CHAPTER - 7

CONCLUSION

The research involved study of the subject right from the geo strategic and geo economic environment of the north eastern region which comprises of the seven sisters and Sikkim bordering the neighbouring countries of Bangladesh, Bhutan China, Myanmar, and Nepal, to the causes of insurgency and the role of the Government of India and the armed forces to manage the same.

The situation in the north east has been complex since the colonial era because of the divide and rule policy of British. Besides, there has been a disparity between the hill areas and the plains in the north eastern region. The hill people of the region are oriented towards community living which implies that the first priority goes to the community and then the individual. Each community is like a well knit family in which the elders are given their due respect, help is rendered to each other when required and are willing to sacrifice. The people of the plains in the region have faced problems of immigration from the neighbourhood before independence and later to include after the 1971 liberation war of Bangladesh. There have been demographic changes and the states have become a victim of insurgency over the years and the insurgency in this region has been supported by external powers in the immediate neighbourhood.

The north east is a heterogeneous region with high level of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and has insurgency problems which are a reflection of its social, cultural, ethnic, political and economic milieu. This has been brought about in the pattern of conflicts, which vary in nature with regards to the causes and stances of the insurgent groups which remain divergent and ever changing. These conflicts in the states vary from secession to autonomy, movements against foreigners and immigrants and ethnic integration. It is pertinent to mention that the political evolution in the north east is influenced by the historical experience which is divergent and leads to tensions and instability in the socio-political arena resulting in agitations and violence. The ethnic mobilization has posed a threat to the adversaries resulting in a conflict situation. The immigration problem poses economic, cultural and social threats and provides
a cause for conflict and violence. There are situations which are undergoing changes internally in the politico-social environment and externally in the geo-strategic field. The insurgents have responded to these changes in the situations while the state response has been wanting. The insurgents have realized that there is a need to control the population and subversion in conjunction with acts of violence and terrorism are rewarding at minimum cost.

To an extent, there has been a control, though not end of the insurgencies, by the government of India in the north east. This has been carried out by a complex mix of force, political reconciliation, and economic incentives and by splitting up the insurgents. There have been fratricidal feuds within the insurgent movements in the region, be it in Nagaland or Assam, which have complicated the reconciliation process and in the bargain delayed the settlements, even though it offered the security forces and covert agencies an opportunity to weaken the movements by pitching one group against another. It is this constant split in the insurgent groups which partly explain the proliferation of such groups in the region. The end result of the proliferation and the intensity of the insurgents compelled the government of India to enforce AFSPA.

Though the insurgency in the north east is to an extent under control, however there is a need to totally eradicate it, for which more efforts by the political, bureaucratic and security forces is required. There is a weak political leadership which has not realised the complexities of the internal security management resulting in missing of the political will. There is a need for an enlightened leadership even if it involves getting the leaders from outside the region. The leadership needs to be made accountable and must lead by example. The government has different policies for different groups on some issues, thus leading to blockades and bandhs in the states as a result there is no signs of peace anywhere. There is a need for a clear and unambiguous government policy. There are turf battles among various organs of the government which becomes one of the main impediments in managing of internal security. The insurgents had in the initial stages wanted economic and cultural security but it has now changed into an industry.

The Ministry of Home Affairs is responsible for the management of
internal security. It is the army which is the primary force deployed for counter insurgency operations in the north east with the Assam Rifles under its operational control. There is, thus, a difference in perception and comprehension of the internal security situation between the Ministry of Home Affairs which gives the decisions and the army under the Ministry of Defence which takes actions against the insurgents and helps the people to win their hearts and minds. There is why there is a lack of politico- military synergy at the centre. Therefore, it is recommended that co-ordinated and result oriented unified command headquarters are established in all disturbed Border States. This will bring about integration with all agencies under the state government.

