Chapter 3

State of Human Rights in Myanmar
Myanmar, a new name under the junta for Burma, is the largest country on Southeast Asian mainland. An adherent of Theravada Buddhism, with multi-lingual and multi-ethnic fabric of the society, the state exceptionally stands for its diverse cultural variations.

Accompanied with a shared past of colonial subjugation with other Asian countries, it emerged out as an independent State on 4 January 1948. With an array of contrasting ethnic communities that exist in homogeneity, provides it a multicultural trait of its own importance. However the historical legacies were all to impede this and other futuristic growth of the country, and to halt every possible prospect of development and stability.

The dream of independence shattered succinctly with the collapse of the democratic form of government in a brief period of 14 years under Prime Minister U Nu. The outcome not only brought the failure to the experiment with democratic form of government but also embarked an entirely new era of autocratic rule (Fink 2001).

The authoritarian government that seized power in 1962 under Ne Win had ruled the country for next decades on the same policies of repression and intolerance. And these policies have brought immense changes in socio-political contours of the county. Definitely the negative impact of the government, by the military junta called tatmadaw, ruined the prospects of development.

Contrarily the period also witnessed a continued and restless opposition to the rule, in the form of democratic forces. But the ‘democratic wave’ (Huntington 1991) that challenged the legitimacy of the military rule was regularly cheated by the authoritarian regime. And hence the politics of military government in the post 1962 period denotes an era of human rights violations.

Contending these challenges led to the emergence of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the daughter of former freedom fighter Aung San, as a charismatic and determined leader.
seeking democracy for her country. She is a prominent leader of the democratic forces that counter the despotic regime on all fronts.

The military government’s thrust to remain entrenched in power has compelled them to engage in policies that counter human rights and freedom. At every juncture they have employed twofold policy. First, at the domestic level the use of physical force of brutality and repression. At the second level, the policy of diplomatic tool is employed in order to justify these acts of cruelty. It is done in effect to extract international recognition and legitimacy of the military rule.

What counts the violation of human rights is all credited to the governmental role in myriad ways. Burma today constitutes as the hub of various problems, which are stepping the country towards the perilous path to decay. From problems like refugees, drug-trade, insurgency, to the AIDS epidemic, are all posing danger not only to the country itself, but also to the region and to a great extent the entire world community.

While illustrating the gravity of these problems, this chapter is intended to explain the genesis of the problems that existed, with the repercussions that it probably had. The Sino-Myanmar relationships which also constitute a major problem of human rights have also been dealt in the same context.

Ethnicity, Insurgency and Human Rights

An ethnic group is a group of people whose members identify with each other, through a common heritage that is real or assumed. This shared heritage may be based upon putative common ancestry, history, kinship, religion, language, shared territory, nationality or physical appearance. Members of an ethnic group are conscious of belonging to an ethnic group; moreover ethnic identity is further marked by the recognition from others of a group's distinctiveness (Smith 1999).

This concept of ethnicity, if maneuvered positively, by the political regime and assimilated in a common national culture, then it constitutes a composite multicultural
nation-state. In these types of states, ethnic diversity is maintained and respected by the authorities.

Contrarily there are states which arbitrarily force one dominant ethnic group or its culture on other ethnic diversities. They tend to mould all the ethnic diversification in one paradigm to construct a common culture that harness in smooth running of the regime, particularly the authoritarian types. Myanmar does the same.

Ethnicity is one of the peculiar problems that existed in Burma since centuries. The country which is divided into several geographical units called States, have their name en-carved on the name of one of the major ethnic nationalities in them. These are the Chin, the Kachin, Karen, Kyah, Mon, Rakhine, Shan etc. And it is inherited in the name itself, which denotes the political significance and demographic representation of that particular minority group or nationality in dominance. There are also other ethnic groups like, the was, the Palaungs, the Lahus, the Rohingyas, Pa-O, Nagas, Kukis, etc. who strives to have their own states within or without Burma. Moreover, these ethnic groups are further sub-divided into ethnic sub-groups, constituting somewhat two per cent of the total population, but sub-divided into 44 groups on the basis of dialectic variations (Smith 1999:30).

Nevertheless, there are other significant features of these ethnic groups, such as religion and language. Over a hundred languages do existed there in Burma; (Smith 1999:32) together with the various religious communities such as Muslims, Christians, Hindus and Chinese, but Buddhism is the state religion, followed by majority of the population.

Historically there had always been an atmosphere of contention between the Burmans on the one hand and one or other or even all the ethnic kingdoms such as the Mon, Shan, Karen etc., on the other. Politically also, Burma was never a single entity. There was never a Burmese nation nor any feeling of oneness amongst its people. Although efforts were employed by the U Nu government since Burma got independence in 1942. The Panglong Agreement was one of the efforts to curb the problem, while
establishing separate States for some ethnic groups independent of Burma (ICG Report No. 52, 2003:2). But it incited the military to take over the rule and preventing any fragmentation of the state.

Since independence from Japan in 1942, Burma had witnessed these ethnic forces trying to shake the government and fulfill their demands. The various demands put forth by these ethnic groups, through movements range from increased recognition and autonomy in the political system, to open separatism or independence from central authorities for their region or nationality (Brown 1996:134).

From the period concluding the independence and later on the repressive rule of Ne Win government (1962–88) these ethnic groups underwent radical transformation from what earlier called ethnic groups are now condemned as Insurgents.

History has played the part. The repressive government induce discontentment among these groups that converted them into rebels.

These ethnic groups sidelined their primary objectives and united in a common platform to fight the military rule. They are clear about their motives, which could only be achieved by overcoming the military junta and to a greater sense, by the establishment of democracy. Thus some 25 groups of the insurgent ethnic armies largely divided into two major blocks, one headed by the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) and the other under the National Democratic Front (NDF), an alliance of about ten ethnic minority armies. They all demanded the formation of a federal union of Burma, but the result was a failure (South 2004).

Again in the popular unrest of 1988 which aimed to the establishment of democracy had united these insurgent groups, but there persisted a problem. The unrest led by the students and other people who employed to protests and demonstration, as a movement for democracy, had not gained the cooperation by the ethnic insurgent rebels. Both the groups directed their movement and dissatisfaction towards the ruling junta, but that is a great irony or a 'tragedy' in the Burmese history that they had never got united (Smith 1999:102).
The popular unrest of 1988 had totally changed the perception of Authoritarian
government, towards insurgent groups. Now the junta rule had been pursuing policies
with primarily two objectives. First, is to keep these minority groups apart from those
who are pro-democracy defenders. This is a precaution taken by the repressive regime to
overcome any future unrest by the democratic forces, cooperated by the insurgents.
Hence, they had pursued a policy of ‘divide and rule’, (Steinberg 1992:148) between the
two forces, that had a common objectives.

Second, is to control these ethnic insurgent groups. For that, the policy pursued by
the government is oriented with two choices for the insurgents. The one is either to
surrender peaceful or to face the harsh suppression by the military. This policy is
enforced by the junta because of its declining world image, which it wants to improve
and yield legitimacy. And to enhance friendly relations with the neighboring countries
while acquiring international cooperation.

Thus the whole period commencing from1990s is the history of either suppression
or surrender of these ethnic groups. Although the two are contrasting policies but they
nevertheless entail human rights violations in different degree of intensity.

In its first policy, the military junta has employed forceful mechanisms to contain
insurgencies. Insurgency though a vague concept has two opposing but significant
connotations. The one, prescribes it as an ethnic group combating the government’s rule
and hence at war with the State. This presents a negative image which chart it as
contentious force and thus illegal. This also empowers the State to contain it with
different mechanisms altogether. While the other view states that insurgents are those
ethnic groups which are at war with the State, but for either against injustice or for self
determination. And as provided under the Charter of United Nations, the right of self
determination might be a genuine right claimed by the ethnic groups or only a tool to
endanger the sovereign status of the State (UN Charter Art.1(2) http://www.hrweb.org/
legal/unchartr.html). So in general, it has been perceived as threat by the international
community. Hence forceful mechanism to pacify them has been accepted as an
international norm of governance.
In this way, as the state government of any country does, the Myanmar ruling junta has turned out against the ethnic forces with the instrument of force. A strategy known as the "Four Cuts" was drawn up that aimed at cutting off the rebels from the four main links (food, funds, intelligence and recruits) between them and local villagers (http://www.forcedmigration.org/guides/fmo019/fmo019-3.htm). The programe proved extremely effective but its results were achieved at the expense of millions of people, mainly from ethnic minority groups, who lost their livelihoods as numerous villages were forcibly relocated and food and crops destroyed. Many civilians were also killed (ICG Report No. 52, 2003:3).

