.

³⁹³ Peter B. R. Carey (1997). *From Burma to Myanmar: Military Rule and the Struggle for Democracy*. London: Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, p. 76.

within the circle of army officers, if found anyone whose view was contradictory to BSPP policy.

In aftermath of General Ne Win succession, the military junta has undertaken major reforms in different spectrums, and one among them was the nationalization of land and trade. Under this nationalization, it has extensively affected over 15,000 firms, small and large, engaged in agriculture, manufacturing and trade.³⁹⁴ The new policy of nationalization implies the means of production and distribution, both internal and external, would directly come under the stakeholder of the state and no new private industries were allowed to establish in the state. Under this rigid law, the first major act of government was nationalization of Burma Oil Company on January 1, 1963 followed with other firms February 23, 1963. The impact of this nationalization does not occur only on agriculture, manufacturing and trade but all the banking too was nationalized. It is said that approximately 14 foreign and 10 domestic banks were ceased under the new law.³⁹⁵ In this process, thousands of private firms were affected and this has greatly touched on the capitalist and the farmers.³⁹⁶ In order to fulfill their nationalization programme the BSPP has carried out all possible means and exploited the state economy in their favor. One such act was the Union of Burma Bank demonetization of large denominations in May, 1964. Later, the purchases and foreign sales of all paddies were absorbed by a new board called Union of Burma Agricultural Marketing Board.³⁹⁷ The consequence of this nationalization of economy does not impact on the specific sectors; it spread like a syndrome over all large areas. During the process of nationalization, the BSPP dastardly declared that the military no longer trust the bureaucrats appointed by the previous civil government, and accused for working in conclusion them. Many bureaucrats were forced to retired immediately and were filed with more, but less qualified, administrators whose principal virtue was politically trustworthy. The new administrators who discharge power were incompetent and thus fail to bring solution to

³⁹⁴ David I. Steinberg (1981). Op.cit. p. 126.

³⁹⁵ Frank N. Trager (1966). Op.cit. p. 205. For details of the nationalization see at Government of Burma (1964). Burma National Economy, Vol. 2. Rangoon.

³⁹⁶ Mya Maung (1997). Burma's economic performance under military rule: An assessment. *Asian Survey*, XXXVII (6), p. 507.

³⁹⁷ It is earlier called as State Agricultural Bank of Burma (SAMB), which was established in 1948 under the U Nu led democratic government immediately after Myanmar's independence.

the economic crisis. In order to improve the economy, General Ne Win initiated policy in 1966 but it did not improved thus dissatisfaction increased not only among the public including General Ne Win himself was stunted to see the economic problem in a country.

As a result, the Trade Council, special committee to look after the trade, has revoked some nationalization programmes on September 26, 1966 in order to relax the trade. But the economic condition has unfortunately gone too far and it was not possible to have sudden improvement. The consequence spread across the country by 1967, there was a severe crisis in the agricultural sector. This has resulted failed in export of rice due to poor government procurement and scarcity arose both in food stuffs and in household necessities including clothing. In 1974, after drawing a new constitution, it again pursues a utopian socialist economy of proportional development, equality and justice for all, the Sino-Soviet model of a planned socialist economy was adopted by nationalizing all private enterprises and industries and imposing direct controls on production, distribution, trade, and finance.³⁹⁸ The highly inefficient dual economy, with formal/official economy comprising 22 state corporations and more than 50 state enterprises, combined with the informal/unofficial economy of a nationwide black market, propelled Myanmar down to the road of poverty. From the average growth rate of 5 percent in between 1962 and 1965 it has slip to negative 6 percent in 1966 but it remains stagnant at about 3 percent in between 1966 and 1974. This has not only brought down Myanmar to 41 least developed economy in the world but equally detrimental condition to the workers – the cost of living become unbearable and under-availability of essential commodities.³⁹⁹

The economic liberalization has badly affects the Indian Diaspora, particularly the Indian Chettyars, landlords and big financiers. The nationalization policy was more or less a technique to chase out the foreign origins in Myanmar, and the Indian diaspora who are resident in different parts of Myanmar since the British administration were ceased of their property and physically targeted.⁴⁰⁰ It is said that approximately 150,000 Indians

³⁹⁸ Mya Maung (1997). *Op.cit.* p. 10.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴⁰⁰ Ministry of External Affairs (1965). *Annual Report for 1964-65.* Government of India.

were dispossessed and had to leave Myanmar without most of their personal possessions and assets worth approximately fifteen crore rupees. The Indians were the hardest hit by the General Ne Win's nationalization measures. Many who tried to escape the tragedy of physical torture and on their struggle to move out of Myanmar, dozens of hundreds lost their lives without record.⁴⁰¹ To denounce the tragedy, there was a strong protest by the Indians and they asked the Government of India for intervention on this humanitarian crisis, but the Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, during his visit to Myanmar in 1965, could do little for the Indians in Myanmar. Consequently, a new leadership took place in India during the interregnum and Indira Gandhi, successor of Lal Bahadur Shastri, and many other leaders at the beginning, however, felt that the nationalization in Myanmar was non-discriminatory and felt adequate compensation should be paid by the Myanmar Government.⁴⁰² In contrast, the situation became severe and no compensation was paid, thus many wanted to come back to India but even this was not possible as they could not pay their passage and the junta provided no passage facilities. When allowed to leave Myanmar, they were not allowed to take anything with them. The situation looked like ethnic cleansing of the Indian diaspora as the Myanmar government did to the Chinese during the cultural revolution, thus the Indian government strongly protested the junta for their inhuman treatment to the Indians but by the time hundreds had died and thousands were gone missing.

3.5. India's Diplomatic Relations with General Ne Win

India's relation with Myanmar, during this phase, was a critical one in comparison with the earlier government led by the popular leader U Nu. Soon the military junta took over Myanmar and General Ne Win became a de facto leader, major changes in foreign policy took place, in fact, after 1962 particularly after 1972 Myanmar became self-isolated from the international community. The deterioration of Myanmar is analyzed by Thin Thin Aung and Soe Myint that 'a Sino-Burmese border agreement and a treaty of friendship and mutual non-aggression was signed on 28 January 1960 when General Ne Win was leading a caretaker government in Burma.' This made General Ne Win feel

⁴⁰¹ Udai Bhanu Singh (2006). Challenges to Border Management in India-Myanmar Relations. *World Focus*, 27 (8), p. 34.

⁴⁰² Rajiv Bhatia (2015). *India-Myanmar Relations: Changing contours*. New Delhi: Routledge, p. 136.

more secure because it got to subdue the threat of Communist Party of Burma (CPB), who earlier got support from China, and disturbed peace and security in upper Myanmar. This shift of policy stemmed from Deng Xiaoping's new 'open door' policy to forge new relationship with south-western neighbour on the basis of economic cooperation.⁴⁰³ Even in this period, Indian leaders paid visits to Myanmar but due to political difference there was no productive result unlike earlier one. It is pretty known to Indian leaders that General Ne Win was very antagonistic on the role played by Indian government over his military coup. No doubt, India as a neighbour has denounced his succession, by overthrowing democracy, in Myanmar and yet under the strong lobby of India that an economic sanctioned was imposed by the international community. Thus Myanmar was totally isolated from the international forum and the only nation that came to the rescue was China for the Chinese withholds a neutral position so Myanmar have become more leaning towards China.⁴⁰⁴

Immediately, General Ne Win signed a border agreement and resolved the border issue that has been lingered between the two countries after the independence. A Treaty of Peace and Friendship was earlier signed during the caretaker government to strengthen with an aim to respect each other internal affairs vis-à-vis mutual non-aggression. In the aftermath of these mutual agreements between the two nations, the Chinese diametrically changed its attitude toward Myanmar, and General Ne Win also reciprocated to the Chinese position.⁴⁰⁵ India became concerned over the bonhomie of the Sino-Myanmar new found relations and pressure among the Indian leaders grew on how the China-Myanmar would aggravate its politics in the region and spark a direct threat to India's sovereignty.⁴⁰⁶ It is much perceivable because in the same year of General Ne Win's military coup d'état in Myanmar, India suffered at the hands of Chinese invasion. Though Myanmar does not cut off the relations with India the situation was never same as before. Many academicians and political analysts describe that Indo-Myanmar relations have sunk unpredictably and become near paralyze. Aftermath the Sino-Myanmar agreement it

⁴⁰³ P. Stobdan (1993). China's Forays into Burma-Implication for India. *Strategic Analysis*, XVI (1), p. 22.

⁴⁰⁴ Shelby Tucker (2001). *Burma: The Curse of Independence*. Sterling; Pluto Press, p. 35.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 39.

⁴⁰⁶ Renaud Egretreau (2003). *Wooing the Generals: India's New Burma Policy*. Delhi: Authorspress.

become perceptible that the Chinese are making all possible effort to woo Myanmar in order to weaken the Indo-Myanmar relations.⁴⁰⁷ Without a doubt, the Indian influence has become lessened in diverse areas of bilateral relations. The Indian leader was expecting Myanmar to raise their voice against the Chinese incursion as Myanmar was friendly neighbour since independence both at bilateral and multilateral cooperation as well as pioneering member of the Non-Alignment Movement, but Myanmar took a position of neutrality on the issue. This is a clear indication that Myanmar no longer remained to its old policy and so many Indian writers projected the Myanmar position as 'Pro-Chinese' and criticize for breaking the relations.

During the time, demonstration of pro-democracy sprung up in Myanmar and protest against the junta in which many innocent students were killed and hundreds injured due to incessant fired by the armed forces. India was critical to this act and asked General Ne Win to conduct general election and restore the democracy on the interest of the general public. The junta was reluctant to reconcile with the demonstrators and continue to harass the pro-democracy activists. Thus India comes to the rescue of the students and pro-democracy demonstrators. The Indian embassy in Rangoon openly come forward and gives refuge to many activists and also gave refuge to hundreds who come to Indian border. This action was regarded as India's intimidating the junta and interfering in the internal affairs of Myanmar.⁴⁰⁸ Since then the cordial relations of India and Myanmar has deeply gone apart in bitterness. The bitter relations does not end there between the two countries, it was just the beginning which culminate to diverse issues thereafter.

In the early part of 1964, the General Ne Win's government nationalized the economy and impact of this affect to Indian diaspora from the top moneylenders to small shoppers and stores. The vulnerable widespread to all section but it badly affect the small traders. The previous nationalization measures initiated by U Nu's government has somehow affect the Indian capitalist viz. Chettiyars, landlords and the big financiers, but it was worst affected during the General Ne Win regime. Under this policy over 150,000

⁴⁰⁷ William C. Johnstone (1963). Op.cit. p. 153. For detail at appendix II, p. 305.

