EXTERNAL LINKAGES OF NAGA SEPARATISM

External involvement or intervention is omnipresent and it has been considered as one of the inherent features of international relations and has become a serious issue in the present world. This type of intervention has been instrumental in intensifying the conflicts as it has acted as a moral boosting for the separatists. This is hardly surprising because separatism has not attracted the attention, which it deserves in international relations (Heraclides, 1990:341).

Over the years, scholars have indentified seven factors can be considered as responsible factors for the involvement of external powers in the separatist movements. Firstly, states and international government organizations refrain from supporting separatist movements because of the existing normative regime against involvement with groups that threaten the territorial integrity of the states. Secondly, separatism is usually linked to foreign interests and is therefore a form of neocolonialism. The finger is pointed not only to the former colonial powers but also to industrialized countries and powerful multinational corporations are active in the region. External actors that do involve are often the instigators of a separatism bid and the separatist themselves are mere puppets. Historically, it was the colonial power and its local administration that instilled parochial feelings of tribalism and separatism. An armed separatist movement is launched only after the separatists have secured extensive external support. Thirdly, there are some economic, political, and other instrumental motives for which states end up to support separatist movements. Fourthly, states may express their support for a rebel movement but are doubtful to match their high-level material aid such as arms and funds. Fifthly, for the neighboring states it is found to be involved in a difficult situation from which it is hard
to escape from nearby conflicts and to support one side or the other. Sixthly multi-ethnic states particularly nearby states with latent or overt centrifugal tendencies and the states, which have a history of armed separatism, are less likely to assist separatist movements than those states, which are homogenous. Seventh most important factor, which is responsible for the involvement of external power in separatist movements, is the involvement of two super powers in any separatist conflict. It is because two super powers are likely to champion opposite side out of which one power support the incumbent government and the other supporting the separatism (Heraclides, 1990:341).

In the Contemporary era, most of the separatist movements throughout the globe have cross – border linkages and transitional affiliations. When separatist groups have had failed to achieve their desired goals, including autonomy or separate statehood they have tried to seek external support. They approached their co-ethnic living in different countries, which are hostile to state against whom they are fighting. For their own strategic interests, external forces try to exploit the situation by providing material and moral support in the form of diplomatic, economic, and political besides providing shelter, arms, and ammunitions to the separatist movements (Kumar, 2007:50-53).

**North East:** North East area occupies 7.6 percent of land and 3.6 percent of the population with 40 percent of its land bordering with China, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Burma. India’s North East borders touch to four counters to its North are China and Bhutan, to the East Burma, Myanmar and to the West is Bangladesh. Since 1947, India has been keeping hostile relations with all its neighbors including Pakistan. The impact of these troubled relations has had a negative implication for India’s North East. Nagas belong to Mongoloid race that has close ethnic and cultural ties with tribes of China, Tibet, and Burma (Bhaumik, 2009:153).
The present chapter focuses on Naga separatist movement which had been able to attain a considerable level of in-group legitimation in particular by the endorsement of independence or another form of self rule as the aim and armed violence, as the means had posed a credible military threat to the incumbent government as seen by the existence of a sizable and active guerilla force and the dispatch of considerable portion of government troops to deal with it and had received arms, funds or political support from external states.

**China**

Beijing has been secretly supporting, advising, and arming major separatist groups in North East India. China ceased to be a threat to India’s borders after Tibet went out of its grip during the revolt of SunYat-Sen, in 1911-12 (Chaube, 2012:213). China was aware that CIA (Central Intelligence Agency of USA established in 1947) was reportedly supporting the Tibetan insurgency against the Chinese occupation of Tibet from Indian soil. This irritates China and China in turn facilitates Naga and other separatist groups of North-East India (Mukherjee, 2007:14). As far as the case of Nagas is concerned, it has its external linkages with external powers including those, which had been and are continuously being hostile to India. China’s technical and ideological support to North East separatist groups is believed to date back to 1950s. It is a well-established fact that Chinese government support the Naga separatist by providing arms training and other material assistance. Besides this, Chinese government has also provided technological support to Naga separatist in the form of radio services for the publicity and to gain international support for the Naga course (Shimary, 2005:309).