Although the International Labour Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (1991) has provided that indigenous and tribal peoples shall enjoy the full measure of human rights and fundamental freedoms without hindrance or discrimination but they were regularly subject to ruthless suppression (ILO, Convention No. 169, Article 3.1).

The history of their subjugation goes back to Ne Win era that begun immediately after the collapse of democratic regime of U Nu who at his best tried to dilute the discontention among the ethnic groups. But his federal formulae failed. Following unsuccessful peace talks with different armed opposition groups, Ne Win embarked his 26-year experiment with the 'Burmese Way to Socialism' (Aung-Thwin & Myint-U 1992: 67-75).

Abandoning Aung San's 'Unity in Diversity' and the federal structure of the 1947 constitution, he adopted a two-fold strategy: to run an all-out counterinsurgency campaign in the rural countryside while at the same time trying to establish a centralised, one-party system of government radiating out from Rangoon into the ethnic minority states. As a result, many serious human rights violations, such as the enforced conscription of civilian labourers and forcible relocations, were first systematised under the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) government of General Ne Win (Anti Slavery International Report, 1994:25).
Since assuming power in 1988, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) has continued all the arbitrary military practices of the BSPP, initially making them harsher by the imposition of tough new martial law decrees. Front-line troops, employing tactics from the war-zones, have been used for everyday civil policing duties in towns and cities right across Burma. Most of their security activities are co-ordinated by the Military Intelligence Service (Guyot & Badgley 1990: 187-95), and even the most junior officer has complete freedom of action. Under this style of government, gross human rights abuses such as summary arrests, extrajudicial executions, disappearances and torture have become commonplace in many areas of the country and, since 1988, these have been increasingly well documented by a number of international organizations (Anti Slavery International Report, 1994:36).

Amnesty International, for example, has identified at least 20 detention centers around the country where 'brutal interrogation', including beatings, electric shocks and various forms of water torture, have taken place (Anti Slavery International Report, 1994:2).

These forceful tactics as defended by military junta in the name of national unity and solidarity accounts significant human rights violations. Against the ethnic people these tactics are projected under the policy of Burmanisation (ICG Report No. 52, 2003:1). This was a discriminatory policy of making preferences to one ethnic community over another. Particularly to dilute the ethnic diversities among various communities while molding them in one culture. It was to establish Burman ethnic supremacy over rest of the ethnicities. Though history of Burma itself provides fragmented society based on various ethnic differences that never united on one nationalistic-culture, the junta only augmented these differences (Silverstein 1990: 114-34).

Under General Ne Win's Burma Socialist Programme Party government (1962-1988), ethnic minority languages were openly downgraded and a tacit policy of ethnic, cultural and religious assimilation was instituted by the state. A theory was developed of the 'Burmese family of races' a family sharing one blood and historic origin. This view
still continues and was summarised by the SLORC chairman, General Than Shwe, as “In the Union of Myanmar where national races are residing, the culture, traditions and customs, language and social systems may appear to be different, but in essence they are all based on the common blood of Union Kinship and Union Spirit like a hundred fruits from a common stem...there can be no doubt whatsoever of the fact that our national races have lived together unitedly in the Union of Myanmar since time immemorial” (Anti Slavery International Report, 1994:19).

It has been persistently criticised by various contending ethnic groups. According to the Karen National Union, all governments have followed the same policies: Clinging firmly to the policy of Burman chauvinism, they muffle the basic birth rights of the indigenous races and absorb them of their cultures and traditions. Despite their shoutings of national unity, they ignore the equality of races, and they are systematically trying to make the whole country become Burman through their wily, unscrupulous absorption and assimilation schemes (Anti Slavery International Report, 1994:19).

Different ethnic variations have particular problems, which explicitly or implicitly were the impact of ruling regime in myriad ways, and which contributes in the infringement of their human rights.

The Chin ethnic community’s strife is that they are culturally subjugated and dominated by the Burmans or the Bamar community. Cultural diversifications were ruined by these people who govern the military rule. And those cultural traits are diluting by the time and it didn’t seem to carry anyhow in future period. As a young male NGO worker said that many aspects of Chin traditional culture, such as songs and dance, are disappearing because those "who can dance (and sing the traditional way) are old people. When they die, nobody can dance then anymore" (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies Report 2010:212).

They also felt that Chin traditional culture was disappearing and being replaced by Burmese culture, what they described as Burmanisation. A young male university student said, “We want to modernise, but this means Burmese.” He explained
Burmanisation occurs in several ways in daily life, be it the compulsory use of Burmese in the education system, or the promotion of Burmese culture through popular culture mediums such as film and TV. He explained that because Chin is a minority group, they sometimes feel inferior to the Burmese majority and often adopt Bamar cultural practices to “fit in” (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies Report 2010:213).

Their concerns are particularly to their marginalization in education where their ethnic language is not used as a medium of instruction, rather Burmese is employed. This led most of them deprived of education, and the rest who wants, shall have to learn Burmese. At many times to yield benefits they simultaneously have to convert to Christianity.

Of those rights that underlie right to life is also jeopardized by crises, such as food shortages. More and more, Chin State is relying on imported food stuffs for survival. A young male university student said, “Rice does not grow well in Chin State, and so meeting demand is difficult. Traditionally, Chin has relied on maize and potatoes as a staple, rather than rice. With modernisation though, everyone has become crazy for rice...every year we import 20,000...very big bags of rice from other states. It costs 15,000-17,000 kyats for each bag. We are dependent on the outside. There is no food security in the long run.” Moreover, most Chin people still use traditional farming techniques, such as shifting cultivation, which is proving to have a poor yield (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies Report 2010:217).

It is inherited in their cooperating nature that they didn’t have any contention with other ethnic tribes. It goes to junta rule which has proven a menace to their habitat. Mass migration in form of exodus has been witnessed in these communities. This has endangered their existence itself. A student express his concern that, “In the next decade or so our population will really decline. We will run out of people...people flee to the borders every month en-route to Thailand, Malaysia, and India. Imagine the next decade: we will all be gone! This is a political challenge. We will be left with maybe 20,000 people. How can we maintain ourselves as a political State? The reducing population will cause problems in the next decade. Who will be the next voice of Chin State? There is
such decline. Where will our rights as a State be?” (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies Report 2010:219).

Kachin people were known for their natural habitat. They are environment friendly and bio-diverse. Since most of their daily requirements are met through the forests, they perceive it as a ‘Supermarket’ (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies Report 2010:238). Any destruction to the forest will definitely impact in curtailment of their rights.

Adversely the military government is destroying these forests for lucrative money that it gains out of wood marketing. Logging is persistently done in the area resided by Kachin ethnic minority. Though it directly infringes the environmental rights but the policies in various ways have negative effect on other rights too.

Several people also complained about the lack of religious rights for minority religions. As an NGO worker said that, “In Myanmar we don’t have religious rights...only worship rights. We can worship anywhere, a pagoda, market, or under a tree, but we do not have religious rights. There is no law to protect minority religions.” According to him, there are not big problems between Buddhists and Christians but the government favours Buddhism and neglects Christianity (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies Report 2010:233).