⁴⁰⁸ Thin Thin Aung & Soe Myint (2006). *India-Burma Relations*, Singapore: Royal Publication, p. 86.

Indian diaspora⁴⁰⁹ and besides, the latest nationalization measures were so vigorous that many Indian were deprived of their means of livelihood. Thus, many wanted to return to India but even that was not possible as they could not pay their travelling fares and the junta was not willing to provide even passage facilities to them. Even when they planned to leave Myanmar, none was allowed to take anything with them. Consequently, there was huge protest in India against the behaviour of military junta and the relations between India and Myanmar became utterly bad.⁴¹⁰ The leaders of both the two countries were tooth to nail reluctant to withdraw their position regardless of the needs of good friendship. Many attempts to reproach were also failed and there were no signed of normalizing the relations. Surprisingly, the relationship between the two countries began to regain little toward the end of 1964; it was apparently due to strained relationship between Myanmar and China as insurgent groups of Myanmar were directly and indirectly getting support from the Chinese government. This act was totally critical by both the armed forces and nationalist groups and in counter against those act of Chinese, in June 1967 an anti-Chinese riots under the aegis of Cultural Revolution broke out in Myanmar though there was no evidence to suggest that the Myanmarese government inspired the riots.⁴¹¹ Taking advantage of the situation, India extends a warm invitation for the rapprochement and General Ne Win had no option rather than to re-build relations with India through re-counting the shared historical values. Thus the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and General Ne Win brought an idea of transformation between the two countries' relations. In course of time, General Ne Win also paid three visits to India and Mrs. Gandhi visited Rangoon in 1969. P.M.S. Malik expounds the record of animosity through an article on Indo-Myanmar relations that:

“General Ne Win recognized that as long as he fed her ego by visiting her almost as regularly as the contacts he maintained with the top-ranking Chinese leadership he would have nothing to fear from India.”⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁹ Frank N. Trager (1966). *Op.cit.* p. 206.

⁴¹⁰ Indian Ministry of External Affairs (1965). *Annual Report 1964-65*. New Delhi: Government of India.

⁴¹¹ Martin Smith (1999). *Op.cit.* p. 224.

⁴¹² Thin Thin Aung & Soe Myint (2006). *Op.cit.* p. 91.

In early 1965, General Ne Win visited India and the two countries issued a joint communiqué which said that a common outlook on international issues resulting from the pursuit of policy of non-alignment has helped in the development of close and good neighborly relations between the two countries. In the succeeding year, India and Myanmar signed the boundary agreement to formally delimitate and demarcate the entire boundary between the two countries on 10 March 1967 followed by the ratification of agreement on trade and commerce.⁴¹³ It was enormous to see the rapid exchange of visit on both sides to resolve possible issues and on this mission General Ne Win paid visit again to India 15 March, 1968 and had dialogue with Indira Gandhi on issue of Chinese threat to the two countries and chalked out policy of maintaining closer political cooperation between them in meeting the ‘common danger’.⁴¹⁴ In reactionary to the Indo-Myanmar new bonhomie China expressed great displeasure and Peking Radio on 13 March 1968 broadcast calling General Ne Win a ‘fascist dictatorship’.

It was pretty known that India and Myanmar had no good relation since the military coup and trade and commerce which have been a bond of friendship declined irreparably. India was one of the largest importers of Myanmarese rice since the British colonization until 1960s, but the Chinese replaced India as the largest importer of rice from Myanmar. Though an agreement to promote trade was signed on 24 December 1962 in Rangoon, there was not much increase in trade relations.⁴¹⁵ The agreement remained merely in words and no real exchange of trade exists for nearly six years. Again India’s effort made to sign an agreement on land boundary treaty on March 10, 1967 with Myanmar but political difference continued and it has immensely ruptured on trade and commerce until 1970. Thereafter, India and Myanmar has placidly recovered its political, diplomatic and economic relations and it was the outcome of General Ne Win’s visits to India on the invitation of Indian President V.V. Giri in 15-22 January, 1970.⁴¹⁶ During the course of visit, talks were held at different parlance first with the Indian Prime Minister followed by interaction with the Indian Minister for External Affairs and

⁴¹³ Udai Bhanu Singh (2006). Challenges to Border Management in India-Myanmar Relations. *World Focus*, 27 (8), p. 31.

⁴¹⁴ Rajeswar (2000). Courting the Burmese Junta. *Economic and Political Weekly*, XXXV (38), 3393-3401.

⁴¹⁵ Udai Bhanu Singh (2006). Op.cit. p. 31.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid, p. 31. See for details at Ministry of External Affairs website URL: <http://www.mea.gov.in/>

Foreign Trade. Bilateral trade relations and regional economic cooperation were among the discussions. On 17 August 1974, a new payment agreement between India and Myanmar enabled the latter to buy goods from India like cotton textiles, pharmaceutical products, electrical goods and hardware and India too import commodities like urea and mineral ores. Even though there was understanding to certain level, suspicion of Myanmar with India did not died down as India always pressurized the junta to restore democracy in Myanmar. Despite that Myanmar was compelled to deal with India due to aggravating nature of Chinese influence in Myanmar. Then during October 1979 there was a provision allotting India to carry out project in Myanmar with a view to recuperation of the ties, and under the project, India would set up 21 pilot projects in Myanmar in areas ranging from plants for menthol, calcium carbide, glue and gelatin, to electro-chemical metallurgy and orange juice etc. In this way the relations on trade has yield to about 36 crores.

Another dimension of Indo-Myanmar relations during this period was that of border problems posed by insurgents groups in Northeast India, particularly by Nagas and Mizos. With the demarcation of international boundary, large population of Nagas and Mizos were segregated on either sides of the two countries, and this has led to emergence of insurgency movement.⁴¹⁷ The Nagas and Mizos insurgency groups would take shelter in Myanmar's border after creating ruckus on the Indian border. Many a times India accused Myanmar for sponsoring the insurgent groups. Without a doubt, the military junta to exploit the India support to pro-democracy activists have had supported the insurgent groups. But after temporary rapprochement, General Ne Win extended help on India's mission in countering the insurgency in the Northeast.⁴¹⁸ Even in multilateral forum General Ne Win began to coordinately working in the collective interest with India. This reflects the changing foreign relations of Myanmar particularly with India. But suddenly on 28 September 1979, during the Sixth Triennial Non-Alignment Summit Conference in Cuba, Myanmar withdrew membership from the movement accusing

⁴¹⁷ Subir Bhaumik (1996). *Insurgent Cross Fire: North-East India*. New Delhi: Lancer Publishers, p. 84. Also see at Maung Htin Aung (1965). *The stricken peacock: Anglo-Burmese relations 1732-1948*. The Hague, p. 96.

⁴¹⁸ Sanjay Barbora (2006). Rethinking India's Counter-Insurgency Campaign in North-East. *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLI (35), p. 3807.

Cuba's attempt to swing the non-aligned group into the Soviet bloc.⁴¹⁹ India was surprised to see Myanmar withdrawal thus appealed to rejoin again, which Myanmar has high esteem as a founding member. It is learned that despite India's criticism to the military junta, India sent its external affairs ministers to build bilateral relations and appealed the Myanmar government to understand the desire of popular mandate. In April 1973, the external affairs minister Swanran Singh visited Myanmar to talk with General Ne Win on behalf of the Indian government followed by another external Affairs Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in August 1977. However, there was a lull in the Indo-Myanmar relationship from 1977 till 1988 as Myanmar re-nurtured friendship with China.⁴²⁰ Although Indian Prime Minister visited Myanmar in December 1987, it did not indicate much improvement in Indo-Myanmar relations. The ticklish question for Indo-Myanmar relations in this period was the case deposed Prime Minister of Myanmar U Nu, who requested political asylum in India. He was allowed to stay in India because of personal relationship that existed between U Nu and Nehru's family, and took shelter in India from 1974 to 1980.⁴²¹ Above that India has extended full cooperation to the protestors during the 1988 crisis.

3.6. First Mass Movement in Myanmar: *India's Patronage against Junta*

Large numbers of Myanmar are discontent with the military overriding the democratic system in the country. Within a few months the pro-democracy demonstrate against the coup d'état and seek the return of popular government, India being a friendly neighbour and a democratic state also hurt with the situation occurring in Myanmar. Thus India appealed General Ne Win to conduct general election and restore democracy so that popular will be served and respected because the independence of 1948 does not mean bringing people freedom in setting government and decision-making process.⁴²² But the appeal of Indian government, in the inception, was a cordial one as India does not want to interfere in internal affairs of other. The military junta, however, learns no lesson and

⁴¹⁹ Soe Myint (2003). *Burma File: A Question of Democracy*. New Delhi: Indian Research Press, p. 487.

⁴²⁰ Maitreya Buddha Samantaray (2004). Indo-Myanmar Relationship in the Changing World. *South Asia Politics*, April, p. 49.

⁴²¹ Aung Thin Thin & Soe Myint (2008). *Op.cit.* p. 93.

⁴²² *Ibid*, p. 91.

continued to dictate the state in its own terms, and many reforms were initiated some of which become very reprehensive to section of society. The first and foremost impact of the junta falls upon the farmers and students. The section of students' community, initially protested⁴²³ but in short the junta curtails their rights and freedoms. Thus, large number of students' union come together mostly from the Rangoon University Students' Union, All Burma Federation of Students' Union, and the Rangoon Students' Union to discuss the ongoing crisis.⁴²⁴ The movement began to intensified only after the returned from summer vacation in May, 1962 when they were greeted by more stringent hostel regulation. The students' leaders raised an alarm over such imposition of rules on the students.⁴²⁵ Instead of listening the students' complaint under new rules, General Ne Win countered their vocal dissent by wresting direct control over all universities in Myanmar from the previously autonomous university councils.