The Naga separatists were not in the favors for the creation of Nagaland state within the Indian union. They demand separate sovereign
state. Two factors were responsible which boost the morale of Naga separatist. One is the formation of independent Pakistan and second is India’s war with China in 1962. In May 1963, the Nagas sent a letter to Beijing through Pakistan military authorities, explaining that Nagas were fighting for their territorial independence. They recalled some of the alleged atrocities and appealed to Beijing to recognize the territorial rights of Nagaland (Nibedon, 1983:88). Without arms, assistance from China Naga separatist would not have been able to setup the tempo of their movement. The China’s aim was to weaken the unity of India and disintegrate its eastern frontiers (Singh, 1995:127). The chief Angami Zapo Phizo (A.Z Phizo (1903-1990) was a Naga leader and a militant. The Naga secessionist groups regard him as “The Father of the Nagas”. He grew disillusioned with the political motives of the newly independent Indian government. He had cultivated great influence in the Naga National Council which was inclined towards seeking secession from India), of rebel Naga National Council (NNC) in 1956, left Naga Hills for the fighting of independent ‘Naga homeland’ from the foreign shores. He traveled through Pakistan, Switzerland and reached London in 1960, and continued his fight against India until his death in April 1990 (Hussian, 2012:NP).

When the companions of Phizo felt that they were not able to avail help from western powers like USA and U.K then they planned to overturn to China. Phizo also realized the fact that U.S.A and England have no conflicting relations with India, so it was futile to think about any kind of assistance from these two nations. He advised his companion to seek help in the form of military and economic aid from China who came to meet him at his place in London. While giving statement to press in London, on January 21, 1962, Phizo admitted that western countries have not provided any support for their freedom struggle (Sareen, 1988:44).
After the Sino-Indian war in 1962, a large number of separatist Nagas went across China to get assistance for arms, ammunitions, and military training. China not only encouraged the separatist Nagas but also supplied weapons like medium machine guns, sub machine guns, rifles, stenguns, rocket launchers, and other ammunitions in a large quantity (Mao, 1992:92). General Secretary Thuingaleng Muivah of NNC and Brigadier Thinoselie Mkeho on 5 May 1966, along with 300 Nagas visited China with a purpose of arms training and they delivered a letter to the President of the People’s Republic of China (Shimary, 2005:309-310).

Muivah was given red carpet welcome and placed in military training camps at EU-Kung about ten miles north of Ten Chung. Separatist Nagas approached China because they knew that China has history of hostile relations with India. The Nagas was in a search of big power support, because this would increase their bargaining capacity vis-a-vis the Government of India. The separatist Nagas requested the Chinese Government that they need Chinese help for the creating of independent ‘Naga homeland’. However, at the same time, separatist Nagas were aware of the fact that they would not adopt communism due to the adverse reaction from the Naga Christian community (Yonuo, 1974:347). In 1968, about 200-trained Nagas encountered with Burmese Army when they tried to cross the Burma border to enter India. During this encounter, separatist Nagas used automatic rifles, machineguns and mortars against Burma’s army. During this encounter, 45 separatist Nagas were reportedly killed (Anand, 1980:188). Indians army discovered a camp in Jostma Village near Kohima on June 7, 1968 that is just after the encounter. The separatist Nagas used this camp for hiding purpose. Separatist Nagas used Chinese made weapons and large numbers of causalities were reported from both the sides (Yonuo, 1974)
Therefore, it is proved that China not only gave arms training to separatist Nagas but also supplied weapons to them to use against Indian army. The issue of Chinese involvement in Naga insurgency was raised for the first time at international level on October 22, 1968 by Wei Tao-Ming (Taiwan’s foreign minister) in United Nations General Assembly. In his speech, he stated that China give training to separatist Nagas at their own territory especially in Yunnan province and then the trained Nagas were used against the Indian army. Likewise, Soviet Union also in March 1969, criticized the Chinese government for providing arms training and weapons to the separatist Nagas against India (Shimary, 2005:313). However, these concerns did not make any prohibition in Chinese involvement in Naga issue.

After the formation of Bangladesh in 1971, China became more active in North East region of India. China facilitated Thuingaleng Muivah to visit North Korea and North Vietnam, where he got familiar with organized training skills of guerrilla warfare, infiltration, and local intelligence. Such type of support from China encouraged the morale of separatist Nagas. Nagas also felt that big power like China supports their agenda. In 1973, separatist Nagas with the help of Meiteis (a separatist group in Manipur) met in Bangkok. The purpose of the meeting was to build a common organization to facilitate communication links with other separatist groups of North East India. It was believed that this meeting was co-ordinate under the command of Chinese officials (Kotwal, 2008:764).