In Kachin minority there exist health hazards like, drugs, and HIV which hampers the well being survival and human rights to health. And the government’s irresponsible role in not containing the problems further augmented the situation. Poor and about minimal immunization programs are usually done as lips service. It is the result of increased cultivation of opium amongst poor farmers that drug abuse has become a serious issue. The gravity of problem can be measured by the fact that drug use is also increasing amongst university students, who travel to classes where they have more freedom to use drugs without their parents knowledge (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies Report 2010:235).
It is also inherited in military perception to perceive Kachins as their opponents. As one Kachin remarks that, “When they see us they only think Kachin people are the enemy of Burmese army. They never do any good things for our people that are why we don’t trust the government army. We never trust military generals because they never do good. They only think about what they can take from Kachin State” (Minority Rights Group International Report 2008).

This adverse state of human affairs does prevail even in the era when all the insurgent militaristic ethnic groups of Kachin had settled to ceasefires (Min & Oo 2007: 91). This is what they get, out of surrendering to the junta. All three armed groups have signed ceasefire agreements with the central government, and the KIO participated in the 2004 National Convention to draft the constitution, which was ratified in 2008. The reason why the KIO participated in the National Convention was because they thought that they could solve problems over the table, but now they are already in the trap of this National Convention and they cannot get out of it. This is the stage where the ‘civilians are like orphans’ (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies Report 2010:231).

Karen ethnic people are versatile and diversified in different religious and cultural traits. But since they speak the same language, they have good relations. But the Burmese want to split them. They want to drive a wedge between them as they use religious differences to do that. Buddhist and Christian groups get driven apart turn to kill each other (Bleming 2007).

The Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) a Buddhist fraction that broke out in 1994, from its parent party Karen National Union (KNU), a Christian group on religious lines has a history of intra-ethnic conflict. It is with the help of state government which supports DKBA against KNU to engage in mutual clashes (ICG Report No. 52, 2003:5).

Although the major problem lies in alcohol usage in the community at a mass level, but it is education which they were denied the most. Although education infrastructure exists in the society but it impairs only quantity and not quality of
education. Due to the preferential and biased education system many Karen are unable to find employment in the government or civil society. Civil service demands educational attainments and many Karen are not qualified, as a result, many Karen work in agriculture and local business. Agriculture is particularly predominant amongst the Karen living in the delta, and has continued to suffer from decreased production (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies Report 2010:253).

These containment policies harness the feeling of enmity towards the ruling Bamar community. And this anti-Bamar prejudice profoundly entrenched in the society as it is being passed down from parents to their children. Despite being educated, many with direct experience of Bamar oppression cannot forgive them. People teach their experiences to children and passed them to future generations (Delang 2001).

In the present situation Karen people use to escape and migrate from their homeland for betterment of their lives. Many of those who got educated go abroad and rest of them flee to refugee camps along the Thai border to have their basic needs, such as food and water, met better life. But certain of them usually trapped by the authorities and trafficked.

Kayah State which is resided by Kayah people is the least developed State of all in Myanmar. It can be analyzed from the statement of one woman from Loikaw who elaborated that, “People mostly are not really rich, (but) not too poor. Just survive. In town they are content with what they have and they manage it. In the provinces they really struggle...In provinces they are really, really poor” (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies Report 2010:272).

The primary occupation for the majority of Kayah people is subsistence agriculture. The state of education is poor, as other states are having, and problems like drugs, alcohols are also prominent in the day to day affair. But the most gruesome thing is the persistence of ‘Black Area’ (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies Report 2010:273) in the State. Geographically located in the Special Region II of the Kayah State, it is known for the existence of numerous armed groups.
It is so called ‘black’ because of ongoing armed resistance in the area. It is Kayah’s resistance against other ethnic and dominant communities to acquire a suitable place for themselves in society. It is also known by the name of ‘non-ceasefire area’, where continued conflicts are prominent among the ethnic groups. These groups are armed associates of major ethnic communities like, Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), Karenni National Democratic Party (KNDP), Kayan New Land Party (KNLP), Kayan National Guard (KNG), and Karenni National Liberation Front (KNLF). Moreover the conflicts not only visible between these groups, but also among those groups which are denominated as ceasefire groups and those which didn’t have ceasefire with the Myanmar’s government (Minority Rights Group International Report 2010).

Because of the consistent fighting among various groups, there evolved a state of chaos and disorder. And the direct impact of these conflicts is the huge number of people who were forced to displace and many into refugees.

Mon ethnic composition is based on agricultural community that is engaged in plantation crops and timber trade (Gravers 2007). Since their habitat entirely depends on those crops, any adversary policy by government does definitely bring negative impact over them. Rubber is the only major plantation crop that is sown by these people. But they didn’t have both the tech know-how and monetary inputs to yield handsome produce. Hence they completely depend on raw material of both the timber and rubber.

The military government as usual initiated the policies which jeopardize their interest. Through a number of taxes and exercise duties on the produce, governments have frozen any monetary benefits to the farmers. Hence their rights to trade, occupation, and even livelihood have been hampered.

Rakhine community strife is apprehended towards other ethnic groups. They are having hostile relations with two ethnicities- the Rohingyas and the Bamar. Rakhine-Rohingyas conflict is based on two issues. First, is the religious discord that is rooted long back in history as manipulated by the British Empire. And second, is based on international assistance. The Rohingya receive preferential treatment from the
international community because they claim to be discriminated against by the government and Rakhine people. An older female INGO worker strongly disagreed with those claims, saying, “CNN says the government is putting Rohingya out because they are Muslim, but in 2007 the government did similar things to Buddhists. The government will chase out anyone who is against them, so it is not because of their ethnic group or religion at all” (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies Report 2010:302). It means that those who oppose the government in any degree or capacity shall have to face repression.

This hostility is not only advanced from the ruling regime, rather the ethnic community that holds the government. It is also a twofold conflict among Rakhine and the ruling ethnic community Bamar. And the roots lie in the history of Panglong Agreement. They felt that they were cheated by Bamar (Siddiqui 2008). They want a federalist system of democracy, but the majority doesn’t want to grant it. Rakhine felt that their rights have been taken away and they want equality that can only be achieved through a federalist system (Minority Rights Group International Report 2008).

Another serious issue concerns to the widespread abuse of the villagers is in form of forced labour and porters. They are also entitled by themselves with the ‘license to rape’ the women especially in rural areas (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies Report 2010:304).

Shan ethnic people are having three major areas of grave concern. First, deals with the declining health status of the community. It is because of the sex industry that evolved in the border areas that were linked with Thailand and China. With a massive number of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) that persists in these States, the Shan areas that align the border having witnessed the increased number of STD infected person in their frontiers. HIV is incurable and is a big problem in the Shan area. Other diseases like malaria, TB, are not endemic, but since government health facilities are very poor many receive insufficient help. Some UN organisations help, but other than that no one helps because government facilities are not equipped (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies Report 2010:316).
Second issue of concerns is the Chinese presence in the areas inhabited by Shan minority. One of the challenges in Shan State is the growing influence of ethnic Chinese, who commonly own major businesses and prime real estate. According to a NGO worker from Lashio in northern Shan State, “They (Chinese migrant people) are stakeholders in the Shan economy, and compared to locals they have a strong background in economics, money, and buying power. Prices are higher in Shan State because of Chinese people. For example, land, house prices, and basic living costs are higher in Shan State. If Shan people cannot afford to buy something, there are many other people-Chinese people-who can afford to buy it. Most Chinese are trying to occupy land and buy hard assets. Chinese own good areas and Shan are forced into to rural villages. The Chinese population is becoming enormous in Shan State, so I think Shan people will be dominated by the Chinese in terms of culture and business” (Aye 2010). In Lashio, over fifty per cent of the population is Chinese” (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Report 2010). So the Chinese domination in the day to day life has made the ethnic people vulnerable vis a vis the outsiders.

Third issue concerns their fragility of unity and solidarity. The lack of unity and organisation within Shan people is a result of the absence of leadership. As one NGO supporter said, “Shan spirit, Shan nationalism? No, we don’t have it, and that is a problem. Even if I had the will to do something, for a sort of revolution to take place, I am not sure if I would get support because Shan people are self-oriented. So if I don’t have support, why would I speak out? I have heard of Shan in Thailand trying to lead, but they are outsiders and cannot affect the daily lives of the people here. I have not heard of anyone inside Shan State trying to lead—this does not mean there is no one who wants to do that, but I have not heard of them” (The Shan Human Rights Foundation, SHRF Reportings, 2009). Thus they are engulfed among these and other such problems that curtail their full-fledged enjoyment of human rights.

