CHAPTER - V

Factors Responsible for Ethnic Conflict: Contemporary Issue

There are several factors responsible for ethnic conflict in Manipur. The previous chapter had discussed about the historical genesis and its impact on present day ethnic conflict in Manipur. Contemporary and recent ethnic articulations have added new dimensions to the ethnic issue. A full blown assertion of ethnic politics in the form of myriad of demands that include recognition, autonomy, statehood, homeland, fairer and faster development has become a difficult terrain of politics for the State to deal with. There is ever increasing ethnicization of identity movements which are largely flagged off by specific and dominant elites who lead the movements. This chapter discusses the contemporary core issues, nature of ethnic movements and their political objectives.

5.1 Resources (Land, Forest and Mineral) Ownership Tendency

To begin with, human beings cannot survive without resources. Because of such significance, resources are an essential condition that shapes socio-economic and politico cultural status of communities, groups, and (nations) states. Most of the conflicts hover around the fights for resources. With similar perspective in mind, one may ask ‘how does a particular relations and state of resources’ can cause a situation of conflict which would be largely contextualized in the context of ethnicity in Manipur.

So it will be better to begin with a simple definition of resources as ‘a source or supply from which benefits are produced.’¹ The resources are materials or other assets that are transformed to produce benefits or in the process to be consumed. From a broader biological or ecological perspective, a resource satisfies the needs of a living organism (whether it is human beings or animals). The concept of resource has been given in diverse ways such as in economics, biology, chemical science, technology, land

management and human resources etc. It is always linked to the concepts of competition, sustainability, conservation and stewardship.

We have a long drawn debate throughout the world over the issue of natural resource allocations. This is partly due to increasing scarcity or depletion of resources and at the same time exploitation of natural resources by particularly developed nations such as Australia, America and European countries. Though many forms of natural resources are available abundantly in the Under Develop and Developing countries, they are unable to utilize it for the nation or common welfare because of lack of technology, capitals and adequate human resources etc. The natural resources, therefore, are appropriated by only develop countries disproportionally but the impact of environment degradations is faced by communities across the world. In the same manner resources in most societies are appropriated by bigger communities or elites within communities.

5.2 Main Resources in Manipur

One of the most important natural resources in Manipur is land resource which is mainly used for agricultural activities which is the main profession of the people of Manipur. As said in the previous chapter, the total area of the state 9/10 lies in the hilly tracts whiles the valley covering just 1/10. The land system of Manipur is classified in different ways and accordingly it is used in various ways. Land resources of Manipur can be classified into as

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<th>Land Use System</th>
<th>Areas in 000 ha</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total geographical areas</td>
<td>2233</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reporting area for land utilization</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>100.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forests</td>
<td>1693</td>
<td>86.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not available for cultivation</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>Permanent pastures and other grazing lands</td>
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<td>Land under misc. tree crops and groves</td>
<td>6</td>
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The forest cover in the state, based on interpretation of satellite data of January-February 2009, is 17,090 km$^2$ which is 76.54% of the state’s geographical area. In terms of forest canopy density classes, the state has 730 km$^2$ areas under very dense forest, 6,151 km$^2$ area under open forest and 10,209 km$^2$.

The state has five forest types groups viz. Tropical Semi-evergreen, Tropical Moist Deciduous, Subtropical Broadleaved Hill, Subtropical Pine and Montana Wet Temperate Forest.

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<th>Table No. 5 Types of Forest</th>
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While the ownership of land resources can generally be classified as individual, community and state. Most of the land in the hill areas of Manipur belongs to village chiefs particularly amongst the Kuki society. The individual do not have right over the land in Kuki society. Even in Naga society, the land ownership system is largely collective or community. Whereas, in the valley, land is part of private properties. There is no collective ownership system prevails amongst the Meeteis. Reserve areas are belonged to government and individual or communities have no right in such areas. If it is required to use the resources available inside the reserve areas, then there is need to prior permission from the government.

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Government records and economists of the state have already shown that 70% of the total population is working in this primary sector (agricultural activities) it can be rightly mentioned here that the agriculture activities at the valley have limited scope because land used for agriculture is quite small. Commercially valuable items including teak, garjan, uningthou, wang etc. are found in the forests of the hill areas.

Mineral resources (e.g., copper and iron ore, petroleum, geothermal power) are found only in specific areas. The natural resources of the state are not fully explored yet. According to the Geological Survey of India, the mineral resources obtain in Manipur are Limestone, Lignite, Nickel, Cobalt Chromites, Asbestos, Clay, Salt and huge amount of petroleum. The latest Annual report of Jubilant Energy indicates that the two blocks in Manipur have prospective of oil resources ranging from 380 billion cubic feet to 1.43 trillion cubic feet. However in a contradicting figures, the document of Jubilant Energy under AIM Rules outlined that the total oil potential in Manipur is nearly 5 Trillion Cubic Feet altogether in the Abin, Kharkhublien, Taithu, Sialman, Laimata, Oinamlong anticlines in the two oil blocks of Manipur. Therefore, in a simplistic calculation it means that the oil reserves in Manipur are worth several trillions of dollars, which supersedes the economic strength of major developed countries.³

5.3 Ethnic Group’s Control over Resources

It is already suggested that in recent times the people of Manipur particularly tribal communities fell insecure that they may lose their religion, culture, language, identity, employment etc. Before colonization Manipur had sufficient production of food.⁴ However, history makes it clear that artificial food scarcity was often occurred during the British period. The same situation continued to exist when Manipur come under the

administration of Indian Union.\(^5\) Therefore, the people of Manipur have a strong suspicion of Indian administration.

Another fear of the people of Manipur is the impacts of globalization. Even its discourse is unending in Manipur. The traditional or localize features of political, economic and culture face the challenges brought by the secrete forces of globalization. Many of the local academicians carefully look at the impact of this secrete force and trying to find out whether globalization delivers any benefit to the local people or not.\(^6\) Many of the traditional means of productions are loss to the modern machine. As the state can not take adequate steps to participate the race for modern industry; people of Manipur keep depending upon the outsiders’ goods and materials. So as a result of the resource scarcity provoke a number of armed and civil societies groups and claim that such insecurity was not in existence in the ancient time. The situation of scarcity is created only when imperialists rule over the state. Therefore, the demand ‘Right to Self Determination’ is choosing by the people of Manipur.\(^7\) This paved the way for ethnic group to set up their own militant organizations. For them militancy becomes the solo hope for protecting ethnicity and resources.

It is suggested that the acceptance of terms and conditions of authority with emotional integrity by ethnic groups in earlier time for the common welfare is missing today. Instead, ethnic groups’ favor to the insurgents is very open. However, insurgents have lots of limitation to set up the welfare scheme and again can not successfully challenge the (state and centre) de facto government. So, the Naga, Kuki and Meetei all think that demanding complete sovereign homeland is the final option. As a part of this demand, they all push for five schedule, six schedule, full-fledged district and state,

\(^5\) Since colonized by British, all the North Eastern India faced food scarcities which made a remarkable impact in the ethnic history. (see N Joykumar Singh, *Social Movements in Manipur*, Mittal Publication: New Delhi, 2005, pp.73-96)


\(^7\) H Herojit Singh, *Insurgency and Its Living Demand: A seven Decade Untold Movement in Manipur* Paper presented at National Seminar organized by Department of Political Science, Mizoram University on 11th -12th March 2014.
homeland, greater land, north land, south land etc. All this is done with the tendency of
going the sovereign state ultimately.

It is important to mention that the basic criterion to realize such demands is to
have definite land (territory). Therefore many ethnic groups are attempting to occupy
specific area as their ‘inherent and legitimate’ ownership. In this case, many groups
followed the ‘Israel model’ with the understanding that there was no land for Jews before
Israel was formed. After Israel was formed and have a definite land for Jews, start
controlling the Middle East in international politics. The exploited resource available at
Israel guarantees hope and prospects to the generations of Jews. Likewise ethnic groups
in Manipur are also hopping for a sovereign state. In this way, the Kuki or the Naga or
the Meetei resist State’s attempt to exploit natural resources. But the demand for
remapping land and territory by the Nagas, Kukis and Meeteis often overlaps. Their
demand includes administration over the resource which is available inside the definite
area controlled by them. This led to competition and conflict between the groups in
present time.

The development programs that have been carried out by state or central
government are often contradicted to the ethnic interest and claimed that such programs
affected the identity and culture of the hills people particularly. Most of the minority
groups blame the state and central government for siding with the majority communities.
On other hand, it is also seen that the outsiders control the market, economy and exploit
the state’s resources, especially the forest wealth. The people’s determination to resist
such activities gets articulated as struggles to preserve and protect their nationality,
identity and ethnicity. Therefore, the Naga or Kuki collected huge amount of ‘tax’ from
buses and trucks plying on the National High way. They justified it saying that it is
conducted within their area or ancestral land.

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8 There is no recognized territorial boundary of Naga and Kuki by international super power or agency in
the history. Even Government of India did not recognize or registered a particular land for the ethnic Kuki
or Naga nor Meetei.
9 Oinam Bagat, Aheibam Koieng, P S Haokip, Tohring, Sajal Nag etc. have commented that the demands
over the land by different insurgent groups are overlapping.
10 Jasantakumar Ng, “Land Problem and Ethnic Crisis in Manipur”, in Dhanabir Laishram, Ch
Rupachandra, and Ng Jasantakumar (ed) The Stitch Ethnicity, Insurgency and Development of Manipur: A
5.4 Land Control and Emergence of Conflict

Originally ‘land and territoriality’ was not considered as essential elements in ethnic politics. However, later when number of communities starts opting for insurgency particularly among tribal communities, the concept of land and territorial including natural resources becomes an essential element of politics of ethnicity. It is said that the natural resources are very important for not only because it is the only means for the survival of people as modern jobs (white color) are not sufficiently created especially for people of this hilly state. At the same time, the ethnic insurgencies are also required resources for survival and running of the groups. All insurgent groups collect financial funds and other supports from the people who are settling inside their claimed areas.

