CHAPTER - 5

ROLE AND EFFECTS OF INVOLVEMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES IN INTERNAL SECURITY MANAGEMENT IN NORTH EAST
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Spectrum of Conflict -

The spectrum of conflict constitutes insurgency at one end and nuclear war at the other. The conflicts can be of three types i.e. low intensity conflict which includes insurgency and proxy war, mid intensity conflict and high intensity conflict which encompasses total war, global war and nuclear war. The sub conventional operations constitute all kinds of armed conflicts which are above the level of co – existence amongst states and below the threshold of war. These include low intensity conflicts i.e. proxy war, insurgency, border skirmishes and terrorism.

It is imperative that for conflict management and conflict resolution, a multi pronged thrust by all elements of national power is required to address the root causes. The union government and the state governments have the constitutional responsibility for running the administration in accordance with the constitution. Although problems affecting public order are to be dealt with by the state police forces, the state may sometimes seek assistance from the centre, and the central para-military force/army may be deployed in aid of civil power. The reins of government must, of course, never be handed over to the armed forces. The civil face of governance must remain visible at all levels, even in situations of militancy and terrorism. The armed forces of the union can be used only in aid of civil power and not in super cession of it. Keeping in view repeated demands for the army to be sent in to provide assistance to affected states, there is sometimes delay in making assistance available due to the process of seeking authorisation from higher formations/the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Since such responses conflict with the provisions contained in Section 130 of Criminal Procedure Code (Cr. PC), therefore, what is required is proper enforcement of the existing law, to obviate the ground difficulties faced by the district administration. The MoD may reiterate instructions in this regard as not much of headway has been made, and the MHA may also address the state governments suitably.
Internal Security -

The ‘Group of Ministers’ report on national security has been dealt with the internal security in chapter IV. They had deliberated on the challenges faced as also the efficacy of the measures required for an effective strategy for the internal security management.

Salient Aspects of Recommendations of Group of Ministers on Internal Security -

Paragraph 4.62 - Whenever central para military forces (CPMF’s) are deployed in a state for an extended period, with or without the army being also involved, an apex body under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister (CM) should be set up to overview the functioning of the security forces. The CM should chair every meeting of the apex body and only in exceptional circumstances should it be chaired by his senior most cabinet minister. This body should include home minister, finance minister, and ministers in charge of various development departments, chief secretary, home secretary, director general of police, the senior most army and CPMF officers and others.

Paragraph 4.63 - In operations against insurgency, militancy and terrorism, arrangements for coordination of operational planning, deployment etc, should be evolved by the senior most officers representing the central armed forces, in close consultation with the state police chief and officers of other concerned agencies. Nevertheless, even while armed forces are deployed to deal with civil agitations and public disorders, the control should remain with the civil authorities/ judiciary.

Paragraph 4.64 - Whenever the functioning of two or more armed forces is involved, there should be no ambiguity, whatsoever, in the chain of operational command. Thus, where the army is involved, the senior most officers should have clear responsibility and authority for all operational planning and execution.

Stages for handling Internal Security Threats -

The stages for handling internal security threats and responsibility are as follows:-

a) Routine law and order- state police.

b) Heightened law and order- central para military forces (CPMF).
c) Insurgency and proxy war – Army and CPMF. The army may get deployed under Cr PC in (a) and (b) ibid.²

**Internal Security Management**

For internal security management in the region armed forces are deployed as follows;

a) Assam - Army, Assam Rifles and Central Police Organisations.
b) Arunachal Pradesh - Army and Assam Rifles.
c) Nagaland - Assam Rifles.
d) Manipur - Army and Assam Rifles.
e) Mizoram - Assam Rifles and Central Police Organisations.
f) Tripura - Assam Rifles and Central Police Organisations.
g) Meghalaya - Central Police Organisations.
h) Sikkim - Army.

**Role of the Army³**

The Role of the Army is as under;

a) **Primary Role** - The primary role is to safeguard the territorial integrity of the nation against external threats. The military capability is directed towards ensuring the defence of national territory, encompassing among others the inviolability of our land borders and island territories.

b) **Secondary Role** - When specifically tasked to do so, the army assists the civil administration during internal security disturbances and in the maintenance of law and order, in organizing relief operations during natural calamities and in the maintenance of essential services. The responsibility of the army in the secondary role in details is as follows:-

i. Serve as the ultimate instrument for maintaining the unity and the integrity of the nation in the face of internal unrest and disturbances by conducting effective internal security and counter insurgency operations.

ii. To eliminate the insurgent threat and create a favourable situation for the civil administration to be effective and for political dialogue.

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² Ibid.
³ www.defencenews.in/indian-army.html
process to commence. This will bring the insurgents back into the mainstream of national life.

iii. Actively contribute to national development and integration through civic action and interaction with the people of India to foster a sense of security, promote social and economic development particularly in remote areas and assist in building a sense of national pride.

iv. Provide aid to civil authorities when called upon to do so for maintenance of law and order, assistance during disasters and calamities and any other circumstance of need including maintenance of essential services.

Role of the Air Power -

Air power is a dynamic force with limitless options of employment. The use of the air power may hasten an end or degrade the security problems. The role of the air power is in a non combat role and combat role. The details are as follows;

a) Non Combat Role -

i. Air Surveillance and Photo Reconnaissance - This provides optical, electro-optical; infra red line scan image etc. These methods can see jungle trails, camps and infiltration sites, thus providing real time and better intelligence.

ii. Psychological Operations - This can be achieved by dropping of propaganda leaflets and letters. Even the mere flying of the friendly aircraft over own forces is highly reassuring to own troops and would conversely erode the morale of the target population.

iii. Air Insertion of Troops - For rapid induction of troops to save on time and achieve surprise, transport aircraft and helicopters can be used.

iv. Air Maintenance/ Logistic Support - Air maintenance can be used to replenish troop supplies enabling them to continue for longer duration in pursuits, search and cordon or ambushes.

v. Casualty Evacuation - This is of prime importance which should be on time, rapid and effective. This would be a tremendous morale
vi. **Escort to Ground Convoys** - Helicopters can be gainfully employed to provide cover to ground troops when moving in inhospitable terrain which affects their freedom of action. This would reduce the ambushes by the insurgents.

vii. **Air Observation, Command Post and Direction** - Aerial command post can be set up from where the operations can be controlled. Air observation and direction can solve the challenges of pursuit in dense or in mountainous terrain as prevalent in the north east.

b) **Combat Role**

Combat air power can be used in operations against insurgents over protracted periods and away from separate and populated areas. Precision weapons and radar directed attacks by night would cause an even greater degree of demoralization. The armed/attack helicopters can provide effective fire support against the insurgents.4

In the north east, the assets of the air power have been utilised mainly for transportation of troops and air maintenance / logistic support, except when employed for strafing the guerillas in February 1966 in Aizawl during ‘Operation Jericho’. The employment of the air power in counter insurgency in a combat role depends on the political will.

**Border Management**

The security of the border areas is not only confined to establishing a string of outposts and policing the border. It involves effective presence on borders by the security forces as a permanent posture, there is a time tested mechanism in place for early warning of the infiltrators and other war like situation and there is an appropriate response in place for dynamic situations which may occur and have an effect on the security of the country. To achieve the above, it is imperative that a seamless interface is established between the army, border guarding forces, intelligence agencies and the local government bodies. The entire process

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encompasses the emotional and integration of the border regions into the national mainstream.

The country faces the threat of insurgencies, separatist and fundamental movements cross border terrorism, large scale illegal immigration, smuggling of weapons and narcotics. As the country is sharing borders with many other countries, these borders have peculiar problems with each of them. Even if all the borders are not under the army’s control, there is a requirement of free flow of information so that there are no surprise actions by the adversaries. As regards the state, there is a requirement of synergy amongst all the agencies which are responsible for border management. The existing compartmentalized and disjointed approach needs to be overcome.