The central government has taken refuge for its inactivity or mishandling of the internal security threats on the pretext that the internal security is a state subject. By doing so, they have failed to realise that the internal security threats are a national threat and is not merely a state law and order problem. The needs and aspirations of the local population have to be met by the state machinery and administration set up. There is also a need for a change in the system where local officers are posted based on ethnic and parochial consideration. Instead, personnel of high calibre, integrity and dedication can be posted to the region. The traditional tribal administration structure can be integrated to the system which could be proved beneficial. The administration cadre has to be trained in financial management and monitoring, and also they should have grass root level knowledge of local attitudes and customs. The policy of an interlocutor /advisor who has a knowledge of the area and background knowledge of the problems to assist the government of India will go a long way in giving an integrated approach to administration in the region. To achieve the requisite results, the citizens’ initiative is very important. There is a need for change in the civil society and end of the middle class apathy.

It has been observed that the ethnic rebels have consistently asked for more than they knew could be granted and have always been prepared to scale down their demands and reach an agreement under the constitution of India. The state’s major concern has been to preserve its territorial integrity at any cost and by doing so be prepared to reach a bargain on every possible kind of power sharing
arrangement within the constitution of India. The insurgent groups have realised that secessionist rhetoric is the surest way to attract the government of India.

It is pertinent to mention that there are only 24 members of parliament from the north eastern region in a house of 543. The numbers of seats are so few that nobody cares much for them and it cannot tilt the balance in any manner. This is one of the reasons that the region is not given its due importance at the national level. The north east needs to be treated as a national problem and the political parties should not be involving themselves in political skulduggery for promoting their own party interests. The region has a great strategic importance for the country and, thus, the need to do everything possible to ensure peace, progress and the population has to become contended with confidence in the nation that their interests will be protected and promoted.

**Socio – Economic Development -**

The main source of material and financial resources as also the government money is in the urban area, thus the support base of the insurgent groups has shifted from the rural area to the urban area. That’s why these insurgents groups have based their covert operations in the population centre. Their aim is to exploit the ethnic bonds so as to influence the politicians, bureaucrats and the elite in all fields. This deprivation in the north east is of various types primarily in the socio-economic fields with political articulation. The NSCN (IM) in spite of cease fire mode still articulates the political stance of independence, the Meitei’s in Manipur feel deprived in comparison to the hill tribes primarily due to the reservations for the tribals in both economic and employment fields, the Assamese feel deprived when compared to the rest of India, in Tripura it is a result of alienation of tribal land due to Bengali influx resulting in economic and social deprivation, the Bodos as compared to the Assamese primarily in the economic fields and Mizoram feels constrained due to its geographical location and the experience of famine in 1959.

Due to the wrong orientation and tardy implementation, the economic development has failed to achieve the desired results in the region. Due to the non investment by the big business industrial houses, the infrastructural development and industrial growth have taken a back seat. This has affected the employment opportunities for the local population, which otherwise should be a major thrust of
employment generation. The development of the economy needs to be addressed at both the macro and the micro levels. At the macro level, there is a requirement to look at the core sectors of communication, power, human resources and education while at the micro level the thrust should be on development of small scale industries, processing industries in agro, horticulture and fishery.

The backdrop to many of the conflicts in the north east is ‘illegal migration’ from the rest of the sub-continent and the resultant fear of becoming minority by many of the region’s indigenous ethnic groups. Thus, demographic changes and religious fundamentalism have also contributed to the disturbed conditions on the border areas in the north east. Land is another important factor in the on-going conflicts. It is the struggle for land as territory that each emerging ethnic nation claims to own as a right. Many of the rebel groups are demanding homelands and adopt armed militancy to achieve them. It has become a trend for each ethnic community in the north east to claim nationhood.

In spite of the fact that the government and the state have ministries and councils earmarked for the north eastern region, the policy makers have not comprehended the fact that development in the region can also be a factor of security. This issue can be gauged by the fact that no correct mechanism for development has been instituted that could have assuaged the sentiments of the people. The infusion of large sums of development funds without accountability still continues to be a cornerstone of government policy despite clear evidence that this money has not been able to eliminate the root causes of deprivation and alienation. The development projects of the railways and roads corridor and connection to the ports needs an urgent impetus and the theory has to be translated into practical results.

