

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUALISING MILITANT MOVEMENT IN NORTH EAST INDIA

2.1 Introduction

Militant movement is a common phenomenon to many countries in the world. India is one such country and North Eastern part of the country can be considered as a home to many militant movements. In his chapter an effort has been made to understand the phenomenon of militant movement in the region. Why militant movements are growing up and what factors facilitate them to adopt such activities. What are the responses from the public and government? How these movements constitute an important part of the problem in the region and will examine to conceptualize the militant movement in North East India.

The North-East is situated in a remote corner of the Indian Union and Machmohon Line separates this region from Tibet. The region is bounded by Bhutan in the West, Tibet and China in the North and East, Myanmar in the South-East and Bangladesh in the South.⁶⁶ It shares only a 21 km common border with the rest of India through the Siliguri corridor also known as Chicken's neck. For those living in the North East, India lies beyond this corridor and for those living in the West, North East slip out of their consciousness.

India's North-East is a region rooted more in the accident of geography than in the shared bonds of history, culture and tradition. The region has over centuries, seen extraordinary mixing of different races, cultures, languages and religion leading to a diversity rarely seen elsewhere in India. The region comprises 475 ethnic groups and sub-groups, speaking over 400 languages and dialects.⁶⁷ The region account for just less than 8 percent of the country's total geographical area and little less than 4 percent of India's total population. It is hugely diverse within itself, an India in miniature. Of the 635 communities in India listed as tribal, more than 200 are found in the north-east. Of the 325 languages listed by the 'People of India' project, 175 belonging to the Tibeto-Burman group are spoken in the North-East.⁶⁸ The hill people of the north-east consist of

⁶⁶ Prakash, Col Ved, *Encyclopedia of North East India*, New Delhi: Atlantic Publisher and Distribution, 2007.

⁶⁷ Subhir Bhaumik, *Troubled Periphery, Crisis of India's North-East*, New Delhi: SAGE Publications Pvt. Ltd, 2009 , p.1

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

Khasis, the Garos, the Karbis, the Nagas, the Mizos, the Akas, the Daflas, the Abor, the Mishimis, the Kukis, etc.

North-east India is very rich in her natural resources. Assam oil-fields are the pride of India. The north-eastern coal mines yield huge quantity of coal every year. Assam is famous for tea. Besides tea, rice and jute are two principal agricultural products of Assam. The forest resources of the north-eastern India are also very large. This region is famous for one-horned rhinoceros, elephants, deers, tigers and other wild animals and her forest offer shelter to great variety of birds too.

The North-east India has been added to political India only in recent times. Assam (which included Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya at the time of India's Independence) was rarely part of political India for most of its history. Manipur and Tripura which were princely states were also rarely part of political India. Arunachal Pradesh was beyond the outline of British India at the beginning of the 20th century; and Sikkim too was not part of political India. These areas were incorporated into the mainstream India during the British rules when the British colonial authorities annexed traditionally separate countries into Indian Territory to form a buffer between their colony and external powers (i.e. Assam, Manipur and Tripura in the North-east and Baluchistan and the North-east Frontier Province in the North-west). After Independence in 1947 extension of Indian state and political apparatus has been a challenge.⁶⁹ The tribal communities inhabiting the mountainous periphery, continued to retain their positions of social and institutional distinctiveness, with the exception that they were brought into the national mainstream.⁷⁰

Different ethnic movements in the north-east India is led by ethnic organizations. While some follow peaceful, constitutional, democratic means, others take extreme or militant path. Non-militant organizations adopt peaceful means to achieve their goals, while the militant organizations take recourse to violent means to achieve their stated aims and demands. And in some ethnic movement, both militant and non-militant organizations co-exist and work together side by side.

2.2 Conceptualizing Militant Movement in North East India

The North-East region of India has seen decades of militancy and is typically characterized as being exceptionally diverse, with a bewildering number of politically

⁶⁹ Pear Ali Ahmed, *Terrorism and terrorist groups of the North East India*, Guwahati: EBH Publishers, 2010, pp. 46-47

⁷⁰R. Gopalakrishnan, *Ideology, Autonomy and Integration in North-East India*, New Delhi: Omsons Publication, 1990. p.92

salient ascriptive identities.⁷¹ The genesis of most militants' organization in North-east India is either to preserve the unique indigenous identity, lack of economic development, opportunities for its down-trodden tribes, separate state and secession from India. The ethnic movements in north-east India which have taken recourse to militant tactics are often led by militant organization.

Altogether, there are 142 militant organizations in the region where 78 of them are considered to be active. According to a study Manipur tops the list of armed militant organizations and followed by Assam. Some of the militant organizations are active while some are inactive. Inactive militant organizations can be found except in Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. The worst affected state of militant activities is Manipur. (See detail list of terrorist and ethnic militant groups operating in North East India in Appendix-I).

Table 2. 1: Statewise Distribution Militant Organisations in North East India

Sl. No	Name of State	Total Numbers
1	Arunachal Pradesh	09
2	Assam	39
3	Manipur	44
4	Meghalaya	11
5	Mizoram	04
6	Nagaland	04
7	Tripura	31
8	Total number of groups	142

Source: Pear Ali Ahmed (2010)

The study also found that, in Assam plain six of the militant groups are considered to be active including Adivasi Cobra Force (ACF), All Adivasi National Liberation Army (AANLA), Kamatapur Liberation Organisation (KLO), Muslim United Liberation Tiger of Assam (MULTA), National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) and United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA). In the hills of Assam, the Dima Haram Daogah (DHD), Hmar People's Convention-Democracy (HPC-D), Karbi Longri and North Cachar Hills Liberation Front (KLNLFF) and United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) are considered to be active. But the two major active Karbi militant groups in the hill have now signed a ceasefire agreement with the government. And the UPDS have already signed Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) with the government whereas peace-talk with KLNLFF is on the process.

⁷¹ Sanjib Baruah, *Durable Disorder: Understanding the Politics of Northeast India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005

The objectives of Militant organizations in northeast India ranges from demand for complete sovereignty, separate state, autonomous state, homeland and distributive justice through affirmative action for the protection of their cultural and linguistic identities from the government. The wide differences between India and its North-East and the weak geographical link have also contributed a sense of alienation, a feeling of ‘otherness’ that subsequently gave rise to a political culture of self-rule. It must also not go unrecorded at this stage that the fires of separatism and militancy in North-East India have some historical facts and bases. The following section discusses militant organization and their activities with an objective to understand and conceptualize militancy in North East India.

2.2.1 Arunachal Pradesh

Arunachal Pradesh, which was also known as North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA) got statehood on February 20, 1987. The state spread over 83,743 sq. km and is the largest in area among the North Eastern states of India. There are 16 districts in Arunachal Pradesh. The state is inhabited by 25 major tribes and more than 100 sub-tribes with their colourful and vibrant social-religious characters.

The state was hailed as the abode of peace however for the past one decade presences of some unusual militant group are coming up. But none has been able to make any mark in the state. The United Liberation Volunteers of Arunachal Pradesh (ULVA), United People’s Volunteers (UPL), United Liberation Movement of Arunachal Pradesh (ULMA) are some of the odd militant group operating in Arunachal Pradesh.