**Border Management in the North Eastern Region** - The border management in the north east is carried out by the following forces;

a) Border in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh with China is the responsibility of Indo-Tibetan border police (ITBP).

b) Indo – Bangladesh is managed by Border security force (BSF).

c) Indo – Myanmar is managed by Assam Rifles (AR).

d) Indo – Nepal and Indo – Bhutan borders are the responsibility of Sashatra Seema Bal (SSB).

**Basic Organisation and Conduct of Operations by the Insurgents in the North East**-

Most of the insurgent organisations have a political support and military wings. The political and support wings usually maintain a low profile and have neither uniform nor arms, thus become difficult to identify. This results in them getting away even after arrest as their guilt becomes difficult to prove in law, for lack of evidence and get released on bail in a short period. It is the military wing which carries out the activities and comprises of two kinds of people, the hard core and the draftees. The hard core people join the insurgent groups based on ideological or personal considerations and are extremely motivated and dedicated. An insurgent leader of the north east lives a lavish life, has monetary stakes in India and abroad, gains respect of the other anti –India agencies and also holds the interest of the government of India and the people they represent. The leadership
of the groups is dictatorial and the ethos is non-democratic.\(^5\)

**Methodology of Conduct of Operations** – Salient aspects of the methodology adopted by the insurgents are as under:

a) Insurgent camps are located in jungles and hilly terrain which is not very far away from the sympathetic village to facilitate sustenance. They have an excellent knowledge and use of terrain.

b) They never stay at a place for more than 5-6 hours.

c) Invariably the insurgents operate in small groups.

d) There is a frequent change in their sleeping places so as to make gaining of intelligence difficult for the security forces.

e) They show their presence in the villages occasionally.

f) During the period of acute pressure by the armed forces, the insurgents resort to shifting to inaccessible areas and have the ability to speedily merge with the surroundings.

g) They do visit their own families occasionally, especially on festivals.

h) The local cadres are utilized for early warning elements while resting / camping.

i) They frequently make use of the couriers for passing messages. They have primitive though efficacious communication methods. However, with the passage of time, things have changed and there is the latest state of the art facility with them.

j) Arms and ammunition is mostly hidden or buried in caches and this is known only to selected person designated as weapon custodians.

k) Automatic weapons are usually carried by commanders, trained personnel or bodyguards.

l) The insurgents extort money from the businessman and once extorted the money is invariably deposited with the businessman for safe custody.

m) Detailed record and documentation of their activities, accounts and organisation is kept in every camp area.\(^6\)

**Weaknesses of the Insurgents** –

Even though the insurgents have been involved in fighting for their cause

\(^5\) *Based on personal interviews.*

\(^6\) *Ibid.*
over a long period, they have certain weaknesses which need to be exploited by the armed forces. These are as follows;

a) The lower insurgent cadres have been found to be physically and mentally weak.

b) Some of the well trained cadres are lacking in boldness and aggressiveness.

c) Their resistance to sustained operations is poor.

d) Cadres are prone to sentimental and emotional behaviour thus, providing excellent target for operations by the security forces.

e) The attachment to their families is deep rooted and thus, the family can play an effective role in inducing surrender.

f) The insurgent camps are not fully self contained and thus, have to a large extent depend on the local support, which results in giving away their aim and locations to the neighbouring area and the security forces.

g) Tendency of the insurgents to visit their families and relations makes it easier for the security forces to trap and apprehend them.

h) The insurgents employ local cadres as early warning elements which results in more number of people knowing their whereabouts thus, jeopardizing their security.

i) Extortion and keeping their money with the businessmen helps in keeping surveillance on their activities.

j) Capture of the insurgent weapon custodians can lead to unearthing caches of arms and ammunition, thus causing a major blow to the groups.

k) Ethnic clashes between the groups in the region have taken the form of ethnic cleansing in many areas.\(^7\)

**Counter Insurgency Operations in the North East and the Role of the Armed Forces in Counter insurgency Operations** -

**Military Aim** - The military aim is to neutralise the insurgent threat and create a favourable situation for the civil administration to be effective.

**Military Role** - Based on the aim, the military role is as under:

a) Segregation of the insurgents from the local population.

b) Destruction of the insurgent groups.

\(^7\) *Ibid.*
c) Identify and neutralise organisations favourable to the insurgents.
d) Confidence building and winning the support of the locals.

**Concept of Operations by the Armed Forces**

- a) Create a dynamic counter insurgency grid.
- b) Need to have an effective intelligence network.
- c) Suppress insurgency.
- d) Target the leadership of the insurgent groups.
- e) Provide support to the ongoing/projected projects in the area of responsibility.
- f) Necessity of zero tolerance.

**Preparations Required** - Following preparations need to be ensured to achieve success by the armed forces;

- a) It is imperative that the troops are educated on the political background. This will give them an insight into the problem areas and to understand the situation.
- b) Essence of secularism and democracy needs to be understood by the troops.
- c) Genesis of the insurgency should be known to understand as to what they are fighting for.
- d) Righteousness of the cause is to be explained.
- e) Role of the external support to the insurgent groups in terms of camps, training, provision of arms and ammunition.
- f) Organisation of the insurgent groups and their tactics. This will form the basis of the pre training to the troops.
- g) Legal requirements are an important issue, thus needs to be understood for implementing in letter and spirit.
- h) Human rights are to be understood and ensured that no violations of the same takes place in any operation or otherwise.
- i) Learning the local language is the core to achieve success and “win the hearts and minds” of the populace.
- j) Need to carry out people friendly operations.
- k) Adopt human approach to the problem.
l) The troops should be trained so that they can discern the pattern of the local activity and, thereafter, institute measures to monitor the same.
m) Interaction with media as media plays a pivotal role in influencing perceptions.
n) There is a need to integrate the human, signal and electronic intelligence and an effective mechanism for intelligence sharing should be in place.

**During Conduct of Operations** –

Conduct of counter insurgency operations is a difficult and tedious phase as it encompasses correct steps to be taken so that nothing goes against the armed forces and they come out with a win-win situation. To ensure these, following aspects need to be ensured;

a) Exemplary conduct by commanders. They need to lead by an example.
b) The commanders at all levels should ensure the “use of minimum force”.
c) Due recognition and awards for task done well at all levels will keep the morale up of the security forces.
d) Constant drilling on the secular concepts should be an ongoing process.
e) There should be a change in the own pattern of activity and by doing so avoid predictability. It is desirable that a security grid of company operating bases is established so as to be effective at any point in the area within a time frame of three to four hours, which is the outer limit. In the north east, this is not the case at all places, thus becoming a limitation.
f) The tactical manoeuvres should be so conducted that they generate insecurity for the insurgents.
g) The sources play an important role, however they should never be blindly trusted even if they are the best source.
h) There is a necessity to ensure reliable communications with all agencies to ensure co-ordination.
i) Contingency planning for all the options should be carried out so that there are no surprises which may lead to failures or fatal casualties.
j) Unity of effort amongst all the security forces and the civil administration will achieve great success.

k) The troops should look for tell-tale signs and also learn to read the body language of the local populace.

l) Ensure that respect is given to the human rights aspects. It is the humility which will favour the armed forces in achieving success.

m) It is imperative to give due respect to old, women and children.

n) Adequate rest must be ensured.

o) Adequate leave be granted to all ranks as an essential aspect of man management.

p) It is imperative that all personnel adhere to the law and abide by the Ten Commandments of the Chief of the Army Staff and the Do’s and Don’ts as enunciated by the army.\(^8\) Strict disciplinary action is taken particularly with regard to cases of thefts, molestation and other offences against women.

