CHAPTER-6

PROBLEMS OF UNREST:

It has been common these days to interpret developments in Manipur in the light of the presence of insurgency groups in the State. In fact, law and order situation is one of the key factor for slow pace of development. So, it is very much necessary to understand the insurgency problems in the State which has given birth to various problems in socio-economic development. There are number of insurgency groups, i.e., National Socialist Council of Nagaland(IM) & (K), Kuki National Front, Peoples Liberation Army, United National Liberation Front, and Kangleipak Yaonlup Kanba Lup etc., operating in Manipur. In Manipur, insurgency has almost become the order of the day. Today, NSCN(IM), the biggest insurgent group in North-East India is operating in Nagaland, North-Cachar and the hill areas in Manipur. It is leading the insurgency under the guidance of one of the associates of the late A.Z.Phizo, who had propagated the demand for the independence of Nagaland (Ajit K.Danda 1998). There is of course, another faction of NSCN led by Kaphlang, who has retained the headquarters at Kachin in Myanmar. The NSCN(IM) has emerged as the focal point around which other insurgent groups have been moving. Besides NSCN(K), UNLF operates from Myanmar with which the valley insurgent groups of Manipur have developed good coordination. Besides, the Kuki insurgents are also active in Manipur hills. Sometime back, they were engaged in clashes with the Nagas. Their ultimate objective is to establish a Kuki homeland. At present, Manipur has become an important centre of insurgency. A report in the Statesman from Manipur highlights """"The fastest growing industry in Manipur is insurgency and insurgent groups come up with the ease with which companies are floated elsewhere in the country. There are established "Liberation" groups carrying on the struggle for more than 30 years now"""" (Laba 1995: 9).
As a whole, the **insurgence** violence in **Manipur** has virtually turned this state into a battlefield. However, it is well known that while the insurgents in the valley are fighting for an independent Manipur, those in the hills have launched a struggle for an independent Nagaland including Naga-inhabited areas of Manipur. The latest in the fray are the Kukis with the objective of forming a greater **Kuki** home land.

**ORIGIN AND SPREAD OF INSURGENCY:**

The insurgency problems in Manipur came to existence in the late 60's and 70's. There were no problem of insurgency when Manipur merged into India. Later, these problems started slowly and now it has become a big issue in the State as well as Central government. Sarin U.K. (1980:121) pointed out "Political **Integration** alone is not enough. Integration should be accompanied by suitable government measures to consolidate it. The case of Manipur is a clear example of the failure of the government on this account. The fact that integration did not entail any organized revolt immediately and that it occurred at a later stage. The acquiescence of the Manipur to merger was an indication that they were prepared to associate themselves with India".

Moreover, integration was necessary for a State like Manipur because of her non-viability and peculiar geographical position. "Nationalities, however small, would not renounce their sovereign existence when they do not find in the new arrangement changes of protecting their "national" interest as perceived by them **(Sareen, 1981)**."

For example, some of the basic aspirations of the people everywhere are speedy development of their region, increased amenities, better standard of living and a sense of belonging through effective participation in the major activities of the State. One of the reasons for the present insurgency in Manipur is the gradually widening gap between the expectations of the people and their attainments. "The former Governor of Manipur points out that economic backwardness of the State is making the people impatient and egging them on to take into insurgency. He also further said that political integration of Manipur was not followed by the economic development. Instead, the people after integration had to witness a most painful period of neglect and step motherly treatment and indifference right up to the societies" (Burney, S.M.
1981, cited in Frontier Chronicle *Imphal, August 18*. L.P. Singh (1981) says "As insurgency in Manipur is directly linked with the problems of the educated, unemployed youth, channelising their energies by creating employment opportunities will go a long way in weaning them away from the path of violence". To substantiate the above statement, the unemployment problems are also linked with the rotten education system in the State. There is no proper system of learning and teaching in educational institutions. In fact, examination halls are centres of malpractices. Generally, students pass out the degree without having basic knowledge of their concerned subject. As a result of this, they are not in position to compete with other people. Thus, majority of the people rely upon the State government jobs where getting job is possible through bribing higher officials and Ministers. Besides, corruption is also being the principal cause of growing insurgency in Manipur. While there is no denying fact that corruption is found in many other states in India also, the magnitude of the problem as prevailing in Manipur, has threatened the very existence of the society. Apart from this, public money is shared among the Ministers, bureaucrats, the contractors etc. Very little of it percolates down to the people in the form of developmental measures and tangible benefits while the central government has been pouring large amount of money.

All these above facts as a whole can be considered as the main cause of insurgency in Manipur, despite their different goals and objectives. Most of the persons, who joined in the insurgency groups, are youth in the age group of 15-30. In the initial part of the insurgency, revolt was carried in with peaceful and systematic manner and they had better understanding with the people of Manipur. Even people used to have sympathy towards the insurgent groups. Today, it is quite the contrast with the earlier part of the revolt. Because, in the process of revolt for long time they are gradually loosing their good image among the people and, at the same time, number of insurgency groups have increased within a short span of time due to differences of ideas. There are factions among insurgents who are fighting against each other, instead of being united as one group. In fact, if the insurgents in Manipur unite under one group, the problem would be really formidable. But this is not likely to happen because of their inability to see eye to eye with one other. This factionalism among the insurgency groups conveys wrong impression to the public. Many elderly
persons do not approve of the violent path adopted by the insurgents but they are unable to dissuade these youth.

In order to run their organizations, they collect and demand money from various sources i.e. collecting money from business men, villagers, officials etc. Sometimes, insurgents also demand money from Ministers and MLAs. Everybody knows about this fact but nobody has the courage to defend themselves and express it openly.