The Arunachal Dragon Force (ADF), also known as the East India Liberation Front (EILF), is reported to have come into existence during the latter part of the year 1996 in the State of Arunachal Pradesh. The ADF has a modest strength of of 350 cadres and functioning under the leadership of Chaw Nawmee Namssoon. The Cadres are primarily drawn from the Khamti, Tsingpho and Tangsa tribes of the Lohit district and backed by the NSCN and ULFA. The groups are active in Changlang, Lohit and Dibang district of the state. They are reportedly undergone training at the ULFA camps in Bhutan and have also procured arms and ammunition from ULFA. It was also reported that, both factions of the NSCN have also been using their camp in Changlang and Tirap district to train militant groups like HNLC and NLFT. The main objectives for the formation of ADF are: (i) To create the pre-British era ‘Teola country’ of the Tai-Khamtis, an indigenous tribe of the State’s eastern provinces. The proposed map of the ‘Teola country’ comprises of the Lohit and Dibang districts of Arunachal Pradesh as well as the Sadiya subdivision in Tinsukia district in Assam. (ii) To resist the domination of the Adi

tribe, that has been accused of cornering the benefits of the developmental process in the State.

The study shows that, the militant groups in Arunachal Pradesh came into being primarily due to frustration. The UPVA were disappointed with the developmental process of the state and formed ADF with a goal for separate homeland for Khamti tribe. The Arunachal Pradesh Government has seeks the help of Assam for flushing out inter-state militant support to the budding militancy group in the state. If there is no cooperation and unity of purpose in the region of North East India, there is little hope to end militancy overflow in the territory.

2.2.2 Assam

The United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) was born on April 7, 1979 at Rang Ghar in Sivasagar district of Assam. The initial objective of the ULFA is to protect the land and its mineral resources. As per the understanding of ULFA the central government has exploited the people of Assam. So the organization aims to establish 'Sovereign Assam' and 'Socialist Government'.⁷² It was Robin Handique, the founder member who stuck to go for 'Sovereign Assam' as the main goal of the ULFA. The Government of India banned the organization in 1990 and classified it as terrorist group. The ULFA seemed to offer platform to a segment of the frustrated youth to take more drastic steps- armed struggles for Independent Assam. In the initial stage only seven members met together and registered their dream of 'Sovereign Assam' through armed struggle. They were Budheswar Gogoi from Ligeripukhuri, Bhupen Borgohain from Demow, Robin Handique from Titabor, Suren Dihingia, Prabhat Hazarika, Pradip Gogoi from Moran and Borah from Dibrugarh University.

Budheswar Gogoi was an active member of anti-foreigner movement in Assam and became the first Chairman and Bhupen Borgohain as first Foreign Secretary of ULFA. In 1984 Budheswar Gogoi and Bhupen Borgohain were arrested by the Police and since then the duo were discarded from the organization. Borgohain after resigning from ULFA contested the Assembly Election on Assam Gana Parishad (AGP) ticket in 1985 and became the Deputy Speaker of the Assembly. Anup Chetia along with Paresh Baruah soon joined the armed movement. During the first few years ULFA kept a low profile. In 1986, ULFA aggressively raised money via extortion and established relationships with two other non-state entities: Kachin Independent Army (KIA) and National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN). In the beginning the ULFA sent six of its members to get training and first hand information on arms and ammunition from NSCN. After spending two to three years with the Naga militants, one Bhimkanta Buragohain along with one hundred youth enrolled in the movement. Significantly, ULFA was able to gain support

⁷² Abdul Quddus, *The Mirage of Terrorism*, Guwahati: Amarnath Pages, 2003, p. 124

within the ruling party in Assam i.e. AGP. ULFA even had supporters within the Police Department of Assam. Because of ULFA's increased visibility, the Indian Government outlawed the organization in 1986 and declared Assam as troubled area.

Although the ULFA which continued to be a banned organization, the Secretary General of the organization Anup Chetia, made his way to the Unrepresented People's Organization (UPO) in Geneva under the pseudonym of John David Salomar. The ULFA chief-of-staff Paresh Barua also travels around the world with false passport facilitated either by Pakistan or Bangladesh under the alias of Kamruddin Zaman Khan. They even ventured into China for training and provision of arms.⁷³

The ULFA leadership decided to go for long term games, 'some of their sponsors' were in a hurry and by 1982-83 a move ultimately paid when the Assam People's Liberation Army (APLA) was formed in Tezpur. The APLA leaders including Arpan Bezbaruah and Munin Nobis by their mercurial style established strong networks in Barpeta and Mangoldoi belts. ULFA could not spot the potential ally and later merged with APLA in 1985 in Nagaon. This has made a turning point of militancy in the history of Assam⁷⁴. The ULFA consider itself a revolutionary political organization engaged in liberation struggle against India for the establishment of a sovereign, independent Assam. It does not consider itself a secessionist organization as it claims that Assam was never a part of India. It claims that among various problems that the people of Assam are confronting- the problem of national identity is the most basic; therefore, it seeks to represent independent minded people irrespective of race, tribe, religion and nationality.

Early events of ULFA

A record of some of the early events and meeting that have taken place between the two provides the progression of the linkage.⁷⁵

1. In the month of November 1990, the ULFA decided to send Munin Nobis and Prartha Pratim Bora alias Javed to Bangladesh to contact the ISI in Dhaka for arranging supply of arms and ammunition. They were instructed to set up a base camp in Bangladesh.
2. Munin Nobis set up a base camp in Dhaka in 1990 with the help of a Col. (Retd) Farooq of the Bangladesh Freedom Party and Ghani Shapan of the Jatiyo Party. Nobis rented a house at Moghbazar in Dhaka.

⁷³ Jaideep Saikia and Ekaterina Stepanova (ed.), *Terrorism: Patterns of Internationalization*, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2009, p.148

⁷⁴ Pearl Ali Ahmed, *op.cit.*, p. 59

⁷⁵ Jaideep Saikia and Ekaterina Stepanova, *op.cit.*, pp 150-158

3. Munin Nobis assumed the name 'Iqbal' and contacted Shamsul Siddique, the second secretary in the Pakistan Embassy in Dhaka. Contacts with the ISI were established through Siddique.
4. Munin Nobis visited Pakistan to negotiate with an Islamist group headed by a Mustafa Ali Jubardo for the impartment of training of ULFA cadres on payment.
5. The Vice-Chairman of the ULFA, Pradip Gogoi visited Dhaka in January 1991 and contacted an ISI officer called Haque and signed an agreement for the impartment of training to ULFA cadres. He also met another ISI officer, one Jalal.
6. After the agreement with the ISI, Munin Nobis summoned a group of ULFA members for training in Pakistan in April 1991. Pradip Gogoi accompanied a six- member group to Islamabad for training with the ISI.
7. Hari Mohan Roy alias Rustabh Choudhary of the ULFA along with 10 other ULFA cadres underwent training in camps organized by the ISI in Pakistan in 1993. Hari Mohan Roy obtained a passport under the name of Jamul Akhtar of Bangladesh.
8. According to a statement of the former ULFA leader, Lohit Deori, the ULFA's foreign secretary, Sasadhar Choudhary has provided information about the Indian Army's location in Assam to the ISI in Kathmandu in exchange for payment in US dollars.
9. At least a dozen ULFA cadres visited Pakistan to obtain training on the use of the Pakistan military produced Programmable Time Delay Device (PTDD). It may be noted in this context that PTDD is the explosive that the ULFA has been primarily using in Assam, including during the infamous August 15, 2004 explosion in Dhemaji that had taken the life of many innocent civilians including women and children.
10. According to reliable source, a meeting was held on June 25, 2007 in the Bangladesh's Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) Head Quarter in Dhaka. The meeting (that was attended by representatives of the DGFI and ULFA) took a decision, among others, that the ULFA must work not only with the Bangladesh terrorist groups like the Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI), but also with mainstream Islamist organization such as the Lashkar-e-Toiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammad. If the above information is correct, then the future would witness an entirely different sort of violence.