**After Conduct of Operations** –

After the conduct of the operations it is imperative that the local population is apprised of the reason of the operations so that they are aware of the situation and the compulsion of the operation. This is usually done by the senior officers in the presence of the civil dignitaries and may also involve the media. This goes a long way in gaining support of the population. This also clears the role of the armed forces and they are thus not blamed for any violation of human rights or any other act.

It is only through mature and balanced training, handling and motivation that the troops will perform in the manner desired by the organisation and the nation. Right motivation will not only help them psychologically but also enable them to handle difficult situations carefully and intelligently.

**Counter Insurgency and Jungle Warfare (CIJW) School at Vairengte, Mizoram** –

In 1967, Lt. Gen. S.H.F.J. Manekshaw conceived the idea of a jungle warfare school after the Indian soldiers had suffered high casualties at the hands of

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the rebels of the north eastern region who were well trained in the hit and run guerrilla tactics. The army at that time was focused on conventional warfare and this kind of operations by the rebels was unique in its own way. In the same year under Lt. Col. Mathew Thomas an adhoc jungle training school was established at Mynkre near Shillong which shifted to its present location Vairengate and was redesignated as Counter Insurgency and Jungle Warfare (CIJW) on 01 May 1970. The motto of the school is to “fight the guerilla like a guerilla”. It imparts training to the troops to fight the insurgents engaged in low intensity and unconventional guerrilla warfare. The institution has expert instructors and imparts training in the followings:

a) The training is based on non-conventional aspects which give the soldier confidence in fighting in any situation and terrain in a counter insurgency environment.

b) The main emphasis of the training is on physical fitness, honing the reflexes of the soldiers while firing under different circumstances and lessons at the tactical level.

c) There are lectures, discussions, analysis of the case studies and outdoor exercises.

d) The outdoor exercises are akin to what is prevalent in the north east and the armed forces personnel undergo live situations and they have to carry out the guerilla tactics. During this period they learn to operate in small teams, analyse and study the tactics of the insurgents, ways and means to establish the intelligence network, methods to achieve surprise, laying of ambush and the most important aspect of fire discipline which can be a major concern during an operation.

The school has also been tasked to train the para military forces, police and foreign contingents. The school has gained a reputation in the world community. The involvement of the foreign contingents has been a great help as it gives an insight into their functioning.\(^9\)

\(^9\) dipr.mizoram.gov.in/article/the-cijw-school-in-mizoram/lang/en
Counter Insurgency Operations by the Armed Forces at Macro Level in the North East -

Some of the important operations conducted by the armed forces in the north eastern region are given in the succeeding paragraphs -

Operation Jericho -

The Mizo National Front (MNF) was being strengthened in its cadre strength, training in use of arms and explosives and support from East Pakistan in 1965 and 1966. Laldenga’s leadership was achieving good results and his security had been catered for by the special force which was a group of specialist guerillas. The MNF launched Operation Jericho on 28 February 1966. It was aimed at the township of Lunglei and Champai on the first night and thereafter Aizawl. Success was achieved at Lunglei and Champai, where Rs. 18 Lacs were looted and Assam Rifles post was captured and treasury looted respectively. The guerillas launched the attack on the Assam Rifles in the heart of Aizawl. They couldn’t achieve success; however, there were about 10,000 guerillas that had surrounded Aizawl. The air force had to be called and they strafed the guerillas, thus enabling the army to get into Aizawl and relieve the Assam Rifles post. The army retaliated with para drop over Lunglei, followed by action to clear Lunglei and Champai. Lunglei and Champai were recaptured on 14 and 17 March 1966 respectively. The MNF had resorted to near conventional operations, including an attack on security forces, and thereafter petered down to hit and run guerilla tactics.\textsuperscript{10}

It was one of the rare occasions when air effort had been employed in operations of this nature in close proximity of the civil population. It also sent a message that the nation would use the requisite force available at its disposal to uphold the unity of the country. It also conveyed to the people of the region that the armed forces were willing to take appropriate hard actions to teach them a lesson for their betrayal.

Operation Bajrang -

In November 1990, the Prime Minister Mr. Chandrashekhar reviewed the situation in the state and the state government of Assam resulting in imposition of the President’s rule. In addition the ULFA was banned under `Unlawful Activities

(Prevention) Act, 1967’. The Army launched Operation Bajrang. The aim of the operation was to raid the suspected ULFA camps, which were in thick jungles both in upper and lower Assam. The army was launched with short notice and lacked intelligence, more so actionable intelligence. There was no information in terms of location of the camps, any guides or informers to achieve speed and surprise. During the execution, it was realized that the camps had been emptied, as if prior information was given to the insurgents. Later, it was confirmed that the ULFA cadres had their tentacles in the government machinery. However, as the atrocities began on the increase by the ULFA, the people started becoming disillusioned and they started providing intelligence. Mass graves were found in the ULFA camps which started isolating the movement. During the operation the media played an important role. There were cases where wrong reporting was done against the army, accused of rape and murder, which was proved wrong later. However, punishments were given to those who had committed any such offence.

The local police had become demoralized to fight the militants and take war to their camps, as the people had supported ULFA in the initial stages of the operation and also that their cadres had successfully infiltrated into the police. However, the results achieved were a great support to the armed forces. It successfully dissuaded the youth joining the ULFA and hampered the communication and logistics network of the ULFA. ULFA was basically an urban movement but because of the success of the army, they shifted into the jungles. Surrenders took place in a big way, as most of the cadres were not used to the life which was difficult and ever worsening conditions prevailed. The elections in the state took place in June 1991 resulting in return of Hitesh Saikia as Chief Minister and congress party to power. The state government offered clemency to the militants who surrendered. Approximately 3500 cadres surrendered and this group was called SULFA or surrendered ULFA.11

**Operation Rhino** -

On night 14-15 September 1991, Operation Rhino I was launched in an attempt to regain the initiative. After the lessons from Operation Bajrang, the army had developed its contacts and was totally familiar with the counter insurgency

grid. The ULFA cadres were caught unawares, as they were moving with impunity. The operation broke the backbone of the ULFA with its top leaders captured along with hardcore cadres in the first few weeks. This brought about the principles of intelligence, mobility and communication. Psychological warfare played an important role, with the aim to bring the misguided youth into the mainstream. Civic action programme were effective. The people were educated about the false and hollow propaganda by the ULFA. Once again Saikia announced clemency in January 1992 to win over demoralized ULFA cadres. The SULFA were given a cash incentive of Rupees 50,000 each and a soft loan of Rs. 2, 00,000. However, some intelligent leaders/ cadres surrendered and opened own ventures. There was an increase in co-operation amongst the army, para military forces and police. Lack of communication was a major factor rather than any professional differences.

Operation Rhino II was launched in March 1992 and is in progress. The ULFA had full control in Assam up to late 1997. They could dictate their terms to the public and the administration. They had the guts of killing a brigadier in Guwahati in broad day light, a colonel near Narangi cantonment; a Major near the Khamakhia temple, a Subedar Major in front of headquarters 4 Corps and no one could dare to venture out through Malegaon area where north east railways headquarters is located. A word from ULFA was taken as serious threat and obeyed.

It was in 1998, that a well planned operation by the operations group under the explicit directions of the chief minister to hit out at the ULFA was conducted. The state police and the intelligence agencies were well co-ordinated. It was for the first time that on 7 April 1998, the ULFA raising day was not successful. Instead the day was converted as a peace day and there were marches by the students, lawyers, and other personalities. There were public meetings against terrorism and the Chief Minister also participated. In July 1998, the first ever surrender of Operation Rhino II was conducted under the aegis of the army in which only 51 ULFA middle rung leaders and cadres were present. This was a big blow to the ULFA resulting in the opening of the flood gates for further surrender and a rift between the head and the body of the ULFA organisation was made.
There were incidents which created dislike of the ULFA like Dhemaji killing of school children, rape incidents by the ULFA cadres and killing of young boys and girls. The psychological operations by the army and state were very effective which brought to light the actual face of the ULFA. In 1999, there were incidents when the villagers faced the ULFA cadres and killed them. Such incidents were well recognized.  