In 1975, a large number of separatist Nagas under the command of Thuingaleng Muivah reached China for getting training. However, they were unable to penetrate into Nagaland because of the strong vigil of Indian security forces at the Burma border. This group established a camp in Myanmar and started running their activities. Myanmar territory became a training center and meeting point of most of the separatist groups of the
North East India (Sareen, 1980:44). On November 11, 1975, the moderate group within Naga National Council, signed the Shillong Peace Accord with the Union government of India. However, the extremist leaders like Thuingaleng Muivah and Isak Chisi Swu, rejected to implement this Accord. Thuingaleng Muivah voiced his views that Shillong Accord brought about divisions and fighting among the Nagas and this Accord would sell the Naga nation and rights of the people by accepting the Indian constitution.

In 1976 Thuingaleng Muivah along with 400 separatist Nagas, reached China and with the help of Chinese intelligence, he sent a message in the form of documents about the present and future programs to Angami Zapu Phizo (A.Z.Phizo), about the present and future programs. However, A.Z Phizo did not respond. This time the main purpose of Thuingaleng Muivah was to get arms from China in large quantity. After getting assistance from China, he came back to Burma (Shimary, 2005:316-317).

In 1978, apart from military training to separatist Nagas by China. Chinese intelligence agencies invited educated Naga youth to their territory for guerilla warfare training and indoctrination. Because at that time China felt that, the earlier batches of separatist Nagas being illiterate could not be effectively indoctrinated. This became one of the serious issues in front of Indian government (Indian Express 28 March, 1978).

In 1979, under the leadership of Morarji Desai government, the External Affairs Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, visited China, where at the political level meeting he raised the issue of Chinese involvement in supporting Naga separatists with Chinese officials. The Chinese government assured Vajpayee that China would not give any kind of support or assistance. However, instead of fulfilling the assurance, China continued relations with the Naga separatists (Sareen, 1980:44). The pro Chinese Mao tribes in Myanmar continued to assist Naga separatists in
transporting weapons like light machine guns, semi-automatic, self-loading rifles, and hand grenades from China to Nagaland via Myanmar and Dirang area of Arunachal Pradesh (Hindustan Times, 21 July, 1986).

In late 1980’s, China substantially consolidated its presence not only in and around North-east India but also began to spread its tentacles in Indian Ocean. The Naga separatists established liaison office at Yunnan province in China across the border with India’s state of Arunachal Pradesh and Lhasa in Tibet (Upadhyay, 2009:48). On February 26, 1982, Separatist Nagas of Nationalist Social Council of Nagaland attacked on Indian army, of 21st Sikh regiment in Manipur. In this ambush, 21 army men were reportedly killed and the weapons used in this ambush by Nagas were of Chinese origin (Indian Express, 28 February, 1982).

Luit Deuri the prominent leader of United Liberation Frontier of Assam (ULFA) surrendered to Indian army in 2001. He revealed many facts to the Indian intelligences regarding the involvement of China’s support to various separatist groups of North East India. He said that from 1988 to 1995 Chinese agency “Black House” supplied a large number of weapons to National Socialist Council of Nagaland. The weapons were transported to North East India from China through Bhutan. The whole process was carried by the Chinese military intelligence (Verghese, 2002:59-60). However, when the Indian army enquired this information from Thuingaleng Muivah, he refused and said that his organization did not receive any arms or ammunitions from China from the last 20 years. Instead Indian intelligences fanned the issues in order to defame National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Gupta, Hindustan times, 23 November 2000).

Anthony Shimmer one of the prominent leader of National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak- Muivah), reached China via Bangkok in
September 2000. The purpose of his visit was to finalize arms deal with China. Likewise, on 25 December 2003, chairman of United Liberation Frontier of Assam Arbinde Rajakho visited China and urged the Chinese Intelligence authority to provide arms training to its cadets (Hussian, 2007:120-121)

Anthony Shimmer who was arrested by Indian intelligence agency in September 2010, revealed how China was fueling North East separatist groups. It was established that Chinese strategic and material assistance to fuel insurgency in Indian North East was an instrument of Chinese policy, assurances not withstanding. Anthony Shimmer disclosed that he visited China in 1994, for the purpose of arms deal, where he made contact with Chinese company “NORINCO” and an arms consignment from the company included 1800 pieces of arms and one lakh rounds, M16 automatic assault rifles, AK series rifles, sniper rifles, machine guns, rocket launcher, pistols and money. The consignment was sponsored by the Naga businessmen. In 1996, another deal was signed in China and this time arms and ammunitions were brought to Cox’s Bazaar with the help of North Korean ship (Cox Bazaar is a name of place famous for landing station on Bangladesh coast and this place is known for illegal activities). These arms were loaded in small trucks and transferred to North East India (Datta, 2011:24). In 2007, Shimmer procured arms from China, contacted Yuthuna, the Chinese representatives of TCL in Bangkok (TCL is an authorized Chinese arms company). This deal was worth $1.2 million and included $1 million for the purpose of shipment from China. A large quantity of ammunition was brought from China and unloaded in Cox’s Bazaar. An intermediary Willy Narue from Bangkok carried out the whole process.