When General Ne Win continued his strict imposition of rules and regulations upon the students, the students joined hands and started demonstrating against the military junta. All popular students' unions came together in Rangoon University Students' Union building and asked the junta to withdraw all the restriction imposed on the students in campus. The Rangoon University Students' Union Building⁴²⁶ symbolized the students' nationalism and a place that began activity against colonial rule dating back to 1930s and when the students intensified its protest, violence erupted at the university campus as students became restive over restriction on their behaviour. They burnt some professors cars and threatened university staffs, there was no signed of withdrawing other than intensifying it. Seeing this violent action General Ne Win was impatient and on July 7, 1962 the troops of fourth Burma riffles, commanded by Sein Lwin, came inside the campus in afternoon and mercilessly opened fire the student demonstrations. In this firing, according to official report, about 15 students were instantly shot dead on spot and

⁴²³ Robert H. Taylor (1998). Myanmar: Army Politics and the Prospects for Democratization. *Asian Affairs*, 85 (1), p. 6.

⁴²⁴ David I. Steinberg (1981). Op. cit. p. 23.

⁴²⁵ Times (London). May 12, 1962.

⁴²⁶ David I. Steinberg (1981). Op. cit. p. 24.

27 were badly wounded,⁴²⁷ though unofficial account the dead toll was over one hundred and more hundreds wounded. In the next dawn, the Rangoon University Student's Union building⁴²⁸ was blown up by the military at the behest of General Ne Win. The act was totally unjustified for a great nationalist like General Ne Win to suppress the voice of his own countrymen. After this incident, there was some sense of quite had returned to the campus but the action of army have reached all across the international community. India was very worried over the situation and had come out openly criticize the militarization over the innocent students. The Indian Embassy in Rangoon was became a centre of treatment to the wounded students and refuge to the student leaders.⁴²⁹ More so the Government of India held talk with General Ne Win to understand the demand of the student community, but the junta was reluctant to listened the appeals of the international community not only of India. This bloody suppression of student discontent accompanied by the destruction of student's union building disgrace the nationalist sentiment.

Subsequently, the universities were closed down with immediate effect and large number of students fled to countryside taking refuge in international boundary where the ethnic minority militants dominated area. To revolt against the military regime, students began to form underground outfit with the support of ethnic militant. Large number of students and pro-democracy activists came to Indian border seeking refuge. The Government of India has warmly received them and set up temporary camps in Manipur and Mizoram. Besides, the former Premier of Myanmar U Nu was also given refuge when he seeks to the Government of India. Generally, the public who were sympathetic to the new government at the beginning, after the crackdown on students, has turned against it. Without realizing the respite of his countrymen, General Ne Win blatantly warned in a public broadcast that the regime would, if necessary, 'meet dah with dah and spear with spear'.⁴³⁰ Although highly nationalistic, the military ironically destroyed the symbol of egalitarian dissent that had spurred the growth of nationalism, and it symbolized a hardening of the regime. Some historians called the destruction of students'

⁴²⁷ Lucian Pye (1963, June). Burma: Opening on the left in the military manner. Mimeographed, Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology – Center for International Studies, p. 18.

⁴²⁸ David I. Steinberg (1981). Op. cit. p. 25.

⁴²⁹ Renaud EgretEAU (2003). Op.cit. p. 39.

⁴³⁰ Maung Maung (1969). Op. Cit. p. 73.

union building reflected a total break away from the past. This earmarked a new ruling group essentially a product of the military experience would set new history in Myanmar.

Ironically, when the military junta distanced itself from its activist student past, it seemed gradually to revert back to more classical patterns of Myanmarese authority under the monarchy. The leadership consistently expressed impatience with the students whenever the regime's legitimacy was questioned. Later government insistence of ideological conformity was codified into the supreme law of the nation under the constitution of 1974.⁴³¹ The destruction of the student union building was also symbolic of the split between elites. The alienation of students' community initiated a continuing tension between the military and those involved in higher education. The imperative was that only temporarily cowed after the incident has not change sentiments of the students and the general public, students later continued to oppose the regime with another bloody demonstration.⁴³² The subsequent reorganization of the educational establishment did not stop students' activism in fact it has given new vigor to fight against the antithesis of military junta. Subsequently, the students' community started a stronger demonstration in June 1974 in alliance with the masses and it had widespread across all corners of Myanmar. Without realizing the impact General Ne Win had order to crackdown and killed over 100 and thousands seriously wounded.⁴³³ India was unable to see the situation that mercilessly killing innocent people who are merely demanding their legitimate rights. Thus India campaigned for another declaration economic sanction over the military regime, and it was accepted by the international community mostly the western world. This isolation from the international community has a great set back not only on the national economy but much touching its image in the international forum. Besides, India also allowed the refugees to campaign against the military regime from New Delhi by allowing them to broadcast anti-military news through the All India Radio.⁴³⁴ India's moral foreign policy was openly experimented on the junta-students conflict in Myanmar.

⁴³¹ David I. Steinberg (1981). Op. cit. p. 26.

⁴³² Ibid, p. 26.

⁴³³ David I. Steinberg (1981). Op.cit. p. 73.

⁴³⁴ Renaud Egreteau (2003). Op.cit. p. 40.

Under pressure General Ne Win feels that framing of new constitution would solve the economic problems and create political tranquility and thus a new constitution called Pyithu Hluttaw was installed in 1974,⁴³⁵ but it does not happened as he expected. In the same month, a chain of demonstration and strike among the workers had developed over food shortage and higher wages. It is first started at the Chauk oil field of central Myanmar and spread across the whole oil industry and factories in Rangoon. Consequently, the police open fired on workers and killed over hundreds instantly without mercy. In precaution, General Ne Win closed down all the universities, colleges and educational institutes to prevent further demonstration. Another disturbance resulted on the issue of burial of the then United Nations' Secretary-General U Thant in December 1974. The students' discontented with what they regarded as inappropriate ceremonies and an inadequate burial site for U Thant seized his body in clear protest against the military. Together with monks they attempted to bury it at the site of ruin Students' Union Building. In angered General Ne Win declared martial law and under this action officially over 13 were killed, 70 wounded and about 3000 arrested of whom 350 were monks.⁴³⁶ The demonstrations over U Thant's burial were significant as people of all profession poured solidarity against the junta and slogans like 'fascist government' was shouted to the one-party dictatorship. In 1975, the students and workers again rioted on the anniversary of June 1974 workers' riots, and some 217 were arrested. Thus the educational institutions once again were closed and re-open only on May 13, 1976.⁴³⁷ In 1976 also there was continued unrest although it was less widespread.

On other side, the insurgent activity had also spread mostly in upper Burma (Myanmar) by the ethnic groups in collaboration of the students.⁴³⁸ India has tried all possible means to settle the issue but remained helpless as General Ne Win was blaming for interfering in the internal affairs. Hence the Government of India, as a last resort, to support the pro-democracy demonstrators secretly provides financial and moral support

⁴³⁵ David I. Steinberg (1981). Op.cit. p. 65.

⁴³⁶ But the unofficial rumours was that over 1000 were killed and buried in mass grave dug in military cantonment area at Mingaladon outside Rangoon. See at David I. Steinberg (1981). Op.cit. p. 73.

⁴³⁷ Ibid, p. 73.

⁴³⁸ Andrew Selth (1996). Burma's Military Expansion Program: Plans and Perception. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 26 (4), pp. 466-481.

to the insurgent groups formed by the students group. During the time there had been attacks on the Bhamo and Myitkyina airports in the Kachin state in 1975 and 1976, and India openly give patronage to one student espionage who hijacked the plane and fled to Kolkata.⁴³⁹ The suppressive controls of junta over the countrymen become unbearable to even within the military force and so a young army officer carried out coup against General Ne Win in July 1976, though it was an unsuccessful attempt the precedent against General Ne Win started from within.⁴⁴⁰

3.7. Myanmar Isolationism and the Economic Performance

The international community was critical on the disposition of democracy and asked to restore the popular government but to this dictate General Ne Win refused and continued to control over the Myanmar as a result of that the international community declared economic sanctioned to bestow lesson. Thereafter, Myanmar undergone isolated from the rest of the world and made no contact with the international community politically, economically and socially; everything was tightly closed and the military junta strives to survive through the self effort.⁴⁴¹ In this circumstance, the economic scenarios have declined unprecedentedly. The BSPP instrumentalized the economic development made numerous reforms after the First Congress of BSPP and the new dimension focus toward the process of formulating new economic document path. The outcome of this meeting was a released of vision document that describe on two major aspects – long and short term economic policies of BSPP and later it was formally adopted during the fourth meeting of BSPP's Central Committee in September, 1972.⁴⁴² Besides, the strategy of the future plan, it also extensively highlights the economic problems that faced over the previous decade and tried to expound a new tactic to enhance the economic growth in Myanmar. Under the regime, this was the first major step envisioning the long-term economic planning. The striking landmark of this vision document was that it draws up a twenty-year plan and further sub-divided into a five four-year plan. The larger objective of the vision document was to: lay the economic,

⁴³⁹ David I. Steinberg (1981). Op.cit. p. 74.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 74.

⁴⁴¹ Allen L. Clark (1999). Myanmar's present development and future options. *Asian Survey*, 39 (5), p. 773.

⁴⁴² Mya Maung (1997). Burma's Economic performance Under Military Rule: An Assessment. *Asian Survey*, XXXVII (6), pp. 503-524.

social and political foundations of socialism within the twenty years; have consistency of the economic policies between the various economic sectors; establish the economic system on a commercial basis; workers should assume more responsibilities commensurate with getting more rights; reduce damages and misappropriation of properties owned by public and cooperatives; form a financial supervision system that is in line with the economic enterprises; reduce the cost of production and to raise productivity; reduce prices of basic consumer goods and to promote welfare of the working people; utilize the means of production of public and private sectors for the country's optimal benefit; eliminate unemployment and black market and; establish the education system in line with the economic enterprises.⁴⁴³ This economic strategy was focus toward fulfillment of 'The Burmese Way to Socialism' as junta realized that implementation of planned economies is the only basis in achieving the set goal.⁴⁴⁴ In realistic term, it shows the flexibility to act in accordance with the general realities in the economic, social and political factors of the country. Unlike the initial policy, the new vision document set forth broad areas that permitted to the private sector and called for the diversification of the economy. Subsequently, it also charted priorities areas where the plan economy can move forward; the first priority areas was to expand production in agriculture, fishery, livestock and forestry in order to increase their production and second priority areas was to set up consumer goods industries to substitute imports by expansion of agriculture, fishery, livestock and forestry sectors with an intend to increase exports and; third priority area was to raise mineral production to the highest possible level and to lay foundations for heavy industries based on such mineral production.⁴⁴⁵

Meanwhile, the document empowered the BSPP's Central Committee to determine on the short-term economic policies, which is a cornerstone to attain the long-term economic goals. The Central Committee thus initiated some of the objectives toward gratifying the larger general economic plan in time bound manner. General Ne Win stated that Myanmar was an agricultural state and that agriculture along with forestry, livestock,

⁴⁴³ Ardeth Maung Thawngmung & Paul Sarno (2006). Myanmar impasses: Alternatives to isolation and engagement?, *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 14 (1), p. 43.