Bamar, the dominating ethnic tribe that holds the entire gamut of power and resources is the upholder of Buddhism in the State. Though entrenched in power, they
claim that they are at the best to serve their country, and if any loopholes led the miscarriage of justice or order, it entirely goes to the nature of those problems.

Also they claims that any act of injustice happens only if and when the authorities were not informed either. To their service they claim that they were also the part of the people who were to serve the country and not to dominate it. In this ways prolong ethnic grievances of various kinds have halted the full-fledged enjoyment of human rights by these people.

Moreover, when junta employs the policy of persuasion to pacify the rebels, it usually persuades them that an accord of harmony and compassion will prevail while considering their interests in future. But the suspicious attitude towards these ethnic groups drives them hostile whenever they address these people. In a drive to pacify the ethnic rural groups the junta concluded peace deals with 11 of the country's 12 major ethnic and tribal groups (all excepting the Karen), (Ahmed 1996:124) in the first half of 1990s, and till recently by 2010, the number risen to sixteen (Amnesty International 16 February 2010: 16). The nature of these ceasefire agreements are not uniform, as in most of the cases ex-insurgents have retained their arms, and still controlling sometimes extensive block of territory (in recognition of the military situation on the ground) (South 2004:239). Usually, ceasefires do not guarantee sustainable peace and development. Major displacements of civilian populations have occurred after cease-fire was agreed between the government and armed ethnic groups in Kachin (1994) and Mon (1995) States (Min & Oo 2007).

Efforts have been made to foster harmony and democratic sentiments. According to the Shan ethnic insurgent group in a drafting committed charter that, "we hope to mobilize the grass roots and bring about harmony and unity among various ethnic nationalities in the Shan State. The charter also, aims at ethnic reconciliation, and building of a democratic foundation among the people" (The Statesman, 22 October 2000). But they were all shattered by junta, while accusing that ethnic groups which turned to truce agreements are intended for extracting further gains. The Wa and the Shan, in particular, have used ceasefires to expand their interests in heroin and
amphetamine trades (The US Drug Enforcement Administration 2000). So there must be a check on the activities of these groups which are having evil motives in their minds.

Of the many insurgent groups that had been pacified are Karen insurgent group that have been in hard targeted by the junta. Military offensive by the government, using newly acquired Chinese equipment in January 1995 succeeded in capturing the Manerplaw headquarters of Karen insurgents, forcing them to flee to Thailand (International Herald Tribune, 18 November 2000). With these policies junta has enormously violated human rights while infringing their liberty and instituting them as internally displaced. With the remaining Karens, the junta continued a pragmatic mix of ceasefire offers and military action. With several rounds of peace talks held in 1996 and 1997, from time to time and offensives that had launched brought down Karen insurgents, to no longer remain a threat (Bleming 2007). Hence their contention augmented to the level where they again started the revolutionary path. Karens attribute this to their fight for survival and survival of their natural resources which according to them were gone under the ceasefire due to extraction by the armed forces. During the civil war they are quoted to state “our resources were maintained because there was no extraction.” (Anti Slavery International Report, 1994: 100).

The Kachins were the second strongest minority insurgent group. Facing pressure from the government of China, as well as from Thailand, they agreed to talks in 1993; in October of that year, a ceasefire agreement was signed. By the end of 1994, cease-fire agreements have also been signed with the Shans, the Pa– O (Christensen & Kyaw 2006), the Palaungs and the Mons. There was, except for the weakened Karens, as they claim, no minority group left which could offer significant armed opposition (Khosla 1998:1666). And, the surrender of Khun Sa, the Shan State’s drug kin-pin had largely eliminated the insurgency in 1996 (Haseman 1993:13).

But in the post ceasefire era the status of these people has not improved. As one Kachin attributes that, “Before the ceasefire, most of the houses in town were owned by Kachin people. Year after year after the ceasefire they have been sold. We have also lost a lot of opportunities to do with jade and gold mines. This is because Kachin people don’t
know about formal business. They have now introduced a more Western system. Other businesses come and invest and buy up things. The people who now own these businesses are the government, Chinese and Burmese” (Anti Slavery International Report, 1994: 99).

Multiple factors had generated hassles in the right to livelihood of these people. Chinese encroachment on their land is perceived as the biggest threat. A Kachin man from Myitkyina, Kachin State asserted that, “The ceasefire started in 1994, before that, we rebelled for over forty-five years. Since the ceasefire we have nonstop illegal logging. We are losing our resources: trees and minerals, gold and jade. Kachin also suffer from drug abuse, STD, corruption, and land loss issues. There is land loss because of Chinese encroachment with logging, roads, and bridges” (Anti Slavery International Report, 1994: 100).

A potential significant development occurred in December 2003, when the Karen National Union (KNU), the last major insurgent group in Myanmar agreed a ceasefire with the military government. It is also perceived that Thailand had pushed them for the agreement, which was entrenched by the long refugee problems in the Thai Frontiers (Callahan 2007). Hence, a major problem, that had brought enough setbacks for the ruling junta had been appropriately solved. But this does not mean that these ethnic groups are totally pacified, instead there do existed many smaller and minor groups, within these ethnic nationalities, that continued resistance, and still had a hard stand on their ideology and motives.

Nevertheless, there are chances for those tranquilized groups to confront the government, if lapses occur. As a leader of Pa-O group stated that, "If SLORC does not deliver on its promise for schools, roads, and health clinics, we have the option to going back to war” (International Herald Tribune, 18 November 2000). Thus, what these groups now want is peace and development as their priority to exist. But at this juncture when military junta has deeply entrenched in power, the prospects of development seems elusive.
Hence, ethnicity if fostered to extreme and turn around to insurgency, then it is one of the biggest hurdles in the path of human rights and democratization. More than any single factor, it was the nationalities question that engendered the political turmoil in Myanmar (The Hindu, 3 July 2002). And still there is no freedom from fear of these ethnic groups, which could at any time stand-up to shake the government, if not dealt in properly. Still eleven groups remained at war with the central government, including one of the oldest movements, Karen National Union, and a holdout of Khun Sa's defunct Mong Tai Army (MTA), the Sham State Army (South). So the problem still persists in Burma (Seekins 2002:207).

The intensity of the problem could be measured by the implications it had. Ethnicity turned insurgent groups provide two types of implication.

First, the international repercussion it had brought through drug-trade, trafficking, narcotics, and terrorism that at any time can jeopardize the peace and stability of the region. A Bangladesh newspaper, Independent reported that the Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front, based in Rakhine State, has links with Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda organization. (Seekins 2002:201). Thus the existence of insurgency (in any number) accorded a continuous fear for the international community.

Nevertheless, these ethnic minority groups are at the verge of succession from the state. These groups are continuously demanding recognition from the international bodies to establish themselves as an independent state. And if any of them got success to detach from the country, then it will definitely be a disastrous event in international arena. Their success will incite the fire of succession of the other minority groups existing peacefully in other parts of world. Thus, it will contribute to hamper the multicultural and multinational states to live in peace, security and human rights in the entire region.

Second, is the regional chaos that it had induced. These insurgent groups in the Southeast Asian region and to a greater context of the countries bordering Burma had generated new problems. Not only of the drug-trade, trafficking and terrorism it had brought to the countries, it also had invited a number of new problems, which are hard-
enough to be resolved, such as AIDS epidemic, refugees, illicit economic activities and rebellious movements. The country Thailand, Laos, China and India bordering Burma are the worst affected (Linter 1992: 225-59). Of them, Thailand had witnessed the economic outcomes of the large number of insurgent ethnic groups that had been taking sanctuary in the frontiers, as the refugees (Sheikh 1998: 471-504).