**INSURGENCY AND THE VILLAGES:**

Here an attempt is made to examine the various problems faced by the villagers due to insurgency. The villages under study have been quite familiar with insurgency groups. At the same time they have come across many problems in their day to day life. During field work, villagers including youth and elderly people complained about the problems faced by them because of insurgents. They used to visit the villages and force the villagers to harbour them for a night or more. Then villagers need to take care of them, sheltering them in the village. They have to provide food to those people. This is also an additional burden to the villagers since they are living in very meagre source of economy. Villagers are forced to provide hospitality to them. Above all, their presence in the villages has created lot of tensions and fear among the villagers. Usually, they come to the villages in groups of not less than 10 members. Even the children are scared by seeing their uniform and guns. Villagers couldn't move freely when the insurgents are present in the village despite of their important works. Sometimes, the chairman of the village requests them not come to the village frequently. It’s really disturbing peace and harmony of the villagers' day to day life activities. As a result of their frequent visits to these villages, youth are getting close to them and it adds more pressure to the parents of youth in the villages. In fact, it is easy to attract youth of the villages, pushing them into this path, since these youth are struggling for survival in the present day society.

Apart from this, insurgency groups have been collecting money in order to raise their funds to be enable to operate their organization. Sometimes, they used to
collect money from the villagers who are economically better off. For instance, an informant, working in the SBI, Imphal, owns three acres wet land. He is married and has two sons. He is considered as one of the most economically better off persons in the village. As narrated by him, insurgency group has collected money from him. Some of the youth came to his house and asked him to donate fifty thousands rupees in cash. He was really shocked and worried. He requested them not to demand money from him, but all his requests were not accepted by the insurgents. Later, he realized that he can not escape from this group. Then he gave assurance to them to donate some money but not fifty thousands. He requested them to reduce the amount to twenty thousands. At last, they came to an agreement that he should pay twenty thousand rupees within a week. And he gave the said amount to insurgents in time. He expressed that all his four months earning was finished just in one day. It really disturbed him mentally and physically. After wards, he was not able to concentrate on his activities both in office and household. His mind was totally carried away by the incident that happened to him. It took a long time for him to come back to his normal life.

Jones, aged about 44 years, living with wife, one son and two daughters. He is also an employee in the Chandel DC Office. His son is studying outside Manipur, and he needs to spend more money for his son’s study. Additionally, he is doing sugar cane cultivation which could get him fifteen thousand rupees to twenty thousand rupees in a year. He is also economically better off when compared to other villagers. He also contributed fifteen thousand rupees to the insurgency group. It was not voluntary contribution from his side. Actually, they threatened him to pay them the money. That was the reason why he has given the said amount. He further expressed that the insurgents who came to him, for demanding money were not well educated, and sometime they behaved badly with him. He was really angry with their behaviour and treatment, but he couldn’t do anything against them. Otherwise, it might have lead to worse consequences.

From the above case studies of the two villagers, it is clearly evident that these groups are able to operate or function in the State with the help of money collected from various sources. It is interesting to note that outsiders or Armies have
assumed that people of Manipur are backing these insurgency groups by giving financial support or giving shelter etc. If one looks at the reality in these two villages, people who have contributed money to insurgents have not done voluntarily as such. Actually, they are threatened and forced to give money to them and these helpless villagers didn't have any alternative to escape from them. This is the reality which one needs to understand. In fact, villagers have developed lots of antagonism towards these groups and criticized them when they are not present in the village. But, none of the villagers of these two villages have the courage to express their feelings and their views. As a whole, this may be the same case in all parts of Manipur.

Thus, insurgency groups have created lots of problems to the villagers. One more interesting thing to note is that the local youth are indulging in robbery, looting and collecting money by taking advantage of the imbroglio created by insurgency. Often one hears that youth who are not really insurgents scare the villagers and collect money from the innocent villagers.

Tongnai, 40 years old, is a farmer and owns two acres of land. He is also working in Excise Department. Two years back, he got demand letter for contributing money to the insurgency groups from three youth who claimed themselves to be insurgents. They have collected ten thousand rupees from him. He has given the money without knowing or enquiring about them since he didn't want to meet them. Later on, he came to know that they don't belong to any of the insurgency groups in Manipur. He also heard that they have been collecting money from various people in the name of insurgency. After two months, they were killed by real insurgents. This type of incidents happen quite frequently and villagers misunderstand insurgents due to these acts of fake insurgents.

Considering this situation, innocent villagers are also put into dilemma in recognizing true insurgents coming to them. Villagers don't dare to do any sort of enquiry about insurgents since they have more power. Ultimately, both the groups, either it may be insurgency or robbery, it appears to the villagers as same. Hence, the villagers are facing problems from both real and fake insurgents. One of the
villagers commented during the field work that insurgency groups are able to survive because of people and they need to be educated regarding their behaviour. He further says that one can't see any positive aspects of change from this revolt in Manipur. Instead of fighting for the real cause they are fighting among themselves and killing each other due to increasing number of factions within the insurgency groups.

Koshal a farmer, lives with his wife and four children. He has 1½ acres of land. He is always busy with agriculture work from morning to evening every day. Generally, he spent most of time working in the field. One night, four youth came to his house and requested him to arrange some food to eat and provide them shelter for one night. That time, all of his family members were in deep sleep. He had to wake up his wife and both of them prepared food and served them. After that he arranged beds and mattresses for them to sleep in his house. They were very polite to him instead of forcing or threatening like any other insurgency groups. Immediately in the next morning they left for another village. Even then, he expressed that he couldn’t sleep the whole night because of the presence of those youth in his house. And he couldn’t go for his agricultural work in the next morning due to night out.