⁴⁴⁴ David I. Steinberg (1981). *Op.cit.* p. 27.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 30.

and fisheries to be given priority in developmental process. Thus under the initial period of junta regime Myanmar had not only been neglected on the potential areas but not performed at prewar levels and this has greatly cause the economy leading a plight on local consumers. The junta also emphasized on production of consumer products but it did not worked out in their favour so it has publicly recognized its own weakness. Many experts describes that the problem aggravating Myanmar economy was not because of production alone but because of serious structural and administrative problems that spill over to all affairs of administration and more severely on the economy.⁴⁴⁶ It was commonly known that tacit recognition with altruism alone would not stimulate the economy – there must have material incentive in order to have progressive growth of a nation. Realizing the economic compulsion, the junta's have initiated commercialization of state enterprises with possible payment of incentives to those organizations and individuals that performed well. Besides, the government also began to recognize the private sector to push an economic growth and accordingly reaching this growth to the rural level. The Report of the Expert Groups indicated that the neglect of guidelines for the private sector had resulted in employment stagnation because the government has no resources to promote either employments or goods thus black market activities and unemployment increased creating serious problems to the economy.⁴⁴⁷ In later years, there arises an urgent need to reversal of isolation policy on economic terms because the continuity of its traditional neutralist policy have deteriorated its economy and there was a consensus among the decision-makers that if Myanmar wanted development, it could no longer rely on its own resources, outside assistance is equally important for the economic growth vis-à-vis compete others in accordance of the pace of economy of other nations. Thus a diametric economic reform is carried out in 1971 and the planning process of the 1970s and 1980s was part of this grant reform.⁴⁴⁸

The most treasured and adored twenty-Year Plan of General Ne Win was in fact not merely a plan but more or less a series of broad guidelines on which the BSPP was

⁴⁴⁶ Mya Maung (1998). Op.cit. p. 65.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 138.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 140. See also at Lintner, Bertil (1994, November 3). Make way for trade. Far Eastern Economic Review, p. 16.

planned to carry forward their economic strategy. It set forth priorities, operational guidelines, and general goals to be achieved and thus it is commonly called the economic charter of The Burmese way to socialism. The goals of this plan are ambitious and contain a mixture of both rhetoric and reality – this vision plan target to achieve the status of an industrialized socialist state by the end of the plan in 1993. There are different sub-plan in the larger Twenty-Year Plan and the target of public sector contribution, for example, to be increased by about 48 percent at the end of the plan. Similarly, the GDP growth rate of Myanmar was set to achieve 5.9 percent in agriculture and 9.4 percent in industry.⁴⁴⁹ Following this economic policy, the BSPP also shifted the priority of expenditure for public funds. As a result of this, agriculture, forest, fisheries and mining have become the focus sectors. In 1960s General Ne Win keep those sectors in abeyance and had concentrated more on industries but it led to a situation of not only failed economy, yet also scarcity of rice leading to farmers protest, price rise and other unexpected threat to the nation's status quo.

The first four-year plan (1971-1974) began in October 1971. The plan was laid out and expected to achieve the targeted objective but it experienced abysmal growth achieving the target only in agriculture. Thus the junta and more particularly General Ne Win admitted that the economic growth rate is slower than expected and thence the individual's economic status declined. These plans soon gave way to the second four-year plan (1974-1977), in some way, a more liberal and modernize one. The target was set for the growth of GDP at 4.5 percent. In this plan the result turned little better than earlier one due to the increased in industrial production. In general, the state economic enterprises responded positive to the principle of commercialization. However, the mining and forestry sector shows no much improvement as expected. The statistics indicate that by 1977 the public sector accounted for 35.9 percent, the cooperative sector 3.3 percent, and private sector 60.8 percent of the gross domestic product.⁴⁵⁰ In spite of lagging in activity its target, the second plan was symbolic in nature because it shows some improvement in the economy. Subsequently the third four-year plan (1978-1981) is

⁴⁴⁹ Mya Than & Joseph L.H. Tan eds. (1990). Myanmar Dilemmas and Options: The Challenge of Economic Transition in the 1990s. Singapore: ISEAS, pp. 101-04

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 3.

implemented with its primary goal to recoup the slow implementation of the twenty-year plan and to put it back on schedule by the end of fiscal year 1982 along the target to achieve GDP of 6.6 percent per year in constant price. As a result the first year target experienced an increase of 5.9 percent in the GDP, after which it was much expected that the increase would grow higher. General Ne Win was expected that if the targets are met, than the per capita GDP will increased by 4.4 percent, per capita income by 4.6 percent, and per capita investment by 8.6 per cent.⁴⁵¹

In the meantime, the plan further postulates a steady increase in labour productivity, improved exports and level of public investment, improved utilization of manpower, and increased private investment. To achieve the target General Ne Win knows that investment projects required either more capital investment, advanced technical know-how or capital equipment. Hence, the BSPP put effort in areas such as agriculture including forestry, fisheries and livestock. The result was that under the third-year plan, agriculture is increased to 27.2 percent from 19.4 percent in the preceding plan.⁴⁵² To harness and achieve the target, the government in succeeding year invested fertilizers and modern technologies in agriculture. Unfortunately, before the completion, the junta enforced a new five year development programme under the aegis of Burma Group Meeting chaired by the World Bank in Tokyo in 1979.⁴⁵³ This paradigm shift in the pattern of economic plan implementation was due to slow growth of economy. There was a huge expectation among the BSPP leaders that the new plan would somehow be able to grow economy as per the plan. In order to test the plan at earliest, the BSPP developed a pattern in which a five year program was prepared for each donor and the first one was prepared for the period of 1977-1981. Under this initiative, General Ne Win proposed the financial year 1979 as base year with 1984 as the end of program.⁴⁵⁴ Under this hypothesis, General Ne Win drops the foreign exchange gap and all the initiatives

⁴⁵¹ Ibid, p. 3.

⁴⁵² Ibid, p. 4.

⁴⁵³ World Bank (1979, July 24). Report and Recommendation of the President of the International Development Association to the Executive Directors on proposed credits to the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma. Report No. P-261 I-BA, p.8.

⁴⁵⁴ During this plan, the GDP was increased to k45, 253 million from k32, 875 million and the investment was to climb from k5, 590 million to k8, 650 million. Similarly, the import was expected to climb to k5, 580 million and exports to k4, 563 million. See at David I. Steinberg (1981). Op.cit. p. 161.

were unfulfilled. It was, in general, a failed economic plan that brought hardship to the people of Myanmar, leading to a massive discontent in Myanmar.

3.8. Emergence of New Totalitarianism in 1988

Inexperience in business and incompetence in handling internal and external trade soon led to shortage and rising discontent. From being a major rice exporter, Myanmar became a country of shortage – the rice export fell to 150,000 tons in 1987 and earmarked the lowest in 40 years. Thus the country observed food riots erupted sporadically in the 1980s. The state's ability to raise revenue remained low, for the nationalized sector performed badly, so there was little investment. After 1962, investment seldom exceeded 10 percent of GDP, and growth was constrained to an annual level of 3 percent till the mid-70s.⁴⁵⁵ It increased, thereafter, partly because of resource inflows from abroad, but never enough to make the infrastructural improvements to accelerate the pace over the long term. There was a decline in foreign trade – import has slip down to only 2 percent and the export from 20 percent to 9 percent in 1987.⁴⁵⁶ This was largely because of discrepancy in management of economy.

The crisis began as early as 1972 but General Ne Win fails to tackle it and slowly this situation led to total breakdown of economies in late 1980s. Consequently, Myanmar's foreign debt also sporadically increased from about 36.3 percent of GDP in 1984 to 45 percent in 1987.⁴⁵⁷ Thus the economic crisis befalls a central issue in Myanmar. On August 10, 1987 General Ne Win called an extraordinary meeting of the Central Committee to review the crisis looming across the country. Lately he discovered that crisis was merely not because of faulty economic management but due to total failure of the system. On other hand, the repercussion of this failure is begun with a small scale student riots in Yangon with slowly people of all professions speaking critical of the administration.⁴⁵⁸ As a precautionary measure, the BSPP first closed the university and imposed strict restriction on large gathering across the Yangon city but the people no

⁴⁵⁵ I.P. Khosla (1998). Myanmar: Cohesion and Liberalism. *Strategic Analysis*, XXI (11), p. 1652.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 1652.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 1652.

⁴⁵⁸ Martin Smith (2001). Burmese Politics after 1988: An Era of New and Uncertain Change. In Robert H. Taylor (Ed.), *Burma: Political Economy Under Military Rule* (pp. 15-40). London: Hurst & Company.

longer hide their anger and in March 1988 public protest spread against the economic hardship. This movement spread across the state that resulted to violent riots. Many accorded that the 1988 crisis was worst than any crisis previously recorded.

The BSPP struggled hard to suppress the public movement, however, every possible attempt without force was possible so General Ne Win order to use brute force. The tatmadaw to subdue the movement had open fired and brutally killed over hundreds innocent protesters and injured thousands. In spite of the killings, the mass movement intensified in June 1988 across Myanmar resulted to another clamped down of the universities and colleges, and imposed curfew in Yangon and other sensitive areas. Some of the areas that have been badly affected besides the Yangon are the Prome, Taunggyi, Pegu and Tenasserin etc.⁴⁵⁹ In all these areas, martial law is imposed with best to survive the controlled of military regime. The leadership thus wavered cruelty against innocent protesters and immediately General Ne Win called another Congress of BSPP on July 23, 1988, and unceremoniously resigned along with five others on moral ground. During the meeting, General Ne Win also openly declared the failure of the 'system as a whole' asked to hold a national referendum on whether to continue a single party system or adopt a multi-party system. This symbolizes to certain degree, the armed force giving up their controlled over the state and transferring the power to the popular will. In contrary, the Congress of BSPP accepted his resignation but nothing else was changed in the administrative system.

Immediately after August 8, 1988, about 100,000 people openly come out and marched down the streets in protest, among them were students, urban workers and monks demanding for an interim government acceptable to the people and conduct a multi-party elections leading to a democratic government.⁴⁶⁰ This protest became more intensified within week with more protesters joining the demonstration. During this time many soldiers including air forces also came out and openly support the masses demand from Yangon. It has extensively spread to new places like Mandalay, Moulmein and Sagaing and hence the administrative officials, troops and senior party members find

⁴⁵⁹ I.P. Khosla (1998). Op.cit. p.1653.