Ceasefire by 28 Battalion of ULFA

The 'A' and 'C' companies of the ULFA declared unilateral ceasefire on June 24, 2008. This was stated in a meeting held at Amarpur in Tinsukia district. They declared

the ceasefire to pressurize the top brass ULFA leaders to sit for negotiation with the Government of India. But the leaders of 28th Battalion led by Mrinal Hazarika and Jiten Dutta were expelled from the organization which was later renamed as ULFA (Pro-talk). The Government of India held several rounds of talks with the ULFA leaders for settlement of their demands (if it falls under the purview of the Indian Constitution). The ULFA submitted their charter of demands which includes administrative structure changes in Assam, rights and powers of upper house, rights over natural resources, new land and revenue laws, safeguarding the identity existence of indigenous people of Assam and seeking judiciary and election as autonomous bodies.

Later on, the anti-talks faction of the ULFA was formed on November 23, 2011 with Chairman Dr. Abhijit Barman, Vice Chairman and Commander-in-Chief Paresh Baruah. The nomenclature of the ULFA (anti-talk) has changed to ULFA (I) meaning United Liberation Front of Assam (Independent). They are consistently demanding for secession from India and dreaming for 'Sovereign Assam'. The new committee of the ULFA excluded the 8 top brass ULFA leaders who have signed an accord with the Government of India. The group is still maintaining its potency in the state of Assam though many of the leaders have come out overground. Thus the militant activities of ULFA of Assam are rooted in the demand for sovereign Assam.

2.2.3 Manipur

Manipur was declared as a state of the Indian Union on January 2, 1972 covering an area of 22,327 Sq Km. Imphal is the present capital of Manipur. The state is geographically divided into two tracts- the hills and the plains. The plains are inhabited by the Meiteis (Manipuris) and the hills are occupied by the Nagas, Kukis and other minority tribal of the state. The state of Manipur, consisting as it does a small but most fertile valley, isolated from the neighbouring kingdoms by encircling zones of the mountainous country and inhabited by wild and warlike tribes, has experience independent existence in the past.

The erstwhile princely states of Manipur, the native people and the political leaders were considerably influenced by the development in the mainland India. Although the native king did not command much respect among the common people, the diplomacy which adopted by Indian government on the eve of independence to force the native king to integrate the state into the Indian Union have left deep scars in the mind of the middle class Meiteis. The militancy in Manipur has certain legitimate historical basis as state was annexed by India without due process. But this is not the root cause of militancy in Manipur.

Birth of militancy in Manipur

The militancy in Manipur began in 1948 when the Manipuri communists under the charismatic leadership of Hijam Irawat Singh wanted to introduce communism in Manipur on the line of Marxist though they failed to achieve the goal. Although a Marxist, he was essentially a nationalist. He was considered as the father of Manipur Militancy. He was opposed to the merger of Manipur with the Indian Union.⁷⁶

The United National Liberation Front (UNLF) was founded in November 24, 1964 with the aim to establish a sovereign and socialist Manipur. Instead of going into violence first, they started propagating their ideas in and around Imphal. The UNLF is the first militant organisation in the valley areas of Manipur. The founder President was Kalalung Kamei and General Secretary was Arambam Samendra Singh. The UNLF came into being as a result of several similar movements in the state having same political agenda. The UNLF operates in the Jiribam Valley and Cachar district of Assam. The Manipur People's Army (MPA) is the armed wing of the UNLF. The MPA was estimated to have about 2000 armed cadres in 2005. Later, Rajkumar Meghen alias Sana Yaima became the Chairman of the organization and his Second-in-Command was Tomba, a post graduate degree holder from Calcutta University. The UNLF was an organization of intellectual and revolutionaries.⁷⁷

During the early days, the UNLF was patronized by Pakistan in the erstwhile East Pakistan (Bangladesh) and a number of the cadres underwent military training under the aegis of the Pakistani Army. Consequently, China is also known to have warmed up the organization although such ties no longer exist now. The organization was reported to have a close link with NSCN (K), ULFA and KNA.

The UNLF have proposed a four point formula to start plebiscite process for resolution of the conflict in Manipur. These include:

- (i) A Plebiscite under the United Nations (UN) supervision to elicit the opinion of the people of the state on the core issue of restoration of Manipur's independence.
- (ii) Deployment of UN peace-keeping force to Manipur for ensuring the peace process in free and fair.
- (iii) Surrender of arms by the UNLF to the UN Force, coordinated by the withdrawal of Indian troops and

⁷⁶ N.Joykumar Singh, *Revolutionary Movements in Manipur*, New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, 2005

⁷⁷ R.K.Samanta (ed.) , *India's North-East: The Process of Change and Development*, Delhi: B.R Publishing Corporation, 2002, p.18

- (iv) Handing over of political power by the UN in accordance with the results of the plebiscite.

To achieve independence for Manipur a pan-Manipuri Youth League was formed in 1968 which also worked as overground for UNLF. However, there surfaced differences over the tactics to be adopted. Arambam Samendra Singh wanted to spread ideological consciousness before taking up armed struggle but the radical leader Oinam Sudhir Kumar and his followers adopted the revolutionary tactic. Under the leadership of Oinam Sudhir Kumar an organization called Revolutionary Government of Manipur (RGM) was formed. The organization started its foundation work of militancy during March-April in 1969. Samendra Singh was shot dead in broad day light by the group opposed to him and his policies.⁷⁸

The People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) is a valley-based Meitei militant group fighting for Independent Manipur and was led by R.K. Tulachandra. It was formed on October 9, 1977, claiming to be the most genuine revolutionary group in Manipur. The outfit's demand is the expulsion of the outsider from the state. Tulachandra was killed in an encounter with the security forces in 1986 and S. Wanglen became the Commander-in-Chief soon after the death of Tulachandra. Lumbeban Masunga, General Secretary of the outfit was also killed on May 19, 1993. Its cadres were also badly suffered while fighting with the Indian forces.

It envisaged collecting farming, nationalization of all trade and business and wanted the establishment of the people's court. Its members wanted a pan-mongoloid movement on ethnic lines and an independent state embracing geographically all northeastern states, except western part of Assam and part of Tripura.⁷⁹

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) was formed under the leadership of N. Ameirakam Bisweswar Singh on September 25, 1978 with his comrades Kunjabihari Singh, Temba Singh and Manikanta Singh. The main aim of the outfit is to organize a revolutionary front covering the entire North-East India and unite all ethnic groups including the Meiteis, Nagas and the Kukis to liberate Manipur from India and established a society based on socialism. Though PLA is a Meitei outfit, it claims itself to be trans-tribal organization seeking to lead the non-Meiteis as well. They undertook guerrilla warfare, political assassination, robbery, killing of the security forces in order to achieve their objectives. In the initial stage it is believed that the PLA had its base in Lhasa (Tibet) and got arms, guerilla training from there. While fighting with the Indian

⁷⁸ V.Venkata Rao and *et.al.*, *A Century of Government and Politics in North East India*, Vol. IV-Manipur, S. Chand and Company Ltd, New Delhi, 1991, P. 177

⁷⁹ See. *Understanding Ethnic unrest in Indian Peripheries*, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, 1994 pp.15-18

security forces most of the Lhasa trained PLA guerilla were killed. After the arrest of Bisweswar Singh, the PLA faced leadership crisis. The leadership of Kunjabhari Singh was challenged by the rank and the file. There were quarrel in the top hierarchy over the leadership of Lhasa trained Temba Singh. On June 8, 1982 Manikanta Singh suddenly appeared on the scene and seized power. Temba Singh seemed to have incurred the wrath of the founder chairman of the PLA, Biswewar Singh for marrying the tribal girl and was in exile to Burma in 1980. Again there was a struggle for power between Temba Singh and Kaka Naba Singh, brother of Biswewar Singh. Biswewar Singh proposed peace talks for the settlement of the Manipur problem within the framework of Indian Constitution. Evidently, he gave up the idea of Independent Manipur.