As a matter of fact, more than 75% the people of this state are below poverty line and survive out of agriculture. So insurgents need to set up their own source of income. The simple means for the source of income is to control administration of state, particularly hills area where lack of government administration and also many kinds of resources are highly available. If they control such area then any political and commercial activities are depend upon them. At latter, various groups attempt to control the areas makes a kind of competition, contradiction and objection environment among the groups, organizations and people in Manipur.

Moreover, the house tax is one of the important incomes of insurgent groups in present day. But in Manipur, not a single district has been settled entirely by a single ethnic group. Financial collection (house tax) without the differential of ethnic people by ethnic based insurgency is conventionally within the operating area. Therefore, they need to occupy a large area of land and territory and people, on the logic that if there is large number of houses then they have huge amount of income. But such collection of house tax is objected by other ethnic groups who also have their own ethnic army. Therefore this is a fact that most important factor of the conflicts occurred in 1990s was the
imposition of house tax in Moreh town. Each and every communities settle in Moreh town has insurgent groups which are often termed as ethnic army. They are always attempt to impose their authority over the land and people.

5.5 Uniform Land Law and Ethnic Conflict:

Colonial law of administration is handed down to the Delhi government after India got her independence. The administration of state during the colonial period was divided into two. The civil society groups demand that it should be only one law to instigate the fraternity feeling among the ethnic groups of Manipur. AMSU (All Manipur Student Union) was the first organization demanding uniform land laws across the hills and valley in Manipur instead of enforcing different laws. According to the students, the existing land law system has been dividing the brothers of Manipur into distinct identities which create lot of law and order problem, hostile attitude and unequal development. They also suggested that this land law is responsible for the backwardness of Hill areas. There are many people who are economically better in the hill areas. Such persons or family do not want to stay at hill areas because they have no right over the land. Economy elite of tribal came down to the Imphal valley or out side the state and settle forever. Therefore it is said that because of lack of economic elites in hill areas, the agro base entrepreneur ship is underdeveloped.

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11 Moreh is a small hilly commercial town on the border with Myanmar, around 108 km distance from Imphal, the state capital of Manipur. It lies in the Tengnoupal sub-division of Chandel district of Manipur. The place is home to different communities, particularly dominated by Meetei, Kuki, Naga, Tamil and Muslim etc. Since ancient times, the people of this border region have followed barter trade system with the neighboring communities of Myanmar. Historically too, the place has its own significance as a point for social, political and economic interaction between Manipur and the East-Asian Countries. In the post-independence, formal trade between the two countries, India and Burma through Moreh Land Custom Station (LCS) in Manipur was opened on 12th April 1995 by Hon’ble Minister of State for Commerce, Government of India, Shri P. Chidambaram along with his Myanmar Counter part Lt. Gen Tun Kyi, the Minister of Trade, Myanmar. Presently, for Moreh trade, land route across from India to Myanmar takes place which is a great significant development. It is now one of the unlimited generating sources of income in generally and easy tax allocation of insurgency in particularly.

12 T.S Gangte, Land Problem and Ethnic Tension in North-East India: With Special Reference to Manipur, papers present at National Seminar on Conflict Study in the Northeast India Organized by Department of Philosophy, Manipur University, 28-30 March 2007.
On the other hand the people of hill areas oppose any policy that treats the hills and valleys as homogeneous. Thus they are against the enactment of a uniform land law applicable to both the valley and hills. Assimilation and integration are seen as attempts to undermine their historical and customary rights over territory and natural resources. They thought that any government step or civil societies demand on uniform land law is a prelude of suicide and homicide of their distinct identity to the Meeteis. On the other side, valley people oppose the policies that divide the people of Manipur into two distinct.

The Manipur Village Authority in Hill Areas Act, 1956 (80 of 1956) was published in the extraordinary Gazette of Manipur under Notification No. 1/15/54 dated the 17th January, 1957, Vol. No. 6-E-4, Imphal, Thursday, April, 1957. The Act is implemented with the aim to promote the democratic values in the hills areas. But this Act created strong sense of opposition, discontentment, apprehension and vehemently resented application or extension of Acts in the hill areas. Protests of all kinds were launched by the Kuki public and even within the Territorial Council by the Kuki members of the Manipur Territorial Council also. The Kuki members of territorial Council were defected to topple the political party that creates instability the territorial government. Such protest and objections were more strongly apparent and active anti-government in the hill areas.

On the Act of 1956, Kukis, particularly assume that it is real danger or uncertainty of their political destiny. The apprehension was that, if the Village Authority Act, 1956 is enforced, then land should be snatched away from their hands. The minds of Kukis rest in fear concerning their habitation. They thought that the Act is leading to complete extermination of Kukis. It is the backdrop of gradual steps being taken up by the Government over the right on Land. By the pressure and agitation, the act was amended and called ‘The Manipur Hill Areas (Acquisition of Chiefs Rights) Act, 1967’. The amended Act also has indeed given rise to increasing speculation. It was a rumor that Government of Manipur was bent on evicting the Kukis from their lands. The Act of 1967 was further amended in 1983 which is, according to T S Gangte, more firmly empower to weaken the right of Chiefs.
Manipur Land law Act 1960 (MLAR) covers entire land of Manipur i.e. both the Hills and the Valley. Any land disputes will be settled on the basis of this Act. However a part of the British legacy, the Act divides the land laws into two viz. Hills and Plain. The provisions of the laws favor, hill people that have right to settle any part of the Manipur whereas people from the valley do not have the right to buy land or settle in the hill areas. Ironically, hill areas cover 90% of the total area of the state and the valley which is just one ten of the total area of the state is settled by 70% of the state population. Therefore, there have been strong demands from people across the valley to review and reform the existing law. However this demand has been opposed by elected representatives from the hill areas. They claim that once the existing system is changed and allow plain people to buy and settle in the hills, they will exploit the resources (including land resources). This will lead to some kind of colonialism. The plain people are more develop in the hills to their advantage only. This will lead not only to economic exploitation of the tribal communities but also their cultural and identity will be jeopardy.

5.6 Issue of Broader Trade and Ethnic Conflict:

The conflict over the existing land laws highlights the issue of inter-ethnic conflict between the endogenous people of state. This is just one aspect of the issue of the conflict languishing in the state. However, there are other aspects of conflict between various groups in the state. One such issue is the issue of conflict between outsiders who have come from other states and insiders who are the original settlers of the state. This conflict is seen particularly in the field of economy, trade and commerce.

It has been claimed that outsiders control the markets and exploit the state’s resources especially the forest wealth. The people’s determination to resist outsiders’ control has articulated in the struggles to preserve and protect their nationality, identity and ethnicity. Therefore ‘Border Trade’ is not simply considered as way of life but a cause of the struggle for territorial control. The insurgent groups attempt to control the border trade (lucrative smuggling, small arms and drug traffic) along the Indo-Myanmar international border is not only for land control but also for security strategic. The Naga-
Kuki conflict of 1992 that took place in the Moreh-Tamu area is a manifestation of control land and security reason.

India’s foreign secretary J.N Daxit in March and August 1993 writes about the importance of Indo-Myanmar Border Trade. According to him, “Indo-Myanmar Cooperation is necessary to counter smuggling, drug crimes and insurgency causing security threats to India’s North East.” The statement clearly shows that it is more concerned with insurgency causing security threat to India’s northeast. Because, especially Moreh-Tamu sector of border trade were not effectively controlled by either India or Myanmar Government. This region is mostly inaccessible and being under the control of ethnic armies who rise up against both New Delhi and Yangon administration. All the insurgents who are operating in the region are supported by people settled in the area.

Regarding the inquiry report of 1992 Kuki-Naga clash, the state government states that the Naga-Kuki violent ethnic conflict is due to the insurgent’s activities ‘like heavy extortion of money.’ After studying the situation the report further says that heavy extortion is mainly conducted by NSCN, KNO, KNF, CRF, and KFC. It could not be tolerated by the people and other insurgent group that creates the communal feeling against each other. The documentation titled “Does Violence Get Mandate” shows that, the government blames the Nagas particularly the NSCN-IM for this clash.

Nagas’ take on this conflict is due to “Kuki dream for Kuki homeland.” The demand for creation of Kuki homeland is presented to Government of India in various forms such as creation of new district and Kuki Refugee Settlement. The Kuki

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14 The Government of India and the Government of Union of Myanmar on 21st January 1994 recognized specific sectors (a) Moreh in India and Tamu in Myanmar (b) Champai in India and Hri in Myanmar (c) Other places as Trade Centre. (See The Border Trade Agreement between the Government of Republic India and the Government of Union of Myanmar 1994)
17 Ibid, pp.14-16
underground organizations on their part laid claims on the district of Churchandpur, Chandel and major part of Ukhrul, Senapati and Tamenglong as the Kuki homeland. Nagas suspect that the Government of India, on a secrect promise; will create “a homeland for the Kukis” in the territory of the Nagas. Then the nomadic Kukis will ‘exploit to fight a proxy war for India against the steadfast freedom loving Nagas in general and NSCN in particular.’

Kuki view on conflict is slightly different from that of the Nagas. According to them “the cause of this conflict is the desire of the Manipuri Nagas supported by the NSCN-IM to achieve Greater Nagaland by combining the present state of Nagaland with Ukhrul district, Tamenglong district and Senapati district of Manipur/Naga inhabited area.”