In the north east states, the expenses of the insurgents are met by levying taxes, extortion, robbing banks and through narco – financing. Therefore, a vested interest in maintaining the status quo has developed. The insurgents are working within the governmental system and subverting it. Insurgency has become a business in the region, with much rivalry between insurgent groups in the extraction of the spoils of corruption and smuggling rather than on ideological grounds. The collateral economic damage beneficiaries are the political leaders.
and top echelons amongst insurgent leaders, who are residing outside the country in comfort and are involved in directing the freedom struggle from there. Thus, at the end of the day it is a win - win situation for the insurgents who are not only fleecing the local people of their rights by ensuring that the development work is stalled and they in the bargain make money, but also go against the government for not carrying out development in the region. The insurgents forcefully demand donations from the common people in both urban and rural areas and also from offices of the government. These result in becoming a hurdle to the development work.

In the state of Nagaland, there has been a complaint lodged by the Action Committee against Unabated Taxation to the state government which has resulted in a tirade against the government by the civil society groups, business associations, youth and student organizations. They are doing so against the back-breaking multiple-point “tax” collection by the so called parallel government which is run by the Naga insurgent groups. The state administration in its reaction has directed to crackdown against those who are involved in collection of the illegal taxes from the business community and also the common man. Such actions by the state administration will be more than welcome provided the same are carried out sincerely.

It should be incumbent for the states to be made accountable for their expenditure of the central government funds. There is a need to initiate checks and balances and scrutiny and monitoring of the project costs and progress. Wherever possible, the funds should be allotted directly to the concerned department/district council and finally there has to be an audit of the funds/accounts. The states must generate revenue and ensure that some percentage of the expenditure on every project be funded by them. The state government must take all possible actions to control resources, check flow of funds and in turn starve the insurgent groups of finances.

**Lacunae of the Peace Process**

Ethnic identity has been the core ideology of most of the insurgent groups

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1 *The Tribune*, Chandigarh, 01 June 2013.
which is different in each case. The leaders of the groups have played an important role as they want to fulfill their ambitions and personal interest and by doing so it has resulted in mushrooming of splinter groups in the North east region. There have been cases of enmity between the groups which has resulted in realigning with other insurgent groups, with support from external forces. There have been clashes between the groups over the control in drugs, arms and ammunition trafficking. This has made the insurgency a socio-political issue. The peace process with various groups has become complicated due to criminalization of insurgency, clandestine links of the leaders of the groups with various political parties in power or otherwise, some government officials and their pressure on allotment of contract work in their areas.

**Measures taken by Government to tackle insurgency**

The porous border with Myanmar helps in the flourishing narcotics trade which in turn gives funds to the rebel armies for their violent military campaigns. In the region, the trade of narcotics and insurgency are interrelated, resulting in procurement of arms. The region has also become the launching pad for drug trafficking into the rest of the country.

The Government of India has taken up a strong step to improve its relations with Myanmar by fulfilling its road and communication commitments and now is involved in achieving the transiting facilities from the Bay of Bengal to the region through Myanmar. All these transport links will give China a competitive market in Myanmar, which as of now is flooded with the Chinese goods. The improved economic relationship which needs a skilled diplomatic persuasion will result in free market economy which is a welcome step to the Indian traders. This will also improve the security scenario between the two nations.

In the Kachin division of upper North West Myanmar, there are controlled areas of the Kachin Independent Army which are closer to Kumning and Yunnan (Tibet now China). This area has camps of the Indian insurgent groups which are operating in the north east and is also the hub of the movement of the arms and narcotics for the insurgents. In addition, because of the ethnic similarity astride the borders of Myanmar and Nagaland, Manipur and the districts of Longding, Tirap and Changlang of Arunachal Pradesh, it becomes difficult for the armed forces to
conduct successful operations. This is the ideal situation for the insurgents to ensure that the insurgency pot boiling remains an ongoing phenomenon.