Nevertheless the case of India is the worst, which had been affected by these ethnic insurgencies. The seven states of India's north-east, also known as the 'seven sisters', had now been in the transition of serious problems. Ranging from AIDS, illicit drug-trade, trafficking and the weapon-trade, these insurgencies had totally dwindled the peace and prosperity of the northeast India (Banerjee 1996: 689-705). Also, the worst outcome is the uprising demands of these people to succeed from the country. Terrorism is common now-a-days in all the seven States and the prospects for human development are almost bleak. In 1995, the Burmese and Indian military jointly carried out 'Operation Golden Bird' to captures insurgents along both sides of the border (Fink 2001:237). But that had become a history and there are no such efforts employed since 1995 to deal with the problem.

Hence, the implication could cost the world community at very high, unexpected, but definitive to bring serious lessons if not dealt in sufficient. So, there must have to device mechanisms to address these people with cooperation, harmony and friendly manner, where peace could be instituted without any human rights violation or infringement.

Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and Human Rights

Human rights are usually accustomed with democracy, as it called the two parts of the same coin. And when democracy is subdued by an authoritarian form of government there begins an array of human atrocities and crimes. Burma, which witnessed the fall of democratic regimes on the hands of military junta, has undergone the same transition from democracy to human rights violation.
The authoritarian government under Ne Win’s regime (1962–88) has initiated the mayhem that forced people unwillingly to displace themselves in the country and as refugees in the frontiers. The problem further gets excelled when the popular uprisings of 1988 has challenged the government at a vast level. It finally culminated into an entirely new problem of Displaced and Refugees.

The first group is the people who had a democratic ideology and had continued to oppose the government since 1988. These people were subjected to repression, enforcing them to seek refuge in the countries nearby. Not only that, these groups of refugees had to combat two types of miseries. The first is the fear of being killed by the junta’s counter oppressions and the second is the worst conditions of huge jungle, the geography of the hide that made them vulnerable from disease like typhoid and malaria. So, the people constituted to first classification were the one who sought to establish democracy (Matthews 2001-02: 37-63).

The second groups of people were the ethnic minorities which are turned to refugees, by two major reasons. Firstly, by the tatmadaw which wants to pacify their existence from the group, which could hamper their interest. While the decade of 1990s was one of major ceasefires and talks to these groups, they were pacified sufficiently. And secondly, by the discrimination on ethnic and religious lines, that made them refugees.

In ethnic minority areas, many of those relocated are victims of the 'Four Cuts' anti-insurgency campaign. Since 1988 the tatmadaw has maintained the use of this strategy in the Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Mon and Shan States, where thousands of democracy activists took sanctuary following the SLORC's assumption of power (Human Rights Centre Report, July 2007, University of California). Most areas affected have been adjudged by the government to be under the direct or indirect control of armed opposition groups. However, many refugees claim that expulsion orders, killings, beatings and other gross abuses of human rights have also occurred since 1988 during 'Four Cuts' operations, in areas where insurgent groups have rarely or never been active (Anti Slavery International Report, 1994).
There is also a geographical division of these two classified groups of refugees. The first group of people usually resides in almost all the countries, bordering Burma and to a greater extent to the whole region of South Asia (Linter 1992: 225-59). While the second group entail further division. The Muslim minority people of the ethnic group ‘Rohingyas’ usually take refuge in the western borders of the country, in India and Bangladesh (Sheikh 1998: 471-504). And the other groups such as Karen, Mon and Karenni seek refuge in the eastern frontiers of Thailand.

Burma's continuing political and economic crisis is forcing ever greater numbers of inhabitants to leave their homes. In mid-1994 over 300,000 refugees, mostly ethnic minorities were officially recorded at camps in neighbouring Thailand, Bangladesh, India and China. Of these, some 75,000 were in Thailand (largely Karen, Mon and Karenni) and over 200,000 (predominantly Muslims) in Bangladesh. There were also an estimated 10,000 Kachin refugees in China and a similar number of Naga, Chin and other refugees in India. Unofficial numbers, however, were estimated at over three times that figure, meaning that over one million exiles and migrants were subsisting precariously around Burma's troubled borders (Anti Slavery International Report, 1994).

The Burmese army has reportedly relocated forcefully some four million people since 1990 for the purpose of various infrastructure development program, and the natural gas exploration and pipeline projects of multinational oil corporations. Particularly the oil giant Total which is engaged in building Yadana oil pipeline in Myanmar (Larsen 1998: 3-13). The Yadana pipeline has been closely associated with serious human rights abuses including forced labour, forced relocation, forced portering (carrying of munitions), beatings, torture, rape and the use of civilians as human mine sweepers (Burma Campaign U.K., February 2005).

As a consequence, the number of refugees along the Burmese-Thai Border had risen steadily since 1992. That year, the number of Karen, Mon, and Karenni refugees forced to live in makeshift refugee camps located mainly on the Thai side of the border, was estimated at 65,000. The number climbed to 71,000 in 1993 and to 98,000 in 1996. In 1997, the number of refugees increased to 1, 12,412 (Maung 1998: 275).
Hence, the eastern border of Burma had an exodus of large number of refugees towards the Thai-frontiers, inviting new shifts in bilateral relationships. Thailand initially had refused to recognize the influx as refugees and thereby denied them the protection of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (Silverstein 2000: 955).

According to the Thai government, approximately one million undocumented migrants are employed in eight labour sectors in half of the country’s provinces. The government’s statistics do not include other labour sectors the remaining provinces, or the extended family members accompanying migrant employees (Caouette 1998). Given the porous borders, migrants extensive mobility, heir hidden and isolated lifestyles and the fact that migrants are often indistinguishable from the local ethnic populations along the border, it is likely that the number of migrants in Thailand far exceeds one million (Save the Children Report 2001).

The issue had been further realized as a bone of contention between the Thai-Burma relationships. Although Thailand had pursued some positive policies towards the refugees, but the future is still precarious (Tang 2005). According to a report in the Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER December 2001), the number of ethnic minority refugees in the camps in Thailand, most of whom were Karen, with smaller numbers of Mon and Karenni refugees, arriving each month compared with 500 a month a couple of years earlier, reflecting the tatmadaw’s intensified pacification campaign in the border area (Seekins 2002:16). Thus Thailand had initiated pressure on KNU (Karen National Union) the last major insurgent group in Myanmar to have a ceasefire agreement in December 2003. Understandably it also wants to get rid of the 150,000 (mostly Karen) refugees from the country, and is keen to exploit the economic opportunities that peace may bring to its borders (South 2004:240).

Hence, Thailand is on the way to rid out of the problem. Refugees has been started repatriated by the efforts of United Nations High Commission for Refugees, together with Myanmar Red Cross, Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association’s help in the eastern frontiers since 2004.
The most disturbing evidence of a new government policy of ethnic resettlement occurred during the mass exodus into Bangladesh of over 260,000 Muslims from Buthidaung, Rathedaung and Maungdaw townships in Rakhine State in 1991-92. Not only were many Muslim villages reported to have been destroyed by tatmadaw units, but there were a number of documented cases of Muslim-owned land or property being confiscated and handed over to Burman or Rakhine Buddhists moved in by the local SLORC authorities. Rumours abounded of government plans to establish nine Buddhist townships as a religious and ethnic buffer along the Bangladesh border (Anti Slavery International Report, 1994: 82).

The Rohingya emergence, in the Arakan on Myanmar's western border has little to do with the crushing of the pro-democracy demonstrations that provoked the flight of so many Burmese dissidents to Thailand in 1988. The Rohingya have been routinely subjected to persecution arising from ethnic and possibly religious discrimination. In 1998, a quarter million Rohingya were force to flee to Bangladesh. Twelve years later, a similar state operation has precipitated another mass exodus. Despite an April 1992 agreement between Myanmar and Bangladesh to repatriate Muslim refugees, the problem of human rights violations and their consequence in the region continues (Matthews 1993:42).

The immense demands for forced labour along the north-west frontier also had resulted in a mass exodus of some 260,000 Muslims form the Arakan State into Bangladesh, in late 1991. Further two hundred and fifty thousand Rohingyas from Burma were housed in refugee camps of Bangladesh between 1991 and 1995 (Fink 2000: 247). And hence a series of movements had been undergoing where a big population has emerged as refugees, in Bangladesh.