The demands of creating Kukiland and Greater Nagaland always include control of Moreh town as center of economic zone. Moreh town controlled more dominantly by Naga insurgents for a long time. Tax of vehicle (public as well as private), wood supply, other business are imposed across community. This has been reacted sharply by the Kukis particularly. Their reaction becomes stronger with the emergence of Kuki insurgents groups in 1980s with the objective of creating Kukiland. Though dominated by the Nagas, Moreh town has been a business center for many years. People from different places including outsider the state settle at Moreh. More importantly, this has been a place where people across communities in and around Manipur earn their livelihood. Obviously, therefore, the autocratic style of the NSCN-IM has been challenged often from many communities. Particularly, the Kukis have been a strong opposition to the Nagas in the area. They reacted to the NSCN-IMs hegemony to the area by even denying house tax demanded by the Nagas. So on Meetei, Kuki and Naga conflict and its consequences in the state are surrounded by land issues and border trade. Since the emergence of insurgencies of aforesaid ethnic groups, the demands are

18 Ibid.
overlapping in maps which sketch by themselves and objected bring endless struggle among Meetei, Kuki and Naga.

5.7 Politics of Representation: A Genesis of Ethnic Conflict in Manipur

There are many issues surrounding ethnic conflicts persisting anywhere in the world. One such factor that hugely contributes in the ensuing ethnic conflict in the state is the existing system of political representation, and the focuses and political standpoints taken by the representatives. In fact, in countries like India, there are groups and communities demanding political representations of various kinds as part of their larger campaign for safeguarding their identities, cultural values and ethos. The success or failure of a democracy is a lot depend on the adequacy of the representative system and the way the representatives undertake their responsibilities. The sub-theme also aims at addressing this particular issue concerning political representation vis-à-vis ethnic conflict with especial reference to Manipur. This issue, I hope, is an important factor contributing enormously to the ensuing conflict in diverse regions like the Northeast India particularly Manipur.

5.7.1 Political Representation: Conceptual Background

Simply put, political representation is the process through which the influence which the entire citizenry or a part of them have upon government action, is with their expressed approval, exercised on their behalf by a small number among them, with binding effects upon those represented.20 Two dominant theories of representation have been- (a) liberal-democratic theory which emphasizes the importance of individual rights, especially the inviolability of individual’s property and the necessity of limiting the powers of government to protect these rights. Liberal Democracy implies not only an extension of the franchise but an equality of voting rights. The representative represents individuals, their opinions, and their interest, and therefore, he is elected according to geographically

demarcated constituencies and not according to classes, occupational distinctions or distinct social interests; and (b) Socialistic or Collectivistic which emphasizes not on individual but on class. Accordingly, this theory suggests that the assemblies should represent not the individuals and their opinions but the majority class whose interests have been subordinated by middle-class in parliaments. There may be many other theories of representation. It will not be of much value to go into details of these theories. However, it is important to mention briefly about the kinds of existing systems of representation as it will highlight how generally different people or individuals have been represented in public arena. Thus, many kinds of representation have been in practice across the globe which may be very briefly discussed below.

**Territorial representation**: It implies that for the purpose of holding an election in a particular country, the whole area should be divided into a number of electoral districts in a way that may or may not, coincide with the administrative districts into which the country is divided. These electoral districts are termed ‘constituencies’. The constituencies may be either single-member or multi-member, but care is taken to mark them out in a way that proportion of population is more or less the same. Most importantly this system assumed that the interests of the people within these districts are essentially alike, and that the majority within each district should select the representatives for the appropriate fractional part of the population. On the basis, most present-day states have organized their representative system. We may also take note of the fact that the minorities are a great loser in such a system of representation. Last, election becomes a game for major political parties. Power alternates between major parties, and minority representation have hardly any chance to send their representatives until proportional representation system is introduced.

**Functional representation**: The advocates of functional representation have contested this system of territorial representation and pointed out that not territorial community, but interests should be represented. In this system the legislature would have representatives of the business class chosen by the businessmen, of the working class chosen by the workers, of the agriculturalists chosen by the farmers, of the teaching community chosen by the teachers and the like. Only in such a way can a legislature with competent persons
be constituted. It implies that social, economic and professional groups, having special interests of their own, should find a place in the national legislature.

**Proportional representation**: It stand on the principle that ‘votes should be weighed, not counted.’ It has three ingredients (i) there should be a multi-member constituency, (ii) a candidate should be elected not by gaining an absolute or relative majority but by obtaining a quota of votes that is equivalent to the total number of vote cast and divided by the number of seats to be filled, and (iii) there should be a mathematically exact, as far as possible, representation of the electorate in the legislature. Its main purpose is to secure a representative assembly reflecting with more or less mathematical exactness by various divisions in the electorate. The essential idea is to ensure, by distributing votes rather than voters, that the number of seats won by political party in the legislature shall be approximately proportionate to the votes cast for the party. There are two main schemes for achieving this purpose: the single transferable vote (generally known as the Hare System), and the list system of proportional representation widely used in Europe. In India this system is followed in the election of the members of Council of the State.

**Minority representation**: The issue of giving representation to those who are in a minority because of their religion, language, culture, racial make-up and like, is, indeed, a delicate affair. While democracy means majority rule, it does not at all mean the suppression of minorities. It is true that in a representative system of government majority must rule and the few must yield to the will of many, but from this it does not follow that the majority should have no representation at all. In a democratic system some provisions should be made for the representation of minorities. Following devices may be suggested for this purpose (a) limited vote system (b) Single vote system (c) proxy system (d) cumulative vote system (e) weightage (f) nominations. This idea of minority representation is important especially when one studies the issues of ethnic diversity in countries like India.

It seems pertinent to highlight at this juncture some of the general understanding on the desired relationship between the ruler and the ruled as it has become of more immediate significance with the development of representative system. The question
arises as to what is the proper function of a representative whom the people have chosen to act for them in matters of legislation and administration. Garner\textsuperscript{21} points out three positions in thus regard: (1) the representative is regarded as deputy or an agent of the particular constituency, charged procuring legislation for the advancement of his constituency obtained appropriations money for public work, securing other favors within the power of the legislature or government to bestow. (2) He may be regarded as the representative of the whole state, elected to consult with other representatives and charged primarily with the promotion of a particular interest of the immediate constituency. (3) He may be regarded as a mouthpiece or a spokesman of the political party which is in majority ion the constituency. He is bound by the will of his party whatever may be his own personal views in regard to the expediency.

5.7.2 The Indian Case

Though the Constitution recognizes the importance of political representation of socially backward communities such as S.C and S.T, it does not provide separate reservation of parliamentary or assembly seats based on ethnicity, religion, caste and creed. In fact, the mechanism provided by the states for the representation of the ethnic groups is inadequate.\textsuperscript{22} Since independence, two strict rules have been followed by the government of India in all dealing with dissident domestic ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural group demands.\textsuperscript{23} The first is that no secessionist movement stance will be entertained and that any group which takes up a secessionist stance will, while it is weak, be ignored and treated as illegitimate, but, should it develop significant strength, be smashed, with armed force if necessary. All secessionist demands in post-independence India which acquired any significant strength have been treated in this way, especially in the northeastern part of the country and lately in the Punjab and Kashmir. Secessionist demands have also been headed off in other places such as Tamil Nadu in the 1950s by

\textsuperscript{22} Ansari Iqbal A, \textit{Political Representation of Muslim in India}, Manak Publication Pvt. Ltd: New Delhi, 2006
the clear understanding that force would be used against the groups who promote such demands if they persisted.

The second rule has been a prohibition against the concession of demands for any forms of political recognition of a religious community. Muslim, Sikh, other religious minorities are free to preserve their own personal law, to practice their religious as they see fit, to seek protection for their language and culture, but not to demand either a separate state for their community even within the India Union or separate electorates or any form of proportional representation in elected or appointed government bodies.

5.7.3 Dynamics of Political Representation in Manipur: A Historical Perspective

The administration (political) history of the state shows that the political system before 1949 recognized and respected the different ethnic groups and their culture and religion. Even though Manipur had monarchical form of government, the kings appointed ministers (*Phamdous*) from the different communities generally as Meetei, tribal (these different tribes had been categorized in larger conglomerate groups such as Kuki and Naga) and Pangal (Muslim) in their councils. ‘*Hao Loishang*’ was one of the important ministries that deal only with tribal affairs. When the British left Manipur on 1947, she adopted a “democratic” form of government, election was held for the first time under the proportional representation system on the basis of universal adult franchise. And then, she framed the constitution known as *The Manipur State Constitution* signed by the king of Manipur (King Budhachandra) and special autonomy provision in different draft (known as Manipur Hill Regulation Act, 1948) to be implemented in the hills areas. The outstanding feature is that the members in the drafting committee of the Manipur State Constitution were representatives from the various communities namely the Kuki tribes, the Naga tribes and minority Meetei Pangal (Manipuri Muslim) etc. That is why the constitution had been accepted by different communities for the “common good” of the state.
The allocation of seats provided in the Manipur State Constitution had been a unique one. The total number of seat in the House was 61, where, reservations for different categories are as under follows.

Table No. 6: Seat Allocation under the Manipur State Constitution, 1947

| Educationalist and commercialist sector seat | 2 |
| Mohamadan reserve seat                      | 3 |
| Hill reserve seat                           | 18 |
| General seat                                | 38 |
| Total seat                                  | 61 |

*Source: Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947*

The table shows that the seats ratio is arranged at 2:3:18:38. The Hill people’s reserved seats were lesser compare to present 19 seats of the State Assembly. There was no reserved seat for Schedule Caste. And there was no demand and issue for ‘under-representation’ from any community as the size of the population was much small. Again, the movement for recognition in the state was not as vibrant as today. The number of reserved seats of the tribal people slightly changed when Manipur merged with the Indian Union.