Later the PLA have formed government-in-exile in Bangladesh where the outfit has set up a number of bases in the Sylhet district. Two camps in Myanmar and five camps in Bangladesh are currently known to exist where about 1000 cadres have received guerilla and arms training.

The Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) was formed on April 13, 1980 under the leadership of Y. Ibohanbi to restore the erstwhile Manipur Kingdom by uniting all the ethnic-Mongoloid groups belonging to the South-East of Himalayan region. It also aims to bring the egalitarian society by strengthening the working class and reviving the indigenous culture. The KCP passed decrees with an objective of widening its level of social acceptability. The founder leader Y. Ibohanbi was killed in an encounter with the security forces in 1995. Later, the KCP was split into four factions KCP-(C) headed by City Meitei, KCP-(P) headed y Prithvi, KCP-(M) headed by Mangang and KCP-(N) headed by Noyaon.

The group is mainly active in the valley areas of Manipur and the hills district such as Churachandpur. The active cadres are known to possess an array of weapons ranking from AK series rifles, US carbine, Chinese made grenades and mortars. The KCP maintained operational linkages with the NSCN (K) and ULFA. They collect fund from the villagers, businessmen and through extortion.

The revolutionary situation took massive character in term of intensity, public sympathy and the war-like postures with the Government of India in 1978, when the People's Liberation Army (PLA), followed by the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK), the Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) started armed struggle against Indian Army and the state security forces which they termed as occupationist army. The organized militancy broke out only in the seventies, following the deep dissatisfaction among the educated middle class Meiteis who felt let down by both the

state and the central government that failed to bring about overall development of the state and its people.

Another militant group Kanglei Yawal Kanna Lup (KYKL) was formed in January 1994 to rebuild the Manipuri society by clearing all anti-social activities like illegal drug business, flesh trade, corruption. The KYKL also aimed at uniting the entire North-Eastern region comprising Seven Sisters and one Brother (Sikkim) on the principle 'all for one and one for all'. The KYKL was formed following the merger of the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) of Oken faction, People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) of Meiraba faction and Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) of Ibo Pishak faction.

The KYKL launched 'Operation New Kangleipak' an anti-corruption campaign to clean the educational system in Manipur. They also pledged for open support to other militant groups who were reportedly working against the narcotic trade, drug peddlers, flesh trade and rampant corruption in the society. In the initial period the KYKL operated in four districts of Manipur like Imphal East, Bishnupur, Thoubal and Imphal West. The group has a close link with NSCN (IM), ZRA, ANVC and NSCN (K).

Present scenario in Manipur

The present study has found that, the militant organizations in Manipur divided into two parts- the hill based militant groups and the valley-based militant groups. The hill-based militant mostly composed of tribal living in Manipur and the valley-based militant mostly composed of Meiteis. While the former demand for tribal state to preserve their cultures from outside influence, the latter based their demand for independence on the basis of historical perspective. They claim that Manipur was a princely state with its geographical area extending to as far as the Kabaw valley of modern Myanmar during the British colonialism and it was never been a part of India. They want to restore the past glory of the Meiteis and to establish a sovereign Manipur through armed struggle. But no militant group in Manipur has made a breakthrough on its demand and still negotiation with the government is in the process.

2.2.4 Meghalaya

Meghalaya, the abode of clouds was carved out of Assam to become fullfledged state on January 21, 1972. Meghalaya covers an area of 22, 429 Sq Kms it is bounded on the north by Goalpara, Kamrup, Nagaon, Karbi Anglong and on the east by North Cachar Hills district. And on the south and west it is bounded by Bangladesh. The state is predominately inhabited by the Khasis, the Jaintias, the Garos and Karbis. The principal

languages are Khasis and Garos with English being the official language of the state. Shilong is the present head quarter of Meghalaya; before independence it had earned the reputation of being an educational and cultural hub of the region. Meghalaya was previously part of Assam, but on January 21, 1972 it became a new state comprising Khasi, Garo and Jaintia Hills. Unlike many Indian states, Meghalaya has historically followed a matrilineal system where the lineage and inheritance are traced through women.

Indication of militancy in Meghalaya

Meghalaya, the land of peace and tranquility unknowingly had walked into the lap of militancy in 1989 with the formation of Meghalaya United Liberation Army (MULA). Its main objectives were all round development of the Khasis society and in due course secession from Indian union, when the idea became acceptable in the society at large. The group has some small arms and had working arrangement with the United Liberation of Assam (ULFA) for their safe passage to Bangladesh.

In August 1992, the Hynniewtrep Achik Liberation Council (HALC) was formed amidst parochial violence. HALC was the first militant organization in Meghalaya which claimed to be a representative of the three major tribes of the state- Khasis, Jaintias and Garos. The council have received due recognition from NSCN (IM) for operational link. But later on the organization split with the Garos walking out and forming the Achik National Volunteer Council (ANVC) in December 1995. The HALC then renamed itself as Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC). The organization claims to be a representative of the Khasi-Jaintia tribes of Meghalaya and its aim is to free Meghalaya from alleged domination of the Garos and the illegal migrants. The early HNLC leadership consisted of Julius K. Dorphang (Chairman), Chesterfield Thangkiew (General Secretary), M. Diengdoh (Publicity Secretary) and Bobby Marwein (Commander-in-Chief). But later on Julius K. Dorphang resigned from the organization on July 24, 2007 due to internal differences with the HNLC. The HNLC claimed that the organization has tried to help the Khasi people and to cleanse the society. The organization has launched 'Operation Kyllang' or "Operation Hurricane' to punish the rapists publicly through physical torture and reduce such anti-social activities in the state.

The ANVC aims for demanding separate homeland (Achik Land) for Garo tribe living in Garo Hills of Meghalaya and large chunk of Kamrup and Goalpara District of Assam. Majority of the Garos living in these areas assert that separate homeland is their legitimate right. The ANVC during their active days was operating in Garo Hills and certain part of West Khasi Hills. The ANVC militants made their head quarter at Cheram in Garo Hills area.

Signing of Ceasefire Agreement

The HNLC has expressed its desire to hold political talks with the Government of Meghalaya. The Shillong Khasi-Jaintia Church Leaders Forum was designated as the official negotiator with the HNLC. Many of the leaders and cadres were surrendered over the years, including its founder Chairman Julius K. Dorphang.

On the other hand, the ceasefire agreement was signed on July 23, 2004 between the ANVC and Government of India, initially for a period of six months. Seven members of ANVC team with notable absence of Chairman Dilash R. Marak and Commander-in-Chief Jerome Momin signed the agreement in New Delhi which has since been extended periodically. A ceasefire monitoring cell has been set up at Coal India Complex at Araimile in Tura, headquarter of West Garo Hills district. Two designated camps for lodging the surrendered militants have also been set up at Samada and Chokpot in Garo Hills region.

In conclusion it is learnt that, the militant in Meghalaya are divided on ethnic line i.e. Khasis and Garos. In initial stage, the joint movement of both Khasis and Garos militant aimed at bringing all round development in Meghalaya and in due course secession from Indian union. But internal differences brought a division between Khasis and Garos militant movement. The newly formed HNLC later shifted their aims to free Meghalaya from alleged domination of the Garos and the illegal migrants. And extending help to Khasi people in building a clean society. The ANVC aims at 'Achik Homeland' for the Garos living in Meghalaya and Assam. Now both the militant groups have signed ceasefire agreement with the government and talks were going on to bring feasible agreement. In the meantime, different ethnic militant has sprouting up in the state where the government needs special attention and redress their grievances the early stage.