Moreover, there are lots of factions among the insurgency groups which are operating in Manipur. This is also one kind of problems to the villagers. As expressed by the villagers in these two villages, the Naga outfit has two factions and these two groups always fight wherever they meet each other. In the process of fighting number of people have been killed. Besides, if villagers are close to one group, the other one never encourages such relation, and some time they give warning to the villagers not to maintain relations with their opposite group. Actually, none of the villager are interested in maintaining relation with these groups. Unavoidable conditions made the villagers to keep relations with any group. The villagers don’t have alternative to escape from this type of situation. Because of factions among these groups, villager are not having faith on insurgents as they used have earlier. Initially they were from just one group.

Apart from this, it is also clearly seen that there are some difference between in the hill area and plain area with regard to insurgents who visit the villages.
Insurgency groups generally prefer to stay in the hill areas rather than plain areas, to be more secure. Basically, armed forces can easily access plain areas whereas it is not easy for armies to reach hill area. Knowing this, ignoring their comforts, insurgents spend more time in the hill areas rather than the plain areas. Therefore, Minou villagers are facing more problem rather than Khangshim villagers. One incident narrated by village Chairman of Minou is that he went to the Block Development Officer’s residence to submit two application forms for Indira Awaz Yojana scheme on behalf of two villagers. He requested the BDO to select at least one of these two. But the BDO told him that some of the youth who posed themselves to be insurgency group threatened him to sanction Indira Awaz Yojana scheme to one Tangkhul lady. That’s why the BDO gave one Indira Awaz Yojana scheme to that lady. After that, the Chairman had strong argument with the BDO regarding the scheme. Later on, BDO assured him that he will try to provide some other scheme to those two villagers. He further told that the Tangkhul lady is also not going to get the scheme. Because, those youth are going to collect the money on behalf of Tangkhul lady and use the money for their own purpose. It is not clear whether these youth belong to real insurgency groups or not. This incident clearly shows that there is lot of confusion among the people or officials to identify the real insurgents group from fake ones. Basically, they threaten people not to disclose such type of information to any one else. This type of problems put the villagers in to trouble, as well as officials, and affect the image of insurgents who are really involved.

During the fieldwork, around 20 youth carrying guns on their shoulders came to the village. One person among the youth directly came to the Chairman's house and requested him to provide shelter for one night. Generally, whoever from any insurgency groups come to village, will first contact village Chairman for their security. In fact, the Chairman tried to ignore them but somehow they forced him to provide shelter for just one night. Afterwards, the Chairman told them to stay in two selected houses in the village. It was quite evident that villagers were very tense, when insurgents were staying in the night. Some of the villagers didn't go out of the village. Most of the time, villagers request insurgents not to stay in the villages especially in the night. Because, villagers are aware of army's treatment when they come to the village in search of insurgency groups. These groups stay in the hill area...
so that they will not have problem from Army. Certainly, villagers always wish that these two groups (i.e. insurgents and army) stop coming to the village. In fact, they will have very peaceful life despite their economic problems. Obviously, these two parties (Insurgents & Army) are becoming additional problem to them which again creates problems. Due to their frequent visits to the villages, the youth in the villages are developing good rapport with them and some times some of the youth in the villages are easily attracted towards them. To avoid this, elder people in the villages always tell their youngsters, not to maintain close relationship with insurgent groups. Otherwise, they may be influenced by insurgency to involve in their activities, when they are in state of frustration. That is the reason, why parents are also worrying about their children.

**PROBLEMS CREATED BY THE PRESENCE OF ARMY:**

Indian army has been given wide-ranging powers in Manipur State. On top of the existing Armed Forces (special power) Act 1958, National Security Act (NSA), the Terrorists and Disruptive (preventive) Act and Punjab Security of State Act, 1953 are imposed upon the people of Manipur. Consequently, equipped with all the powers, army raided villagers, arrested and tortured many innocent villagers and branded them as insurgency activists and sent them to jail. Many people have been killed in fake encounters. Several civilian villagers have been bombed and shelled by mortars (Shelly, Apam, 7th September 1993). However, deployment of the army to control the insurgency in Manipur has lead to anger of local people. The Indian army men who are racially different tend to look upon every Manipuri as a suspected insurgent. Given the threat to their life, they feel as if they are in an enemy area. It is common to find the army moving for patrolling in every nook and corner of Manipur State and disturbing people who are travelling on the buses and riding bikes. Moreover, the over deployment of army and their combing operations and harassment have quite often led the rural youth joining the insurgents.

Considering the above, it is certainly true that villagers have faced many problems caused by army, as observed during the field study.
According to the villagers, there was an attack on an army convoy by a group of insurgents one year back nearby Khongjom village. Attackers left the place immediately. The army then came to the spot and indefinite curfew was imposed. Sometime later, they had started beating up the people living in the nearby areas. Later on, army came to identify the attackers from the villagers. They called out all the males and questioned about the insurgents. Villagers suffered a lot since they couldn't communicate with army, because most of the villagers don't know Hindi. Besides nobody was able to go out from the village due to curfew imposed by army. In this type of situation, the poor villagers have been the worst hit when frequent curfew was imposed due to such incidences. Because they are the people who are earning their livelihood by engaging themselves in wage labour outside the village, and men and women are engaged in selling vegetables and goods in the market. In fact, such type of incidents created lots of fear among the villagers. It also strongly disturbs them mentally as well as economically. This type of incidents are occurring in different parts of the State. This also plays an important role in the slow development of Manipur. One incident cited by Jane, 38 years old, is working as a Clerk in Imphal Tourism Department. He used to travel by bus to attend his office. He was told that one day there was a bomb blast in Imphal city. At that time he was in his office. As usual, the whole area of Imphal city, came under curfew. Nobody was moving on the road except army forces. That day, he couldn't come back to home due to curfew. All the family members were worried because of his non arrival at home. He didn't have any means to communicate with his family through telephone also. He stayed one night in his friends house in Imphal. Next day he came to the house without facing any problem. The whole night he was worrying about himself and his family members. He expressed that this type of problems are common these days in the state, due to rise of number of insurgency groups.