In 2008, National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah) strengthened its relationship with Beijing. In September 2010, Anthony
Shimmer procured arms from China and asked the supplier to deliver it in the upper parts of Arunachal Pradesh. (Datta, 2011:25).

Recently Rajeev Bhattacharyya published a book ‘Rendezvous with Rebels: Journey to meet India’s most wanted men’. This book is focus on the external linkages of Separatist groups of North East India with neighboring countries (Sanjay Kumar, a correspondent of The Diplomat newspaper) conducted interview with the author. Rajeev said that the separatist groups are too much dependent on China in financial matters. “Chinese involvement with these groups is much greater than what the Indian government can think of. China has been employing some of these groups for spying activities. China is a very unpredictable neighbor. For Beijing, Myanmar is very important. What Bhutan is to India, Myanmar is to China? The communist regime has commercial and strategic interests in Myanmar. It already has two pipelines from the Arkan region to Yunnan province in China. Now, in last few years, the situation in Myanmar has changed and China feels that its grip over Myanmar is loosening a bit. Earlier, the Myanmarese government was quite close to China now it is getting closer to the United States and European countries. This development China does not like. In addition, earlier the Kachin Independence Army was pro-China, but very recently, a huge hydroelectric dam project, which China was supposed to build on Irrawaddy river, was cancelled by the Myanmar’s government because of local projects. Therefore, Beijing that it needs to cultivate more insurgent groups. I can say with certainty that China has been trying to cultivate a greater relationship with these insurgent groups so that it can have better hold over Myanmar’s Sagaing region”. So from the author’s views it is clear that how china is fueling insurgency in North East (Sanjay Kumar the truth behind insurgency on Indo-Myanmar border, The Diplomat, June 21, 2015).
Pakistan

Pakistan supported different separatist groups in India for its relative and strategic gains. India claimed that Pakistan was the first country to offer material and moral assistance to Naga National Council and various separatist groups in North East India. On December 6, 1956, A.Z. Phizo visited East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) through the Karbi Anglong Hills of Assam to seek Pakistan’s assistance, in the form of arms support. Pakistan assured full encouragement and material assistance to Naga separatists. Pakistan provided El Salvador passport and other travel documents to Phizo to enable him to proceed to Zurich in Switzerland, as Phizo’s aim was to reach London (Nibedon, 1983:88). First batch of separatist Nagas reached Pakistan in 1958, under the command of Kaito Sema (a Naga army commander) for the purpose of arms training. The training undergoes for four months in Sylhet area of Pakistan. Nagas learned how to use automatic guns, rocket launcher, and mortars (Nibedon, 1983:88).

Likewise in September 1962 Pakistan arranged travel document to Kaito, Mowu, Khodao Lotha and Young Kong Ao, (the members of Naga National Council organizations) to visit London at the invitation of A.Z. Phizo. A special liaison cell was set-up with the help of government of Pakistan to facilitate communication links between different separatist groups of North East India (Singh, 1995:104). In 1963, five hundred separatist Nagas reached Pakistan under the command of Dusoi Chakesang for arms training. This batch stayed in Pakistan for one year. In 1964, one thousand Nagas, one of the largest ever batch reached Pakistan for arms training. Zuheto Sema, command this group. The Chittagong Hill Tracts and Sylhet areas of Pakistan became the permanent training centers. From 1962 to 1968, about ten batches of Naga separatists reached Pakistan. They were trained in different areas like Rangmati, Ruma, Bander Ban, Rankhinag and Chitta Gong Hill Tracts. These areas were used to train
Nagas for guerilla warfare and handling of high explosive materials (Singh,1995:117). Pakistan played a double game like in 1964, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Foreign Minister of Pakistan gave a statement in United Nations Security Council meeting against India that Indian representatives had been silent about the human rights violations of Nagas in Nagaland for many years. Pakistan on one side supported Naga insurgency as discussed above and raised the issue of human rights violations on the other side.