The history of India shows that Manipur was a ‘part C state’ rule by bureaucrats and then upgraded into the Union Territory having 30 members in Territorial Council in 1956. These two kinds of status were not satisfied by entire population in Manipur. Therefore, since its merger with the Indian union, for more than 20 years people have been organizing many forms of agitation. During this period, there was neither any remarkable development work undertaken by the state government nor their efforts to build an environment of ethnic cooperation.\(^\text{24}\) In 1972, the Manipur was given the status of a full-fledged state of the Indian Union thereby making the political representatives the center of power. The seat allocation for the schedule tribes and caste is followed throughout India in one pattern under the modified act provided time to time by

government of India. The reference of India population ratio to the reserve seats is quite debatable because the tribal population in Manipur is closer to half of the total population. This system of seat allocation, therefore, is not satisfied by the tribal generally and particularly smaller and “intermediates” tribes (It). When Manipur become a full-fledged state, the number of seat was increased not only in the State Assembly but also in the Union Parliament. At the local level, the Panchayati Raj institution popularly known as grass root level Democracy abruptly taken place the traditional ‘Khunja Meepham’.25

The State Assembly is more important in this three level structure; therefore, people expected that this middle government will be in the interest of the people. In other sense, this is the only highest platform where ethnic groups who are having different own interest struggled for power. The seat distribution of the reserve and non-reserve of the State Assembly becomes the calculation of the profit and loss reference to pre-merger reservation. The present seat allocation of reserve in the State Assembly given below as

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seat categories</th>
<th>Seat</th>
<th>Dominant community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schedule caste</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dominated by Meetei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule tribe seat</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Dominated by Naga and Kuki-Chin-Mizo group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unreserved seat</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Dominated by Meetei, occasionally 1 seat goes to tribe (Kuki)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total seat</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Dominated by Meetei</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies Order 1976, Government of Manipur

As I said in chapter III that the total seat is 60 out of which 40 seats are allocated for general category and 19 seats are reserved for STs, one for SCs i.e. in ratio 40:19:1. Out of the reserved seats of Schedule Tribe (ST) is 19, Nagas have 10 and remaining 9 with the Kuki-Chin-Mizo group but from the non-reserve seat, this group got one that

25 Khunja Meepham is one of the oldest institutions in the state of Manipur. In such institution local elders members discussed development of all the matters including religious issues of the village. (see S Mangi Singh, The State of Panchayati Raj Institutions and Peoples participation in Northeast India Paper presented at national seminar organized by Nehru College, Pailapool in collaboration with Dept. of Political Science, Assam University, Silchar on 6 to 7 April 2012).
neutralized 10, 10 between the Naga and the Kuki-Chin-Mizo group. The system is totally dominated by Meetei and always paves the way for government dominated by the Meeteis. Only 31 members are required to form the government.

In this system of seat distribution, the Intermediate tribes\(^{26}\) (namely Aimol, Kom, Koireng, Chiru, Kharam, Chothe etc) who are small groups remain mainly outside the fold of the Naga and the Kuki (or even if they are inside the Kuki or the Naga as claimed by bigger groups are under represented) in the Assembly floor. So the minor tribes are trying to capture their ‘Right to be Represented’ in various ways including armed struggle. Many scholars pointed out that the intermediate tribes are very insecure about their identities, cultures, language, jobs and future prospects etc. The relationship is much like that of between the big fish and small fish that dominant tribe detains the small groups. An example is MLA Wungnaoshang Keishing demanded a separate district by upgrading the Phungyar sub-division at Ukhrul district. According to MLA Keishing, this movement was strongly objected by the NSCN-IM and the United Naga Council (UNC).\(^{27}\)

Therefore, intermediate tribes joined unwillingly into the fold of either the Kuki or the Naga after the Kuki-Naga conflict of 1992. In reality they are culturally and linguistically closer to the Kuki groups but politically partner of the Naga group due to geo-political situation. Most of the Intermediate tribes are demanding for the recognition of their independent identities. One possible way to get their voice heard is to send their own community representative in the State Assembly. Such a demand for representation from amongst the smaller communities seems to come down heavily on the aspiration of the larger communities. Particularly, it is taken it as a challenge to the Naga Unification Project, or Kuki homeland demands. Referring from the electoral politics, most of the ethnic tribes of Manipur claimed that Meetei’s dominant structure of representative at

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\(^{26}\) There are two main group of tribe vis. Kuki and Naga in Manipur. But out of this two categorize, there are number of having small population ethic tribes living in Manipur. Larger groups such as Kuki and Naga often try to bring them within their respective folds. However, some successfully spaced themselves out of the larger groups and some still trying to assert for their distinct identity. These are called intermediate tribes simply because of neither the part of Kuki nor Naga fold.

Assembly floor is not different from that of a colonizer’s role. Therefore tribal problems (socio political and economy) in the hill areas are artificial created by the Meetei.

As a matter of fact, Maximum numbers of the representatives in Assembly and other democratic platform come from the Meetei community. Since statehood, the names of the Chief Ministers, duration of ministry and ethnic identity of C.M. (Chief Ministers) is shown in the following table

Table No. 8: Chief Ministers, duration of ministry and ethnic identity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.no</th>
<th>Name of C.M.</th>
<th>Duration of Government</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Md. Allimuddin</td>
<td>3rd March, 1972 – March 26, 1974</td>
<td>Manipuri Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Md. Allimuddin</td>
<td>March 4, 1974 - July 10, 1974</td>
<td>Manipuri Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yangmaso Saiza</td>
<td>July 10, 1974 - December 5, 1974</td>
<td>Manipuri Naga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>R.K. Dorendro</td>
<td>December 6, 1974 - May 2, 1977</td>
<td>Meetei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yangmaso Saiza</td>
<td>June 29, 1977 - November 14, 1979</td>
<td>Manipuri Naga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Rishang Keishing</td>
<td>November 26, 1980 – February 28, 1981</td>
<td>Manipuri Naga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Rishang Keishing</td>
<td>December 13, 1994 - January 10, 1995</td>
<td>Manipuri Naga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Rishang</td>
<td>Feb 25, 1995 – December 15, 1997</td>
<td>Manipuri Naga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>W. Nipamacha</td>
<td>Dec 16, 1997 - 7 Assembly election</td>
<td>Meetei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>W. Nipamacha</td>
<td>March 2, 2000 - February 2001</td>
<td>Meetei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Radhabinod Koijam</td>
<td>February 15, 2001 - May 21, 2001</td>
<td>Meetei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>O. Ibobi</td>
<td>March 7, 2002 - present</td>
<td>Meetei</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researcher collected from different thesis and Govt. report
The above table can also be classified into two parts as i) before 1997 and ii) after 1997. In the year 1997, the Naga-Kuki clash of 1992 was preceded in different dimensions. It almost became a clash between Thadou Kuki and Paite (Thadou Kuki-Paite clash). In the valley, the Meetei and Meetei Pangal too had clash for a sort period on 1993. With the solving of the Thadou Kuki-Paite clash, the Naga-Kuki clash also become cool and built understanding among the warring groups. NSCN-IM entered into cease-fire with Government of India (GoI) and there was talk about a possibility of affecting the territory of Manipur. Civil societies of Manipur, therefore, especially All Manipur United Club Organization (AMUCO) become ‘care taker’ for preserving the territorial integrity of Manipur verified the situation of the state. It launched a mass rally at Imphal and founded integrity pillar too on August 4, 1997 by participating different communities. Such campaign spread mistrust in one side and co-operation among the ethnic groups.

i) Before 1997: The table shows that there are nine persons who had served as Chief Minister and took oath 20 times for the post of Chief Minister since statehood. Before 1997, there were only 6 persons who served as C.Ms. Out of which three person were from the minor communities including the first C.M of the state who belonged to Muslim (Meetei Pangal) community. The second C.M was also from the Manipuri Naga tribe. Since statehood among the 9 persons who served as C.Ms, no one completed full terms accept O. Ibobi. Before 1997 the longest serving C.M. of the state was Shri Rishang Keishing. He is called an old Tiger, Clever Tiger with respect by the people of Manipur. He is also known as Ta-Rishang, Oja-Rishang amongst the Meeteis. There were 14 times oath taking ceremony for C.M. out of which minority people took 9 times. Out of these 9 times, 7 goes to people belong to Naga community and 2 to Muslim Community. Therefore it is a fact that maximum number of the CM is from Manipuri Naga tribes and the longest ruler CM was also from the Manipuri Naga tribes. Therefore it can be concluded that before 1997, there was no communal politics and identity politics in the Manipur. Even in the outer constituency for the Lok-Sabha (one reserve seat for tribes) valley people never interfere in the election before 1997. That is why both Kuki and Naga got one terms each through their understanding as representative (Member of Parliament) in the Parliament. Thus, the popular saying that Meeteis are not responsible for the ‘Underdevelopment of Tribes’ would not be wrong from this point of perspective.
ii) After 1997: Shri Rishang Keishing swore as Chief Minister on 13 December 1994, after the President Rule imposed after minority government of R.K. Dorendro failed to prove majority on the Assembly floor. It was suspected by the non-Nagas that the Rishang Keishing lead government generally and in particular Rishang will favor only the Naga community. Therefore, the Rishang government could not remain stable because of his cabinet ministers always attempt to dethrone him from the post of CM. The period starts with swearing in of W. Nipamacha Singh as CM on Dec.16, 1997. The credit goes to him for bringing an end to the ethnic clash in Manipur. The period marked a change in the voting behavior of the people leading to ethnic/communal politics in the state.

The Eight State Assembly Election, 2002 (Mid term poll) was held on February 14 and 21, 2002 for the hills and the valley respectively. It was held totally at the backdrop of ethnic politics. The extension of Cease fire Agreement between the NSCN-IM and Government of India to Manipur was suspected by many including sections of the hills people belonging to the Kuki conglomeration. Simultaneously, people started strong agitation to Save territorial integrity of Manipur. Ultimately, the Government of India had to roll back the agreement and the ceasefire was confined to the state of Nagaland only. This crisis marked an emergence of separatism based on politicization of collective identities between the Nagas and non-Nagas or hills people and valley people. Thus, palpable “ethnic tension’ based on the collective identity among the Nagas, the Kukis and the Meeteis reflected on the election pole. The election of 2002 (mid term poll) was held under unprecedented ‘ethnic divide’ among the different communities of the state. It was also in the news report that the undergrounds involve to withdraw forcefully the candidate from the election. In other hand, there was a contest between the underground politics and the main stream politics in state politics. This election marked a heightened process of traditional groups into rigid identities and craft to engage in zero-sum contest.