Dealing with the intensity of problem Bangladesh, after signing an agreement on reparations, in 1992 had also convinced the world community to foster the process, as early as possible. United Nations after passing certain resolutions to overcome the problem had finally appointed the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights to Burma in 1992, to continue investigation and reports throughout the 1990s (General Assembly 136
resolution 1992/58 of 3 March 1992, www.un.org). In 1995, an additional special representative of the UN Secretary General was also appointed to try and put forward international concerns by more subtle means. And since, then repatriation was under process to bring down the problem under control (General Assembly resolution 49/197 of 23 December 1994, www.un.org).

But Bangladesh a step forward had mishandled the problem and used 'force' to throw back the refugee to Burma. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Prof. Sadako Ogata, appealed the government, to take all necessary measures, to halt coerced return of Rohingya refugees to Burma (UNHCR Global Appeal 1995: An Overview, www.unhcr.org). But the government countered the argument be denying any kind of use of force in repatriation.

But the international community is not blind to watch the event, as Fakhruddin Ahmed, a former Bangladeshi Foreign Secretary said, “The whole thing has been mishandled. This is the first time that Bangladesh finds itself alienated from the international community.” He said that if the refugees are going voluntarily (as said by the government), then why is the government denying access to the UNHCR? Thus the whole problem had entered in the gambit of politics, and the problem of refugees will persist until there exist the military junta in Burma (Amnesty International Report AMR 13/07/97, September 1997).

Refugee problem of Burma do had serious implications that it had brought to the region of South Asia and Southeast Asia. Although there were some degrees of concerns for the country bordering Burma, yet it is an extremely serious problem for Thailand and Bangladesh (Fink 2009). The two countries which were the destination of the large number of refugees had socio-economic considerations. The presence of refugees in abundance had brought serious setbacks to the economy of the particular region, where they reside. Increased consumption of resources had brought the economy into chaos.

Unrest has also paved the way for crimes in the society as an influx of various discriminated nationalities. Nevertheless, the refugee problem if not overcome by the
time, could even bring serious threats. The increase drug-trade, trafficking, AIDS and terrorism are few but extremely dangerous problems that by the time could get momentum by these refugees (Gibson & Haseman 2003: 1-17), who are denied of their rights to existence. Hence, Burma is still on the verge of dangers brought be the gravity of the problems. India as a neighboring country shall have deep apprehensions towards the immense rise in refugees across its frontiers. May be in Bangladesh as a neighboring country, or in its own northeastern states could inflict dangers in various ways (Stobdan 1993: 21-37).

One, India is having illegal migrants population crossed over one core, that entered in the mainland and creating extra burdens both on economy and society. These are Bangladeshi migrants and it is out of doubt that majority of them could be Rohingya refugees also called Chakma refugees. Since the saturation point of entertaining migrants has been crossed, it cannot be possible for India to allow any more of them (Singh 2009).

Two, the disturbed area of Northeast States has its own complex problems. And any such migration could only incite it further. Hence refugee problem is posing a major threat to India’s peace and development particularly in the Northeast which is seen as possible gateway to ASEAN.

Civil Liberties and Human Rights

The respect for Human Rights can only be possible in the democratic regimes. And it is possible only in the Western liberal democracies that had gone to provide the fullest respect for human rights, with some extent of lapses otherwise. Contrarily theEastern countries have lacked the prospects of the development of human rights. But that should be understood in terms of economic prosperity enhancing social mobility and development. The regimes in Eastern countries lacking the economic prospects may be the capital, resources, technical know-how, had prevented them to provide the people with fullest enjoyment of human rights. Nevertheless, there do exist the feeling and the political will to implement the rights. Burma is a distinct case.
As other military regimes in the world, having almost denied their people of human rights, Burma under the military rule had followed a step forward policy. It not only denied the people of the basic human rights but also had gone in the extremes to violating them and preventing any prospects of development, even in the ideological arena of Burmese people.

Although, there is the history of human rights violation in the Ne Win's era of repressive rule. But the violation had reached at the zenith only after the popular uprisings of democratic forces in 1988 that had jeopardized the regime's future to rule Burma. Tatmadaw confronted by the then unrest of 1988 had pursued the policies of harsh repression, turning the country into a state of civil war (ICG Report, 27 September 2002:1). As stated by the then US Secretary of the State Madeline Albright (1996-2001) that, "the regime has a record of unchecked repression. It had murdered political opponents, used child soldiers and forced laborer, and employed rape as a weapon of war" (Indian express, 2 May 2004). The gravity of misrule since 1988 has marked a new history of cruelty, negating the human rights.

The laws most commonly used by the SLORC have been the 1950 Emergency Measures Act, the 1957 Unlawful Associations Act, the 1962 Printers and Publishers Registration Law, and the 1975 State Protection Law. Each allows for long periods of imprisonment for any citizen deemed guilty of criticising the government, and those arrested have come from virtually every political and ethnic background (Anti Slavery International Report, 1994:71).

The first and foremost right of every individual, 'the right to life' had been seriously violated by regime since 1988. An estimated 3,000 civilians dies in the bloody repression that brought the SLORC to power on 18 September 1988 (Silverstein 1992:123). And this violation continued to the present times, targeting the insurgent groups and the democratic opponents, the junta had been engaged in a series of genocidal crime. Although Burma voted for adoption by the General Assembly for the 1948 UN Charter on Human Rights, it has been one of the worst offenders against the Charter since SLORC seized power.
In July 1989, at a press conference, Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo alleged that 8,000 to 10,000 people were arrested and forced to serve as porters in the Kachin state and Saiging Division. Some of those forced to serve as porters were children, youths, and pregnant women (Link, 6 January 1997). Thus people in Burma were treated no better than animals where they had been subjected as porters. This is an example of one of the types of forced labor employed by Tatmadaw, violating the basic human rights to life and freedom from forced labor. Nevertheless these porters while moving were vulnerable to existence as the death tolls increased immensely, which is termed as 'Death Marches' (Link, 9 January 1997). The use of forced labor in the building of bridges, roads and pagodas can also be seen as a legacy of Burmese kings (Gyi 1983). The SLORC has made use of this practice since 1989 to launch various infrastructure development projects meant to attract foreign investors and tourists.

As with pottering, forced labor is endemic in Burma. Since 1992, the military has forced at least two million people across the country to work without pay in the construction of roads, railways and bridges. In recent years, the use of forced labor has increased, as government tries to improve its infrastructure, in order to attract foreign investment and tourism. Hundreds, if not thousands, have died from beatings, exhaustion and a lack of medical care. Those forced to do such work include women, children and the aged (Maung 1999:274).

Equally widespread in Burma today is the forcible conscription of civilians into compulsory labour duties for the military authorities. No pay is given for such labor and the period of service can last months and even, in some cases, years. This further disrupts family life and pushes many families deeper into poverty. Those conscripted to work for the SLORC include pregnant women, children and the elderly in clear contravention of international norms.

Typical labour duties include the construction of roads, airfields, army barracks and railway lines in government-controlled areas, while in the war-zones civilians have been forced to work as look-outs or as porters carrying arms and supplies for the
tatmadaw into dangerous front-line positions. The number of civilians conscripted for such duties can be vast.

However, government accounts of the conditions of such service differ greatly from those given by former labourers and the tens of thousands of refugees and displaced peoples who have fled their homes since 1988. Forced labour also existed under the former BSPP government (especially in ethnic minority areas), but the numbers conscripted have undoubtedly increased and the conditions of service harshened under the SLORC (Anti Slavery International Report, 1994).

The last decade had witnessed two significant events in the history of Burmese forced labour. First is the ‘Visit Myanmar 1996’ campaign of the tatmadaw, for which it had exploited the extremes of the forced labour to turn Rangoon and Mandalay, a hub of tourists and investment destination. The objective was also to gain international recognition and legitimacy.