Here is one more incident narrated by Kopham. He is also an employee in Veterinary Department, Chandel. Generally, he used to attend office thrice in a week. Unfortunately, when he was returning back from office by bus, all the passengers of bus were stopped by the army. Immediately, he suspected that some thing might have happened in this area. Later, he came to know that it was due to the reason that some insurgents have been killed by army forces at Pallel. That's why army stopped
all the buses for two hours and interrogated all the people to find out if there were more or not. Then, after checking they allowed them to go on. He missed the lorry which goes to his village. He didn't have any option to go to his village. That's why he came to his village by foot with so much of difficulty. From then onwards, he is reluctant to go far away from the village As expressed by the Minou villagers, at least some villagers used to visit town market everyday, for selling their products and buying goods from market. They used to go by lorry in the morning and come back in the evening. There were many incidents where villagers come back to the village by foot, when army imposed sudden curfews in the town areas. In such times, Army generally stops lorries going to the hill areas. This gives lots of trouble to the elder people unable to walk in hill tracks. As told by the villagers, these types of problems occurs very frequently. Because of these problems, elderly people do not prefer to go far away from the village.

The problems discussed above show that how people are facing problems due to army as well as insurgency groups operating in Manipur.

Generally, people living in Manipur are very much conscious about going out from their respective villages. It is also rare to see people moving on the road after 7-30 in the night unlike other states of the country.

During the fieldwork a group of army men came to Minou village searching for insurgents. Villagers suspected that army might have got the message of insurgents moving in the hill areas. Because they came to the village the next day after the insurgents group left the village. After army entered the village, they called some of the youth and asked them about insurgents hide-outs. Besides, they searched in some of the selected houses in the village. Before leaving the village, they warned all the villagers not to encourage and provide shelter to insurgents groups. After that they left to another neighbouring village. Villagers said that they would do the same in other village also. In this situation, people who are struggling to earn their daily livelihood are disturbed. Some times they are not able to express their views or problems, created by army to the higher officials, since army has been given more power by the State and Central governments, to tackle the insurgency problem.
in Manipur. In short, the villagers are at the receiving end whether it is the activities of insurgency or that of army.

**VIEWS OF OFFICIALS:**

The discussion and interviews held with the government officials of development agencies, especially for tribal development also revolved round the problems caused by insurgency. According to officials, the insurgency groups have been collecting money from each and every employee in the State. The amount of money contributed by employees depends on the pay scale of the employees. They further expressed that this practice is common for all the employees working in government institutions except army and police. Everybody knows about this issue but nobody complains to any of the higher ups or authorities. Because, they fear that these insurgents may take any ultimate action. Thus, every employee whether small grade or higher grade has to contribute at least some amount to insurgency groups, whenever they get their monthly salary.

Dongel, aged 42 years, who belongs to Khoibu tribe is working as UDC at P.W.D., Chandel. He revealed that one of his office Cashier's used to collect money from all the employees in his department. Insurgents who used to visit the office every first week of the month, and collected the money from the cashier. The entire process of collecting money and dealing with insurgency groups is done by the cashier. Other officials don’t have interaction with the insurgents. He further opined that the cashier may have some possibility to get benefit out of his dealings with them. These days, insurgency groups are coming once in three months due to non-payment of employees’ salary by the state government due to severe financial crisis in Manipur.

Apart from this, it is also not unusual to hear about people using insurgency to serve their vested interests. According to the official sources of DDTBC, Chandel, there was sugar plantation scheme implemented by DDTBC. Two unidentified youth came to the DDTBC office, Chandel, and asked officers to provide the scheme for one person whom they recommended. These Insurgents told the officer that the
person was a close friend of them, and he wanted to avail the loan for sugar cane plantation. Actually, the officer didn't know anything about the applicant recommended by insurgents. Besides, the officer didn't know whether the person was eligible for that scheme or not. Still the officer of DDTBC, Chandel selected the person proposed by insurgency group to avoid further problems. This also sometimes affects the administrative system. Generally officials mention that Manipur is ruled by two governments, i.e., the State Government and the underground groups (Insurgents groups). That's why people are suffering more and more day by day.

An informant who works in DRDA office, Chandel, narrated that, insurgency problem is the main reason for the slow development in Manipur hill areas. Basically, officers who are working in the hill districts, are not interested to be posted in hill areas due to poor infrastructure. Apart from this, insurgents put lots of pressure on them and demand money very frequently, sometime even kidnapping officials. All these problems made the district officers to work in the Head quarter, Imphal, when the financial matters come up for any programmes. Moreover, State government is also not in position to provide security to all the departments located in the hill areas. By taking advantage of security problem, higher officials simply stop coming to the office. Then, other staff are also not serious about their duty since the officers are not present in the office. Due to these factors, majority of the departments in the hill districts are not functioning properly. In this condition, ultimately the poor villagers are main losers. He further expressed that if the insurgency problems are not solved in Manipur, villagers are going to suffer more and more.

Sometimes, they also demand and collect money from the high level officials and Ministers etc. Moreover, all the financial matters of schemes allocation for the district or block are mostly done at the Head Office, Imphal for the security purpose. It also affects the villagers who are living far away from the capital city. On the other hand, the villagers generally don't prefer to travel far away from their villages, except for urgency since the law and order situation in Manipur is not so friendly for the people.
The brutal Kuki-Naga killings have bloodied Manipur and Nagaland over the past few years. The Kuki belong to the larger Chin group. James Johnstone, one time political Agent in Manipur, described them as "a wandering race consisting of several tribes who have long been walking up from the south" (Johnstone, 1896). The term Kuki first appeared in the "Asiatic Researchers" in 1872 and A.Mackenize, writing in 1873, remarked that "we lumped together as Nagas all the tribes from Patkai to Kopili, and dubbed all hill men Kookies from North Cachar to Aracean". However, the Kukis are also divided into two groups, the early settlers in North Cachar and Manipur being old Kukis and late comers to these places being New Kukis. The Kukis are now spread over Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland and the Assam districts of North Cachar and Karbi Anglong (Sailo, S. 1993:102).