5.7.4 The Fate of Intermediate Tribes

The organization of collective identities as the Kuki and the Naga and their insurgent groups involve in the electoral politics. In such a case the intermediate tribes (small
tribes) are very difficult to participate freely and fairly. It is said that Naga MLA are under the flag of NSCN-IM and working for the NSCN-IM main demand- expeditious integration of the Naga dominated areas of Manipur into Greater Nagaland or Nagalim.\(^{28}\) Likewise the Representatives from the Kuki community are also puppet. Many sources supported that they (Representatives) are directly or indirectly related with insurgency. Unlike the Naga, some of the Kuki Representatives are leader of the ethnic army/insurgency. Former Chief Minister Radhavinod Kojjam expelled his six Cabinet Ministers from his Council of Minister for their relations with underground organizations. His action was based on the report of Justice (retd.) Shri S.K Hom Choudhary.\(^{29}\) The fact is that the insurgencies do not like any candidate proceed beyond the layer of their centrifugal circle. They always attempt to keep the representatives under their control. A competent candidate, therefore, from the intermediate tribe never win election due to lack of support from the insurgencies. Since the last 4 State Assembly elections, such candidates are contesting but no one could win. Although the candidates are under the centrifugal relation, the insurgencies are always suspicious that the representatives will favor other, selfish and main stream politics etc. This mistrust also affected to the real politics for either the major tribe or the intermediate tribes.

Moreover, political culture (in terms of electoral representations and political participation) particular in hills area is ‘non-participant political culture’. The political space is enjoyed by only those elite groups e.g. chiefs and village councilor etc. It is claimed by political analyzer that both the Center and State governments did not conduct the elections freely and fairly in the hills of Manipur since election began to hold. Presiding officers could not say openly the fact due to threats from insurgencies when asking about the election proceeding. But people know that it is an open secret, the election is conducted beyond the free and fair system. Writers, columnists, academicians and experts discuss the matter very frequently in the media channels. However, people do

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\(^{28}\) The lone Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) Mr. Mani Charenamei, along with 11 Naga MLAs elected from the 7th State Assembly election are supported by NSCN-IMs. They submitted a memorandum to support the demand of NSCN-IM- expeditious integration of Naga-dominated areas of Manipur into Nagaland- to the Prime Minister of India on 26th May 2005.

not see any effective measure taken up by both the governments. Exceptionally, Church leaders discussed about the 10th Manipur State Legislative Assembly election at the Larin khul Chandel district, decided to stop the proxy vote, boot capturing and threats to the voters, which was relatively only effective.30

It is seen that in the state of Manipur there is a parallel government of de facto and de jury groups.31 Intermediate tribes hopes to the insurgencies is totally or partially fail on the one hand and on the other hand both centre and state government would not work for the recognizing or promoting them. This group of tribes, therefore, looks at major community Meetei. The COPAI32 conducted historical survey on ‘what the aspirations of the smaller tribal groups like Kom, Chiru, Aimol, Kharam, Koireng etc are?’ They emotionally state that they were caught in the dilemma of big fish eating the small fish situation. They received causalities and atrocities from both the Kukis and the Nagas. They also wanted to be under the protection of the Meeteis. They did not want to be a party to the conflict by affiliating or aligning with either the Kukis or the Nagas.

The question is ‘How far Meetei help for the Intermediate tribes?’ The COPAI concluded that the Meetei never come and enquired about the well-being of tribes. The Meetei who were employed in the government services and posted at hilly areas as doctors, teachers, officers etc. but received their salary by remaining at home, and without serving there, have also created distrust and ill will among the hill brothers. During the Kuki-Naga clash the helping hand of Meetei is longer and accepted by ethnic tribes, though it was not equal distribute towards tribes. After the clash, tribal’s have shown a highly doubtful towards the Meetei that ‘whether the Meetei help for particular group or in the interest of the Meetei ethnic group itself’ because of gliding between the

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30 Our Special Correspondence, “Church Leaders Meet for Fair Poll”, Imphal: The Sangai Express, 5 June 2011.
32 Committee on Peace and Integrity (COPAI) was formed by civil society of the Nagas, Kukis and Meeteis during the ethnic clash of 1992.
Naga and the Kuki. Therefore, whatever development program taken by Meetei is very thorny to reach the village of tribal areas. Even, in the present day, no civil organization of valley based landed on the hills by the resistance of major tribes.

5.7.5 Armed Movements: The Last Option

It is a fact that couple with existing dominant attitude of the bigger community within the ethnic umbrellas, government’s failure in administration and carelessness of Meetei community contribute in woes of smaller communities in Manipur. The intermediate tribes, therefore, have to look out for other means that can bring them in the centre stage of politics. Therefore, one of the easy ways in such a condition is thought to be the armed struggle. One likes it or not, this can be seen as a continuous ideational practice that was once legitimized in the form of the ‘Village Defense Force’ which was assumed to be a product of the infamous Kuki-Naga clash in the ‘90s. During the clash each and every men of the village voluntarily joined the Village Defense Force (VDF) for security of the village. Though the overt clash seems to be over, the smoke of the violent conflict is still looming large in the state. When one may ask ‘What should be done for the future of the village or ethnic community?’ an insecure tribe may reply that the easy way for the security is to re-organize and re-arrange the village voluntary force and undertake what is often termed as “revolutionary activities”. United Tribal’s Liberation Army (UTRA), United Komrem Revolutionary Army (UKRA), Kom Rem People’s Convention etc. are the armed “revolutionary group” of Kom Rem people. In reality, it is the heir the Village Defense Forces with the aim of “sovereignty”.

Such activities not only heighten the already saturated tensions between different communities in the state but also exacerbate the problems of insurgency in the entire region. Now, the problem of insurgencies has become more complex and very difficult to handle in the state of Manipur. Issues of human right violations, atrocities, kidnapping, killings etc happen to be quite a pervasive phenomenon. At the same time, the demands based on identity and cultural recognition also needs to be addressed properly. The numbers of issues are spiraling in one form or the other, and this creates many forms of tensions and conflicts. Therefore, it is pertinent to think of some modalities through
which the smaller tribes are ensure of fair representation in political forums and incorporate them in the decision making process of the state.

5.8 Political Violence: As a Factor for Ethnic Conflict in the State

Since its annexation with the Indian Union in 1949, Manipur has remained a hotbed for various insurgency related activities. Since then, there is not a single decade, that, the insurgent outfits have kept silent. The controversial agreement of “Manipur Merger Agreement, 1949” is still not justified by any law. Therefore the agreement not only paved the way to chaos in the state but also affected the inter-ethnic relation. In an assessment of the situation of Manipur in 2006, American Consul General (ConGen) in Kolkata Henry Jardine wrote that “the overwhelming presence of military and police officers contribute to the impression that Imphal was under military occupation”. In ConGen’s many interactions, even with some government officials, a reoccurring comment was that “Manipur was less a state and more a colony of India”. He reported in a cable sent on September 1, 2006 (76968: confidential). According to the leaked Embassy cable, authorities have committed numerous human right violations under the AFSPA. Governor [S.S] Sidhu admitted to ConGen that the Assam Rifles in Particular are perpetrators of violations”. In this point, the claims of all insurgency are truth that the government of India is a conqueror while it is union of states. This is considered in a telegram sent by former Assam Governor Sri Prakasa to Sarder Patel said

“HH (His Highness) must not under any circumstances be allowed to return to Manipur with advisors and I have accordingly instructed police to detain here his party if they attempt to return before signing of agreement. Please telegraph immediately repeat immediately authority for detention of HH and advisors under regulation III or by whatever other means you consider might be appropriate. Have already warned sub-area to be prepared for any eventuality in Manipur.”

The telegram statement shows that though the maharaja was not willing to sign merger but due to by threaten he signed the agreement. So it concluded that the merger

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34 Ibid
agreement was forceful agreement. Such the merger agreement is the first political violation in the state and then ethnicity trigger in diverse ways.

5.8.1 Merger Agreement: It’s Impact on Ethnic Relation

When the maharaja of Manipur had signed the ‘controversial Merger Agreement’ on September 21, 1949, Manipur already adopted and enacted a democratic government. Without the consent of the government and people, any agreement entered by the king was considered void and invalid. Therefore, it was particularly the Hills leaders who were strongly opposing the merger. It is said that R Suisa, an elected MLA from Tolloi Constituency had lost his consciousness for three hours at House of A. Daiho (Speaker) when he learned about the merger. Even A. Daiho who had once boycotted the election of 1948 in Mao-Maram areas vehemently protested against the merger. One boy had been killed by the state forces in the course of the agitation. The dominant elites of the Meeteis of that period were in favour of the merger into the India Union and so there had no immediate reaction from the Meeteis against the said Agreement.35

After the merger, the relation between hills and valley was extremely changed. Prof. Gangmumei holds a view that the merger had created a political vacuum in the hill areas of Manipur as the Delhi rule did not have any democratic base in the hills. The Advisory Council of Part-C State had nothing to do in the state because of limited power. This vacuum was gradually filled up by the Naga National Council (NNC). The Nagas of Manipur were compelled by the historical circumstances to embrace the nationalist movement of A.Z. Phizo (Naga leader). So, whatever might be the case, the merger was largely responsible for setting off the Meeteis and the Nagas towards divergent historical trajectories.

It was explained in the previous chapter that British ruled India Sub-Continent by using the mean of ‘Divide and rule theory’. India followed same steps of British procedure in North East India. Government of India recognized the ethnic names in Manipur as Koireng, Mao, Maram, Tangkhul, Khongsai etc in the official gazette of

35 Sanatomba Kangujam, “Myths of ethnic conflict”, Imphal: Epao-Net, accessed on 24, 28 October 2011
1951. But this Act was modified in 1956 and the Act itself grouping the tribes for administrative encourage as ‘any Naga group or any Kuki group or any Lushai tribes’. This grouping of tribe is the pliers of diversity Naga or Kuki tribes into unity towards a political motto and other side distances among the ethnic tribes.