**Operation All Clear**

‘Operations All Clear’ by the Bhutanese army had broken the backbone of the ULFA and was thus contained. Paresh Barua had many times sent feelers to the government for talks so that his image can be maintained and the peace process can start but no heed was paid by centre. They were under the impression that ULFA was finished and this gave the ULFA time to reorganize and to get over the lost battle. A lot of credit goes to the AGP government and certain group of SULFA’s who took part in the operations from front in helping out the security forces in getting control of the situation. These operations have weakened the capabilities of ULFA.

The establishment of the “unified command structure” in January 1997 to enable better coordination of various civil, military, para-military and police force departments was a major step but was also an acknowledgement of the deteriorating situation. This further increased the pressure on the ULFA.

**Intelligence at the Armed Forces Level**

The SMAC provides duly evaluated intelligence to the intelligence staff of the formation headquarters of the army and the Assam Rifles. The intelligence is shared on fax, telephone and even as short message service (SMS). However, the company commanders are not able to get actionable intelligence primarily because of the delay in processing of the intelligence at the formation and at the battalion level, by which time it is no more actionable intelligence. It has also been observed that the military intelligence units are not carrying out an effective role, which has become restricted to providing feedback on army personnel and units and very less on insurgency. The representatives of the military intelligence are rarely visiting the units/companies in the forward areas. There is no intelligence...
sharing between the army and the police, even though the army has made sincere efforts for the same. The police are involved in sharing the intelligence with the state machinery as they are answerable to them.

Intelligence is gaining importance and is considered to be a principle of war which by no means should be neglected. It is imperative that officers who are posted at various headquarters to intelligence staff appointments in the insurgency affected areas are qualified so as to gather functional intelligence and also handle Human Intelligence. It is not everyone’s capability to inculcate, nurture and handle sources. The sources need to be protected. These skilled and well trained analysts are required to collate and synthesize the signal, electronic and human intelligence so as to build up a comprehensive picture for the counter insurgency operations.

**Psychological Operations in the North East**

Low intensity conflict in essence belongs to the realm of psychology and mental attitudes of all the people who are involved in it. Insurgents themselves are fanatics for a cause, while their strikes aim at creating mass fright in the minds of the population and intimidation of those who are to deal with them. It follows, therefore, that measures against insurgency should be deeply concerned with the psychological impact created by their movements. Psychological operations basically involve development of favourable emotions, attitudes or behaviour in neutral, friendly or hostile groups. Both the government and the insurgents use informational instruments, including psychological operations to mobilise people. These informational activities target not only the enemy or foreign groups, but also populations internal to the nation.

Counter insurgency is the battle of hearts and minds. Hence, to achieve the overall aim, concurrently with the military operations, the process has to be extended to other spheres namely political, economic, social and psychological fields. Insurgency can be defeated by environmental improvements, co-operation of the population, resources control and counter insurgency tactical operations. Psychological operations are directed towards the people who consist of the entire range of persons concerned with the movement, for or against, active and passive supporters including the militants and the security forces personnel. Consequently, these operations would require different approaches and thrusts as considered
suitable for each group. Basically the Psychological operations should be conducted to:-

**Mutual Confidence with the Population -**

The most essential to achieve success in eliminating the insurgency movement is to ensure mutual confidence with the population which can be achieved by:-

a) There is a need to provide the affected population with an honest and efficient administration.

b) The population should be involved in running their own administration and other affairs.

c) The futility of the demand of the insurgents should be explained to them, especially when it happens to be that of complete independence.

d) A fair amount of security must be provided to them so that they are not intimidated by the insurgents.

e) The culture, traditions and social customs of the affected population should be respected and honoured.

f) Measures to be taken to prevent exploitation of the affected population.

g) It is pertinent to highlight the achievements of the government and the security forces.

The environment envisages with a purpose to improve the economic, social, political and psychological aspects and national environment. Civic action and community development programmes are part of it. To successfully achieve this, the various operations that can be launched are as under:-

a) Information concerning the proposed plans for economic, social and political improvements should be disseminated.

b) Sincerity in carrying out civic action projects and community development programmes.

c) The local population should be highlighted the constructive and sincere efforts of the government.

d) Address the lawlessness of the insurgents and compare it with the disciplined and orderly behaviour of the armed forces.
Population and Resource Control Measures -

There is a need to support the population and resource control measures. To achieve this, operations are designed to complement and support the other counter insurgency programmes by providing a secure environment in which these can be administered. The control measures have an objective to sever the support, the population gives to the insurgents, neutralise the insurgent apparatus and activities in the community and to provide a secure physical and psychological environment for the population.

Operations at the tactical level -

Operations that are conducted by the armed forces at the tactical level are bound to cause hardship to the population thus alienating them from the armed forces. The armed forces must, therefore, take necessary remedial measures so that the local population are not alienated. The misguided youth are amongst the youth who have joined the ranks of insurgents and are not criminals. Many of them were forced due to one reason or the other and this should be understood. There have been instances where people had rivalries or local fights between the various insurgent groups. Thus, the approach to deal with various categories of insurgents has to be different. As part of psychological operations, following must be conveyed and highlighted:-

a) The policy of violence is futile and at the end of the day the insurgents will suffer.

b) The external support to the insurgents is with vested interests.

c) The success of the armed forces in controlling insurgency /militancy in various other parts of the country needs to be highlighted.

d) The programme of surrender/ rehabilitation as enunciated by the government of India should be circulated /advertised.

e) The benefits of returning to the national mainstream are being implemented.

f) The advantages which will accrue when they, as free individuals return to their wives and children.

g) The insurgent group leaders and activists should be discredited.

The themes to be selected for the conduct of psychological operations
should be simple and timely, must bear the truth, must conform to the policies of
the government, be credible and also be consistent.

**Dedicated Organisation –**

Realising the importance of psychological operations, there is now an
organized staff posted up to the corps headquarters of the army, headed by a
Colonel General Staff (information warfare). However, below that there is no
dedicated organization. This leads to adhocism in planning and conduct of
psychological operations. Various level staff officers are given the additional
responsibility for psychological operation. It can be appreciated that in a counter
insurgency environment the amount of work for staff officers is so much that it is
not possible to do justice to the additional responsibility of psychological
operation.

**Limitations of Psychological Operations –**

The regular organisation has also the advantage of dedicated resources
designed to assist in performing the task. There is a requirement for highly skilled
personnel for psychological operations. Limitations in this field are;

a) **Institutionalized Training** - In the army there are publications on the
subject and also form part of some course of instruction, but what is
lacking is an exclusive course on conduct of psychological operations to be
attended by as many personnel as possible. The understanding of planning
and conduct of psychological operation is inadequate among the armed
forces at all levels.

b) **Vision** - There is a lack of vision about psychological operation at the
operational level which may be a cumulative effect of lack of training from
the early stages and general neglect of this aspect at the national level. The
understanding of the psychological operation seems to be restricted to only
leaflets and press releases. In actuality, it is a much wider gambit
involving a large or rather all activities of human life. Thorough
understanding of this in totality is vital for effective planning and conduct.
For instance, it has been experienced that in counter insurgency operations,
the performance of a unit is judged by the number of weapons it recovers.
This has led to a tendency where the entire focus of a unit is on recovery of
caches and weapons no matter what means are adopted. This is a short sighted approach, because action to recover the cache may alienate the masses which, defeats the very aim of counter insurgency operations. Such finer aspects of psychology must be understood and has to be taken into account while planning of all operational and non operational matters in counter insurgency area. The issues like legislation for awarding sentence or giving amnesty, the terms of surrender, the rehabilitation policy, the action against armed forces personnel found guilty of human rights violations and all such issues contribute to psychological operations. The themes which need to be adopted must be visionary which can affect the population and the insurgents to bring about peace and end up in conflict resolution.