The Indian government has also proposed the reopening of the Ledo or Stillwell road which starts from Ledo in Assam - Lekhapani – Jairampur - Nampong- Pang sau Pass (Indo - Myanmar Border) - Patkai ranges - Shindbwiyang - Myitkyima - Bhamo- Kunming in the Yunnan province of China, a total distance of 1726 kilometers. It will be a great boon for the people as it will increase the trade and tourism because of its importance since World War II, thus affecting the socio-economic development of the region. However, this can become a cause of worry to India due to security aspects from the Chinese and also that the market will get flooded with their cheap goods.

The Prime Minister of India visited Myanmar after a quarter of a century for three days in May 2012 and this itself was a milestone. The President of Myanmar Thein Sein and the Prime Minister realizing the necessity of peace and stability in the region to achieve results in the development and well being of the people from both the countries, signed an agreement in the border areas for development, transportation, connectivity, agriculture, trade and investment, promotion of friendly exchanges and human resource development. They both agreed to the commitment of fighting the insurgent activities in all forms and manifestations. They also assured each other that the territories of the two countries will not be allowed to be used by the insurgent groups for training, sanctuary and other operations and where the need be flushing out operations will be executed. This will go a long way in ensuring that there is no external support to the Indian insurgent groups, which will help in eradicating the insurgency in the border states of the north east. Even though the relations with Bangladesh have improved with the present government in power, one of the strategic solutions to the north eastern region is to gain transit facility through Bangladesh. This will facilitate use of the ports of Bangladesh just the way it was before pre-independence. With this, Bangladesh will also be able to extend their trade with the region. India as of now is the only potential customer to the gas exports of Bangladesh, which will generate the much needed revenues for them. The developments taking place in that country will also have a close bearing on India’s
long term security deposits.

Bangladesh has a huge bearing on the security environment and development challenges in the north east India. The support being given to the Indian insurgent groups by virtue of camps, passage and arms and ammunition needs to be stopped and if need be operations be carried out by the Bangladesh security forces as conducted by the Bhutanese army in 2003 against the insurgents. However, it is important to understand that Mrs Sheikh Hassina has to be very cautious in her approach in security related matters. She and her party Awami League has been facing challenges from the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) of Begum Khalida Zia and the Jamaat-e- Islami (JEI). There are anti– India mindsets in certain sections of the population and she has to be very careful of them. These sections are nurtured by Pakistan over the years and by some other Islamic fundamentalists’ organisations which are operating from other countries directly or indirectly through Pakistan. It becomes imperative of the Indian polity to win over these anti - India elements to have better security related co- operation.

China is pushing her efforts to emerge as a major player in the world order by consolidating her comprehensive national power (CNP). Modernization of the armed forces is an important priority and is looking at not only the Tibetan border, but also the Indian Ocean region. China has designed its strategic policy for the control of the Indian Ocean region which is prominent with the footprints up to Seychelles.

As regards Tibet, it abuts the Indian sub continent, and it becomes an advantage to India geo politically, if China has less control over Tibet. China has had a clear laid down policy on Tibet since 1959. It has changed the old social fabric of Tibet, improved the infrastructure to the level as it exists in their mainland. The Chinese want Arunachal Pradesh to realize and get influenced by these improvements, but India is lucky that it has not trickled down to the population of Arunachal Pradesh as they strongly believe in the Indian nationalism and that ours is a democratic government. However, if the government of India does not improve the economy and infrastructure of Arunachal Pradesh and other North east States, it is likely that changes for the worst can take place. An important issue about the Chinese claims to Arunachal Pradesh is that it does not
only want that the attention from the mainland Tibet issue be sidelined, but show her keen interest to reach the warm waters of the Indian Ocean through as many land routes as possible. The routes which she has made are ports at various places in Myanmar, Pakistan, Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles and transportation infrastructure into Pakistan, Tibet and Myanmar. Apart from this, China is applying water politics on India and, therefore, our response needs to be assertive. India, China and Myanmar face a common threat from Islamic fundamentalists in one way or the other. If the trio use their cultural ties and trade potentials to positivity, the threat of Islamic fundamentalists and North East/Myanmar’s insurgents can be neutralized.