2.2.5 Mizoram

Mizoram was carving out from Assam in 1971 as Union Territory and became fulfilled state on February 20, 1987. The state covered an area of 21,087 Square Kilometres bounded by Tripura in the west, Manipur and Assam in the north. In the east and the south the state is bounded entirely by international borders. In the west, its major length borders the Chittagong Hill Tracts. In the east and the south the state border with the Chin Hills and Northern Arakans of Burma extendeds to about 404 Kilometres. Aizawl is the capital of the state.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Animesh Ray, *Mizoram*, New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1993 p. 1

Unlike political aspiration of the Naga, the Mizos led by the Mizo Union showed their willingness to join the Indian Union, as the emerging educated Mizo then found in it an opportunity to get rid of the oppression and exploitation by the native tribal chief. After a decade, half of the same Mizos felt dejected by India when the Government of Assam failed to come to the rescue of the people in the Lushai hills, when the worst food crisis hit the region during the mid-sixties, following the bamboo flowering. The *Mautam* (famine) has brought forth a number of voluntary social welfare organizations in the relief front. One such organization which came up in 1960 was the Mizo National Famine Front. Young volunteers of the Front collected relief contribution from door to door and came forward to help the distressed in all villages including the remotest ones and thus the Front gained popularity in the district. On October 22, 1961, the Front gave up the word 'Famine' from its name and become the political party with the name Mizo National Front. The MNF under the charismatic leadership of Lal Denga, an ex-serviceman and an ex-clerk of the District Council declared achievement of independent sovereign Mizoram. The MNF gradually got in its fold, a part from the zealous young men, some members of the EITU and the UMFO who were asking for a hill state

Birth of Mizo National Front

The dejected Mizos then extended their support to Lal Denga whose Mizo National Front (MNF) rose in revolt against the Indian state demanding for independence.⁸¹ Large scale disturbance started on February 28, 1966 where armed MNF force, simultaneously attacked different government installation at Aizawl, Lunglei, Vairengte, Chawngte, Chhimluang and other places. The first attacked was on the sub-treasury attacked the Assam Rifles post at Lunglei. Some attackers and two Assam Rifles men were killed and many others were injured. R.V. Pillai, SDO, Lunglei was kidnapped by the MNF militant. At midnight from February 28- March 1 the Government treasury in Aizawl was attacked and cash, rifles and ammunition were taken away. The road to Aizawl was cut off at Vairengte, the first village in the Mizo Hills on the Assam side. Culverts were blown up and huge trees were placed on the road and large scale disturbances continued all through the district.⁸² The Assam Chief Minister Bimala Prasad Chaliha said that, the Government had information that the Mizo National Famine Front had been converted into the Mizo National Front with the objectives of having an independent state consisting of Mizo people living in the district and contiguous part. He further charged the MNF leaders " are all betrayers and betrayers will have to be dealt within an appropriate manner...Let the Mizo people, the people of India and the people of the world know that the MNF leaders are betrayers." ⁸³

⁸¹ Gopalakrishnan, R. *Insurgent North-Eastern Region of India*, New Delhi: Vikash Publishing House Pvt. Ltd, 1995

⁸² Animesh Ray, *op.cit.*, pp. 159-213

⁸³ Nirmal Nibedon, *op.cit.*, p. 78

At Aizawl, the incendiaries dropped by strafing fighters had considerably demoralised the Volunteers. Nevertheless, some of the angry jungle fighters attempted to shoot them down with whatever weapons they had with them. “Inter-mitten hostile fire continues from all sides,” wrote the digest keeper in the defence perimeter on the morning of March 6, 1966. In the afternoon, four helicopters landed smoothly under air cover from fighter planes. An officer and eight other ranks added to the morale of the defenders. Simultaneously, New Delhi announced that the MNF was banned under the Defence of India Rules.⁸⁴

New Strategy of MNF

The MNF changed its strategy from direct encounter with the security forces to selective killings. It was felt that it was trying to get political revenge within Mizoram through murder and blackmail. There appeared to be three objectives in their new strategy: (i) paralyse administration through militancy activities, (ii) to restore the morale in the rank and file, and (iii) to force the government to come to term with MNF. A number of Mizo government officials were killed. Lalnunmawia, a former Vice-President of MNF and one of the founding father of MNF, who acted as mediator for talks between the government officials with the MNF and later surrendered, was brutally killed. His throat was slit while he was sleeping by the side of his ailing wife at Aizawl Hospital. The government was also willing to negotiate to some extent, unofficially. But the possibility of dialogue started receding as MNF wanted some sort of political recognition for MNF and a peace mission formed just as it had happened with the Naga hostiles a few years back. But the government’s standpoint was that all these could follow only after MNF surrendered unconditionally.⁸⁵

MNF’s Approach to Social Reformation

Mizo National Front started a campaigning to reform Mizo society and re-established what was described as ‘Christian Values’. Sale of liquor and *Zu* was prohibited. There were other psychological pressures to make the people conform to the Mizo way of life. Major Kapchhunga wrote in a local weekly: ‘Mirozam is rightly called the land of Christians as almost cent per cent are Christians. Probably you have forgotten that you are guardians of Christian people. We think that it is high time to know who you really are and what the conditions of your people are’. A postscript to the letter urged all Mizo officers to turn away from the pleasure-seeking way of life and to do away with corruption and be dedicated.

⁸⁴ Nirmal Nibedon, *op.cit.*, p.79

⁸⁵ Animesh Ray, *Mizoram Dynamics of Change*, Calcutta: Pearl Publishers, 1982 p.222

Agreement between MNF and Government

An agreement was signed between MNF leaders and the official of the Union Government on July 1, 1976 by which MNF agreed to surrender arms and give up its armed rebellion acknowledging Mizoram as an integral part of India. They resolved to accept a settlement of the problems of Mizoram within the framework of the Constitution of India. They undertook to abjure violence and suspend all its activities and thus create a climate of understanding and peace in Mizoram.⁸⁶ Accordingly, the government ordered immediate suspension of security operation on July 6, 1976 for a period of three months. This was to facilitate establishment of camps and collection of arms from the underground members of MNF. The suspension did not, however, apply to those attempting to cross the international border.

With cessation of hostilities necessity of accelerated economic development assumed prime significance. Towards the end of July 1976, the Central Government constituted a 4-member committee with representatives of the Ministers of Agriculture, Finance, Home Affairs and Planning Commission to accelerate the pace of development in Mizoram and to strengthen its administration. Another official committee with the Chief Secretary of Mizoram as its head was setup to assess the rehabilitation needs of the persons who would give up militancy and to identify suitable rehabilitation schemes for them.