The second is crude investment, the case of Yadana gas pipeline, which was built to supply natural gas drawn from Andaman Sea to Thailand via pipeline. This project worked out by SLORC (in 1995) with foreign investment scheme together with US-based Unocal, French giant Total and, PTT Thailand’s state owned Energy Company. But the project has been called one of the most controversial infrastructure projects in the world (Larson 1998:04). It is because of the human rights abuses. The people were victimized to forced labour; they were displaced from their villages, as to keep the pipeline secure and were subjected to taxes. The SLORC launched ‘Operation Natmin’ a military action in Tenasserim Division in 1994, which was aimed to clear the site for pipeline. As result of that thousands of ethnic villagers were forcibly removed and thousands more fled into neighboring Thailand (Larson 1998:16).

Nevertheless, Unocal insisted that human rights abuses are unrelated to the pipeline, the Bangkok Post published a statement by Unocal president John Imlein in which he essentially blames the pipeline’s ethnic opponents for military abuses in the area that, “If you threaten the pipeline, there gonna be more military. If forced labor hand
in glove with the military, yes, these will be now forced labor. For, every threat to pipeline there will be a reaction", (Larson 1998:19) hence justifying the use of forced labour. This finally had cleared the picture of the role played by the big powers in fostering human rights abuses.

While on the other side, to prevent the international criticism French oil company Total said that it was scandalized by allegations made by various human rights organizations. Of them French based International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (IFHR) describes it as a ‘demeaning evidence’ that human rights have been violated in the cause of work on a colossal gas pipeline project in Burma. The report also claims the pipeline project that has been responsible for blatant human rights violations by the regime, “whether with the aim of assuring security in a region subject to an endemic rebellion by certain ethnic minorities (the Karens, the Mons) or of clearing the area with a view to building infrastructure necessary for the pipeline, Burma troops have carried out massive population transfers” (Guardian, 3 November 1996). Hence in one way or the other, Burmese junta had been engaged in the crime of forced labor, a human right abuse, even when it had ratified the ILO convention against forced labour, in 1955.

Another very common human right abuse in Burma is of arbitrary arrest and detention. This is what the world knows today about Burma, that the democracy demanding leader, Aung San Suu Kyi was arrested in 1989 and is still confined in the house arrest, except for the period of 1995 to 1998, and 19 months from September 2000, when she was allowed to live independently but under restrictions (Wintle 2008). In August 2009 she was sentenced to 18 months of additional house arrest after a foreign national entered her house, breaching the terms of her existing house arrest (AAPP Annual Report 2009:20). Aung San Suu Kyi met a specially appointed government representative three times in 2009, but avail no benefits (ICRC Annual Report 2009: 208).

The junta with the motive to pacify the NLD’s victory of 1990’s election had employed this measure against the elected leaders. Prisons were used as a ‘silent killing fields’ (AAPP Annual Report 11 May 2009), to contain democratic forces. Also, those
opposing the rule were subjected to arbitrary arrest. In both May 1996 and May 1997, several hundred NLD members were taken into temporary detention when the party attempted to hold a full party conference (Smith 1999: 430). There were still hundreds of prisoners that are confined behind the bars and the exact data is unknown to anybody (AHRC Report, SPR-002-2009). According to the New Strait Times (Kuala Lumpur) report that, “In spite of the fact that from 1992–95, the authorities reportedly released over 2,000 political prisoners, there were well over 2,000 political prisoners recently held throughout the country.” (New Strait Times, 20 October 1997). The eyewash by the military junta was criticized by the Amnesty International report, “Myanmar: A challenge for the icon” as a ‘cynical contempt’ overall to improve its human rights record. Up to the end of 2009 there were 21, 00 political prisoners detained by the authorities (Amnesty International Report 2009).

In 2009, Assistance Association of Political Prisoners continued to actively support the 2,100 plus political prisoners in Burma by means of distribution of vital foods and medicines, financial assistance for them and their families, and research and documentation work aimed at raising international awareness of the issues faced by current and former political prisoners in Burma (AAPP Annual Report 2009). Hence, prisons had become powerful tools to deal with the opponents of the military rule, violating the basic human right against arbitrary detention.

Apart of the above mentioned rights, military junta ruled by SPDC (a new name for SLORC since 1997) had been engaged in other abuses also, which are of series consideration. Torture in the prisons, Apartheid, Violence, and Restricted Freedom of Expression, are few but major human rights abuses that shall be taken under consideration. The most affected were women who had been subjected to physical abuse, rape and forced prostitution. Of them the ethnic women are frequently subjected. As a recent published reports by the Thailand based Shan Human Rights Foundation and the Shan Women’s Action Network, extremely detailed rapes involving at least 625 girls and women by Burmese Army troops in Sham State, the largest of the seven ethnic minority states in Burma (International Herald Tribune, 5 July 2002).
The political upheavals since independence have greatly affected women of every ethnic background. It is women who have been most exposed to the humanitarian consequences of social and economic collapse. Just meeting the survival needs of a family has become increasingly difficult for poor mothers. Women also face greater personal risk, as they have themselves become everyday victims of serious human rights abuses. Reports of abuses against women, notably forced porterage, have increased dramatically in every region of the country since the SLORC came to power. But many of the gravest allegations of human rights violations, including murder and rape, come from ethnic minority areas.

Burma has signed the UN Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952), and under both the 1947 constitution and the BSPP's 1974 constitution women were guaranteed equal rights with men (Anti Slavery International Report, 1994:110). However, like many other social and political protocols approved by governments in Burma, such declarations of intent conceal a very different social reality. Women in Burma have traditionally been responsible for managing the welfare of the family. In health and education too, women have played a major role in the workforce, but despite the theoretical equality women are supposed to enjoy, few have ever reached really senior positions.

Living conditions are especially harsh in ethnic minority hill areas, where many families are headed by single women as a result of the twin ravages of endemic ill-health and of war. In these areas, women have often been the innocent victims of conflict (Metraux & Oo 2004). Over the years there have been many reports of the arbitrary arrest, shooting or extrajudicial execution of women in ethnic minority villages.

Equally disturbing, many of the worst human rights abuses against women, including summary arrest, beatings, murder and rape, have happened while they have been engaged in forced labour duties, which are per se a clear violation of the ILO's Forced Labour Convention (ILO Convention No.105, 1957, www.ilo.org). Since 1948 there have been frequent reports of rape by government troops in the war-zones and in
occupied territory. On occasions, similar allegations have also been made against armed opposition forces (Anti Slavery International Report, 1994:111).

Former tatmadaw commanders have privately admitted that they could not always prevent their troops from carrying out civilian 'reprisals' in areas they captured. But they strenuously deny there has ever been any such thing as a policy of rape. Military leaders are adamant that the tatmadaw has always been the protector of the people (Anti Slavery International Report, 1994:112).

Nonetheless, children were also forced to work as army troops, to kill people of their own country. With no access to education and other development prospect in life, they usually found themselves lost. Hence most of them engage in workings at early age. An elected representative of the National League for Democracy (NLD) said child workers were among the "silent voices" of Burma (The Irrawaddy September 2008).

They were also left defunct citizen when they either themselves or accompanied with their parent flee to neighbouring country. With the status of refugee, their future and childhood both ruined in those frontiers. It is estimated that there are about 1 million stateless children in Thailand, with about two-thirds thought to be children of Burmese migrant workers who come in search of a better life (The Irrawaddy August 2009). And similar number of population resides in other neighbouring countries. Thus Burma at the 21st century had entered into the world of human rights abuses, the worst of anywhere in the world.

The state of human rights in Burma identified the country into a land of political oppression, social unrest and chaos. Although the alarmed international community had initiated steps to overcome the problem, but successes are few. The problem further had invited sound measures by the international community to curb the disease. In March 1992 the UN Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) passed a strong resolution calling for a permanent representative to monitor developments in Burma, and asking the UN General Assembly to consider further SLORC'S treatment of people (www.myanmarmissionny.org).
United Nations initiated the works, by passing resolution to halt the violence and establish the democracy in Burma, in almost every session in the last decade. But progress is lull. Nevertheless, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had walked out of Burma in 1995, which was prevented from inspecting the prisoners and the detainees. And Burma was expelled from ILO; the 183 member groupings because of its flagrant use of forced labour, the only nation ever experienced such censure (Silverstein 2000:957).