On August 23, 1967, Pakistan radio broadcasts and press propaganda played virulent role in fermenting trouble for India, in the North East. It announced that Nagas were not a part of India, even during the British regime, and New Delhi forcibly occupied Nagaland, only to bow down, subdue, and suppress the people of Naga (Shimary,2005:320). In response to this India strongly opposed Pakistan’s support to the Naga separatists. India stated that such an act not only constitutes a gross interference in India’s internal affairs, but is also a clear violation of the accepted standards of international behavior. In a diplomatic and devious reply to India’s protest, Pakistan denied any aid to the Nagas. However, Pakistan role was brought to light by documents captured from the Naga separatists which were released by the External Affairs Ministry in New Delhi on 4 October 1968(Mao,1992:92).

Pakistan is a very unpredictable neighbor. In Chita Gong Hill Tract, Pakistan government in 1968, constructed small airstrip to provide training to the separatist Nagas in flying small aircraft’s so that such a training might be helpful in fighting the Indian forces. Apart from this Pakistan allowed using its seaports to facilitate Nagas to visit other part of the globe (Singh,1995:111).

Disintegration of East Pakistan and emergence of Bangladesh in 1971 was a great set back to Naga separatists. Because this proved to be a
big hurdle in directing, coordinating and carrying on the secessionist activities, which were carried from their bases in East Pakistan. In the same year the Indian army arrested Thinoselie Angami, (Commander in Chief of Naga National Council and prominent leader), and for the time being the secessionist activities were stopped (Shimary, 2005:320). However, Pakistan did not completely abandon the idea of encouraging Naga separatists, as secret talks reportedly held between Pakistan officials and Naga separatists about the future planning of arms training camps (Yonuo, 1974:304-305).

In the late 1980s, Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI-established in 1948), an intelligence wing of Pakistan government, spread its activities in North East India, for exporting Islamic terrorism in India (Anand, 1980). When Naga separatists openly revolted for independence, the former East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) was one of the major supporters of the Naga movement. India claimed that Pakistan was the first country to offer arms to Naga National Council (Nibedon, 1983:88).

The aim of ISI was to weaken India’s internal security system and to engage India internally to divert its attention from Kashmir and Pakistan. Major General B.K Bopanna GOC, 21 mountains Division, of Indian army informed to the Indian government that some Madrasas (Islamic religious institutions) in Assam helped separatist groups of North East with the help of ISI (Datta, 2000:24). In 1990, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah) made contact with ISI officials in Dhaka; the purpose of this meeting was arms supplies and training programs to Nagas. The relationship and the modus operandi of Naga separatists and ISI agents was exposed when Manipur police arrested, one of the terrorists of Revolutionary People’s Front (RPF), a separatist group of Manipur. In his interrogation, he confessed that Pakistan government provided all kind of support in the form of money, arms, training to the separatist groups of...
North-east India (Correspondent, 1994). In another incident in 1994, Khayao Hurey the finance secretary of National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak- Muivah) arrested who too confessed about Pakistan’s support, particularly ISI’s, direct involvement in assisting the Naga separatist movement. He revealed how millions of dollars were provided by Pakistan to buy arms from South East Asia in which the Pakistan embassy in Kathmandu played an intermediary role (Correspondent, 1994).

Thuingaleng Muivah of National Socialist Council of Nagaland arrested on January 19, 2000, by Thailand police on the charges of travelling on a forged passport. These travel documents were provided by the ISI in Karachi before his flying to Bangkok (Kotwal, 2008:765). Anthony Shimmery (main leader of Naga separatist organization), arrested in September 2010, during interrogation confessed that National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak- Muivah), top brass leaders were received by the Pakistani intelligence officials in Karachi in 2001. The purpose of the visit was to discuss the conditions of peace talks by the Naga separatists with New Delhi. In the mean time, NSCN-IM was negotiating peace with New Delhi. In 2008, an ISI agent visited Bangkok to meet NSCN-IM leaders, and offered financial help and military training to NSCN-IM, on the condition that Nagas should break the ceasefire agreement with India (Datta, 2011:26).