This disgression has a bearing on the Naga charge that the Kukis have been moving north, seizing and settling Naga lands. According to a Naga student federation spokesman who asserted the Naga's birth right to protect their land from encroachment (Verghese, 1996: 102). The Kuki migration in Manipur and North Cachar hills and their subsequent settlement had also been a part of colonial policy. Throughout the colonial regime the Kuki had been used by the British against the powerful Naga and Lushai (Ray, 1990). The present territorial politics between the Kuki and the Naga has a long colonial legacy.

National Socialists Council of Nagaland leader Muivah states that in his interview with the Sun. The Kukis want to chase the Nagas out of the Chandel district border town, Moreh and the foothills near Imphal. This is the crux of the problem. The Kuki leaders offered .... (to) fight us provided the Indian government back them" (Ibid, 102). The bone of contention is Moreh, a Kuki-dominated area and a nodal point for the most lucrative trade in narcotics and other smuggled goods that
every insurgency group would like to control. Confronted with NSCM (IM) taxation, the Kukis retaliated, sparking violent incidents that soon erupted in virulent ethnic strife in several parts of Manipur, Nagaland and the North Cachar Hills, with no holds barred. Thousands were killed and thousands rendered homeless as villages were torched and helpless women and children butchered, first in Manipur and then in Nagaland.

The Kuki version is that the British scattered them as punishment after the Kuki rebellion in 1917-18 treating them as an inter-tribal buffer. The Kuki are therefore now in a minority everywhere and, though enjoying indigenous status in Nagaland, face discrimination in employment and development. The Manipur Kuki ridicule the NSCN taunt that they are outsiders. They contend that the Nagas and Meiteis, like themselves, are of the same Tibeto-Mongoloid stock and all three migrated to their present places of domicile. Hence, none can claim superior status (Ibid, p.103).

Manipur Government has spent crores of rupees for rehabilitation programmes in 1994-95 to resettle the affected people in the conflict. Regrouping with security was one option, but this would have entailed loss of precious land in the old settlements. A joint Naga-Kuki rally was held in Imphal and a committee for the restoration of normalcy between Nagas and Kukis was set up. But this remains an uphill task, though some hundreds of broken Kuki-Naga marriages were mended. The Church has been able to do little despite both the affected communities being Christians.

Coming to the villages under study, the root cause of Naga-Kuki conflict has a long history. However, during the fieldwork, villagers narrated that the real clash started in the Chandel district area in 1993. When the Naga tribe started collecting house taxes from minority areas of Kuki villagers who are residing in Moreh areas. Immediately after few months, Kukis also started collecting house taxes from the minority areas of Naga villagers as a revenge to Naga tribes. Then the fighting started between each other. The situation became worse when there were interviews at Chandel for the appointment of school teachers in tribal areas. The
Kuki people were against conducting the interview because the selection officer belonged to the Naga tribe. Obviously, they knew that more number of Naga people were going to get selection. To stop that, they blocked the NH-39 and whoever (Naga) came to attend interview were severely beaten up by the Kuki people. Immediately the news was spread throughout the state and Naga also started attacking Kuki people elsewhere. Lots of people have suffered in this long and continuous process of conflict. It resulted in the killing of innocent people, and the destruction of property for both the groups. Both the communities had been affected severely due to this conflict. In fact, there were transfer of employees who belonged to Kukis or Nagas to their respective areas, to protect them from the sporadic conflicts and attacks.

As told by the villagers, during the time of conflict, these villagers were not able to move out of the village and couldn't take up any kind of work outside the villages. All people used to stay in the villages itself. Generally, fighting takes place only in the night when the villagers were asleep. That's why, all women and children were made to stay in one common place at the villages, and male members had to go to the village boundaries for guarding the villagers. Villagers use guns and other tools as weapons for fighting purpose. The study villages were not affected by Naga-Kuki conflict occurred in Manipur. However, there are twenty five households in the Khangshim village whose houses were burnt down by Kuki groups. Basically, they migrated from Biyang and Khoibu Khullen during the time of conflict. They have come across lots of suffering during the time of conflict and also after the conflict too.

Here some of the case studies collected from those victims are discussed to understand impact of Naga-Kuki conflict in Manipur State.

Shelthang, aged 56, belongs to the Khoibu tribe. He migrated from Khoibu Khullen. Now he is living in Khangshim village with one son and two grand children. As narrated by him, his daughter in law was killed during the Naga-Kuki conflict. He also sustained minor injuries and his house was also burnt down by the Kuki. He said that Khoibu Khullen village is located at interior part of hill. Moreover, when the conflict began in other parts of tribal areas the Kukis were easily
accessible to them. One night suddenly a bunch of **Kukis** came to the village and attacked the whole village. Most of the houses were burnt down leaving behind one or two. Majority of the villagers escaped from the village, and unfortunately, some of them had been killed by the Kukis. It was really difficult to escape from the village since the attack came in the night, and there were no lights around the village. Moreover, villagers were in deep sleep at that time. He never came across such a difficulty and suffering in his life. He is having tough time to earn daily needs after migrating to the Khangshim village.

Kocha, aged 45, has been living in the Khangshim village for the past 15 years. In fact, he was not affected during the Naga-Kuki clash. But some of his relatives who live in Biyang village were severely affected. They lost their houses and lots of grain stored in those houses. They ran away from Biyang to his house at Khangshim village, since they didn't have any other alternative. He kept them for two months in his house. He provides them daily food and clothes etc. Later, they went back to their village after the conflict came down to normal.