5.8.2 Rising Insurgencies

Insurgency movement in the state had started before its merger to Indian Union. The ‘October Revolution of 1950’ was a reaction against political parties like the ‘Manipur State Congress’ who agitates for merger with the Indian Union. The 60 year old insurgency scenario and its related political violence are now at the benthic stage. This insurgency movement is must referred to ‘Indo-Manipur Conflict’ by the scholars. Prof. R.K Ranjan projecting the insurgency issues as a part of South East Asia. All the revolutionary movements, therefore, which have been occurring in south East Asia region, by large, influenced the North eastern India too. (Other factors of arm revolution will be discussed in the next chapter) We had also seen that the insurgencies in Northeast Region of India (NRI) are similar in its aim and object that is liberation from the Indian rule or Right to Self-Determination (RSD). Perhaps, the slogan for Right to Self Determination is echoed not only from the insurgencies but also from civil societies. Since independence, there are number of insurgency groups appear and disappear in every decade with same identical object and continuing it in line for RSD. Although,

36 Kuki war, Jadongnang movement, Nupa-lal (men war), and Nupi-Lals (first and second women war) have sown the seeds of insurgency in present Manipur. The events are at least one or more remarkable impact in the socio, economy and political realm of Manipur and linking to the present circumstances of the Right to Self Determination issue.

37 It is also known hundred guns war. In fact the rising of insurgency in Manipur is linked with the rise of insurgency movements in its neighboring states and countries, with an objective of Right to Self-Determination (RSD) or to be liberated from the Indian rule. If clinically examine the movement, it has crossed sixty years and considered it one of the oldest movement not only in North-East India but also India itself. (See Naorem Sanajaoba, Manipur's 1950 Revolution Revisited, 2008, http://nsanajaoba.blogspot.com, accessed on 5th July 2013.

38 He generalized that the Northeast region is culturally a part of South East Asia. The indigenous people and some migrant people too have a close affinity with the South East Asia. The region (South East Asia) is famous for its fertile soil germinating a series of arm revolutionary movements in the world.

there was no difference between newly appearing and already disappeared insurgencies, the leader of disappeared groups lead the new ones (new wine in old bottle). It means that only the name of groups change but the leaders and staffs are remain the same. Therefore, if we study about the insurgency in Manipur, we must discuss within the period of domination or since merger with the Indian union. Besides, there are many other armed groups who accept the domination but still struggling for power and resources. It is necessary to study here the evolution of insurgency amongst various communities.

Red Guard revolution of Manipur Communist Party (MCP) under the Supremo (leadership) Hijam Irabot was the first movement against the Govt. of India. It was followed as second wave in 1960s by the dissatisfied cadre of MCP in the name of Meetei State Committee (MSC). And then, United National Liberation Front (UNLF), People Liberation Army (PLA), Peoples’ Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK), Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) and Kanglei Yawol Kanba Lup (KYKL) etc emerged with the motto of Right to self determination against Indian Rule. Meetei Pangal community, a minority group in the valley, formed Peoples’ United Liberation Front in1993. In the beginning the insurgencies were organized to demand for united Manipur sovereignty instead of ethnic line or separate homeland. It was very difficult to say that these are only the Meetei Insurgencies because the founder members are from the different ethnic community, even cadres were also largely from different communities. They formed common front for working at the valley as well as hills. On other side from April, 1953 onward Govt. of India resorted to mass arrest and torture of the NNC members and Naga people in the Naga Hills. As a result, A.Z phizo and other members of NNC were forced to go underground. This was the premium history of Naga insurgency in the proxy war against the govt. of India. The refusal of ‘Shillong Accord’ signed between NNC and Govt. of India led to the emergence of the NSCN in 1980 from the NNC and it again split into two fractions as NSCN-IM and NSCN-K. The national movement of NSCN concerned more with Manipur after the development of Shillong Accord. Another fraction from the NSCN-K led by Ketobi and Khole is working in the name of unification as NSCN-U. Now fractions of NNC, NSCN-IM, NSCN-K, NSCN-U has actively been invoking in the peace process.
The late 1980s show emergence of the Kuki militants for the first time. Before that they jointed movement the Mizo National Front (MNF). On 5 August 1987 the political wing Kuki National Organization (KNO) was formed and then army wing Kuki National Army (KNA) come. Today there are more than half a dozen organization such as Kuki National Army (KNA), Kuki National Front (KNF), Kuki Liberation Army (KLA), Kuki Commando Force (KCF), KFC, Kuki Defense Force (KDF), Kuki Independent Army (KIA), United Kuki Liberation Army (UKLA) etc. actively working. In the Suspension of Operation with the Government of India 19 Kuki insurgencies give consent to the peace process. Most of these organizations are supposedly fighting for Kuki homeland, autonomy and sovereignty against India and Burma.

5.8.3 Right to Revolution: A Way to Sovereignty

People of Manipur claim ‘demanding Right to self Determination’ is legitimate claim under in the light of the guidelines of the United Nations for exercising the right to self determination. The guidelines being i) a history of independence or sovereignty in a identifiable territory ii) a distinct culture iii) a will and capacity to regain self-determination. All these guidelines fulfill by Manipuri people for exercising the Right to Self Determination (RSD). The right is referred, according to International Court of Justice, to the people rather than held by the government alone. The people of Manipur

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41 Manipuri itself is known by 22 names in different ages and different times. Prof. Acharya of Guwahati University observed that Manipur was known to the Arabic, Persian, Greek, Romans, Chinese, Burmese, Shans and other historian, as international trade route of silk of the past. Oinam Bogeshowar observed that the state had centralized constitutional government since A.D 429. Henry Yule point outs an identifiable territory of Manipur since 1500 A.D. ‘Loiyumba Shinyen’ a written constitution, mentions of the kingdom since 1110 A.D. all the events are recorded in the Chitharol Kumpapa, Royal Chronicle of Manipur including listing the names of 76 Kings. The archeological evidence of the royal palace ‘Kangla’ is still available. The Court of Justince was of three kinds on the basis of traditional customary laws. There were also international agreements that recognized Manipur, as independent kingdom. Mention may be made especially of 1470 agreement between the king Kiyamba of Manipur and Khekomba of Pong, Anglo- Manipuri Friendship Treaty in 1762, Anglo-Manipuri Defense Protocol of 1763 and Treaty of Yandaboo in 1826. Office of the political agent or ambassador set up in the British territory in 1835 in Lakhimpur as well as Calcutta also talks about the same. Barrister Ghose argued that Manipur was an independent Kingdom which was recognized by the British government. The parameter stipulated by Montevido Convention, 1993 of an independent state, viz, A) State B) Population C) Government D) Capacity to
have touched the right to self-determination under the guidelines of the United Nations. But insurgents claimed that Government of India is suppressor the right through the military might. This is another political violation in the state Manipur.

5.8.4 Counter Insurgency (COIN) Program

While insurgency provoke some kind of political ideology that involves warfare conducted either by group or groups against the other groups or the state authority. Prof. R.R Damala categorized them into terrorist that can be understood as violent manifestation of their activities and actions. Every government facing the challenges of terrorism may confront one or more forms of violence such as (a) propaganda-organizational activities (b) terrorism (c) guerrilla warfare and (d) mobile conventional warfare. Each type of threat involves different techniques and poses a unique problem for

maintain external relation has been found in the state in Manipur. ii) Distinct culture: The people of Manipur are Mongoloid group speaking Tibeto-Burman language. Dr. Grierson in his work Linguistic Survey of India suggested that the language is very different from others in the present day India. The Manipuris follow the endogenous religion while some are converted into the Christianity. Prof. Lokendro Arambam observed that Meetei used the higher religion of Hindu to the needs of indigenous religion. Before 1947, there was no India, but there were British India, Mughal India and Ashoka Empire. They never touched upon the administration of Manipur. The publications of the first Prime Minster of India do not mention anything about Manipur and her people. iii) A will and capacity to regain self-determination: After merger, the first revolutionary government known as ‘Revolutionary Government of Manipur’ was installed in the state Manipur. Then it was followed by PLA and UNLF by curving out the ‘liberated zone’ near to the border area of eastern side where they ran their political and civil administration. Amongst the civil groups, AMSU initiated the campaigned for self-determination in the public space for discussion of self-determination inviting different professional persons. Implementation of the AFSPA 1958 which suspended the right to life is triggering a strong feeling of alienation to the state that India colonized Manipur. Irom Sharmila fast-onto-death, Pebam Chittaranjan’s self-immolation and nude protest by a group of women at kangla’s western gate against the Indian Army are continuing event for the demand self-determination. Many civil societies including Pan-Manipuri Youth League demanding revival of the pre-Hindu period; Script, language, Culture and establish temple and religious ceremony. The National Convention on Manipur Merger Issue was held on 28-29 Oct 1993 at Imphal resolved that merger agreement did not have any legality and constitutional validity. The present demand ‘Plebiscite’ to resolve the ‘Indo-Manipuri conflict’ was started in 1990s by RPF. On 6 June, 2005 address to the Plebiscite by dignitaries including the heir of former King of Manipur, former MPs, Human Right Commissioner, president Working Journalist Union, leader of political parties, students and women groups. In the discussion reflected the National Will and Capacity to govern the state Manipur by the people of Manipuri itself without interferes of others.