⁴⁶⁰ Ashley South (2008). Op.cit. p. 43.

difficult to continue their governance.⁴⁶¹ At some places, the government officials leave their offices and were replaced by the monks to run the local administrations. The junta, in reaction, imposed stringent martial law with large scale killing of about 3000 people in Yangon. In spite of heavy uses of armed forces, there was no signed among demonstrators to retreat the movement. Thus the government reluctantly declared on August 12, 1988, as a conciliatory gesture, released the leader of opposition and student union activities who were kept in their custody. Subsequently, the BSPP declared to hold a multi-party election in three months. To intensify pressure about 350,000 people demonstrated in Yangon and demanded to hand over the power to an interim government.⁴⁶²

But surprisingly, General Saw Maung staged another military coup on September 18, 1988 in the name of saving the country from abyss and created State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). Within two months it issued order to form the Department of General Security Administration (DGSA) under the Ministry of Home and Religious Affairs and under the DGSA, the former People Council (PC) was reorganized and renamed Law and Order Restoration Council (LORC) to function at different urban and village level. Thousands of these councils were formed on the districts, township, and village level to execute various government's orders and projects of development. These LORCs, together with the People's Police Force, Special Bureau of Investigation, and the army, enforced tight security across the country to quell the continued public unrest and halt the democracy movement. Therefore, the students, monks, farmers and other civilians cutting across profession intensified the movement all over Myanmar, it is said to have intensified the protest with a catchphrase of 'do or die'.⁴⁶³

On other hand, more than 20,000 pro-democracy activists, including students, military officers, soldiers and monks fleet to international border under the duress of repressive action of new military dictator – one section to the Indian border and other section along the Thai border, which are directly controlled by ethnic minority rebel

⁴⁶¹ I.P. Khosla (1998). Op.cit. p.1653.

⁴⁶² Ibid, p. 1653.

⁴⁶³ Martin Smith (1999). *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*. Bangkok: White Lotus, p. 371.

groups.⁴⁶⁴ Subsequently, these people along with the ethnic rebels formed a Democratic Alliance of Burma – a coalition of some 20 groups and set up its' headquarter at Manerplaw in the Karen state to fight the military junta.⁴⁶⁵ They set up about 20 camps in liberated areas of the Kachin, Karen, Karenni, and Mon states – the majority of camps are located along the Thai border in the Karen and Mon states. The SLORC viewing the high intensity building against them had softens its position and finally promised to hold a multiparty democratic election and transfer power.⁴⁶⁶ On May 27, 1990, the election was held after allowing over two hundred political parties and on June 30 the result was declared with a landslide victory to the NLD capturing 392 out of the total 485 seats contested.⁴⁶⁷ Suddenly, after the result declaration thus he was sacked and Senior General Than Shwe became Commander-in-Chief and Chairman of the SLORC. The NLD leaders requested for the transfer of power but the new chairman does not honoured the result and denied to the formation of new civilian government. To control any embarrassment, the top opposition leaders U Nu and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi were put under-house arrest and some outspoken candidates were arrested and sentence a very long jail term. Thus the SLORC continues to rule against the will of the Myanmar people in direct violation of article 21 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.⁴⁶⁸

After the 1990 election, the National League for Democracy's (NLD) political headquarter in Central Myanmar was virtually decimated. Thus the NLD candidates, who won seat in the election, were force to flee from the mainland Myanmar and took refuge at headquarter of DAB at Manerplaw. Henceforth the NDL along with the DAB fought against the SLORC.⁴⁶⁹ To subdue it SLORC in cooperation with Thai authorities systematically chased, subdue, and repatriated thousands of beleaguered students. For those returnees the SLORC opened up about seventeen different reception camps along

⁴⁶⁴ Ashley South (2008). *Ethnic Politics in Burma: States of Conflict*. New York; Routledge, p. 45.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 46.

⁴⁶⁶ On 18 October, 1990, General Saw Maung gave an extraordinary speech on Rangoon radio with promise to transfer the power. It is cited in Martin Smith (1999). *Op.cit.* p. 418.

⁴⁶⁷ In September 1988, the National League for Democracy (NLD) was formed as a political party with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi but she was disqualified by the military junta in January 1990. Ibid, p. 419.

⁴⁶⁸ Yawngwe & Sakhong (2003). p. 82

⁴⁶⁹ Ashley South (2008). *Op. Cit.* p. 46.

the Thai-Myanmar border.⁴⁷⁰ The horrific account was that those returnees were arrested or disappeared once they reached central Myanmar. The initial estimate of the number of student refugees along the Thai border after the September coup of 1988 was around 10,000 militias but it has by 1991 decline to merely 3000 or 4000. In 1995, the headquarters of students' camp at Daw Gwin was overrun and Manerplaw was captured by the army.⁴⁷¹

On other hand, when Khin Nyunt becomes the chairman of National Educational Committee, he forced the teachers and civil servants to attain one month refresher course and training under the military officers. This practice was to indoctrinate all civil servants, including teachers to accept the legitimacy of military rule and its benevolent development policies and programmes. These courses also get instruction to teachers on how to monitor and discipline the students in the name of patriotism and safeguarding the unity and stability of the Union of Myanmar. On December 10, 1991, the day of the ceremony on which Aung San Suu Kyi's Nobel peace prize was awarded in Oslo, college students of Rangoon University once again demonstrated on their campus, demanding democracy and release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest.⁴⁷² It was the first major public protest by the students after more than three years of being silenced and subjugated by the military rulers. The demonstration continued on the next day when soldiers moved in and sealed the campus. They did not shoot them this time, although it was reported that 100s were arrested. The speech of Khin Nyunt on July 11, 1993 at the closing ceremony of Special Refreshers Course for junior and senior assistant teachers highlights the unchanging attitude of the junta to respect the ordinance of state by invoking traditional culture, patriotism and xenophobia.

3.9. SLORC and Changes in Administrative Structure

When the SLORC succeeded the earlier regime on September 18, 1988 and, it has launched a far reaching economic and military plan to expand economic growth vis-à-vis

⁴⁷⁰ Martin Smith (1999). Op.cit. p. 422.

⁴⁷¹ The number of students' rebels at the remaining 12 camps had dwindled to less than 2000 volunteers in 1997. Amnesty International (1990, May). Myanmar: Prisoners of conscience and torture. Newsletter Amnesty international, p. 12.

⁴⁷² Tin Maung Maung Than (2000). *Myanmar: The Dilemma of Stalled Reforms*. Singapore: ISEAS Publisher, p. 23.

modernize the armed forces.⁴⁷³ Thus priority to expand the military strength and arsenal was taken seriously at first hand. Within few years the SLORC has increased the strength of soldiers, and equally the navy and air forces also doubled the size from earlier. The SLORC has admitted that its final goal is to have 500,000 strong military force with well equipped military machine.⁴⁷⁴ It embarked an ambitious arms procurement programme, designed to improve the equipment holding of all three services and significantly upgrade their operational capabilities. This programme has been made possible by a radical departure from the policies and practices of previous regime.

The important change is the increased of Tatmadaw's share on Myanmar's foreign exchange earnings. As a result, there was a massive inflow of new arms and military equipment into Myanmar over the years. The arms and equipment have come from a wide variety of suppliers, both official and private from across the world. The specific orders and deliveries are very difficult to obtain, but China has clearly been the main sources of supplying these machineries.⁴⁷⁵ Over the years, SLORC also able to negotiate several highly favorable arms deals with Beijing, covering the procurement of fighters, ground attack and transport aircraft, frigates and patrol boats, tanks and armored cars, field and air defence artillery, truck and heavy duty vehicles, small arms and ammunition, radar and communications equipment etc. Nonetheless, it also purchased helicopters and military vehicles from Poland, naval patrol boats and ground attack aircraft from Yugoslavia, and assault helicopters from Russia. A wide range of infantry weapons and ammunition is also obtained from Singapore, Portugal, Pakistan, North Korea, Israel, South Africa and several other countries.⁴⁷⁶ As a result of all these measures, the Tatmadaw is now larger and better equipped than at any time in its six decades history. It has not only strengthened its ability to quell domestic political dissent

⁴⁷³ It is describes by Ardeth Maung Thawngmung (2003) that a 'new face of old image' which conceives that military might is a process of nation stability and economic growth in the context of Myanmar. See at Ardeth Maung Thawngmung (2003). Preconditions and Prospects for Democratic Transition in Burma/Myanmar. *Asian Survey*, XLIII (3), p. 455.

⁴⁷⁴ Bertil Linter (1991). Regional Rivals leading Burma astray. *Jane's Defence Weekly*, pp. 1053-1054.

⁴⁷⁵ Andrew Selth (1995). The Burma-China-India Triangle. In Sandy Gordon & Stephen Henningham (eds.), *India Look East: An emerging power and its Asia-Pacific neighbours*. Canberra: Australian National University, pp. 185-206.

⁴⁷⁶ Andrew Selth (1996). Transforming the tatmadaw: The Burmese Armed Forces since 1988. Canberra papers on Strategy and Defence No. 113,; Canberra: Australian National University, p. 7.

and carry out counter-insurgency operations, but it now has the potential to perform a much wider range of conventional defence roles.

After being dismissed for decades as a minor factor in Southeast Asia's evolving security environment, Myanmar have started to attract increased attention especially after the privileged access on China military facilities.⁴⁷⁷ This growing arsenal of Myanmar has raise concern among the immediate neighbours because it has the potential to upset the current balance of power in the region. The SLORC has always been reluctant to elaborate on the reasons for its massive armed forces expansion programme. Questioned about purchase of new weapons and equipment have been simply stated that these arms are for our legitimate defence needs but they have usually been related in whole or in part to three broad goals which the SLORC has raised to the level of guiding principles – non-disintegration of national solidarity; non-disintegration of the Union of Myanmar and; perpetuation of the sovereignty of the state.⁴⁷⁸ These goals can be interpreted in a number of ways.