India and Nepal have been sharing a unique relationship of friendship and cooperation characterized by open borders as also deep rooted people to people contacts in terms of kinship and culture. The Indo-Nepal Treaty of Friendship and Peace of 1950 has been the basis of the special relations that have existed over the years. The Nepali citizens have enjoyed the facilities and opportunities in India as any other Indian citizen, which has facilitated it to overcome the limitations of being a land locked country. India has been involved in various development projects and has given grants for the same.

However, over the years the situation has changed, resulting in the change in the attitude of Nepal, more so after the constituent assembly (CA) elections held in 2008. The problems faced in Nepal resulting in instability are that even though the insurgency was eradicated, the integration and rehabilitation of the Maoist combatants is still to be carried out and the drafting of the constitution is not complete. The National Democratic Campaign, an alliance of 22 political parties including the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML have joined hands against Bhattarai’s Maoist led Government for dissolving the Constituent Assembly and announcing elections in November 2012 for another constituent assembly.2

India has also played a major role in the provisioning and training of the Nepali army. There are Nepali soldiers in the Indian army and they are given pensions after they have retired and gone back to Nepal by the government of India. The open borders between the two countries are a concern to the mutual

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security and cordial relations. Nepal has always assured India that it will not allow its territory to be used by any groups against India. In order to ensure the above, there are stringent bilateral mechanisms which are in place.

It is high time that the political parties in Nepal limit the use of the China card. There is a need for political realism and stability which will ensure that its relations are at par with both India and China. Nepal has to understand that it cannot move towards China, overlooking the security concerns of India. The peace process must be given due priority over the power politics which actually are a short term gain. The civil society has to play an important role to monitor the political leaders and by doing so, make them accountable. The economic co-operation with India and China is of great value and this needs to be pursued. It needs to be ensured that the Maoists of Nepal and the Maoist –Naxal do not share a relationship which can become a serious threat.

Bhutan is India’s most peaceful and stable democratic neighbor. It has provided support in the fight against insurgency by not allowing its territory to be used by the Indian insurgent groups. It had launched `Operation All Clear’ in 2003 to evict the groups. The Bhutanese refugees of Nepali origin issue is a delicate security situation and needs to be handled well by the governments of Nepal, Bhutan and the international community which has taken the responsibility of settling the refugees from the refugee camps in eastern Nepal to the third world countries. This will ensure that the relations between India and Bhutan remain cordial as India will not be blamed for not supporting the cause.

The neighbourhood has always seen India as a big power with hegemonistic tendency of which they are afraid. The country needs to make the neighbourhood realize that it is a highly attractive market, the advantage of which can be exploited by them and the trade related matters can result in a stable environment. The bilateral co-operation between the countries in economy and security will benefit in all respects. The underground economy has to be stifled through the entire spectrum of actions starting with international co-operation. In addition, there is a need to initiate measures to choke the underground narco-arms economy by measures such as raising costs of their operations and co-operation with dealing international organizations.
India’s Look East Policy –

The look east policy as of now using the north east region is only on papers as India’s policies are either Kashmir or Pakistan eccentric. This has resulted in China increasing her influence and encircling India. China is supporting Myanmar and Bangladesh which are economically weak and in turn support is provided by them to the insurgency prevalent in the North east states of India.

The essential philosophy of the look east policy is that India must find its destiny by linking itself more and more with its Asian partners and the rest of the world, and that India’s future and economic interests are best served by greater integration with East and Southeast Asia. Thence, look east policy is an attempt to forge closer and deeper economic integration with its eastern neighbors as a part of the new real politik in evidence in India’s foreign policy, and the engagement with Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a part of the recognition on the part of India’s elite of the strategic and economic importance of the region to the country’s national interests. Northeast region should not be envisaged as the periphery of India, but as the centre of a thriving and integrated economic space linking two dynamic regions with a network of highways, railways, pipelines, transmission lines crisscrossing the region. Thus, there is an effort to open the region that involved opening doors and windows in intellectual, cultural, political matters as well as in the economic arena. Economic development of North east is therefore, an important requirement.