42 R.R Damala, Understanding State Response towards Terrorism in North East India, paper presented at Regional Seminar on “Role of Public Administration and Terrorism” organized by Dept of Political Science Assam University, in association with IQAC Assam University and IIPA (Assam Chapter) Guwahati, 25 the March 2009.
the government. Accordingly it is suggested that the government response to the nature of insurgency as

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non State sponsor</th>
<th>State sponsor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terrorist threat</td>
<td>Intensified Police Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guerrilla warfare</td>
<td>low level military response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Conventional warfare</td>
<td>Conventional operations by the military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propaganda organizational activity</td>
<td>Civic action administration, low level police activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: RR Dhamala, *Understanding State Response towards Terrorism in North East India*

But the last several decades has seen the highest conflicts between the state and the non-state armed groups on the one hand and among its ethnic groups on the other, on the issues of exclusivity, governance and integration. Bandhs, road blockades and protest rallies are common features alongside a large quantity of small firearms in circulation in the state. According to South Asia Terrorism Portal, New Delhi, 5121 people have lost their lives in conflict-related incidents in the state during the 1992-2008. The conflicts have resulted in a series of flashpoints that have gained national, if not global attention. Therefore, it has been nagging problem of the country to tackle insurgency cause violence. Such challenges for a democratic government become doubly difficult because while implementing its counter insurgency programs it has to ensure that minimum loss is inflicted on the common public and that the human rights of the people are not violated. Without strong and effective administrative machinery even a well-formulated strategic may fail to yield the result.

It is said that Counterinsurgency (COIN) operations have evolved over decades in fighting against insurgency and terrorism in India. It may be defined as ‘comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and

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address its root causes’. Unlike conventional warfare, non-military means are often the most effective strategic, with military forces playing an enabling role. COIN is an extremely complex undertaking, which demands policy makers not only a detailed understanding of their own specialist field, but also a broad knowledge of a wide variety of related disciplines. Strategies will usually be focused primarily on the population rather than the enemy and will seek to reinforce the legitimacy of the affected government while reducing insurgent influence. This can often only be achieved in concert with political reform to improve the quality of governance and address underlying grievances, many of which may be legitimate. Indian approach to Counter Insurgency has been a mix of political accommodation, economic development and the use of military force to restore normalcy.44

5.8.5 Counter Insurgency and Ethnic Conflict

India learnt lessons from the British army’s counterinsurgency experience in Malaya like re-grouping of villages, isolation of the population and area domination.45 Since independence government allowed to recognize the registration of ethno based cultural or political organization. The lessons learnt from counterinsurgency too seem similar with this ‘Divide and rule policy’. For time to time, re-grouping the ethnic based organization is accepted because of legitimate procedure granted by the Constitution of India. The best example is many Kuki tribes identified the Naga identity in post Kuki-Naga Clash of 1992 and there is also another intermediate Tribe’s unification canvassing. Re-identification of signers of SoO is another latest canvassing which is accepted by both state and central government. Some signers are partner of NSCN-IM whose are accepted Naga Unification and against the Kuki campaign for Homeland or Zalen’gam in the older time. Even though Khulmi National Union was unrecognized, the movement of this group is directly opposed to the Thadou Kuki campaigned. All these campaign portraying internal chaos against each other. In the beginning of insurgency, various communities’

45 Robert Asprey, War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History, Macdonald and Jane’s, London 1975, p.147
contribution to the common goal is side line now by fractional conflict and chauvinist manners.

As part of counter insurgency, ethnic disorder is essential in the state. Ethnic disorder is the best policy to control the insurgent who operate in multi-ethnic state. Subir Bhaumik said “often Indian Intelligent agencies have played rival insurgencies fractions against each other to weaken and control the relatively stronger revel groups”. 46 As external politics of India, Indira and Rajiv Gandhi promoted LTTE to destroy the Lanka Government and Mukti Bahini for independent Bangladesh from the Pakistan rule. Likewise, Indian intelligence set up Boro insurgency and help three crore to destroy the ULFA. Senior officer R. Swaminath went to the battalion of MMB and SFF in Arunachal Pradesh with 20 special commandos for training the Boro Insurgent. “In the border states, RAW has always been active in supporting militant local bodies. RAWs actions are dictated by the logic that if it did not come into the picture the border state militants would be lured by foreign agencies”.

Therefore Government of India or RAW actively set up the insurgent on the logic of foreign hand defend. So Tripura National Volunteers (TNV) is set up as RAW protege. Another RAW body in the Northeast is the People’s Militia of Manipur (PMM). 47 Super spy M.K Dar in his writing: “he did ‘cultivate’ RK Priyoberta, RK Madhujit, Laishram Joychandra, Daveshor dev Sharma”. 48 Further he said “A few top functionaries of the RGM were recruited as paid agents of the Intelligent Bureau”. 49 The information relating to insurgencies collected from various place of Imphal East and West, Bishenpur and Thoubal. They had known the journey plan of around 50 cadres to the East Pakistan. 50 And finally, they (intelligence) destroyed insurgencies which bore the lack of confidence towards insurgencies by the people particular hills people. In a little while,

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48 M.K Dar, Open Secrete: India’s Intelligence Unveiled, Manas Publication: New Delhi, 2005, p.106.  
49 Ibid, p.108.  
50 Ibid, p.110.
hills people step out to support the movement of right to self determination in present day Manipur.

The Government of India supports the Tibetan movement by giving the asylum to the spiritualist Dalai Lama. This is balancing the Chinese support to the Northeast Insurgencies. Many Kuki rebel who revolts against the Burma government is supported by Government of India by giving asylum even arms and financial.\(^{51}\) This is also another policy which minimizing the Burmese allowed to use their land as base camp by Indian Insurgents.

Perhaps, a fractional insurgency of Kuki group demanded Home-land to the Government of India would affect state politics but it won’t brought changed the boundary of India. Therefore, Kuki insurgents are particularly supported by the government of India. So it is remarking as “Last few years; from valley, hills particularly Churhandpur/Mizoram large number of RAWs had been entered. It is not only for pay but also fight the Naga expansionism”.\(^{52}\) Some fractional insurgency of Kuki in collaboration with Indian Army attacked very frequently on the valley based insurgency is in the news. Now, Naga Insurgencies could not control over the different places that is claiming ‘ancestral land’. On the other side, there was a mass rape case to the Hmar girls (25 girls) by the UNLF in Parbung and Thanlon Areas. It was a national issue and condemn from the far away people including Global forum.\(^{53}\) At last, inquire conducted by Human Rights Alert (NGO) based at valley collaboration with Indian Army, and then there was not single evidence found of rape. People believed that the drama is created with an intention by the Indian Army for divide the unity of Manipur and consequently loss the helping of tribal to the valley based insurgents.


5.8.6 Cease Fire and SoO

Government of India’s peace initiative to the Northeast India is setup first by peace-talk with the NSCN-IM after Mizo turn to permanent settlement. Now most of the insurgencies in Northeast India are under either the cease fire or SoO (suspension of operation) formally or informally. The Naga and the Kuki operating in the Manipur are never being touched the guide line of the United Nation for the self-determination. That is why common believed Kukis and Nagas insurgents are turned their motto from the sovereignty to autonomy. In the peace process still Government of India difficult to find out ‘the path’ accepted by the communities of Manipur. In the issue of cease fire and SoO, Government of India has been playing ‘Double-Standard’. For example they accepted the ‘unique History of Naga’ in front of the Naga and other side proclaims ‘can’t change the boundary of neighboring state’. On the other hand Muivah warns that if Government of India sideline the unique History of Naga, war on the front. So, on this diversion view, AMUCO concluded that the peace talks will not have final conclusion. And then, ethnic people live in the situation of upheaval are Delhi’s desire. Renowned theater personality like Kanaihalal blaming Delhi comment on the cease fire that it is an arrangement of Delhi for ethnic people killed against each other. In the peace process still Government of India did not create an environment of confidence. Very frequently civil societies of the Kukis supporting by ethnic army called to band and blockade in the national High way for the creation Kuki district. And at the same time, there is no sign of composite dialogue. Peace meal dialogue may not bring a durable solution of the state problem within a reasonable time because insurgents of Manipur want political solution instead of peace only. If composite dialogue would be performed then, there was no demand for ‘Zeliangrong live as Zeliangrong’ and statement of (NSCN-KK) Kitovi ‘Manipur Naga thinks for Manipur Naga alone’ would not have come.

So on, in the name of peace process ethnic groups in Manipur and its cognitive people either in Nagaland or Mizoram are in the artificial conflict situation. If ethnic groups did not carefully convince each other than ethnic clash may come at anytime.
Migration as a universal phenomenon has been continuing since the dawn of human civilization. Though it has both positive and negative impact to the society or state, no country of the world can isolate so far from this process of the migration. It is a core issue not only in far corner but also at global forums. Recently it is studied as a discipline of social sciences because of its significance. Especially in the conflict prone areas, the migrants are used as ‘weapon of ethnic warriors’ while most of the groups can’t understand internal dynamics of ethnic society itself. Manipur have continuous influx of both internal and international migrants originating from mainland India and aliens coming from neighboring countries like Bangladesh, Nepal and Myanmar. Therefore, historians called the history of Northeast India generally and particularly Manipur is the ‘History of Migrants’. The question ‘who are migrant people in Northeast India’ is the central mindset in this region and at the same time it is exposed by ‘who are not migrant in Northeast India?’ The premise concludes that all the people of the North-East India originally coming from different directions. Therefore study on dynamics of migration in the region must be great appraisal. It also suggested that using the migrant people for the political power through the election and then, physically and mentally is one of the factors for the conflict. Most ethnic groups follow model of greater China which has 15% of the total population of the world, therefore, if there is a war between men to men without technology, and then the victory of the Chinese is the fact. In electoral politics too, larger population group always win when election may contest by different ethnic group what it is called ‘Majority Win the Vote’. Therefore, the migration issue would not be studied simply as issue of humanity or globalization generally in Northeast India and particular in Manipur.