The foremost priority of SLORC, after the 1988 crisis, was to consolidate its grip on government. As a longer term goal, it determined to put in place all necessary means to ensure that the Tatmadaw would remain the real arbiter of power. To achieve these aims the armed forces needed to be large and strong enough to response any future challenge whether it come from the civilian populations in the cities and towns, armed insurgents and dissent groups based around the borders, or even from forces outside the country. The SLORC has an opinion that once these are effectively contained it could relax its iron grip and it could then contemplate general elections and erect a civilian administrative structure.⁴⁷⁹ Before 1988, the Tatmadaw had the little capacity to crush sporadic outbreaks of the civil unrest – it was due to military unpreparedness or lack of machinery that is required to use at particular incidents. Thus the SLORC not only fear with the possibilities of further demonstration of this kind, but it even feared that these

⁴⁷⁷ Robert H. Taylor (1998). Myanmar: Military Politics and the Prospects for Democratization. *Asian Affairs*, 85 (1), p. 8.

⁴⁷⁸ OECD (2013). Development Pathways Multi-dimensional Review of Myanmar Volume 1- Initial Assessment. Naypyidaw: OECD, p. 59.

⁴⁷⁹ I.P. Khosla (1998). Op.cit. p. 1654.

essentially peaceful protests might evolve into an armed uprising against the regime by the civil populations. Thus the determination of SLORC to preserve the national solidarity has been a major factor behind the expansion of the Tatmadaw and police force.

The SLORC was anxious to reduce the potential of insurgent groups and narcotics drug smugglers in order to absorb the resources to its strength around the country's periphery.⁴⁸⁰ There was also a concern that some of the insurgent groups may try to combine or at least coordinate their actions with other anti-SLORC forces to bring down the military regime. To overcome this threat, SLORC has adopted a 'carrot and stick' approach reminiscent of the policy which was the creation of Ka Kwe Ye militia groups in 1963. As a result for over the first five years the regime has made a range of concession to ethnic insurgents in order to remove them from active opponent of the regime. In accordance to that, ceasefire agreements have been signed with 16 groups including members of the Kachin, Shan, Karenni, Pao, Palaung, Akha and Wa peoples.⁴⁸¹ In return for undertaking not to fight the SLORC or disrupt cross-border trade, these groups have been permitted to retain their weapons and exercise control over their old territories. As an added inducement, the SLORC has undertaken to develop the infrastructure in border regions. Undoubtedly, the concession policy has given the regime advantage as well as to end the insurgent problems. It becomes inevitable that, in due course, even those insurgent groups which are currently enjoying truce with them now have come under pressure to acknowledge the regime's authority.

To ensure that the system works effectively and to guard against any upsurge of irredentism, SLORC envisages a permanent military presence in almost every part of the country. This presence yet gives the SLORC direct benefits. The regime has then easily monitors any development in the frontier more closely, exercise greater administrative control over those areas, better regulate cross-border traffic and improve revenue collection. In this mission, the armed forces also help develop the civil infrastructures of

⁴⁸⁰ Martin Smith (1996). *Fatal Science? Freedom of expression and right to health in Burma*, (Article 19, London), p. 5-6.

⁴⁸¹ Martin Smith (1999). *Op.cit.* p. 427.

the border areas in ways that were conducive to both economic growth and their own strategic mobility. Projects such as roads, bridges, and hospitals also profitably linked to ceasefire arrangement with local ethnic groups. The other significant reform made by the SLORC was renaming of country from 'Burma' to 'Myanmar' in order to accommodate the whole ethnic groups of the country.⁴⁸² The SLORC, in order, to pacify criticism and alienation feeling of ethnic groups had notably changed it.

At the same time, the expansion of Tatmadaw is also linked to the SLORC's economic ambitions. The SLORC therefore encourage foreign investment and economic growth.⁴⁸³ The regime also does not feel confident without large army that it can protect the newly restored overland trade routes through the troubled border regions to China, Thailand and India because there is large scale smuggling of foodstuff, lives stock, forest products and precious stone to neighboring countries, or the illegal imports of weapons, machine parts and consumer goods.⁴⁸⁴ For instance, the navy has been expanded to safeguard the country's exclusive economic zone and protect against the poaching of Myanmar's rich marine resources. With its new patrol boats and frigates the navy can be in more places at once and act more vigorously offshore and better protect gas and oil exploration ventures and extraction operations.⁴⁸⁵

Besides, the SLORC has also undertaken certain reforms in economic paradigm. The SLORC has virtually abandoned the autarkic economic policies of General Ne Win and shifted away from Myanmar strict neutrality in international affairs. Some of these reforms have great impact on the progress of nation economies. As stated above, the SLORC withdraws the principle of 'The Burmese Way of Socialism' and has moved forward to an open foreign investment and free market.⁴⁸⁶ The SLORC realized that

⁴⁸² Bertil Lintner (1989, October 7). Burma-The army role in Politics. *Jane's Defence Weekly*, p. 715-716. See also at Maung, Mya (1990). The Burma Road: From the Union of Burma to Myanmar. *Asian Survey*, 30 (6), p. 103.

⁴⁸³ Swaran Singh (1998). Myanmar: The 'Strategic Hub' of the 21st Century Asia. *U.S.I. Journal*, CXXVIII (532), p. 247.

⁴⁸⁴ Bertil Lintner (1994, November 3). Make way for trade. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, p. 16.

⁴⁸⁵ Bertil Lintner (1991, June 15). Regional Rivals leading Burma Astray. *Jane's Defence Weekly*, pp. 1053-1054.

⁴⁸⁶ Allen L. Clark (1999). Myanmar's present development and future options. *Asian Survey*, XXXIX (5), p. 778.

‘isolation’ brought the country total drained of economic growth and development of physical infrastructures. Realizing this fact, the SLORC had determined to open Myanmar’s economy to the outside world and welcomed increased foreign investment.

3.10. International Community Reaction to Military Junta

The SLORC suffered widespread condemnation for its violent suppression of the pro-democracy demonstrations and other violations of human rights. Almost all bilateral aid donors suspended development assistance and withdrew support for Myanmar loans in international financial institutions. Even multilateral aid agencies like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) took steps to deny direct assistance to the military regime. There were calls for an economic boycott and an unofficial arms embargo was imposed by a number of Myanmar’s traditional suppliers. There was also strong criticism of the SLORC in the United Nations and other international forum like the European Parliament. This criticism was renewed after the arrest of charismatic opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi in July 1989, and the SLORC’s repudiation of the May 1990 general elections.⁴⁸⁷ These political and economic measures against the regime were bitterly denounced by the SLORC as ‘foreign interference in Myanmar’s internal affairs’, and firmly rejected as the basis for any significant policy changes. Senior SLORC spokesmen accused the western democracies of a plot to cripple Myanmar’s economy and turn the country into a colony once again. International radio broadcast, particularly from India, highlights the terrible events in Myanmar during the 1988 pro-democracy demonstration, and criticize various measures taken by SLORC to harden its own policies in its own term.⁴⁸⁸

The SLORC was concerned about the strong international response to the 1988 massacres, and feared that it might extend to military action. During the August and September 1988 demonstrations, there were repeated calls to the international community by the pro-democracy activists for help in ending military rule in Myanmar. These calls were not unusual and they had been made on other occasions, such as in 1974, when

⁴⁸⁷ Ardeth Maung Thawngmung (2003). Preconditions and Prospects for Democratic Transition in Burma/Myanmar. *Asian Survey*, XLIII (3), p. 446.

⁴⁸⁸ I.P. Khosla (1998). Op.cit. p. 1667.

students and monks appealed to the United Nations to help them honour the memory of former UN Secretary-General U Thant by restoring democracy.⁴⁸⁹ In 1988, however, the anti-government demonstrations were much larger, received far greater publicity and prompted a higher level of international interest. For instance, there was a news reports that the US was sending naval vessels to evacuate American nationals from Myanmar apparently sparked fears among the Tatmadaw that a US fleet was to assist in toppling the military regime. These fears grew after the fleet was suddenly detected in Myanmar's waters.⁴⁹⁰ Despite the US officials' denial of any hostile intent, the SLORC Chairman Senior General Saw Maung later quoted that a 'superpower country' had sent an aircraft carrier to Myanmar's waters at the height of Myanmar's crisis cause fears in Rangoon that the city would be attacked.⁴⁹¹ This fear appeared to have felt very strongly by the members of SLORC.

In 1988 the SLORC remembered the pressure brought to bear against India in 1971 when a US task force was sent to the region during Bangladesh's war of independence. Hence in 1991 Tatmadaw was reportedly placed on alert against an invasion when the US landed troops in Bangladesh to assist in flood relief. The regime also took careful note of the multilateral military operation against the Iraq in 1990-91, and even placed anti-aircraft guns around Rangoon in case a similar effort was made against Myanmar. In this regard, the SLORC's fears were heightened in April 1992 to the remarks made by Prince Khaled Bin Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia during a visit to Bangladesh at the height of the Rohingya refugee crisis that called on the United Nations to do for the Muslim Rohingyas.⁴⁹² Most observers interpreted this to a call for another 'operation Desert Storm' against the military regime in Rangoon. The unlikely of Chinese support for Myanmar in the event of any international intervention feared SLORC with insecurity and vulnerability. There also appears to have been a concern

⁴⁸⁹ Andrew Selth (2002). *Burma's armed forces: power without glory*. Michigan: Eastbridge, p. 40. See also at Andrew Selth (1974, December). *Death of a hero: the U Thant disturbances in Burma*. Research paper Issue 49, Griffith Asia Institute- Centre for Australian-Asian Relations, p. 25.

⁴⁹⁰ Andrew Selth (1996). *Transforming the Tatmadaw: The Burmese Armed Forces Since 1988*. Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, Issue 113, Australian National University: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, p. 138.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid*, p. 139.

⁴⁹² *Ibid*, p. 139.

felt in the SLORC around this time that Myanmar could be targeted for the Islamic countries angered by the regime's harsh treatment to the country's Muslim minority. After the 1988 crisis, Pakistan was quick to support SLORC and other Islamic countries like Malaysia and Indonesia did not appear to be troubled by the internal development in Myanmar.

In New York, lobbying began for UN intervention and among the most outspoken critics of Myanmar at that time were the Islamic countries, including a number in Southeast Asia. Later, there was a number of that Rohingya insurgent groups were being provided with funds from the Middle East to buy arms from the Cambodia-Thailand and Afghanistan-Pakistan borders.⁴⁹³ Since the 1988 relations with China were better than ever before, but suspicion of China's long term strategic intentions remained because it remembered the China assistance to the Communist Party of Burma before 1989. Relations with India had been difficult ever since General Ne Win's 1962 coup, and the subsequent expulsion of 200,000 South Asians from Myanmar, particularly an Indian Diaspora.⁴⁹⁴ India was highly critical of the SLORC, both in official statements and over All India Radio. The Indian government became a sanctuary to exiled Burmese dissidents and even provided clandestine assistance to anti-SLORC insurgent groups.