Role of the Central Police Forces and the State Police -

The paramilitary forces should have the primary task to complement the army, while the central police organizations complement the police. The peculiarity of the para military personnel is that they have a delicate mission to perform, considering that they are almost always outsiders rushed to the scene of a local disturbance. The local population considers this force as an impartial arbiter being outsider, but it has its own drawbacks. The fact that state and local authorities have petitioned the centre to provide police assistance is an admission that the local police have failed in their responsibility of maintaining the peace. This acceptance of failure breeds among local policemen a sense of resentment and once set in motion it can complicate the efforts to restore peace. Police
officials often withhold aspects of cooperation from paramilitary officers who, in turn, reciprocate by showing disdain for the professional capabilities of their police counterparts. Lacking the intelligence-gathering networks, sympathetic contacts with the population, goodwill of the police, and often, a knowledge of the local language, the paramilitary forces have to carry out their peace-keeping mission with little local back-up.

The Central Police Organisations (CPOs) operational culture is different. They have an existing ethos for guard/check post, escort and protection duties, in a defensive mode and also in counter insurgency operations. Their employment is mainly manpower oriented in company or detachments and not much as a force in being. The present training of CPOs needs cultural change to cater from lathi charge to high intensity counter-insurgency (CI) operations.

There is bound to be turf battles when a plethora of forces are employed in counter insurgency operations. This will inevitably result in lack of cohesiveness and dissonance in the execution of the policy. It, thus, becomes imperative that the capability of the state and para military forces which are under the state and the centre are upgraded to enable them to tackle the internal security problems. There is, thus, a need that these organisations develop an ethos like the army and must raise their standards to match the army’s levels of proven junior leadership, motivation and training. The gradual transformation of the CPMFs can be done by the army provided these forces can overcome traditional inter-service mindsets and learn to work together in the national interest. The various options which the army has to provide training to police personnel are selected instructors at its training institutions like the Infantry school at Mhow, its junior leader wing that conducts the commando course, the counter - insurgency and jungle warfare school at Vairengte and at its corps battle schools in the north eastern states. The army can also provide instructors for short duration teaching assignments at the various police training schools and academies.

The CRPF has over the years gained experience in counter insurgency operations working with the armed forces and independently .In fact their confidence and achieving good results have made them responsible for some of the districts in Assam and they are referred as CPOs districts.
State Police –

The future of the police force becoming an effective force to wage a war against insurgency should be that they are capable of quick response from various nodal centers with high level intelligence, which includes identification, dissemination, tracking and elimination of insurgents before they can carry out attacks at important places. Most of the states of the region have borders with neighbouring countries, thus the need for revamping the local police beat system. This can be achieved by having a wide human intelligence network, a viable communication system, modern weaponry, adequate manpower and close relations with the public. There is thus the need to improve the footprint of police and civil administration in the far flung areas. In the insurgency ridden states of the region, the police needs to gain confidence of the various ethnic, sub-ethnics, communities and religious groups and leaders for excellence in public policing. The general public plays an important role to help the police force perform their duties with their co-operation, willingness and assistance. This will have another great advantage and that is, obviate the raising of additional para military forces.

Psychological Operations -

Psychological operations form the basic structure of counter insurgency operations and this aspect needs to be given its due importance to achieve success in combating low intensity conflicts. It is different from intelligence operations.