The separatist groups like the Naga National Council (NNC), Peoples Liberation Army (PLA), United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), National Liberation Front of Tripura, (NLFT), and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), used Pakistan territory for arms training with the help of ISI (Upadhyay, 2009:52).
Myanmar

The British separated Myanmar from India in 1937 by demarcating new administrative boundaries and carving out the Naga Hills, Mizo Hills, Khasi-Jaintia Garo Hills etc. In this way, Nagas were placed in the Naga Hills in Assam, Manipur, and Myanmar. During this period, the Nagas were not strong enough to protest against the British for demarcation of boundaries. On the eve of India’s independence, Naga, Kukis, Mizos, Khasis and other tribes of North East India did not show any interest to join the Indian Union (Yonuo, 1974:327). Nagaland shared an international border of nearly about 258 kilometers with Burma. Most of the Naga tribes are settled on the Burma border. Separatist Nagas used Myanmar territory for to and fro movement with China, guerilla warfare training, arms training, intelligence for communication and base camps. Myanmar became a magnetic zone for separatist groups from North East India. In 1966, the Kachin Independent Army (KIA), a separatist group in Myanmar, started providing safe corridor to Naga separatists for entering China. KIA provided them base camps, training, and arms (Bhumik, 2009:175). In 1966, Eastern Naga Regional Council (ENRC), a Naga organization, acted as an intermediary to provide first link between Naga National Council (NNC) with KIA at the Kachin Hill Tracts of Burma. The Nagas settled in Myanmar started joining hands with Naga National Council, for the demand of independent Naga homeland. They helped Naga separatists by providing safe passage to visit China (Upadhyay, 2009:51). In April 1971, about one hundred Naga separatists entered Myanmar via Chin Hills in two batches and their final destiny was to reach Yunan province of China for the purpose of arms training. In July 1971, two hundred Nagas crossed over to Myanmar, under the command of Thuingaleng Muivah. In December 1974, again a batch of sixty separatist Nagas crossed Burma and for the first time, female Nagas accompanied them (Singh, 1995).
Apparently, Myanmar not only provided a safe route to Naga separatists to reach China, the Kachins (a separatist group of North Burma) provided arms and training to the Naga separatists. Lethal drugs too were also peddled into region from Burma (Upadhyay, 2009:71).

Naga National Council (NNC) established powerful base camps in Somra Hills, Sinkaling Hkamti and Nokiak, (places in Myanmar and these locations served as the headquarters for the army of from 1960 to 1975) (Kumar,2012). The Shillong Accord was signed between the Naga National Council (NNC) and Government of India in 1975. Leaders like Thuingaleng Muivah, Isak Swu and Khaplang opposed this Accord. This resulted in factionalism in NNC and the leadership was divided into extremist and moderate ideologies. Some leaders called themselves extremist and formed their own party under the name of National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), announced in Myanmar on January 31, 1980. The formation of NSCN proved to be a major setback to NNC and this made clear cut demarcation between moderate and extremist ideology.

Myanmar also suffered insurgency problem in its own territory by the separatist outfits like KIA, KIO, and Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA). These separatist outfits were active in the upper part of its territory. According to LT. Gen N.K Singh, there were about 40 militant camps, belonging to various separatists groups from North East India along the unfenced 1,643 km long border, which touches Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram. They would use of this unfenced border for their separatist activities (Rai, 2009:174). In 1986, United National Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) established links with NSCN, both these separatist groups established strong connections with Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) and Kachin Independent Army (KIA). These groups run their activities from the western border. Myanmar had very limited control over its western frontier. The KIO and KIA charged one-lac rupees per cadet
from ULFA and NSCN for arms training in Burma and this process was carried from 1980 to 1990 (Goswami, 2005:NP).

As discussed above that KIA is pro-China. China had improved its relations with Myanmar in 1990. When China stopped assisting KIA, India intelligence directly contacted with KIA and offer weapons to them with a promise that KIA would not provide any assistance in the form of arms training to Naga separatists and other separatist groups of North East India (Bhaumik, 2009:175). The split in Naga National Council and the formation of new party National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), factionalism continued and resulted into splits within NSCN. S.S Khaplang, (a Hemi Naga of Burma) formed a new party called National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang (NSCNI-K) on 30 April 1988. Khaplang had strong hold in Myanmar over Burmese Naga tribes and he has established party headquarters in Myanmar (Inderjit, 1988:24).

The government of India constantly put pressure on the Myanmar government to conduct joint military operations against the NSCN base camps inside Myanmar. The joint military operations of Indo-Myanmar were launched on April 26, 1986. During this operation, the Indian Chief of the Army, General Krishna Swamy Sundarji visited Myanmar to monitor the operation, but this operation did not prove successful, because of the lack of coordination from Myanmar army and ultimately joint forces withdrew (Shimary, 2005:320). On December 15, 1987 Rajiv Gandhi, then Prime Minister of India visited Burma with a purpose to sign the ‘Maritime Boundary’ agreement between Burma and India. However, the focus of the discussion was to fight trans border insurgency (Asian Recorder, 1988). The officials of India and Myanmar held meetings in June 1999, both the countries agreed on the following issues,

1. To check movement of separatist groups across the borders.
2. To strengthen communication network along the internal borderline.