3.11. Indo-Myanmar Relations under SLORC

The Indo-Myanmar relations have reached the lowest point in 1988 when India openly came to the support of pro-democratic upsurge in Myanmar. Since 1962 India has been consistently backing the pro-democratic activist and demanding the returns of popularly elected government.⁴⁹⁵ Undoubtedly, the Indian government and Indian Embassy in Rangoon was playing an active roles during the movement of 1988 at a parallel level. At a governmental level, India was pressurizing the United Nations and international community to enforce economic sanctioned on Myanmar on ground of violation of human rights and repressive act upon the citizens by the military regime. Similarly, the Indian Embassy in Rangoon was opened to treat the wounded activists

⁴⁹³ Andrew Selth (2008). Burma and the threat of invasion: regime fantasy or strategic reality? *Regional outlook*, Griffith Asia Institute- Centre for Australian-Asian Relations, p. 18.

⁴⁹⁴ Thin Thin Aung & Soe Myint (2006). *Op.cit.* p. 91.

⁴⁹⁵ Helen James (2009). *Security and Sustainable Development in Myanmar*. Delhi: ABC Publishers, p.110.

from military action as well as keeping in touch with opposition groups like the All Burma Federation of Students' Union, Aung San Suu Kyi and U Nu.⁴⁹⁶ More so that when the students' activists fled to the international borders of India and Thailand, India continue to render possible support to the students, particularly by providing them financial assistance to those who want to go to India for refuge.

As similar to the past, the Government of India welcomes those activists and opened camps in Mizoram and Manipur states for those students who cross the border. The then External Affairs Minister Narashimha Rao informed a parliamentary panel in 1989 that strict instructions had been given not to turn back the refugees seeking shelter in India.⁴⁹⁷ This proactive activity has badly irritate the military junta and asked not to interfere in internal affairs of Myanmar. As a result, the Indo-Myanmar relations entered to a lowest ever since the independence.⁴⁹⁸ With no much concern of the bilateral relations, India backed the United Nations resolution condemning the Myanmar military junta for its violation of human rights. As a neighbour India has played a role to safeguard the victims of the junta unmerciful action. In collaboration with the United States and western countries, India isolated the military regime. When the National League for Democracy (NLD) won a landslide victory in the 1990 general election, the Myanmar Government under Than Shwe intensified the crackdown on the democratic activists, in general, and the NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi (1991)⁴⁹⁹ stated that India was among the first countries to congratulate her victory. India does not step back its support to the pro-democracy demonstrators and continued to remain strong in all out against the military junta. In this sense, India relation with the military regime has been a pure deadlocked opposing each other.

However, there was a paradigm shift of India's position with Myanmar by mid 1992 and the foreign policy establishment in India started reviewing its policy towards Myanmar. The changing perception on Myanmar was due to many factors. India's

⁴⁹⁶ Help Burma's Heroes (1989). *Asian Bulletin*, 14 (2-12), APACL Publications, p. 90.

⁴⁹⁷ Bibhu Prasad Routray (2011). India-Myanmar Relations: Triumph of Pragmatism. *Jindal Journal of International Affairs*, 1(1), p. 302.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 303.

⁴⁹⁹ Aung San Suu Kyi (1991). *Freedom from Fear and other Writings*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.

northeast became very problematic due to increasing insurgencies during the interface creating law and order situation in the frontier.⁵⁰⁰ The rise has been suspected to the Chinese and Myanmar's military support and hence befriending with Myanmar is one measure to control the insurgency menace. Consequently, the military junta had been on its military campaigns along the border of the country, including on the Indo-Myanmarese border to fight against the Karen insurgent and Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB), which is a coalition of pro-democracy activists and twenty insurgent groups of ethnic minority who were deadly against them. During the operation, there were some cases when Myanmarese armed personnel crossed the Indian border in pursuit of the Myanmarese rebels. Under this campaign, there was another waves of refugees' exodus from Myanmar to India, hence the Government of India protested over this refugees issue and asked the Myanmar to stop atrocities on innocent villagers on the border.⁵⁰¹ For instance, hundreds of Naga Refugees fled to Nagaland in India in the beginning of 1992. Later, India and Myanmar worked together for the repatriation of these refugees back to their ancestral home in Myanmar.

Subsequently, an unwritten understanding developed between the authorities of the two countries that troops from either side could cross the border to a certain limit in pursuit of the insurgents.⁵⁰² As in the 1960s, India realized that it needed a friendly relationship with neighbour both the government and civil societies level to contain its own insurgency problems in Northeast India, as some of these groups established their camps within Myanmar. Another notable factor behind was that India initiated a Look East Policy in 1991 and this policy is focus toward building relations with Southeast Asian countries and by having strain relations with Myanmar would hamper the India's long term foreign policy.⁵⁰³ Moreover, the growing Chinese influence in Myanmar during the past three decades and the closer military and economic cooperation between Beijing and Yangon made the policy-makers in New Delhi to worried vis-à-vis rethink her past

⁵⁰⁰ Maitreya Buddha Samantaray (2004). Indo-Myanmar Relationship in the Changing World. *South Asia Politics*, April, pp. 48-50.

⁵⁰¹ Ashley South (2011). Burma's longest war: Anatomy of the Karen conflict. Amsterdam: Transnational Institute-Burma Center Netherlands, p. 14.

⁵⁰² Thin Thin Aung & Soe Myint (2008). Op.cit. p. 92.

⁵⁰³ G. V. C. Naidu (2008). BIMSTEC and its Geo-Strategic Importance. *World Focus*, XXIX (1), 3-4.

policy towards Myanmar. In 1990 India began some initiatives to express its willingness to normalize the relationship with Myanmar but the military junta had at the beginning negated this proposal of rebuilding relationship. In the succeeding year, that is 1991, India acceded to the pressure of junta to stop AIR Burmese Language Broadcasting when a formal complaint was made that Daw Than Than Nu, the daughter of U Nu, was using abusive language attacking them, the Indian government barred her from broadcasting.⁵⁰⁴

Finally, in 1992, the junta responded positively to India's offer to normalize the bilateral relationship and consequently an eight-member delegation of junta led by U Aye, Director-General of the Political Affairs visited India in August 1992 and met the senior officials in the Ministry of External Affairs, Home, Defence and Commerce of the Government of India.⁵⁰⁵ This visit was in fact the first ever official Indo-Myanmarese senior-level meeting since Rajiv Gandhi visits to Myanmar in 1987. To reciprocate, the India's Foreign Secretary J.N. Dixit visited Rangoon in March 1993, and met the Myanmarese leaders including Lt. General Khin Nyunt. These two bilateral visits were viewed as misunderstanding-managing exercises for both the countries. At the same time, India specifically asked junta to release all political prisoners and stressed that India continued to support restoration of democracy in Myanmar. In January 1994, Myanmar's Deputy Foreign Minister U Nyunt Swe visited India, during his six day visit, and held a series of meetings with Indian ministerial officials and discussed wide-ranging issues to improve the relation. A Memorandum of Understanding of border trade treaty was signed on 21 January 1994⁵⁰⁶ to increase cooperation and to prevent illegal and insurgent activities.

The border trade was, accordingly, officially opened on 12 April, 1995 at Moreh in the presence of the Indian Commerce Minister P. Chidambaram and the Myanmar Trade Minister Lt. General Tun Kyi. Since that time, the Indo-Myanmarese relationship has been steadily improving and there have been a number of informal and formal visits

⁵⁰⁴ Bibhu Prasad Routray (2011). *Op.cit.* p. 303.

⁵⁰⁵ Thin Thin Aung & Soe Myint (2006). *Op.cit.* p. 94.

⁵⁰⁶ Udai Bhanu Singh (2006). *Op.cit.* p. 31.

of the senior officials and ministers of the two countries.⁵⁰⁷ However India continued to support the democratic movement, shelter refugees and support Aung San. On 3 February 1992, when the then President of India R. Venkataraman called on the military regime to restore democracy in Myanmar while receiving the credentials of the new Ambassador for Myanmar. Meanwhile, the cooperation between India and Myanmar continued to improve. Regular meetings, exchange visits and sharing of intelligence became more frequent. In trade too, the bilateral trade between India and Myanmar increased substantially.⁵⁰⁸ The improvement in trade relations had its impact on the political relations of the two countries. The junta is basically looking for recognition, especially from India and countries in Asia. A number of high level ministers and officials of both countries have exchanged visits after the India-Myanmar Trade Treaty was signed in January 1994.

3.12. Creation of State Peace and Development Council

On November 15, 1997, the SLORC was dissolved and another was formed under the name of State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). This institutional change is also known as a 'nineteen-member junta' because it was initiated by the nineteen senior military officials who are also on the top hierarchy in SLORC.⁵⁰⁹ When the new council was institutionalized it was announced that the dissolution was made with a view to ensure the emergence of an orderly and democratic system and to establish a peaceful and modern state.⁵¹⁰ In this SPDC, only four officials of SLORC namely Senior General Than Shwe, Lieutenant General Maung Aye, Khin Nyunt, and Tin Oo became a direct member, the rest were removed from the direct involvement in the office, and retained their positions as chairman, vice-chairman, Secretary-1 and secretary-2 respectively. Immediately another new position name as secretary-3 was also created and it was assumed by Lieutenant General Win Myint who is a former western regional commander and Adjutant General from the War Office⁵¹¹.

⁵⁰⁷ Soe Myint (2003). *Burma File: A Question of Democracy*. New Delhi: India Research Press, p. 490.

⁵⁰⁸ Maitreya Buddha Samantaray (2004). *Op.cit.* p. 49.

⁵⁰⁹ Mya Maung (1998). *Op.cit.* p. 55.

⁵¹⁰ *ibid*, p. 55.

⁵¹¹ Win Min (2008). Looking Inside the Burmese Military. *Asian Survey*, XLVIII (6), p. 1021.