**Operation Sadhbavana -**

The aim of Operation Sadhbavana is to win the hearts and minds of the target population and to reduce the popular support for the terrorist organisations by people’s operations as an extension of the counter insurgency operations. This is carried out by the armed forces. In counter insurgency, population is the key. The prescription for dealing with them is respect the people, help the people, and defend the people in order to win their confidence and affection.

**Concept -**

a) Development programmes to be planned as per the requirement of the insurgency affected areas of the north east.

b) It is imperative that more stress is laid on development of far flung and neglected areas.

c) Interaction with people should be an ongoing process with the aim to restore faith in the armed forces. The village elders and prominent people of the localities/ villages should be told that the insurgents are in a no- win situation and the armed forces are too strong to be defeated.

d) The aim is to win hearts and minds of the local populace.

e) Operation Sadhbavana is a part of effective perception management.

**Fundamentals -**

a) Ensure maximum participation by the local people. This can be achieved
by reaching out to them by establishing liaison thus fulfilling their needs.
b) The projects planned to be in synchronisation with the development programmes of the state government. This will go a long way and make the people aware that there is co-ordination with the state government to develop the area, thus weaning them away from insurgency.
c) It is the general public which needs to be targeted and helped.
d) There is a need to have a long term roll on plan to ensure overall development.
e) It is imperative to show respect for local customs, traditions, culture and religion.
f) Address problems of the locals.
g) To ensure environment management, positive image of the army needs to be showcased.

Focus - The focus of winning the hearts and minds of the people to be on the following:

a) Need based projects to be planned and executed.
b) For the fulfilment of these projects the armed forces should reach out to all segments.
c) By helping the people in the projects, it should result in finally people helping themselves.
d) The projects should be such that there is low investment, but has a far sighted vision.
e) By doing the above, it will facilitate the successful conduct of the tactical operations by the armed forces.

Development Projects - Some of the development projects carried out by the armed forces in the region includes the following;

a) Construction / repair of the community centres.
b) Construction of foot bridges.
c) Installation of hand pumps.
d) Construction of bus stands.
e) Construction of public toilets.
f) Solar street lighting.
**Education Projects** -

Education plays an important role in eradicating poverty and unemployment. Though the literacy rate of the north eastern region is quite high but rural areas to include the hill areas do require support. This support is being well provided by the armed forces. Some of the projects are as follows;

a) Establishment of computer laboratories at the schools.
b) Provision of furniture at local schools.
c) Provision of books for library.
d) Construction of class rooms.
e) Opening of Co-operative societies.

**Women Empowerment Projects** -

Women are playing an important role in the eradication of some of the major problems to include drug trafficking, atrocities against the women and also helping to fight insurgency. To give them more empowerment in the society they are being imparted training and coaching in the following projects;

a) Establishment of weaving centres.
b) Coaching on cookery, pickle making and baking.
c) Classes on sewing, knitting and handloom crafting.
d) Training of nurses and midwife.

**Medical Camps** -

a) Medical camps at far flung areas.
b) Veterinary camps at local villages and towns.
c) Distribution of free medicine.

**Educational and Motivational Tours** -

a) Visit to famous universities for students.
b) Visit to agricultural universities for local farmers.
c) Visit to historical places for children to other parts of the country.

**Preparatory actions for the Military Civic Action Project (MCA)** -

Military civic action projects are a hallmark to ensure good relations with the population by rendering help to the needy and also wean away the insurgents. There are certain preparatory actions which are required to be carried out for the success of a project which include liaison with the civil administration and the
village authorities. The actions to be taken are as follows;

a) There is a need to give advance warning to all local villages and district authorities for the planned MCA project.
b) The civil administration has to give a no objection certificate for use of land for the project.
c) Certificate of availability of power supply/ water supply, if required for the project.
d) Certificate to take over and maintain the project after it has been completed.
e) No objection certificate from the village and district authorities for execution of projects duly verified by and affixed with round stamp of the deputy commissioner’s office.
f) Initial reconnaissance is carried out by the executing engineer regiment and sponsoring unit for suitability of sites for the project.

Rough financial estimates are made keeping in view the availability of local resources to execute the concerned project.

**Objectives of the Insurgents** -

The insurgents have been using the television, radio and the tabloid press with clear cut objectives and these are as under;

a) They have always conveyed the propaganda of their deeds and by doing so created the fear factor amongst the target groups.
b) Their thrust has been to mobilise the population so that they can become part of their cause and wherever possible, internationalise the cause, and thus achieve victory.
c) By taking appropriate actions they will frustrate the government and the security forces, thus disrupt the response by these agencies.
d) They need the support from the people of their constituency who comprise of the actual and opportune supporters. It is from them that they are looking for funds, recruitment and support for further attacks against the government and the security forces.

**Effect on the Insurgents** - The effect of the media on the insurgent is as given below;
a) The insurgents become an exaggerated sense of importance as news makers.
b) They gain by getting wide publicity about their violent acts.
c) The media supports the insurgent movements as even the threats and hoaxes get wide publicity.
d) The insurgents through the media get popularity not only in the domestic arena but also the international environment.
e) The movement struggle also garners recognition that their cause is a just cause; thereby the local population supports them.
f) The insurgents give the media their due importance and by doing so they start manipulating it either through threat or coercion.

Bearing on the Society - There is quite a strong bearing of the media on the society of the insurgency. The salient issues are as under;

a) The public opinion is an important facet in insurgency and the media builds it up by being selective and also while presenting the news, its analysis and finally the comments on it.
b) It is an important tool for the government and the policy makers to provide a feedback on the pulse of the people.
c) Supporting the movement of the insurgency whereby ensuring its growth. It brings out the limitation of the government which has a serious impact on the local populace. The locals then resort to support the cause of the insurgent movement.
d) If the media brings out the true face of the insurgents by bringing out their brutal acts of killing, extortion etc, the government will be in a better situation and the local population will retaliate resulting in alienation of the insurgents from their support base.

Role of Media in North East and its Effects on the Involvement of Armed Forces in Counter Insurgency Operations -

Media is an important tool for psychological operations. The print and electronic media in the country is owned by the government agencies as well as by the private owners. The media has come under tremendous pressure from the insurgents in the north east and has to work under heavy strain. The media
personnel are threatened and even killed. Thus, the insurgents have been able to influence the public opinion in their favour in the past using coercive means. Lack of control on print and electronic media has led to yellow journalism and biased coverage.

Media is an industry engaged in collecting and diffusion of information and news. There is always a rush for exclusive and latest news. The facts are the basis of competition in the industry. This leads to manipulation and the news is diluted. Sensationalism in reporting focuses undue attention to a personality or movement, in such a way that its image and impact is boosted many a times. This results in escalating of the situation, which otherwise, could have been better handled. The rush for instant reporting leads to certain practices such as establishing contacts with insurgents even during an incident or operation by the security forces. They, thus, become a part of the incident or operation whether they like it or not. The insurgents seek to achieve their goal of breaking the spirit of the opposition by creating dissension in the ranks of security forces, public, national and international media. They manipulate the media either through coercion or by terrorising in order to make them comply with their diktat.

There are both positive and negative effects of the media on the police and the armed forces. These are as follows;

a) The two important aspects for the armed forces are true reporting and free access to the media. This will facilitate to resolve any false accusations against the security forces especially violation of human rights.

b) The media is a great motivator of the morale of the armed forces when its good deeds are appreciated and those who have lost their lives are honoured.

c) It, however, has a negative effect when the coverage by the media is biased and negative. The media doesn’t realise that due to security of the operational plans, all information cannot be divulged. In some cases, the media indiscreetly reports the plans and movement of the security forces through different sources which finally hinder the plans of the armed forces.

d) The media reporters have in some cases hampered negotiations when there
is a hostage crisis.