Tolkhamthel, aged 42, also migrated from Khoibu Khullen after the conflict. He was considered a rich man in the Khoibu village. His house was burnt down by Kuki, just after two years of construction. He had spent around fifty thousands for its construction. It was a pucca house. Besides, he was severely beaten and attempt was made to kill him. Luckily army came to save him from the Kuki people. Later on, he was hospitalized for two months in RIMS Hospital Imphal, and spent around ten thousand rupees on his treatment. After recovery from the injury, he could not work for two years. During the field work period, he was running a tea stall at the village to earn daily needs for his family. He is living in a small thatch house in Khangshim village.

Koshel - is a cultivator and he has 3 acres of land to cultivate at Khoibu Khullen. The attack took place when he was planning to harvest his crops. He used to get at least fifteen thousands in one year. He couldn't harvest since his paddy fields were burnt by the Kukis. Later on, he also participated in attacking Kukis in other areas as to take revenge against Kukis. They also burnt down some of the
Kukis houses and destroyed their properties. However, during the time of conflict he also struggled to get daily food. He is still engaged in shifting cultivation and going for labour work during the lean season. He lives with his wife and three children.

Minai, aged 55, lives in Khangshim village. He was also one of the victims during Naga and Kuki conflict. He also faced the same problem like losing costly house and properties. During the time of conflict, he spent two days in forest along with his family. Then, he came to the refugee camp, which was organized by the army. He stayed in the camp for one month. Later on, he shifted to the present village i.e. Khangshim village with the help of the village Chairman. That time, he didn't have any means to meet daily needs. To some extent, village Chairman provided some help. Apart from this, his wife and children used to go for begging rice and clothes from plain area people. Generally, begging activities are rare to witness in Manipur. But, during and after the conflict, lots of people (Naga and Kuki) came down to plain areas and started going for begging to get some rice or clothes and eatable etc. It continued for quite a long time. Later on, he started working as a wage labour in the village and outside the village. During the fieldwork period, he was engaged in business like getting goods from Moreh and selling it in local market. His condition is better off when compared to the earlier period. But he is not able to reach the level, which he had before the conflict.

Mengpham, aged forty four, migrated from the Khoibu Khullen during Naga and Kuki war. He is living with his wife and four children. During the time of conflict, his house and properties were burnt down by the Kukis. Infact, he was seriously beaten and was unable to engage in hard works like agriculture or wage labour. He is just staying at his house by doing some minor household works. His wife is running one tea stall at village market. From this income, he is running the family with lot of difficulties.

From the above case studies, it is clearly understood that how innocent villagers have suffered due to unpredictable Naga and Kuki clashes. This conflict made them homeless for quite a long time. Besides, many of them who practised settled cultivation lost their valuable crops. Some of them transformed their occupation
from agriculture to wage labour. One of the important losses during the conflict is that of people losing their houses. People take several years to construct houses of their own. Thus, lots of people have been affected. According to these villagers, **Kukis** were more affected than Nagas during this conflict. Both the tribal communities have been severely affected, especially innocent villagers, who struggle to earn their livelihood. They are suffering more than any other elite tribals either Kukis or Nagas.

Besides, huge amount of money has been spent on rehabilitation of affected people. But very less is reaching to the needy people.

As a result of the conflict, these two tribes have developed strong hatred to each other. It has also lead to **favourism** among the higher officials in terms of scheme implementations and development activities. During the fieldwork, villagers of these two villages expressed that when the Naga **MLA** was elected in this constituency, they used to get some individual schemes as well as village development schemes especially during 96-99. After the Kuki MLA come to the office in this constituency during mid 99 onwards, villagers' are getting much fewer number of schemes. Some of the victims during Naga and Kuki conflict narrated that they were supposed to get housing scheme but still not getting the housing scheme because of not having Naga MLA to help them. According to them, majority of the housing schemes have been provided to the Kuki villagers with the help of the Kuki MLA. They say that Kuki MLA has strong antagonism against any of the Naga villagers, residing in this constituency. It may be the same case in the time of Naga MLA representing this constituency. It might have affected other Kuki villages. Considering the fact, it tends to affect both the communities in one way or the other. This adds to the existing imbalance of development among the tribals living in Manipur state.

**DISTRICT COUNCILS IN MANIPUR HILLS:**

The preparatory work for the establishment of District Councils in Manipur hills was simultaneously taken up with the preparation for the inauguration of
statehood in December 1971. The Manipur Hill Areas District Councils Act 1971 was subsequently passed to provide for the establishment of District Councils in the Hill Areas in the Union Territory of Manipur. Following the attainment of statehood in 1972, the Act was enforced in 1973 and the hill areas of Manipur were subsequently divided into six autonomous districts. The first election of the autonomous district councils was held in 1973 and six autonomous district councils were constituted in the hill areas of Manipur.

According to the Manipur Hill Areas District Councils Act 1971, the administrator is empowered to divide the hill areas into more than six autonomous districts.

The total number of seats in the District council shall not be more than eighteen. These seats are to be filled by persons directly elected on the basis of adult suffrage from territorial constituencies. Besides, the electoral members, the administrator may nominate not more than two persons, but the person doing service in government office are not to be members of any District Council.

The term of office of a member will be five years. For each district council, there will be a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman. The Chairman and the Vice-Chairman will be elected by the council itself. Besides, for every district council, there will be a chief executive officer who will be appointed by the administrator.