3. To set up measures to check narcotics smuggling and to launch joint operations against the separatists on both sides of the border (Rai, 2009:174).

Myanmar government did not stand by its promise to curb transborder insurgency. There were two reasons, first was that Myanmar army felt, that India is supporting democratic movement that was started by Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar. Second reason was that India awarded Nehru peace price to Aung Sang Suu Kyi in 1992. These two issues created irritant between India and Myanmar (Express News Services, 1992).

With the passage of time, the relationship between India and Myanmar was improved. In 1995, operation ‘Golden Bird’ was carried out by the joint military forces of India and Myanmar to eliminate the base camps of various separatist groups of North East India in Myanmar. Likewise, on February 6, 2000 the Myanmar army attacked NSCN-K headquarters in Myanmar. This operation continued for over a week and got success. On May 6 2001, the Myanmar troops attacked NSCN-K camps and number of causalities occurred on both the sides. This proved helpful in uprooting many insurgents camps, which were located in south west of Burma (Rai, 2009). In 2004, General Than Shew of Myanmar army visited India. A special meeting was held between the official of Indian army with Than Shew. He assured full support from their army in conducting joint operations against various separatist outfits in his country. Many joint operations were conducted by Myanmar and Indian army forces from, 2005 to 2006. But due to lack of commitment on the part of Myanmar, these operations did not show any fruitful results.

Recently a statement was made by Assam, Director General of police that various separatist groups of North East India used porous
border of Indo-Myanmar for the smugglings of weapons. “the weapons are first brought to Myanmar and from there these are sneaked into Dimapur or Mizoram through the land border with that country. From Dimapur and Mizoram, these weapons go into the hands of insurgents. On some occasions, the weapons are sent to Bangladesh from Myanmar and from there these are brought to the North eastern states through different routes”. The separatist groups for arms smuggling used earlier sea routes. But because of constant vigil by security forces on sea routes, land routes are using (Bora, The Tribune, 27 May 2015,p.15)

On June 4 2015, twenty Indian army men were killed in chande district of Manipur, by an unsuspected separatist group. Rebels used rocket- propelled, grenades, and automatic weapons. “Preliminary findings suggested the role of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang group). This group unilaterally withdrew from a ceasefire agreement on March 27 2015” (Laithangbam and Pandey, 20 soldiers killed in Manipur Ambush, The Hindu, 5 June 2015, p.1). NSCN (Khaplang) took responsibility for this ambush. Indian government suspected that United National Front of Assam and Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup of Manipur were also involved in this attack. These groups hide in Myanmar after the attack. Indian government shared this information with facts to Myanmar government and Indian army believed that Myanmar would agree to conduct joint military operations against these separatist groups in Myanmar territory (Peri and Pandey, India to take up rebels issue with Myanmar, The Hindu, 6 June 2015,p.9).

On June 10 2015, Indian army attacked and destroyed two militants’ camps in Myanmar. The attack was carried out by 21 Para Regiment Commandos. Narinder Modi Prime minister of India in a press statement said that this is a message to all the countries of globe that if any country will try to destroy the Indian security, India will attack in the same manner
Union Home Minister of India Rajnath Singh said in a press statement on July 11 2015, that separatist groups of North East India, used Myanmar border for drugs and arms smuggling. In a meeting with eight Chief Ministers of North East states “of late, the Indian- Myanmar border has become more active as there are reports of movement of insurgents, weapons, and drugs. I have constituted a committee headed by JIC (Joint Intelligence Committee) chairman R.N Ravi, on effective management of the border. The Home Ministry will act as soon as the committee submits its report. We also need to setup vigil along the India- Bangladesh border”. Rajnath Singh said that there are around 240 villages along the 10-kilometer long Indio-Myanmar border. Due to the lack of security, separatist groups use this segment of population for illegal activities. Singh urged the Chief Ministers of the north eastern states to provide land for fencing border (Bora, Myanmar border used for drugs and arms, The Tribune 12 July 2015, p.1)