Dissolution of Mizo National Front

The militant leaders used the same language, argument and rhetoric like Nagas to justify their struggle for independence. Although the Mizo militancy continued for more than a decade, it failed to win over the support of all the Mizos. Realizing the limitation of the movement, on June 30, 1986 MNF leaders accepted a separate statehood within the Indian Union and joined the mainstream politics by giving up their armed struggle. They also realized the futility of the gun culture and the state is now on the path of peace and progress. After the Mizo Accord was signed in 1986, Laldenga became the first Chief Minister of Mizoram. Now, the state becomes one of the most peaceful states in the North East India.⁸⁷

The MNF took armed movement due to the step motherly treatment perpetrated by the then Assam government on the Mizos people during the great famine or *mautam*

⁸⁶ *The Times of India*, July 3, 1976

⁸⁷ Samanta, R.K., (ed.), *India's North-East: The Process of Change and Development*, Delhi: B.R Publishing Corporation, 2002 p. 14

in 1959. Government's failure to meet the necessary assistance and support has led to the birth of Mizo militancy. With the slogan 'Mizoram for Mizos' draw the attention of the thousand people living in the territory and MNF has demanded for independence. In the process, the Union Government has timely acted to the cause of mizo militancy and a deal with Lald Denga was made on February 19, 1986. This has led to the birth of Mizoram. Though the state is considered being one of the most peaceful states in North East India militant groups like Hmar People's Convention- Democracy (HPC-D) Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF) are demanding for autonomy in the areas where their populations are majority. The Government of Mizoram has been engaged in series of talks with the militant groups. However, no concrete solution has arrived yet on the demand raised by the ethnic militant groups operating in Mizoram.

2.2.6 Nagaland

Nagaland became the sixteenth state of the Indian Union on December 1, 1963. The state covered an area of 16, 579 Sq. Kms with its capital Kohima. Nagaland is the third smallest state in North East India after Sikkim and Tripura. The Nagas are homogeneous tribe and there is still a search for a unified Naga language. There are 16 major and 20 smaller tribes of the Nagas each having its own dialect.

Before the Japanese invasion in 1944 life for the Nagas was more or less peaceful. When the World War-II broke out Angami Zapuo Phizo, popularly known as A.Z. Phizo was already in Burma and he had close contacts with both the Indian Army in Burma as well as in Naga Hills. Subhas Chandra Bose promised him that after the liberation of India, Nagas could be allowed to have their independent state. Basing on the promise Phizo started preaching the good news of 'Naga Independence'. When the Japanese invaded India from Burma they first halted at Kohima, capital of Nagaland. The entire Naga country became a battle field and they took part in various assignments. They helped the Indian Army in all possible manners in spite of whipping torture, execution and the burning of their villages by the Japanese Army. After the end of Japanese war there was social, economic and political unrest. At the same time Naga youth studying in various colleges came back to their villages with new ideas and thoughts. This has given Phizo's movement a great impetus and a very high percentage of educated youth joined hand with him.

Accord signed between NNC-Akbar Hydari

The accord was signed between the Naga National Council (NNC) and Sir Akbar Hydari –the then Governor of Assam in June 1947 prescribed certain institutional mechanism aimed at securing and guaranteeing the autonomy of the Nagas including the

Naga traditional institution, their customary laws. These institutional mechanism – as Article 9 of the accord points out- would be placed under the supreme responsibility of the governor for a period of ten years and at the end of this period the NNC will be asked whether they require the above agreement to be extended for a further period or a new agreement regarding the future of the Naga people arrived at. Interestingly, the Government of India by all accounts did not want to allow the NNC to exercise either of the two possible option mentioned in the accord. Thus, the Naga-Hydari Accord in 1947 has laid down the basis of integration of the Nagas into the new political privilege however the Government of India did not consider it as an accord to be honoured. On November 9, 1948 Gopinath Bordoloi, for the first time admitted that the Government of India did not consider the agreement as valid. Thus, many of the accord makers like NNC in this instance became part of the body politic without even actually entering into it and correspondingly without enjoying whatsoever the right to stage an exit from it. The NNC took little time to discover that they were increasingly pushed into a box that had no exit point.⁸⁸

After Independence, the Nagas became more strident in their demands and launched a violent underground movement in early 1950s not being satisfied with the district council set up envisaged in the Constitution to confer autonomy on the hill people.

Initially, the NNC is only a political organization. This is the only political party of the underground Nagas and it aims at achieving ‘Independence’. The party at first enunciated the theory of non-violence but switched over to violent confrontation after armed hostilities broke out between the Naga Army and the Assam Rifles in 1955. Phizo (who was settled in England) was the President of NNC and in order to popularize his ideology backing the demand for independence had organized an auxiliary party called The People’s Independence League (PIL) in 1948. And its goal was to intensify the labour towards the achievement of a Sovereign Naga State comprising the Naga Hills, Tuensang Frontiers and areas inhabited by the Nagas elsewhere in India and Burma. The PIL mobilized Naga youth into Naga Youth Movement, Naga Women’s Society and a number of village volunteer groups were formed and each village has special cells to which villagers came and listened to party men and discussed the NNC ideology.

When the Indian Constituent Assembly finally passed the Constitution of India as an Independent, Democratic Republic, the NNC declared that the Nagas has nothing to do with the Indian Constitution and as the Nagas were not Indians, they hereby rejected

⁸⁸ Sanjib Baruah (ed.), *Beyond counter-insurgency: Breaking the Impasse in Northeast India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009 pp.232-260.

the Sixth Schedule prepared and incorporated in the Constitution for the tribal of North-East India.⁸⁹

In March, 1956, the hostile Nagas established a 'Naga Federation Government' and hoisted their flag at Phensiyu village in Rengma dominated area. They adopted a constitution; formed its own parliament, appointed its own cabinets and governors and magistrate, duplicating the official administration. By then they had built up a guerilla force of 3,000 men and set in motion a reign of terror in the villages. Hostility has increased considerably after March 1956 in the territory. Meanwhile, Government of India had taken several measures that gradually conceded most of the demands of the liberal Nagas. The first such step was taken in 1957 when under the terms of the 'Naga Hills and Tuensang' (NHTA) Regulation, 1957. It created a single administrative area out of these two regions and placed it directly under the Centre. When these steps were rejected by the hostile organization (Naga Federal Government) the liberal element went ahead with the next steps, which formed an Interim Body to act as an advisory board on NHTA.

During this period, Naga affairs remained virtually the personal preserve of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. It was he who forced the Cabinet decision to grant Statehood to Nagaland, which came into effect in December 1963 under the 'State of Nagaland Act, 1963'. The new state was inaugurated by President Radhakrishnan on 1st December, 1963. The Act besides granting full statehood to Nagaland also provided a numbers of safeguards for the tribal with regard to their religious, legal and social practices. Overtly violent activities had abated to some extent when the Nagaland was formed as a sequel to the agreement with Naga People's Convention, but even then sporadic acts of sabotage and disruption had continued which only increased in volume with the passage of time. Mediation efforts by leaders like Mr. Jay Prakash Narayan and Mr. Bimala Prasad Chaliha did not yield any worthwhile result. However, none of these steps evoked any response from the Naga Militants, who continued with their depredation and violence, causing untold hardship and suffering to Naga people in general.

Shillong Accord

Subsequently an Accord was signed between the Government of India and part of the Naga militant at Shillong on November 11, 1975 and violence was suspended for few years and the accord was known as 'Shillong Accord'.⁹⁰ There was a series of four

⁸⁹ P.S. Datta (ed.), *Ethnic Peace Accord in India*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1995.

⁹⁰ The 'Shillong Accord' was a ceasefire agreement signed between the Government of India and part of the Naga militants. A portion of the NNC agreed to move into disarmament camps and begin negotiations for a settlement within the framework of the Indian Constitution. The Accord's important impact was in

discussions. Some of the discussions were held with the Governor alone; at the others, the Governor was assisted by the two advisers for Nagaland Mr. Ramunny and Mr. H.Zopianga and Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs Mr. M.L. Kampani. All the five members of the Liaison Committee namely Rev. Longri Ao, Dr. M. Aram, Mr. L.Lungalang, Mr. Kenneth Kerhuo and Mr. Lungshim Shaiza participated in the discussion.⁹¹

The Following were the outcome of the discussions:

- I. The representatives of the underground organizations conveyed their decision, of their own volition, to accept, without condition, the Constitution of India.
- II. It was agreed that the arms, now underground, would be brought out and deposited at the appointed places. Details for giving effects to this agreement will be worked out between them and representatives of the Government, the security forces, and members of the Liaison Committee;
- III. It was agreed that the representatives of the underground organizations should have reasonable time to formulate other issues for discussion for final settlement.