There is a lack of exposure of the media personnel to military matters which causes difference in perceptions of the media personnel and the armed forces personnel. The media is unwilling to work in some of the insurgency infested areas for reasons of safety. It, therefore, becomes the responsibility of the armed forces to commit their own resources to ensure the safety of the media in case it wants to have a favourable coverage of its actions. The armed forces due to the restrictions imposed have inhibitions in interaction with the media. The primary reason for this is lack of training in dealing with the media during counter insurgency operations. It is imperative that there are qualified officers at various headquarters who should be confident and be accessible to the media at all times.

The troops and the officers in counter insurgency operations are extremely vulnerable to false accusations of human rights, committing atrocities and other offences. The insurgents take full advantage of the information boom and blow the actions of the armed forces out of proportion through the local, regional and international media. The armed forces should always monitor the media reports and they should be contested when necessary. In the north east, the vernacular media plays an important role as the local people are affected and involved in the insurgency, thus they are the ones who read local newspapers than the national ones. The vernacular press has, therefore, a greater influence on the rural areas and also the urban areas than any other form of available media. It continues to be intimidated by the insurgents. The armed forces must make the best of the cyber information through the websites to the public in which the true picture of the armed forces is given which will prevent the reporting of only one-sided information.

The armed forces by using the media to their advantage and revealing the truth will win the hearts and minds of the local population. It also helps in motivating and building the morale of the armed forces when their success in the operations is covered which will also recognise the sacrifices being made by them for the people. When the media is present during the operations, this very fact will help curb the human rights violations and also counter false charges of human rights violations. An impact on the society will take place when the media will
isolate the insurgents by truthfully reporting their ruthlessness and brutal acts. The armed forces have over the years learnt to be transparent and media-friendly.

The media has an important role in ensuring that the integrity and cohesion of the nation is not adversely affected. The media must therefore exercise self restraint so that it does not aid the divisive forces within the nation. Self restraint by the media is any day preferable to pre censorship and will only enhance media credibility.

**Armed Forces and Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005** –

In the modern times, it is impossible to render censorship or restriction on the flow of military information because of the technology, satellite communication and the electronic media. In addition, the freedom of the press and transparency in the government functioning are becoming increasingly relevant under the Right to Information Act, 2005.13 “Right to Information” means the right to information accessible under this act which is held by or under the control of any public authority and includes the right to-

a) Inspection of work, documents, records.

b) Taking notes extracts or certified copies of documents or records.

c) Taking certified samples of material.

d) Obtaining information in the form of diskettes, floppies, tapes, video cassettes or in any other electronic mode or through printouts where such information is stored in a computer or in any other device.

However, under the act there will be no obligation to give any citizen the following:

a) Information, disclosure of which would prejudicially affect the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security, strategic, scientific or economic interests of the state, relation with foreign state or lead to incitement of an offence;

b) Information which has been expressly forbidden to be published by any court of law or tribunal or the disclosure of which may constitute contempt of court;

c) Information, the disclosure of which would cause a breach of privilege of

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parliament or the state legislature;

d) Information including commercial confidence, trade secrets or intellectual property, the disclosure of which would harm the competitive position of a third party, unless the competent authority is satisfied that larger public interest warrants the disclosure of such information.

e) Information available to a person in his fiduciary relationship, unless the competent authority is satisfied that the larger public interest warrants the disclosure of such information.

f) Information received in confidence from foreign government.

g) Information, the disclosure of which would endanger the life or physical safety of any person or identify the source of information or assistance given in confidence for law enforcement or security purposes.

h) Information which would impede the process of investigation or apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

i) Cabinet papers including records of deliberations of the council of ministers, secretaries and other officers: provided that the decisions of council of ministers, the reasons thereof, and the material on the basis of which the decisions were taken shall be made public after the decision has been taken, and the matter is complete, or over: provided that those matters which come under the exemptions specified in this section shall not be disclosed.

j) Information which relates to personal information the disclosure of which has no relationship to any public activity or interest, or which would cause unwarranted invasion of the privacy of the individual unless the central public information officer or the state public information officer or the appellate authority, as the case may be, is satisfied that the larger public interest justifies the disclosure of such information: provided that the information which cannot be denied to the parliament or a state legislature.

The armed forces personnel should be factually correct when giving the report after an action and it should be timely. It has been seen that if there has been an untoward incident where the army personnel were involved, the media will rush to the incident site, collect the information from the locals, the victim and the local
police station. The RTI act is also available to the media and the population as long as security is not compromised. The media reporters may also try to gain details from the army but due to the procedure involved for permission to share the details with the media from the higher headquarters, the delay takes place and the information loses its value. This aspect needs to be looked into in the near future.

If there are any allegations against the armed forces then the same should be investigated with dispatch and urgency. The armed forces should take a strong stance against any adverse publicity by being bold, aggressive and pro active. There should be no hesitancy in sharing the details of the operations and achievements during the execution. If there is scope of giving additional information then the same should be provided, but not at the cost of any compromise on security. However, what is important is that there should be no half truths as it would ultimately affect the credibility of the armed forces and if the media gain knowledge of the same, they are likely to distance themselves from the armed forces. This sharing of the information can also be carried out by organising press briefings, press releases and press conferences.
Role and Effects of the Involvement of Assam Rifles (AR) and Rashtriya Rifles (RR)

Assam Rifles though under the Ministry of Home Affairs functions under the operational control of the army in the north east, while Rashtriya Rifles is under the Ministry of Defence, totally under the control of the army in Jammu and Kashmir. The Ministry of Home Affairs wants to bring the Assam Rifles under their control like the other central police organisations since quite some time. It is imperative to bring out the salient issues which will determine that both Assam Rifles and Rashtriya Rifles should be under the control of the army.

Rashtriya Rifles

In 1993, the Rashtriya Rifles (RR) was deployed by the Indian army to expand its role in the Kashmir Valley. It was a light, elite counter insurgency force comprising of 36 battalions formed specifically to compensate for the weak and untrustworthy local police and increasingly well-armed insurgents in Kashmir. However, by 1996, as militancy problems grew, regular army units joined the RR in the valley. The RR was sanctioned by the government to relieve the army, to the extent possible from counter insurgency duties. However, 18 years after its raising, this potent force has all but taken over most of the areas from the regular army. Though it is necessary to retain some army units to compliment the RR, the commitment of regular army units has come down in a major manner. In view of the challenges being faced by the Indian army in the internal security involvement, it is interested to reduce its overall strength and use the available revenue for force modernization. Salient features of the RR are:

a) RR is the dedicated counter insurgency component of the army in Jammu and Kashmir.

b) It is 100 percent manned by the army.

c) The training levels of any RR battalion are the same as any other infantry battalion tasked for counter insurgency tasks.

d) It is commanded by selected army officers.

e) It is manned by selected soldiers of younger age profile from all arms and services.

f) All personnel move on routine posting to the RR battalions.
g) Logistically the RR has a seamless interface with the army.

h) Since the composition of the RR is exclusively of personnel subject to the army act, it is a legal necessity to have operational and administrative (discipline) control of army over them.

i) RR personnel are not subject to local political pressures. This facet would be diluted once it is taken out of army’s control.