FUNCTIONS OF DISTRICT COUNCIL:

The rules framed under the Manipur Hill Area District Council Act 1971, entrusted as many as seventeen functions to the district council. The functions include the maintenance and management of such property, movable and immovable and institutions may be transferred to the council by the Administrator. The construction of school buildings, repairing, maintenance of roads, bridges, and buildings are transferred to the council by the Administrator. Establishment, maintenance and management of primary school, dispensaries, etc. are entrusted to the charge of the council by the Administrator. The following are also the
responsibilities of the councils: the initiative, inspection, and control of relief works; the allotment, occupation or use, or the setting apart of land, other than land acquired for any public purpose, or land which is a reserved forest, for the purpose of agriculture or grazing or for residential or other non-agricultural purposes or for any other purposes likely to promote the interest of the inhabitants of any village or town situated within the autonomous district council for which the council is constituted. The management of any forest not being a reserved forest, the regulation of the practice of Jhum or other forms of shifting cultivation and any other matter which the administrator may, in consultation with the hill areas committee, entrust to the District Council in the field of agriculture, animal husbandry, community development, tribal welfare and village planning etc.

The 1971 Act did not provide the district council any legislative power. To some extent they have powers like appointment or succession of chiefs, inheritance of property, marriage and divorce, and social customs.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DISTRICT COUNCILS UNDER THE SIXTH SCHEDULE AND DISTRICT COUNCILS IN MANIPUR (1971):

Prior to the establishment of the district councils in the hill areas of Assam in 1952 under the sixth schedule to the Constitution of India, there were no district councils in the country. After the enforcement of the Manipur Hill Areas districts councils Act,1971in 1973, Six district councils were established in the hill areas of Manipur. But the district council in Manipur is fundamentally different from those enforced in Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura, which were established under the sixth schedule. Unlike district councils in other parts of the Northeast region, district councils in Manipur are not entrusted with any judicial and legislative powers. Only some executive and financial powers are entrusted to them. Even financial power is limited as the government grant is the only source of income for the district councils. The District Councils are not empowered to mobilize sources of income. The District Councils, though are given Autonomous power by Act,1971, have not been able to impart developmental services to the tribals. It is in this sense that it has been often that the autonomy given to the council by the Act is only for name sake.
While the district councils in other North-Eastern states are administrated according to the provisions laid under the sixth schedule of the constitution, Manipur's are for all practical purposes under the administration of the state. Some points of distinction between district council under sixth schedule and district council in Manipur are given below in tabular form:

**Table-5.3: Distinction between District Council under Sixth Schedule and District Council in Manipur**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>List of Points</th>
<th>Sixth Schedule</th>
<th>District Councils in Manipur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Constitutional provisions under which District Councils are established.</td>
<td>Under the provision of the sixth schedule to the Constitution.</td>
<td>Under the provision of Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Legislative Power.</td>
<td>With the prior approval of the Governor, they have the power to make laws with respect to 1. Allotment, occupation or use of land for agricultural and non-agricultural purposes. 2. The management of unclassified forest; 3. The use of canal or water course for agriculture; 4. Regulation of Jhuming or other</td>
<td>No Legislative power. Section 52 of the Act provides them only bye-laws making power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Judicial Power</td>
<td>They have power to constitute village councils or courts for trial or suits</td>
<td>They can recommend to the Government of Manipur for Legislating relating to appointment and succession of Chief or Head; Social Customs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Power to assess and collect land revenue and to impose taxes</td>
<td>They have power to levy and collect these taxes</td>
<td>No power</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) Entry of goods etc.
c) taxes for maintenance of schools, dispensaries or road, etc.

1. to assess and collect land revenue
2. to levy and collect taxes on land and buildings and taxes on persons, and
3. to levy and collect all or any of the following:
   a) taxes on professionals, trades and employment

Source: Rajendra, KL993; Study of district councils in Manipur Hills, Centre for tribal studies, Manipur University.
A comparative picture of the two types of district councils as given above, make it clear that the nature and the extent of autonomy given to the district councils under the sixth schedule is different and more powerful than the one in Manipur.

It is therefore not unnatural for the hill people and the tribal leaders to demand for the extension of the sixth schedule to the hill areas of Manipur. In fact, the issue was raised in the Hill Areas Committee meeting as early as in March 1973. Subsequently the sixth schedule demand committee was formed by all the District Councils of Manipur. The All Tribal Students Union, Manipur (ATSUM), became instrumental in demanding immediate extension of the sixth schedule in the hill areas of Manipur. From the 1980s onwards the demand for the extension of the sixth schedule has gained momentum when memorandum after memorandum were submitted by various tribal organizations/groups to the Chief Minister, Union Home Minister and the Prime Minister.

But when in 1984, the sixth schedule was extended to Tripura State, the extension for the same to Manipur was also discussed in the Rajya Sabha and then the Prime Minister gave an assurance in the House about the inclusion of Manipur in the sixth schedule. In May, 1988 the councilors and Chairman of the autonomous districts councils submitted a petition to the Home Minister, New Delhi. After the district councils were dissolved in March 1989, the ATSUM again submitted memorandum to the Prime Minister in April for the immediate extension of the provisions of the sixth schedule to the hill areas of Manipur. So far efforts made by the tribal leaders and students have failed to produce concrete results.

In October 1990, the Chairman of the sixth schedule demand committee was told by the Chief Minister that the inclusion of hill areas of Manipur in the sixth schedule of the constitution is under active consideration. Protesting against the state government for its apathy to the long felt demand of the tribals, the committee has called and observed ban in hill areas of Manipur. The agitation continued till 1992 without concrete result.
The tribal leaders/ students felt that the existing District Council Act 1971 has failed to "protect and safeguard the interest of the tribals of Manipur". They hope and believe that the extension of the sixth schedule to the hill areas of Manipur will solve the problems that exist in the hills. It is their contention that "no proper development can be achieved unless the entire hill areas of Manipur are brought under the framework of the sixth schedule of the Constitution of India".