India urged Myanmar government to hand over four leaders of National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang) including its chief S.S Khaplang. This issue was discussed in a Joint Consultative Committee in July 2015. India needs this man because his group was involved in a series of attack on Indian army in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland. But Myanmar government remained non-committal over the India’s request to hand over the NSCN (K) leader (Singh, Myanmar asked to hand over Khaplang, three other leaders, The Hindu August 19 2015, p.12)

**Bangladesh**

Bangladesh shares 4’095 km border with India and its territory touches with four North Eastern states of India, Assam and Meghalaya to its south Tripura and Mizoram to its east and southeast. These states
shares 1.879 km border with Bangladesh (Singh & Gupta, 2004:279:280). Since 1971, Bangladesh has been actively involved in aiding and abetting separatist groups of North-East India against India. The separatist outfits bring arms and ammunition into India through Bangladesh with the help of sea routes via Thailand and landing at Cox’s Bazaar port in South-east Bangladesh. This sea port was known for illegal activities (Singh and Dipanker, 2004).

The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) got support from Bangladesh to set up training camps in Chitta-Gong Hill Tracts (CHT) and to establish base camps. The Cox Bazaar was considered as the main operating location through which cadres of NSCN operated their operations. Major Ningkhkhan, a top brass Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), personally supervised the training of separatists Naga with the help of Pakistan ISI agency. Thuingaleng Muivah and Isak Chishi Swu of the NSCN got support from Bangladesh government to form an ‘umbrella body’ in the Bangladesh territory. This umbrella body works as the communication links between NSCN and other separatist groups of North-East India. The NSCN leaders established contact with almost all the separatist groups of North-east and operate one of the largest training camp in the CHT region of Bangladesh (Shimary, 2005:312). The Bangladesh government allowed Pakistan ISI to launch their anti-India activities from their territory. The ISI developed a channel through which money and arms were transferred to separatist groups in the North-east India (Datta, 2000:7). India warned Bangladesh government about the role of Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) of Bangladesh who worked with Pakistan ISI to support, in the form of training, funding, and arms to the separatists groups in the North East. Bangladeshi population which resides near the porous border between Bangladesh and the Indian
states of Assam, Mizoram, Tripura and Meghalaya facilitate these two intelligence agencies in their anti-Indian operations (Upadhya, 2009).

The Naga separatists use Bangladesh territory for sheltering and conducting operations. On December 21, 1997, Bangladesh authorities arrested ULFA leader Anupchetia who illegally entered the Bangladesh territory with forged Bangladesh passport and possession of foreign currency. Through this action, Dhaka authorities claimed that they would not permit Indian separatist groups to operate from their territory. Despite all this, on January 2004, New Delhi handed over a list of 194 Indian separatist camps, located inside her territory to the Bangladesh government on January 6, 2004, in New Delhi during a joint meeting of BSF and the Bangladesh Rifles (Hussian, 2012: NP). New Delhi advised Government of Bangladesh to set up joint border security forces to stem infiltration of separatist groups from both sides of border. India alleges that ISI of Pakistan helped Bangladesh for promoting insurgency which included training, funding, and sheltering of militants by Pakistan elements with the base camps in Bangladesh. However, Bangladesh denied these charges (Shimary, 2005: 323).

Conclusion

It could be observed that like most other separatist groups, fighting against the Indian state, Nagas tried to internationalize their struggle against the Government of India. The Nagas leadership approached Pakistan, China, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. Pakistan and China provided moral and material support to Naga militants openly. Pakistan has its historical enmity with India over Kashmir and other issues as Pakistan blames that Indian agencies were involved in creating problems in Sindh and Baluchistan. India was allegedly held responsible for the disintegration of Pakistan in 1971. Further, disintegration of Pakistan and
nuclear explosion by India in 1974 led to disparities in conventional warfare between India and Pakistan and created an imbalance in South Asian region. Hence, due to such reasons, Pakistan government gave its moral and material support to the Nagas and other militant groups.

Apart from Pakistan, Nagas established their camps in Bangladesh and Burma and operate illegal activities from there against the Indian state. As far as, the involvement of China is concerned, due to its hostile relations with India, initially it supported the Naga militants by giving them shelter, training, and arms to fight against the Indian state. However, after the restoration of diplomatic relations between these countries in 1976, the official support of China to Nagas got decreased. Here, it can be argued that through external support, Nagas may have succeeded in internationalizing their movement to some extent but they have failed to realize anything from their hostile activities. The main achievement on their part is that they have forced the Indian state to talk on the table and that in neutral venues like Thailand and other South-East Asian countries.