Implementation of the Clause II of the Shillong Accord of November 11, 1975.

1. It was decided that the collection of arms initially at collection centre, would commence as early as possible, and will be completed by January 25, 1976. Initial places of collection to be decided through discussion between Commissioner, representatives of underground organizations and the members of the Liaison Committee.
2. Once all arms are collected, these will be handed over to Peace Council team at the respective places of collections.
3. Peace Council team will arrange to transport the arms from collection centres to Chedema Peace Camp and arrange guards, etc, for safe custody of arms.
4. Similar arrangement at agreed place/places will be made in Manipur with concurrence of the Manipur Government.
5. The underground may stay at Peace Camps to be established at suitable laces, and their maintenance will be arranged only by Peace Council. Any voluntary contribution from any sources will be made to Peace Council, who will utilize the fund according to necessity.

Formation of Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland

The formation of Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) on January 31, 1980 followed by constitution of its government as 'Government of the People's Republic of Nagaland (GPRN); a joint organization of the Naga freedom fighters is a

splitting the NNC, rather than containing any specific settlement of key issues in the Naga conflict. This was New Delhi's first significant strategic victory against the Naga militancy.

⁹¹ M.Horam, *Naga Insurgency-The Last Thirty Years*, , New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1988, p. 267

living example. Whatever drawbacks they may have within their organizations, there may be something behind it which cannot be ignored. The Government of India had recognized NSCN/GPRN and agreements were made between the Government of India and NSCN.⁹² This group included militant elements of earlier Naga bands that had received training in China and forged a new alliance with the Kachin Independent Army (KIA) inside Myanmar and with some section in Thailand and Bangladesh. They were also successful in establishing a pipeline for their supplies of arms, ammunition and other materials and gained hideout for their safe sanctuaries and bases.

The Naga revolt against the Indian State can be seen as the failure of the Indian Political elite in creating confidence among the Nagas as a community safe and secure within the Indian Union. The Nagas people thought that, '*white men*' never ruled them and now they were not going to be ruled by the '*black men*'.⁹³ As they had little faith with the rest of the Indians, the Nagas found it difficult to identify themselves with the Indian states and the people. Naturally, they had their doubts and fears about the consequences of joining the Indian Union. Instead of being sensitive to their suspicion and feelings, the Indian political elite then acted like a big brother and used its armed forces to integrate the Naga inhabited areas with the Indian Union as against the wishes of the Nagas therein lie the beginning of Naga Militancy.

Present scenario of Nagaland

At present, Nagaland has its separate political identity, own legislature and responsible council of ministers which obtained stable political position in the mainstream of India. The Naga people have their elected representatives in both of the Houses of the Union Parliament. Different political parties in Nagaland, both regional and national parties are active. During the end part of 1980, the NSCN has divided into two major factions of almost comparable strength- NSCN (S.S. Khaplang) and NSCN (Isaac Chisi Swu-Thuingaileng Muivah).⁹⁴ The former is composed substantially of Burmese Naga and is well entrenched on that side of the border. It is gratifying to note that talks are being held with the leaders of NSCN (IM) to find a solution to Naga issue. On the other hand, both the faction of NSCN has condemned the democratically installed government of Nagaland. The militants are not ready at all to accept any negotiation done so far with the Government of India by various Naga bodies. They maintained that these bodies had 'no mandate of the Nagas to negotiate a political settlement with any other

⁹² A. Lanunungsang Ao, *From Phizo to Muivah: The Naga national question in North-East India*, New Delhi: Mittal Publication, 2002, p. 67

⁹³ J.B. Bhattacharjee (ed.), *Roots of Insurgency in North-East India*, New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, 2007, p. 103

⁹⁴ The NSCN-IM is named for its leaders Isak Chisi Swu and Thuingaileng Muivah. The NSCN-K designation refers to the leader S. S. Khaplang.

country'. Further the militant leaders also maintained that India is an 'exploiting force' and it should vacate her occupation from Nagaland and leave the Nagas to solve their political problems.⁹⁵

The study of Indo-Naga conflict is as simple as give and take question that can be accepted or rejected by the giver and the receiver. However, India is taking enough time in the process of considering to recognize or to reject their rights. Because it is India and only the Government of India can either accept or reject their demands. At the same time, Nagas are re-organizing themselves to fight out for their legitimate rights. Thus, the misunderstanding continues without finding a point of mutual understanding to solve their long-standing issue amicably between them. The Nagas would have advanced much higher than what they are today provided if India alone could read how beauty and attractive the Nagas are as understood by Mahatma Gandhi. Very unfortunately, they have failed to understand each other during the last centuries. The nature of treatment meted out under sponsorship of New Delhi over the innocent Nagas during the last few decades has been found to be very illogical, high handed and biased attitudes. It has been proved to be highly objectionable in the eyes of International Court of Law and against the principles of Human Rights if one reads between the lines on what had happened on both the sides. It has failed to understand the past Naga political history that was developed much before they came to know them.⁹⁶

When a political settlement is arrived at with India, what roles will the men of the present Naga Militant play? That is a subject to be discussed and settled. The negotiations so far, though very slow, have not been totally unsatisfactory to the NSCN. In the beginning of the negotiations the NSCN has asked the Government of India to recognize the fact that the Nagas were a unique people. In the course of the negotiation the special representatives of the Indian Prime Minister, Padmanabhiah, conceded the point that the Nagas are truly a unique people. Having acknowledged that, the Government of India will have to create a unique relationship with them and make arrangement that will be special or unique, and not to deal with them on the basis of the common arrangements it has for the rest of the country. This issue of evolving a unique relationship has still to be negotiated at the talks.⁹⁷

2.2.7 Tripura

In Tripura, although the pro-Indian sentiments were voiced mainly by the non-tribal, the tribal did not show any organized opposition to Tripura joining with the Indian

⁹⁵ Singh, Chandrika, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, New Delhi: Mittal Publication, 2004.

⁹⁶ A. Lanunungsang Ao, *op.cit.*, pp. 268-269

⁹⁷ Harish Chandola, 'Nagaland Talks Going Slow' *Mainsteam* (Vol XLVI No 20) May 3, 2008, p. 19

Union. It was only when the waves of Illegal Bangladeshi Immigrants (IBIs) from the erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) came and settled in Tripura in the subsequent decades making the tribal people minorities in their own ancestral land, the tribal militancy started gaining ground in Tripura.

The intermittent influx of the refugees into Tripura after the partition of India reduced the percentage of tribal population in the state from 50.09 percent in 1941 to 28.95 in the year 1971.

Demands of Tribal in Tripura

In view of the changing phenomenon of the society of Tripura the tribal began to think that their existence in Tripura faced a threat. In 1967, a younger section of the tribal organized themselves under the banner of Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti (TUJS) and put forward four demands. The demands were:

1. Restoration of tribal lands transferred to non-tribal since 1960
2. Formation of an Autonomous District Council for the tribal in the state.
3. Reservation of government jobs for the tribal
4. Recognition of Kok-Borok as state language and a medium of instruction and introduction of Roman script of the language.