There is almost complete lack of coordination among civil administration and military authorities. It is a fact that the maximum resources for psychological operation are under civilian control whereas the agencies in close contact to masses are the armed forces. Under this situation for any psychological operation to be successful, extremely close coordination between civil and military is a pre-requisite, which unfortunately is lacking. This deficiency is very prominent in the North east region where, development is one of the major issues. It must be understood that no kind of psychological operation will succeed if not backed by action on ground. In North East, army and the Assam Rifles being the agency with maximum reach into the area, feels constrained by civil counterparts not cooperating in the civic action schemes particularly involving development programs. This highlights the shortcomings of higher direction and need to vest
adequate authority at appropriate levels to control and coordinate psychological operation.

In recent times, it has been seen that psychological operations have by and large been reactive in nature. There is no long term goal for psychological operation otherwise a much timely and meaningful action to counter the threat would have been initiated.

**Intelligence sharing for successful CI Operations**

For achieving success in the counter insurgency operations, intelligence-gathering is the corner stone and the foot soldier cannot work in isolation. The soldier must be able to gather intelligence from the people and also the representatives and quasi-representatives of the state such as the sarpanch, the lambardar, the village accountant etc. In majority of the cases, intelligence is provided by the people who would wish to remain faceless and nameless.

It, thus, becomes imperative for the state governments to adopt “community policing” whereby establishing a toll-free service under which a citizen can provide information or lodge a complaint. The end result of this would be to bridge the gap of mistrust that exists between the police and community and also go a long way in collecting actionable intelligence. This actionable intelligence comes about when the myriad bits of information flowing from different sources are sifted, analysed, matched, correlated and pieced together. This needs to be done as the first stage at the police station thus the need for at least one police officer in each police station exclusively for intelligence gathering. The special branch is the key to better intelligence and more intelligence-based operations at the district and state levels. For this intelligence gathering when it flows up the channels to the district special branch and state special branch, there will be a requirement of adequately number of well-trained analysts to analyse the intelligence and to draw the correct conclusions. Thus, there is a need to restructure the state special branch into a specialised and self-sufficient cadre of the state police in terms of personnel, funds and equipment.

There is a need to create suitable interface for the passage of human intelligence in a real time frame. It is a confirmed fact that in a counter insurgency scenario, the advantage will invariably be in the favour of the insurgents, who can
pick and choose their targets and thereafter melt away into the countryside. They have instituted their checks and balances through the over ground workers in such a manner that it becomes virtually impossible for anyone to visit or speak to the security forces either directly or on the telephone. It is a difficult proposition to gain intelligence regarding any political activities, which thus necessitate first class operational procedures to help negate any advantage the hostilities may have. It is thus imperative that the battalions of the army and the Assam Rifles have an excellent rapport with the local population. The battalions have their own effective networks. The political leadership must allow the intelligence agencies to perform their primary tasks unhindered and also give positive directions to implement the counter insurgency measures. In the states where there is no unified command, intelligence sharing is non-existent.

Media -

It is quite amazing that in the entire north east, except for Guwahati, there is no other state capital which has a satellite news channel. There are approximately 60 million people in the region and for their local news and entertaining programmes, there are more than 50 cable news channels. Since the 1980’s there has been a steady growth in the daily newspapers, but they are now having a negative impact. This is because the population feels that the editorial and other articles are shallow and sometimes even anti social. The increase in number of the newspapers has an effect, thus losing its credibility. In Assam the local media has become pre - mediated and in addition politically motivated.

Due to the stiff competition with the television, the daily newspapers have become glossy. Crisis of credibility is a serious issue which is affecting the media. The insurgent groups due to their pressure tactics have been successful in getting pro insurgent activities published, thus demeaning the security forces. The media needs to improve its authenticity, reliability and credibility before the situation arises that the population consider it as a source of cheap entertainment and inciting.

Employment of Armed Forces in Counter Insurgency Operations -

The armed forces conduct operations to tackle insurgency which are above the level of co-existence but are below that of a conventional war. These sub
conventional operations are complex operations with multiple dynamics and there are a number of agencies which are involved. This results in each operation requiring a different approach, strategy and technique to handle it. Such sub conventional threats from the western and eastern borders is a reality and the armed forces have to be prepared for the same.