There are number of definitions about the term migration. The popular definition is given by the United Nations Multilingual Demographic Dictionary as ‘a form of geographical mobility or spatial mobility between one geographical unit and another,  

54 Marxist line of thought says that in the war between bourgeois and proletariat, latter will be the winner because it has large population. Poor people or exploited people unite and revolt against the exploiter or ruling class will success when mass people support the revolutionary core.
generally involving a change in residence from the place of origin or place of departure to
the place of destination or place of arrival’. Further it defines as – “a person who has
changed his usual place of residence from one migration defining area to another at least
once during the migration interval”. It is generally studied under two headings i.e.
internal migration and international migration. Internal migration is the spatial
movements of individuals within the country while international migration refers to the
movement of people from one country to another. The migration within and between the
state of a country belongs to the internal migration. Therefore, the study on the migration
issue in Manipur has both the migration waves since the ancient time. Under the
international migrations, Nepalese, Bangladeshis, Myanmar’s Kukis are densely
populated and Myanmar’s Tamil also concentrated in economic zone of border town
Moreh. Among the internal migration, the immigrants from the Hindi belt of Indian
Republic (Bihar, U.P. etc.) are the most considerable groups. The second recognizable
group is the immigrants of south India (Tamil Nadu and Kerala). Marwari and Bengalis
are also settled in the heart of the Imphal city. The Myanmar’s Kuki and Nepali are
difficult to differentiate with the indigenous people because of same mongoloid stroke
though some Nepalese are Aryan in looks.

5.9.1 Factors for Migration

There are certain push and pull factors that are directly or indirectly responsible for the
migration. Generally, migration takes place from less developed and developing countries
to developed countries; less develop state to developed state; urban to urban; rural to
urban, etc. the common tendencies associated with the migration is the earning of income
and remittance. The present trend of migration is from less-developed countries of Asia
and Latin America to more developed countries. Such trend is considered to be impact of
differential economic and demographic condition between developed and less developed
countries. In another dimension, migration takes place in order to distribute and utilize
labor, capital, crowding out local production of tradable goods of the place of origin etc.
The above two cases of migration is from the economic point of view. Scholars consider
that the reality of the migration clearly lies somewhere in between these two extremes.
5.9.2 Post-Merger Population Scenario

Manipur merged into the Indian Union on 15th October 1950. Therefore in the last sixty years the uncontrolled influx, both foreigners and internal migrants have accumulated into such a scale that today the total number of indigenous tribal population is outnumbered by the number of migrants in Manipur. The table: 10 show the rate of district wise increasing population of Manipur.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senapati</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>37.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamenglong</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>30.016%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churachanpur</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>34.966%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandel</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>40.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukhrul</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>30.174%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imphal</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>7.11</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>9.68</td>
<td>25.082%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishnupur</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>25.188%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoubal</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>27.562%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total(state)</td>
<td>7.81</td>
<td>10.72</td>
<td>14.20</td>
<td>18.36</td>
<td>22.93</td>
<td>27.21</td>
<td>28.512%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Handbook of Manipur 2012, directorate of Economics & Statistics, Govt. of Manipur

The data is from the 2001 census. As per the 2001 Census report, the total population of the state is 22,93,896 in which the tribal population is 868249 (indigenous tribes + migrants tribes). The population growth rate of the state is less when it compare to other states and national growth rate. Table no. 11 shows the total number of Influx with offspring, indigenous as tribal and non-tribal strength.

Table No. 11: Strength of Indigenous Tribal, Non Tribal and Migrant people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of population</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Tribes population</th>
<th>Non tribe population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<p>| | | | |</p>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous people</td>
<td>15,89,408</td>
<td>6,70,782</td>
<td>9,18,626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant people</td>
<td>7,04,488</td>
<td>1,97,467</td>
<td>5,07,021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous + migrant</td>
<td>22,93,896</td>
<td>8,68,249</td>
<td>14,25,647</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Handbook of Manipur 2001, directorate of Economics & Statistics, Govt. of Manipur

The table shows that indigenous people can be classified into two as tribes and non-tribe people. One third of the state population is composed by influx of migrant people. The indigenous tribe is less then migrant people and it even closer to non tribes or general group. If it can classify the indigenous people into ethnic group then, their number is at micro level (see Table No. 12.1 and 12.2). The migrant tribe is more than indigenous ethnic tribes. This phenomenon of making the indigenous tribes minorities in their own land was not developed in a natural course, but rather a result of total indifference to this state by the government of India in all respects and not having a clear policy to deal with the migrants issue and keeping a porous international border for a long time.56

5.9.3 Impact of Migrants

Culture: Migration is one of the major factor contributing imbalances to the ethnic equation in Manipur. The state, as we know, is already having ethnic competition since ethnic army emerge. Therefore the state had been bearing the burden of increased population so also the burden of having less finance to manage the problem.

The crux of the problem is that these outsiders have not been assimilated to the existing culture of the state. Rather, because of sheer greatness in number they have managed to retain their identities and have become an onerous addition to the pluralistic society. At the outset there seems to be nothing wrong in society becoming more pluralistic in nature. But many tribal communities are very small in term of number. Therefore when tribal group comes into contact with these outsiders, they become a minority in all respect. Hence they are losers in any kind of competition – jobs,

56 Ibid.
livelihood, etc. - in their own homeland. The result is that the outsiders have the upper hand in all respect.

Another great threat to these small groups of people is that the cultural elements of the outsiders are not alien at all to them. They have already been initiated to these elements through the constant contacts with the outsiders. Therefore, since the outsiders are not, in any situation, ready to assimilate to the culture of the state, the small groups are in danger of getting assimilated themselves to the outsiders. This means that the indigenous peoples of the state – at least the smaller groups- are at the verge of extinction as was the case of the American indigenous people (Red Indian). Sociologically, survival of the ethnic groups means the interaction of the members among themselves and behaving in the patterns prescribed by the norms of the culture. When one is interacting and behaving in some other patterns that is prescribed by the culture of another rather than one’s own, that existence does not make any meaning. This is the immediate and outright threat to the Manipuri national sub-groups. Even the larger community-Meetei is also under great threat since the element of the cultural patterns of these communities, as mentioned above. If definite measure doesn’t be taken up, only a miracle can save the Manipuri national sub-groups from the extinction through ethnocide or cultural genocide.

Economy: The huge influx of migrants from outside the state necessitates fresh examination of the traditional supplementary role of the inter-state migrant labors. Relatively, low skilled migrants provide competition for jobs with poorly educated natives. Migrant workers, because of their minimal social engagements unlike the native workers, are in position to offer themselves at a wage much below the reserve price of local workers. They are cheaper but have opportunity to settle down, and then begin to compete in the primary sector labor market. In short, such a large number of migrants affect adversely the distribution of the fruits of development, however meager it may be.

Trade and commerce has an important role in Manipur because of backwardness in agriculture and lack of industries. Unfortunately, this sector (trade and commerce) is dominating by outsiders namely, the Marwaris, Bengalis and Sikhs in and around Imphal. The Manipur Chamber of Commerce (MCC) plays an important role in price fixation of essential commodities in the state. During 1972 to 2004 all the presidents of MCC were
the Marwaris and the Sikhs. All the honorary General Secretary also belongs to these communities except for once during 1996-2004. Therefore, the price differential between Manipur and rest of India is not responsible by transport cost or road blockade alone. It is responsible of immigrant businessmen who would always be on the lookout only their capital in the price fixation.

The process of development generates job opportunities. In the absence of proper manpower planning, chances of mismatch between demand for and supply of manpower are high. When migrant labor filled up the gap, the local manpower has less room for adjustment and there is a gradual erosion of their market share. In the absence of influx of migrant laborers, the adjustment process would have ensured that the benefits of development accrue to the local people who are not finding enough job opportunities. But outsiders are merrily entering the state to joint the work force. This may be a major alienation of the youth from the mainstream.

**Political:** The influx of ‘foreign national’ as well as outsiders without any effective control will have very far reaching political consequences that will threaten the very existence of the Manipuri identity. Example of such a scenario can be vividly seen in the case of Tripura state. It is believed by ethnic groups that these immigrants are more dangerous than the British colonizers. In fact this trend can be considered as a second colonization. The issue of ‘Foreign Nationals and Immigrants’ can be fully understood, if one visits the hill constituency of ‘Kangpokpi’ which become a general constituency, visitor think that the place is not Manipur. Kangpokpi is basically a hilly constituency and surrounded in all sides by reserved scheduled tribe constituencies. However due to immense pressure from the immigrants Nepalese, the constituency become a general constituency, in the above constituencies it was not surprise that in the mid-term assembly election of 1974 just after the delimitation, one Nepali Keshore Thapa elected as MLA of Kangpokpi Assembly Constituency. It was the political climax of Manipur.

From above discussion, it may be fairly concluded that if certain specific protection measures are not taken up immediately, Manipur will have a drastic change in the near future and the days when a Manipuri will become an alien in his own land may
not be far away. No one overlook the fact that some of the indigenous sub-groups in the
state have very tiny population. In such delicate ethnic balance, migrating of lakhs of
outsiders has become a doom to the indigenous inhabitants. In the onslaught of the
numerous immigrants, either major groups or minor groups have little chance of survival
and protection of their own identities.

Indeed, the ethnic conflict in the state cannot be attributed solely to one single
factor. It was the result of the various issues in contemporary emerged. It is evident that
not only historical roots but contemporary issues- land and resource ownership tendency,
border trade, political representative and their political stand points, political violence of
the State as counter insurgency, the issue of merger agreement and impacts of the
migration and it politics etc. all contribute in developing tensions between different
groups and therefore lead to between them.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL No.</th>
<th>Name of Sub-group</th>
<th>Population (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aimol</td>
<td>2643 (0.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gangte</td>
<td>15100 (5.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hmar</td>
<td>42690 (14.48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Purum</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Mizo</td>
<td>10520 (3.57)</td>
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<td>Total (%)</td>
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</table>

Source: [http://kukiwiki.com](http://kukiwiki.com)

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<th>Population (%)</th>
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<td>Chiru</td>
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Source: [http://nagawiki.com](http://nagawiki.com)