Under the SPDC the leadership position is sparsely distributed to different wings of military with a view for inclusive governance. There are fifteen new members who have become a member and that is the two commanders-in-chief of air and navy and 13 regional commanders. Under the notification no. 3/97, a fourteen-member Advisory Group to SPDC was also formed and all the 14 are the ousted SLORC members who were being pushed outside the center of the power echelon. But within a month after its creation the Advisory Group it was completely dissolved to indicate a permanent purge of those fourteen members and intra-grouping within the military become cleared.⁵¹² In the same year, there was appointment of another 33 deputy ministers, most of whom were newly appointed. Thus, the total number of cabinet ministers and deputy ministers of the ruling junta has been increased from 66 in July 1995 to 73 in November 1997. The reshuffling of cabinet and removal or de facto purging of ministers from key ministry continued. Mary Callahan (2007) describes that Myanmar military is not a totally united institution but fragmented with groupism.⁵¹³

This development of creating the SPDC with a new portfolio of military commanders and reshuffling of cabinet became a trend under the SPDC and it is typical in nature. Some political analyst describes that it is an indication to protect the political throne and power in a totalitarian state. In the Myanmar case, it points to the continue legacy and the power influence of General Ne Win, who has not simply faded away despite his alleged retirement from politics. The resurfaced of General Ne Win in the political arena prior to the dissolution of the SLORC shows his relevant in the regime.⁵¹⁴ The dictator seems to continue to wield inner most power and control over the ruling generals in shaping the political destiny of Myanmar. During the 26 years of his iron ruled, purging dangerous generals and reorganizing the inner circle of power holders and

⁵¹² Allen L. Clark (1999). Myanmar's present development and future options. *Asian Survey*, 39 (5), p. 772.

⁵¹³ Immediately, the cabinet of SPDC was reshuffled again under notification no. 2/97 and enlarged the post of minister to 40 ministers. The old ministers were replaced by newly appointed ministers all of whom are military commanders. The primary objective of forming the new cabinet, as largely said, by the newly formed SPDC was to fulfill the goal of bringing forth a new development and modern nation guiding by the principle of collective interest for all the nationals. See at Mary P. Callahan (2007). *Of Kyay-Zu and Kyet-Su: The Military in 2006*. In Monique Skidmore & Trevor Wilson (Eds.), *Myanmar: The State, Community and the Environment*, Canberra: Australian National University Press.

⁵¹⁴ Jurgen Haacke (2006). *Myanmar's Foreign Policy: Domestic Influences and International Implications*. London: Routledge, p.59.

power echelon was a regular ritual to secure the military grip on power whenever there were signs of power struggle, economic crisis, and socio-political unrest.⁵¹⁵

Since the formation of SLORC, reshuffling and enlargement of cabinet as well as promotion of powerful regional commanders to ministerial post to halt their rise to power and sever their ties to regiment has been a regular ritual to indicate the persistence of General Ne Win's legacy and tactics. The creation of SPDC is a political maneuver of removing the powerful, corrupt, and older SLORC ministers, and cabinet ministers.⁵¹⁶ It has also been reported that these ministers, their aides, and director general of various ministries were also questioned, and put under house arrest for corruption along with the seizure of their properties and assets. Replacing them with less well-known and powerful but not necessarily less corrupt and younger military commanders is a calculated move to salvage the tarnished name, reputation, and a potential demise of military rule to distract the rising public dissatisfaction with the economic hardship brought on by the SLORC.⁵¹⁷ In the final analyses, it indicates that the Myanmar polity has been incrementally and totally militarized with a centralized feudalistic system of governance and distribution of power, privileges, and wealth among the Myanmar military commanders.⁵¹⁸

As part of the growing understanding between India and Myanmar, the SPDC chairman, General Than Shwe, paid a visit to India on 24 October, 2004.⁵¹⁹ The visit materialized after Lt. Gen. Soe Win became the country's Prime Minister. Soe Win is a hardliner and has served as Myanmar's commander for the north-western border where militant violence has escalated. Since the north-west is not Myanmar's security priority, India has to engage Myanmar by ensuring it high economic stakes in the region so that it would shift its focus to this area. India is trying to promote Myanmar's natural gas resources. The Indian leadership is also trying to promote infrastructure activities and develop the Moreh-Kalemo road and the traditional river route linking Kolkata to

⁵¹⁵ Ibid, p.62.

⁵¹⁶ Mya Maung (1998). Op.cit. p. 56.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid, p. 56.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid, p., 57.

⁵¹⁹ Joint Press Statement 27th October, 2004 in New Delhi. Retrieved from Ministry of External Affairs website URL: <http://www.mea.nic.in>

Myanmar for promotion of trade. India has become Myanmar's fourth largest trading partner and the two-way trade has reached over USD 400 million. India is also the second largest export market for Myanmar after Thailand and absorbs 25 per cent of its exports. The two sides aim to increase their trade volume to over USD one billion by 2006. India is also helping Myanmar build a USD 30 million crude oil refinery and has invested USD 4.5 million in the project. The New Delhi in this context views Naypyidaw not only as a bridge to Southeast Asia but also as an alternative route for transit of goods.⁵²⁰

3.13. The Northeast India: *The period of Turmoil?*

The northeast is one of most trouble spots in the sub-region of South and Southeast Asia during this period, not simply because the region has large number of insurgent groups operating and demanding self-determination but largely that of alienation by the Government of India.⁵²¹ As discussed in previous chapters, the northeast has trans-border linkages and this advantage has potential to harness economic development with no much effort if the New Delhi extended minimum support as it were given to other parts of country, but it fails to take up any infrastructural, investment and developmental initiatives in the region. The lack of these basic amenities does not repose any good indication – people were yearning with high expectation but step-motherly treatment by successive governments from New Delhi led the people to feel alienation. In every occasion, the issue of northeast was not dealt in a proper way hence led to unprecedented chaos and conflict across the region.⁵²² The northeast has been no doubt from the time of India's independence demanding some form of autonomy. For instance, the ethnic group like Nagas was demanding self-determination as early as colonial ruled in India but it was only after independence that such movement is increased unprecedentedly. There are perceptions that the ill-treatment was key factor for the embarkment of insurgencies and other form of conflicts in the region. The Government of India failed to understand this antagonism thus lightly presumed the conflict to a law and

⁵²⁰ Anjali Ghosh (2005). Myanmar: Realpolitik at work. In Babu, G. Kishore (ed.), *India and Neighbour – Yearbook 2005*, (207-220). New Delhi: CNF, p. 208.

⁵²¹ Wasbir Hussain (2001). *Insurgency in India's Northeast Cross-border Links and Strategic Alliances*. New Delhi: Institute for Conflict Management, p. 2.

⁵²² *Insurgency overview (2007)*. New Delhi: Center for Peace and Development Studies for Peace and Development Studies

order problem. In order to control their acclaimed law and order issue, it has imposed an armed force special power act and the paramilitary forces, misusing the act, has umpteen number of human rights violation. As a result, the northeast is seen sparking up repulsion from every corner. No doubt, the Naga movement was a classical one but the rest uprising came about in the eighties and ghastly widespread in short duration. These groups have strategic alliances among them and acted as force multipliers and made the conflict dynamics all the more intricate. The demands of these insurgent groups is ranging from secession to autonomy and the right to self-determination, and a plethora of ethnic groups clamouring for special rights and the protection of their distinct identity.⁵²³

Prior to the year 1962, the whole northeast was under only three administrative zones viz. Kamrup, Manipur and Tripura but after when India cut off diplomatic relations to Myanmar in aftermath of Chinese incursion, the Government of India totally isolated this landlocked region. It gives an advantage for those spoilers to conveniently persuade the general public, particularly youth to join in militancy. Consequently, the northeast encountered an unprecedented rise of insurgencies demanding some form of autonomy. Thus it became compulsive for the New Delhi to deal with the issue and the last option was to divide the frontier into seven states base on the ethnic line. The first and foremost to gain statehood was the state of Nagaland curving out from Assam on December 1, 1963 and latter on the state of Mizoram, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura followed after. This region is merely 263,000 square kilometers in size but with highly porous and sensitive frontiers with China in north, Myanmar in east, East Pakistan in southwest and Bhutan to the northwest. This trans-border linkage of the northeast made easy access to the foreign shores thus the insurgent groups got illegal arms and ammunitions. For instance, the leader of Naga National Council (NNC) A.Z. Phizo has got access to the foreign shores as early as 1956.⁵²⁴ The historical accounts state that East Pakistan extended support in order to create instability in India, and Myanmar help does come from the kindred ethnic groups who are in Indo-Myanmar-China border. With all this support, the Naga movement became very strong in guerilla warfare with

⁵²³ Wasbir Hussain (2001). Op.cit. p. 2.

⁵²⁴ Ao, Lanunungsang A. (2002). From Phizo to Muivah: The Naga National Question in North-East India. New Delhi: Mittal Publications, p. 14.

sophisticated weapons. Thus the Government of India in 1972 declared the NNC an unlawful organization but it was not a solution. Hence to subvert the movement it initiated a policy measure and finally led to signing of Shillong Accord, but the agreement was rejected and in 1980 it formed a new insurgent group called the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) under the leadership of Th. Muivah, Isak Chisi Swu and S. S. Khaplang.⁵²⁵ Shortly, the NSCN emerged as a most powerful insurgent group in the northeast after its formation inside Myanmar and having established itself in a front-ranking, started providing arms, training and logistic support to other outfits such as United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) that was formed in April 1979. Latter the ULFA started sending its cadres for advanced ‘military training’ at the hands of Kachin Independence Army (KIA) through the support of NSCN. This was the first attempts by rebels from Assam to strengthen strategic alliances with militant groups located in India's South Asian neighbours like Myanmar.

At a similar pace, the insurgent groups in Tripura, Manipur, Mizoram and Meghalaya also started getting direct and indirect access of sophisticated arms and ammunition, logistic and training from the foreign shores. In some cases, the small groups got support and training from the older groups. The insurgency front in the northeast has, in this way, revolt against the New Delhi and these alliances act as force multipliers. Insurgent politics in the region registered and engulf a very important development - the signing of a deal for joint operations, logistic and training by the NSCN and ULFA so that the latter would get access in the former base camp in Myanmar. On other hand, UNLF was formed in 1964 to establish independent Manipur and at inception the outfit shared a close relationship with the then East Pakistani regime. It also moved closer to China in 1975 for assistance as well as ties with NSCN-K for the training of cadres in Myanmar. In this way, the conflict dynamics as well as complex rebel equations combine to keep the northeast on the boil.

⁵²⁵ Madhu Gurung and Ramtanu Maitra (1995, October 13). Insurgent groups in Northeast India. *Executive Intelligence Review*. Retrieved from <http://www.Insurgent%20groups%20in%20Northeast%20India.html>