**Assam Rifles -**

a) Assam Rifles (AR) has a long history of tackling insurgencies and internal security situations in the north east.

b) It was raised as Cachar Levy in 1835 with a force of approximately 750 combatants for guarding tea gardens, re-designated as Assam Frontier Police, Assam Military Police, East Bengal and Assam Military Police and then as Assam Rifles.

c) The AR was responsible for the counter insurgency operations in the north east when the army was withdrawn for 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak war. Because of their continued deployment, it has developed close association with the local population.

d) Most of the towns in north east have developed around the cantonments of the AR.

e) The army provides 80 percent officers on deputation and the balance 20 percent are from the Assam Rifles cadre. The army ethos of leadership is imbibed due to which the Assam Rifles personnel have been able to achieve success in their own areas during counter insurgency operations.

f) It has the requisite ethos, equipment and training standards akin to the army to undertake offensive counter insurgency operations against well armed insurgents.

g) It also has a seamless logistic interface with the army.

h) Since army personnel with the AR are subject to army act, it is a legal necessity to have operational and administrative (disciplinary purposes) control of the army over them.

i) In insurgency affected areas border management is inextricably linked with counter insurgency operations.
j) There is a need for the security of strategic lines of communication which the army and AR are carrying out.

k) The Assam Rifles Junior commissioned officers/other ranks retire at the age of 60 and they do not get any pension on retirement. The age factor is a disadvantage to the organization as the soldier has to shoulder all tasks which require physical fitness.

l) If the Assam Rifles are placed under control of the MHA, it will become like the police and lose out on its capabilities of a strong counter insurgency force.14

Achievements of the Armed Forces in the Suppression of the Insurgent Factions in the North East -

In the region, there are enumerable factions, some of them are in cease fire/suspension of operations and the balance are at large with no control. Whichever mode these factions are in, they have resorted to extortion, getting arms and ammunition from the neighboring countries, increasing recruitment thus the increase in the numbers of the cadres. The armed forces and the central/ state governments have to synergize to suppress the insurgency in the region. The armed forces can suppress the insurgency as “The Way Ahead for the Armed Forces” by actions as enumerated below;

a) Policing - It is a state subject and it is their responsibility to improve the quality of policing. It has been observed that the states are not taking keen interest as they do not realise that there is a strong linkage between the policing and the internal security. There is a lack of synergy between the state and central government to upgrade the quality of the state police or to raise extra force with substantial financial support. This problem is more in the states where the state and central governments are run by different parties or alliances. This limitation puts an added burden on the armed forces. The telephone numbers of the police/armed forces cells should be displayed which will help the people to report cases of extortion, recruiting, intimidation with a caveat that the identity of the informer will not be divulged by them.

14 The information of the RR and AR is based on personal interviews.
b) **Intelligence Based Surgical Operations** - The armed forces should conduct surgical intelligence based operations but must ensure that there is no collateral damage, which is being ensured to the maximum. The intelligence organizations have to be restructured thus making them more accountable and responsive. The armed forces must exploit the village guards to gain intelligence. There is a need for latest technology for better acquisition, collation and dissemination of intelligence. There is a requirement of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and satellite coverage of the underground camps along the International Border and also in areas where the deployment of the armed forces is thin or non-existent.

c) **Targets in Counter Insurgency Operations** - The government and the armed forces should target extortionists, couriers and over ground workers who are providing support to the insurgents. The leaders of the groups are operating from outside the state and it is thus imperative that they are targeted. This will break the backbone and success will be achieved. The families of the insurgents should be reached out to put pressure so that they can help in inducing surrenders. To achieve this, there is a need to have a more dynamic grid with greater use of mobile and static patrols. In addition, the operations should be conducted in close co-operation with the police and other para military forces. This co-ordination can be extended with the police and civil administration of the neighboring states.

d) **Media** - It is imperative that the criminal nature of the terrorists is also highlighted to the public, which is not being done and it is the armed forces which are suffering at all times. The media cannot be allowed to play the tune of the warring groups, thus deft handling of the regional media is of greater importance. The armed forces therefore need reorientation in their attitude towards the media. The officers posted at various headquarters for media management should be well qualified and must have a flair for this assignment. There is also a requirement to reach out and obtain support, instead of merely reacting to adverse publicity.

e) **Peaceful Conditions** - The armed forces must consolidate the gains in terms of peaceful conditions.
f) **Civic action** - Civic action by the armed forces should not be considered as a side show, but as a force multiplier. Politico –military co-operation can play an important role in the development of projects in the region. The development concept of creating islands of well being, based on villagers being stakeholders releases a positive dynamic of its own which should be exploited. Women and children are usually supporters of community based development projects. Their help as catalysts should be sought. The army and the state authorities need to adopt a joint approach of the projects which can help in accelerating development with its spin offs, but assuage feelings of the masses to some extent also.

g) In the hill and far flung areas, it is the Army and the Assam Rifles which should take over the projects for development due to the virtue of being deployed there and the civil authorities not reaching there. In the hill areas, education and unemployment is a cause of worry and this is where the armed forces can play a major role. Security can be provided to the teachers so that they attend to their job in the schools and the people can be educated as to how their home made products can be sold in the market.

h) **Psychological Operations** - It is imperative that innovative psychological operations campaigns should be launched. Feedback from various sources should be taken and included in the psychological operations loop. Inputs from the target population must be sought to keep a finger on its pulse.

i) **AFSPA** - The armed forces have been inducted to carry out counter insurgency operations in the north east since 1957 by the government of India and the state governments. The AFSPA is imposed only after the disturbed area act is promulgated in whole or part of the state, which is reviewed every six months by the state. If such non-military operations have to be conducted by the armed forces, then it becomes the moral duty of the leadership of the nation to provide the legal protection to all personnel of the armed forces employed on such tasks. The Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) would not be treated as a draconian law if people understand the good being done by the armed forces and the criminal actions of the insurgents/terrorists is the reason behind the problems. Need to carry out sustained well-planned media
campaign to expose the nefarious designs and activities of the insurgents and also for perception management.

**j) Political Support** - Whenever the armed forces have launched operations and have regained control over the insurgent groups in a given area, the gains by them are frittered away by the state governments for reasons best known to them as in the case of Operation Rhino I. This is a case of non effective political governance and is not good for the morale of the armed forces. The armed forces will not be able to function in the insurgency prone states unless the states are willing to co-operate with them. If they do not co-operate, the armed forces will be losing out on gaining tactical intelligence, logistic support and may also have to face the resistance of the local population.

**k) Border Management** - There is a need for better border management.

There are existing gaps in the deployment. The Indo- Myanmar border is being used by the cadres for their movement and also transshipment of arms. Due to the inhospitable terrain, lack of communications and the free move regime along the border, the border management becomes more daunting. Following steps are recommended;

i. There is a requirement of co-operation with the army’s of Myanmar, Bangladesh and PLA in terms of intelligence and ensuring that no support is provided to the Indian insurgent groups in their territory. Wherever possible, joint operations should be conducted.

ii. The UAVs are a force multiplier for border management.

iii. The border roads organization need to upgrade the present communication system by constructing parallel/and axial roads to the border so that the Assam Rifles can operate in the forward posture. As an interim measure, till the communication system is fully developed some infrastructure to include company operating bases and the helipads can be constructed. The fencing on the Indo- Bangladesh border needs to be completed.

iv. The state government can also play an important role by enforcing requirement of permits which are issued for keeping a check on the free
move regime along the border. The valid permit system can help the armed forces in keeping a check on the entry of illegal arms and also undesirable elements from across the border.

v. Due to the lack of communication in the border areas on both sides of the International Border with Myanmar, it becomes imperative for the weapon transhipment parties to undertake forced halts in the villages close to the border. The armed forces have to work out a strategy to interdict these parties before they reach the road head which in most of the cases is about 30-40 kilometers inside the state boundaries. This should also be carried out before the parties can reach the designated camps which are close to the border. The armed forces need to dominate the villages along the border which can be used for arms smuggling and should be abreast with the various innovative methods being adopted for transshipment of weapons.