The Army which has the internal security as the secondary role, if employed in it for a protracted and excessive period, can lead to ‘Law of Diminishing Returns’ which will have serious effects in carrying out its primary role. It has been trained, equipped, organized and motivated to meet conventional and external threats. While doing so, the philosophy which governs the actions is ‘to use maximum combat power in the destruction and suppression of the enemy’s capability and his will to offer any resistance’. However, when the armed forces are employed for internal security, the philosophy becomes ‘use of minimum force’.

In the north east, the armed forces have been deployed for counter insurgency operations since 1950’s against the Naga insurgents when the state government with its resources could not keep them in check. The moderate Nagas were quite satisfied with the actions of the army and the political concessions, thus there was a respite in the rebellion. This policy was also followed in the Mizo insurgency and success was achieved.

The armed forces have been able to achieve success in handling of the insurgencies in the north east, beyond its abilities, with its forbearance, in the policy of use of minimum force necessary by which it has not resorted to any tactics which can be considered barbaric even though the provocation was immense. The armed forces never used the heavy artillery or aerial bombing, unlike the similar tactics being used in our neighbourhood. The use of minimum force has a clear intention behind it and that is the recognition that the resolution of any insurgency would be hampered by the use of inordinate firepower. It is pertinent to mention that the political strategy was successful due to the armed forces tailoring themselves to the requirements as asked for and also vice versa.

In order to achieve success in the counter insurgency operations, there is a necessity for closer co-ordination between the civil and military power. The
armed forces are an important adjunct and component of the country’s diplomacy. The experience of the armed forces in its role in the internal security management to include insurgency, cross-border infiltration and terrorism has given enough to formulate its own doctrines and theories. The armed forces while carrying out its role in internal security management, is coming into close contact with the neighbourhood. Because of these contacts, it has earned respect due to its professionalism and competence.

The states and the government have been resorting to the policy based on using the armed forces to eliminate the insurgents, announcing packages as fire fighting solutions towards the economy front and at the political level the aim is to garner the groups to agreements, dialogues and surrender and thereafter divide them and use the breakaway factions to control them. There is also a need to consider other factors which could make an impact on India’s strategic interests to include population growth, illegal migration, climate change and the like.

The anatomy of an insurgent group needs to be understood by the armed forces to achieve success. It has three parts i.e the head, which is the leadership, then come the hands which implies the motivated group, which is very small and finally the body, which is a large group of people who are ignorant of their role but have been paid to do something. So it becomes imperative for the armed forces to go for the head, as the balance thereafter will fall apart.

For the armed forces on ground, while there is no difference in their target which is the insurgent, the strategic targets to be destroyed are quite different. In the north east, it is the macro based economy that has to be choked, alienation, deprivation and unemployment have to be overcome and insurgent bases in Myanmar and Bangladesh have to be destroyed in co-operation with the respective governments. The external linkages of the insurgents which include both the state and non state actors are a cause of concern.

In the region there is the army, Assam Rifles, units of the CPO’s which are deployed in the counter insurgency role. There is a need for single point operational control of the Assam Rifles under the army as that of Rashtriya Rifles. Both, Rashtriya Rifles and Assam Rifles should be designated as the sub-conventional arm of the armed forces.
In the north east, insurgency in Assam, Nagaland, Manipur and other areas which is being aided and abetted by the external support from the neighbours continues to be the preoccupation of the army and the Assam Rifles. It is also a result of own domestic politics. At the end of the day, it should be the army to play the role of mentor, due to its better training and organization and provide help and encouragement to the police and the paramilitary forces.

The armed forces have an important role to play in the north east and are doing tremendous good work over the past recent years which have put the warring groups on the back foot. They thus need to exploit this situation to the fullest. The political governance need to come out with a national security and policy to eradicate the root causes of insurgency and to put into place an effective civil and police internal security mechanism. Till such time this is not in place, the armed forces will continue to be called for ‘Internal Security Management’, to suppress the level of violence to an acceptable limit.