Unfortunately, the long struggle or protest for demanding sixth schedule in hill areas were totally destructed due to unexpected clash between Naga and Kuki in the mid 1992. Because of this incidence, tribal leaders and student community were drawn away from their concentration towards Naga/ Kuki clashes rather than to the sixth schedule. After coming back to normal life from the Naga/ Kuki war, tribal people are not united like before. So, Sixth Schedule issue had become silent and they couldn’t take up any kind of strong protest or demand to Government due to shattered community affected by Naga and Kuki clash. Besides, the problems of territorial integrity became big issue all over the state. It leads to development of apprehension among the people living in the hill and plain area. As a result of all these problems, demand for the extension for the sixth schedule to the hill areas of Manipur has become totally diluted from tribals and leaders mind. There is no strong demand for sixth schedule by the people who are living in hill areas of Manipur. Recently, some of the groups are trying hard to avail sixth schedule provision in the Manipur hill areas and lots of debates are going on in this issue.

Regarding District Councils in Manipur, it has been a picture of suspension. The term of the last District Councils was over in 1988 and since then they have been kept under suspension and no election has been held so far. The district councils of Manipur are therefore virtually defunct now.

An attempt has been made to know the peoples awareness and their participation in demanding the application Sixth Schedule. The personal interviews were conducted among the two villages and some of the officials working in tribal development agencies. Awareness among the villagers about sixth schedule, is very less but they could remember the hill area bandh (Blocking road, Closing government
offices) called by All Tribal Student Union Manipur (ATSUM) and sixth Schedule demand committee. Some of the elders have not even heard about the Sixth Schedule. The students, village leaders, and employees have some knowledge about the demand for Sixth Schedule. Considering the fact that ATSUM was the only organization that took active part in demand for Sixth Schedule application. Kothil belongs to Minou village participated in demand for Sixth Schedule agitation. That time he was studying degree in D.M.College, Imphal. That's why he was able to participate in strikes and agitations. According to him, the participation of tribal students was also very less. In fact, it was organized by the tribal students studying in Imphal city and Manipur University. Tribal Students studying in other parts of the state did not actively participate in the demand. That is another reason for the lack of strong pressure on the State government as well as Central government.

In the process of demand for Sixth Schedule application, the other problems like Naga and Kuki conflict and problems of territorial integrity etc. came in the way. Due to these problems the spirit and enthusiasm of demanding Sixth Schedule had lost its momentum. Later on, it became difficult to mobilize people to participate in the demand for Sixth Schedule since two tribal groups (Naga and Kuki) have become rivals of one another.

Another informant who live in Khangshim village also participated in the protest. According to him, demand for Sixth Schedule extension was reaching high momentum. However, it couldn't continue in the same pace as was done before due to Naga-Kuki conflict. Due to this conflict, the demand committee couldn't proceed and got divided. People's attention had shifted from Sixth Schedule to Naga Kuki conflict. Most of the people have forgotten about the demand for Sixth Schedule, and are only concentrating on fighting and killing each other. After the conflict came down to normalcy also, Naga-Kuki tribes were not in a position to reunite again to demand for Sixth Schedule. He further narrated that these two tribes started concentrating more on their own communities like, demands of Kuki homeland and Naga tribe joining with Nagaland. Because of this reason, they are not making any attempt for demanding extension of Sixth Schedule to Manipur.
The Chairman of Khangshim village mentions that the main reason for not availing Sixth Schedule provision in Manipur hill area is due to the political leaders' carelessness and lack of initiatives on this issue. The tribal political leaders never put any pressure on state government as well as central government. On the other hand, especially the tribal development ministers are not interested to have Sixth Schedule provision because all the power enjoyed by them, will be transferred to the local people, if the provision of sixth schedule is implemented in tribal areas. Then village authority will have strong hold regarding any issue related to tribal people. Quite often, political leaders have been talking about the Sixth Schedule issue during the time of assembly election campaign. After elections are over, they simply ignore the issue, and never look back to consider the issue as important for tribal development. There is possibility of getting Sixth Schedule facilities in Manipur hill area, if the tribal political leaders unite together and take initiative about the issue. But it is not likely to happen since they have antagonism among themselves.

Another employee working in Chandel D.C. office also commented that as far as the demand for Sixth Schedule is concerned, there is no hope of getting it if we consider the present Manipur situation. There are lots of other problems which made people to forget about Sixth Schedule. It is better to revive the earlier Autonomous District Council. So that tribal people can have at least some voice about their problems and prospects despite its limited provisions. It is always better to have something instead of losing everything. As of now, most of the tribal people feel that the existing Autonomous District Council election should be conducted as soon as possible to restart the functioning of Autonomous District Council in Manipur hill areas.

Now, tribals of Manipur are left out with more problems. Because they are neither getting benefit from sixth schedule nor from autonomous district councils. Moreover, some of the officials and villagers revealed that political leaders are not serious about sixth schedule issue in Manipur. Otherwise, it would have succeeded long back. The reasons for un successful demand of sixth schedule was due to lack of mass involvement and inability to give strong pressure to the political leaders. In fact, majority of tribals are not aware about the demand for the extension of sixth schedule.
in hill areas of Manipur. It is very much necessary to make tribals of Manipur to be aware of sixth schedule and their active involvement from different sections of tribals are necessary for effective demand of the sixth schedule.

To sum up, it can be understood from the above discussion, the study villages socio-economic life have been disturbed due to the existing unrest problems like insurgency and tribal conflict. Besides, non-functioning of ADC also affected villages development process in various aspects. Above all, villagers are not able to lead a peaceful life, which is one of the important factor for bringing socio-economic development progress in the society. All these factors hamper the development progress in both the villages especially Minou village.