vi. The signal communications in the border areas is lacking, due to which the undergrounds are using the satellite communication. The armed forces, therefore, need to have a suitable communication monitoring system in place to get worthwhile intelligence information.

l) **Apolitical** - Since independence, the armed forces have remained apolitical, and this is the need of the hour at all levels.

m) **Violations of Ground Rules** - The ground rules need to be implemented by the cadres. However, wherever any violation of the same takes place, the armed forces must continue with relentless operations. The central government needs to review the ground rules with the factions and if there are any ambiguities, then the same should be resolved. This will help the armed forces/security forces in countering the rise and activities of the factions. In addition, the chairman of the CFMG/CFSB should be vested with certain punitive powers to include ordering arrest/confinement/eviction, levying of appropriate fine and in order to ensure transparency, he can be assisted by a legal officer detailed by the Ministry of Home Affairs/state government.

n) **Role of Armed Forces in Targeting of the Drug Industry** - The drug
industry is flourishing in a big way in the region and the factions are taking advantage of it by generating money. The armed forces along with the state police and the state narcotics bureau can in a joint effort eradicate this nuisance. Some of the measures which can be adopted are as under;

i. There is a requirement of greater vigilance / patrolling along the Indo-Myanmar border. The company operating bases (COBs) will have to be proposed and set up.

ii. The poppy cultivation is usually in the remote areas and the armed forces can help the police and narcotics bureau by giving them information and in turn also burn the same if requested by the state authorities.

iii. Can carry out discreet surveillance of the known drug peddlers in consonance with the state police.

o) Involvement of the Armed Forces in Talks - In the present situation, the armed forces are not participating in the talks between the government of India and the groups. However, they are responsible to take action against the factions and also ensure that the cease fire mechanism is in place. This is not an ideal situation which can result in certain ambiguities and doubts while functioning. It is imperative that the government considers this and makes them a party to it.

p) Perception Management - Over the years there has been a change in the ideology of the groups from where they started and what it is as of now. It has resulted in the fact that rather than the interests of the people, personal interests of the leaders at all levels are primary. For perception management, the armed forces cannot generate a mass people’s movement against the warring groups all by themselves, thus need the support of the state administration. These plans can be worked out at the corps headquarters level along with the state authorities and thereafter co-ordinated at various levels. The plans so formulated can be focused around the following;

i. In the insurgency affected states, the extortion money is being utilised by the leaders for their own profit making ventures in and outside the
country, thus the cause of the groups fighting is given scant regards.

ii. The cost of living and corruption has been on the increase due to the collection of the extortion money from small time businessmen, shopkeepers, transporters etc.

iii. The cadres are resorting to changing their support bases and also that there is indiscipline amongst them.

iv. There is an insecure environment prevalent in the states due to extortion, kidnapping etc which in turn is detrimental to the progress and development of the state.

v. The inter-factional clashes and inter-factional killings are leading to the loss of civilian and innocent lives.

vi. ‘Embedded Journalism’ needs to be pursued and this can be carried out by involving some famous columnists and journalists who can publish articles on some selected themes in the newspapers on a regular basis.

vii. It is imperative that there are regular seminars organized by the armed forces in co-ordination with the civil authorities at various levels which will be of great help in forming a public opinion against extortion, recruitment by the factions, and futility of the cause of the warring groups and support the positive aspects of the armed forces.

q) **Win over the Civilian Organisations.** The armed forces can influence the village councils to delay/resist and if possible refuse tax collection. To instill confidence, there is a need for strong and visible presence in the townships to include the market area by carrying out regular patrolling and interaction with the shopkeepers.

r) **Train Security Guards**- The armed forces can train the security guards who are hired by the corporate sectors to deal with interference by the insurgents.

s) **Border Roads Organisation**- The border roads organization should be used for construction as they have inherent security cabailities. Their capabilities need to be given publicity which inturn will deny the insurgents in obstructing their work.
Effects of the armed forces being employed for prolonged deployment -

The prolonged deployment of the armed forces in the internal security will always have a danger of the focus and priority being shifted from the conventional role to the ongoing daily issues of the internal security. This is based on the major concern of the political leadership and the bureaucracy. Some of the effects of the armed forces being employed for prolonged deployment are as under;

a) **Internal security** – It is a law and order subject under the jurisdiction of the state. The state has its own armed police and in addition the central armed police and paramilitary forces for tackling the situation. The army is called for internal security when the situation goes beyond the control of the state machinery. It is pertinent that the states don’t make it a habit of calling the army, as over dependence on it reflects lack of trust and faith in the capability of the state and central machinery. The police and the bureaucracy are passing the buck to the army which is not justified.

b) **Respect for the army** - In the case of prolonged employment of the army in counter insurgency operations, the local population will tend to lose the respect for the army which has a role of border management and fighting wars across the border. It will be treated as just another police force.

c) **Defence Budget** - The employment for a longer period for counter insurgency besides adversely affecting its preparation for its primary role also imposes an extra burden on the defence budget which in turn will affect the modernisation programme.

d) **Morale** - Internal security is not a war like role and therefore, causalities suffered in the peace time do affect the morale of the army personnel.

e) **First Line Equipment** - In counter insurgency operations, there is wear and tear caused to the first line weapons which are primarily small arms and light crew served weapons, radio and telecommunication equipment, vehicles and other ordnance items which have a life cycle.

f) **Tenure of the Battalions** - Due to the number of battalions required for serving in field areas and also for counter insurgency, some of the battalions have to serve in the counter insurgency areas soon after having completed their field areas tenures or vice versa, thus giving them no
respite and also not to be with their families. In some cases, the peace
tenure of the infantry battalions has become less than two years.

g) The prolonged employment will have an adverse affect on the discipline of
the army, morale and operational readiness.

h) Cordial Relations with the Local Population - It is important that the
army has cordial relations with the local population as during a war like
situation the support of them is a necessity. There should be no alienation
from the local population as prevalent in some states of the north east
region. It is pertinent that the armed forces continue to reach out to the
general public.

i) Corruption - During the counter insurgency deployment the junior officers
and troops are noticing the corruption prevalent in the states and it is likely
that they also can get involved in it as they have to interact with the local
population and the civil society.

j) Conflict Resolution - The army is a part of conflict resolution, but cannot
help as the politicians are the bosses for end results and decisions. The
politicians will not like to give the control to any organization even in the
far flung areas.

k) Exit Strategy - The government will employ the armed forces for counter
insurgency operations but will never give “Exit Strategy”.

l) Feelings of the People - The armed forces have been fighting the
asymmetrical war with the insurgents in the region, but the problem is that
the war has not remained confined to the military domain. For the people of
the north east, major cause of discontent are that these have transgressed
into the civilian domain whereby, they have erased the distinction between
the civilian and military powers. The people are feeling that an upper hand
has been gained by the armed forces and they thus, carry out violation of
civil rights. This is not a healthy sign as the armed forces require the local
support.

m) No clear cut victories- There are no clear cut victories in the counter
insurgency operations vis- a –vis the conventional war. In a conventional
war a soldier is treated as a savior, whereas in a counter insurgency
operations, he is regarded and treated as a villain by some percentage of the population. The local population sees the soldiers moving about with guns in their hands and they feel that this is the power with the armed forces and they get tempted to use it at will.

n) **Arrogance** - A feeling of arrogance does creep in the armed forces as a result of long tenures in the counter insurgency operations.

o) **Frustration** - There is a feeling of frustration as the soldiers have to conduct counter insurgency operations in populated areas which lead to hostile attitude of the people. This attitude in turn brings about making false or exaggerated allegations of atrocities omitted on innocent individuals. Such propaganda affects the masses, helps the insurgents and has an adverse affect on the armed forces. The population which is not on the scene of the action tends to believe such rumors. The end result is that the troops who are involved in the conduct of operations suffer humiliation and feel frustrated and demoralized.