Since 1967 TUJS has been launching democratic movement in support of the tribal demands. But its younger militants group went underground and formed a secret organization called Tripura National Volunteers Force (TNVF) which adopted militant line of action. The TUJS organization was mauled along with everything else. But their leaders alleged that it was because of the other political groups that all this had happened. One of the tribal leaders compared the tragedy of the fruit, “the tree which was planted by the CPI, nursed by the Congress, fertilized by the CPI (M) and plucked by the militant section of the TUJS.”⁹⁸

Emergence of TNV as militant group

The Tripura National Volunteers (TNV) was formed under the leadership of Bijoy Hrangkhawl in July, 1979 with the aim to establish an independent tribal state of Tripura by ousting the legally constituted government through armed struggle. The battle of militancy in the sense of raising an active revolt against existing legal government began in Tripura with the emergence of TNV as militant group. The members of TNV were sent to Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh for receiving training in guerilla warfare.⁹⁹ By the middle of 1979 communal tension in Tripura was very high. It is

⁹⁸ Nirmal Nibedon, *North-East India: The Ethnic Explosion*, New Delhi: Lancers Publications, 1981. p.158

⁹⁹ Bhattacharya, Suchinta, *Genesis of Tribal Extremism in Tripura*, New Delhi: Gian Publishing, 1991

undeniable fact that the issue of expulsion of foreigners in Assam has added flame to the tension in Tripura. The great tribal uprisings of 1980 was accompanied by large scale devastation and killing of hundreds of men and women by the TNV militants.¹⁰⁰ The TNV declared those who settled in Tripura after 1949 (the year of accession of the Indian Dominion) would have to leave the state as they are foreigner. The TNV militants gradually spread over the different hills areas inhabited by mixed population of both tribal and non-tribal. In every assault it was evident that mainly the non-tribal traders like blacksmiths, artisans, washermen, shopkeepers, barbers and money lenders were the target of their attack.

Signing of MoU with TNV

In 1988, after eight years of hostilities, a tripartite agreement was signed by the Union Government, Government of Tripura and TNV. The agreement provided for the amendment of the Representatives of People's Act 1950 to ensure reservation of 20 seats for the schedule tribes in Tripura Legislative Assembly and redrawing of boundary of the Autonomous District Council of Tripura.¹⁰¹ Some of the important features of this understanding are that, the surrendered militants would be rehabilitated and the TNV would give up its secessionist policy and abjure violence and all underground activities. An important aspect of the agreement was that a Constitutional amendment would be brought about to ensure that the tribal always have the number of MLA commensurate with the proportion of their population in the state. Another important aspect was to enact necessary laws and take effective action to restore land alienated from the tribal. The eight-year long militancy came to an end on September 10, 1988 with the signing of Accord. Many other tribal groups like All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF), National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT), Tripura Tribal Volunteers' Force (TTVF), Tripura Tribal Democratic Force (TTDF), and Tripura Tribal Youth Force (TTYF) emerged in the hills. But those different militant groups did not commit any massive scale of crime like the former TNV militants did in the past. They did not use any sophisticated weapons. They are called militant doing certain anti-social activities and disturbing the peace atmosphere in the hills areas of Tripura.

The present study shows that, the militant movement in Tripura was started due to large influx of Bengali speaking immigrant in the state. The indigenous tribal populations were at stake due to unabated influx from neighbouring Bangladesh. The militant demanded for restoration of tribal land under Tripura Land Revenue and Land Reform Act, 1960 and removal of names from electoral rolls that entered Tripura after 1956. Though accord was concluded between TNV and the Union Government in August 1988,

¹⁰⁰ B. Pakem (ed.) *Insurgency in North-East India*, New Delhi: Omsons Publications, 1997, pp. 354-57

¹⁰¹ R.K. Samanta, *op.cit.*, p.18

NLFT and ATTF are actively operating in different areas in the state pressuring the government for fulfillment of their stated objectives.

2.3 Chapter Summary

In North East India, one can see militant groups in several ethnic communities. These militant activities and movements resulted in certain political concession for the tribal communities in the form of more powers, homeland, autonomous and separate statehood. Earlier, the Naga militant group led by Naga National Council (NNC) resulted in the signing of the 'Shilong Accord' between the Naga militant leaders and the Government of India opening the way of granting Statehood to Nagaland on December 1, 1963. The Mizo armed movement under the banner of Mizo National Front (MNF) led to the signing of the 'Mizo Accord' between MNF and Government of India on June 30, 1986 and consequently led to the birth of Mizoram. The demand of the Revolutionary Government of Manipur (RGM) for Independence, Manipur was met with New Delhi's offer of statehood in 1970. The center's response to these early challenges devastated the prospects for peace. Up until the 1970s, the Indian government used collective punishment, forcible relocation, and military occupation in an attempt to end militancies in the Northeast.¹⁰² Bringing the North East into newly independent India was sometimes a fraught process, often marred by coercion. Controversy over accession to India contributed to three separatist groups within the first decades of the country's independence.¹⁰³ Tribal militancy in Tripura under Tripura National Volunteers (TNV) led to the signing of the 'TNV Accord' on September 10, 1988 and led to the creation of Autonomous District Council for the tribal people in Tripura. But the demands of some ethnic militant groups operating in the North-East India have not met even today. They have accused New Delhi for ignoring their issues concerning them. A feeling of second-class citizenship and prejudice has led the natives of these states to seek greater participation in self-governance.

Almost all the states of North-east India are badly affected by militancy. The militant groups are active in all the states except Sikkim. Mizoram is comparatively peaceful now after decades of armed movement. But one time it was badly affected by Mizo militancy. In Meghalaya the militant groups of both the Khasis and Garos are active. Tripura is also badly affected by militancy and the worst militants affected state is Manipur. The ethnic clashes, killing of innocents, extortion, kidnapping for ransom and bandhs is the order of the day. Normalcy has returned in Nagaland and slowly peace is reviving but some militant groups are still alive and can create any situation. And at

¹⁰² Sanjoy Hazarika, *Strangers in the Mist: Tales of War and Peace from India's Northeast*, New Delhi: Penguin, 1995. pp.90-97

¹⁰³ Bethany Lacina, The problems of Political instability in Northeast India, in *Asian Survey*, Vol. 49, Issue 6, pp. 998–1020, or at <http://www.ucpressjournals.com/reprintInfo.asp>.

present the peace in Nagaland is fragile but if the initiative taken up by the central government is successful it will influence the peace process in other states as well.

Thus, the present study conceptualizes militant movements in the North East India as group of people either legitimately or illegitimately, with or without state support having their members from different section of society and holding on some kinds of ethnic, political and social ideologies which they aim to achieve in any way available to them but mostly resort to violent means as the last option for achieving their objectives. Militant is a form of private army whose members live a military life that is subjected to almost the same discipline and training as soldiers. They wear uniforms and badges and always ready to meet their alleged enemy with weapons in physical combat.

Karbi Anglong is adjacent to Nagaland state where the NSCN are actively working for 'Greater Nagalim' or 'Sovereignty for Nagaland'. They have influenced many tribal groups in the North East India to take arms for defending indigenous' rights. The NSCN, mother of militancy in North-East India could not influence the Karbis for several decades in spite of its geographical proximity. From this it has reflected that geographical proximity has nothing to do in persuasion of one's thought and conduct. The Karbis have been peacefully and democratically demanding their right for separate Statehood since 1960s. From the field study it has come to light that, as the government turns a deaf ear into the Karbi's demand and failure in addressing the people's aspiration, in 1994 some Karbi nationalist took arms as a substitute like other ethnic militant groups in the North East India.

In Karbi Anglong, ethnicity is the base of militant movements. The demand for protection of Karbi sub nationalism and self-determination, militancy has appeared in the territory. The group which assumes militant tactics gradually changed into militant organisations for the exertion of ethnic identity.