But the dawn of century had witnessed some positive results in the development of human rights in Burma. The ICRC had stepped in Burma, to have a check of the prisoners in detention. It was granted access to 19,000 inmates and to interview more than 700 security detainees (with repeat visit to three of the prisons in which they are held) which is a significant breakthrough in 2000 (National Herald Tribune, 21 May 2000). And thus a significant change was expected in the history of human rights abuses.

It was the impact of UN efforts that had initiated by sending a human rights envoy Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, who by the ways of diplomatic talks had prompted the government towards softening in the attitudes of treating people (http://www.myanmar.gov.mm/myanmartimes/no85/ New/14.htm). And it was his efforts that made Burma to host first international seminar on the Rights of the Child in November 2001, in cooperation with the center of Humanitarian Dialogue and the International Institute for the Rights of the Child, based in Switzerland (Khaing 2002:43). He also condemned the international community's attitude of waiting for a changed political situation to emerge and doing about nothing to employ the efforts. He said, "I think it is very important that the international community and international bodies do not wait until the end of the political transition to become engaged. This is absurd" (Myanmar Times, 4 November 2002).

Thus the international outlook is changing and now positive scenes are expected to emerge in the picture of human rights. But never to forget is that still the military junta is in power and it can do whatever fits in its policy to remain in power. The whole scenario could be traced down in the words of the report of UN Human Rights
Commission submitted on November 1999, stating that, "At the very worst, we are faced with a country which is at war with its own peoples. At the very best, it is a country which is holding its people hostage" (National Herald, 2 May 2000).

**Narcotics and Human Rights**

Opium was the traditional crop in the eastern Shan and southeast region of the Kachin State. Until the 1950s, it was mainly produced and used locally. Things changed after the elements of Kuomintang (KMT) escaped from China following their defeat by Communist Party forces and took refuge in the Shan state. Once it became clear that the KMT was not going to return and liberate China, its members settled in Burma and organized opium production and sale (Smith 1999).

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Golden Triangle region produced some 1,300 metric tons, or one-third of the world’s opium in 1998; by 2007, it produced 460 tons, or around 5 percent (The Irrawaddy November 2008). Until 1976, the Burma government considered opium as internal problem, but growing use by young people in Burma heartland caused the military rulers, to attempt to eradicate the production with aid and advice, from United Nation and the United State.

Since 1999 the Burmese government and United Nations Office for Drug Control (UNODC) have been engaged in an aggressive campaign to eradicate poppy cultivation and heroin production in eastern Burma. While successfully reducing heroin production, the campaign has resulted in widespread violations of human rights, including forced relocation, food insecurity, and destruction of property without compensation, affecting thousands of families who once relied on poppy growing for their livelihood.

Although UNODC has attempted to develop crop replacement initiatives including fruit, lychee, tea and rubber plantations and basic manufacturing such as liquor and tobacco factories, mining and limited construction, these initiatives have often faltered, leaving poor farmers with few alternatives to feed their families (Human Rights Centre Report, July 2007, University of California: 30).
The problem is not easy to solve. The opium fields are in rebel or contested areas. Several of the minorities, especially in the Shan State, are involved. Various Shan groups are united nominally to fight for an independent Shan State, but in reality, a few are more interested in opium sales than politics and the income generated provides funds for weapons and the enrichment of the leaders.

Although there are local and foreign opium dealers in the Shan State, it is believed that one of the most important was, Khun Sa, the leader of the Shan United Army. With 3,000-5,000 well armed and trained men, his area rarely is attacked by the government because it was believed that he has an arrangement whereby he uses his arms against the other minorities, and the government leaves him alone. His wealth and power were unchallenged in his area (Silverstein 1990:121).

The Karen absolutely forbids narcotics to be grown, sold or to pass through their territory. The Kachin eradicated opium from the western portions of their State and encouraged the peasants to grow other cash crops. However, in the Lashio region of the southeast Kachin and western Shan State, it continues to be grown; while the Kachin Independent Organization (KIO) the organization of the Kachins in revolt allow the peasants, there to continue planting and harvesting because no other cash crop can be grown in the difficult terrain and marketed in the absence of roads and other infrastructure. The KIO is on record as opposing opium and will eradicate it, once the civil-war ends and development comes to their state; meanwhile, it taxes opium grown in its area, but does not market it.

This problem of drug-trade further exacerbated by many significant features. Firstly, it is the basic source which provides the military build-up for tatmadaw, which intentionally didn’t want to halt the production. Secondly, there inherited the personal interests of many top soldiers who are profiting from the illicit trade, and who are having ties with those who produces. Thirdly, if the efforts were seriously employed at any time, then the government finds itself unable to deal, as the drug-kin pins had emerged as powerful entities.
It is also not to perceive wrongly that the ceasefires undertaken by the government with these traffickers do bring any positive prospects, to halt the growth. Instead the agreements done with insurgent groups were only intended to avoid bloody confrontation with the army.

As a result, Burma in the last decade of 1990s had emerged as a hub of drug production and trafficking. In fact, Burma is now the world's largest exporter of drugs, and serves as the base of international narcotic businesses which stretched through the heroin refining laboratories along the Burma-Thailand border to the streets of New York and other developed world, where an estimated 60 percent of the heroin sold is of Burmese provenance (Carey 1997:13). This further clears the picture of the reality. The production of the drugs in the Burma reached the international market through the country Thailand and Laos, which all together constitutes the 'Golden Triangle' (Katha 1996: 393-419).

Although the drug trade has not been completely prevented, but there had emerged some positive prospects in the last decade. As in 1996, the regime negotiated a surrender deal with Khun Sa, the armed opposition leader and drug warlord long wanted in the United States on heroin trafficking charges (Fink 2001:240). But to the government’s disappointment many of the Khun Sa’s former followers refused to accept the surrender terms and transformed themselves into a new version of the Shan State Army (SSA), which today is one of only a few insurgent armies still fighting against the tatmadaw. Nevertheless, the surrender had also brought implications for the regime which after 1996, was condemned as a ‘narco-military regime’ (Smith 1999:428).

It is also true that the government economic policies in the country in one way or the other are all regulated by the income generated out of drug trade. As Francois Cassier, an intelligence analyst for Geopolitical Drugwatch explains, “Drug money is irrigating every economic activity in Burma and big foreign partners are also seen as big shields for money laundering” (Larsen 1998: 140). Thus the trade is growing day-by-day, leading ways for other minority groups to emerge. Reliable reports had recently claimed the United Wa State Army (UWSA), a 20,000 strong militia that now operates virtually
unfettered in northeastern Myanmar, to expand its methamphetamine production; is now the largest armed narco-trafficking organization in the world (Kurlantzick 2003: 140).

In this way Burma had been infected by the problems of drug businesses going over the land of which is called as the holy kingdom of hermit.

The increased frequency of trade and the emergence of many new drug lords had already alarmed the international community to stand hard and determined to eradicate the problem, generated by the military rule.

The United Nation, through its International Drug Control Program (UNDCP), had remained engaged with the military government in joint efforts to address the drug trade in Myanmar and the neighboring countries. But the reality is that the country had become the sanctuary of those who dare to engage in illicit drug production and trade. And by the time if the problem couldn’t be resolved then the world will have to witness a new generation- ‘drug prone’.

Apart from the Ethnicity, Human Rights, Refugees and Drug-Trade, their do existed many other problems in Burma, that bring enough implications for the World Community. Of the important one are dealt here, which are of deep concerns in human rights scenario.

**Health and Other Issues**

It goes to the military rule in Burma since decades, that the status of public health had been declined to the worst, and the diseases, which often heard of existence, are now the major one in the country. The dire expectations of the military junta to remain in power made them to ignore any kind of the development in the fields of health, infrastructure, education, information and media.

Decades of repressive military rule, civil war, corruption, bad governance, isolation, and widespread violations of human rights and international humanitarian law
have rendered Burma's health care system incapable of responding effectively to endemic and emerging infectious diseases.

Burma's major infectious diseases—malaria, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis (TB) are severe health problems in many areas of the country. Malaria is the most common cause of morbidity and mortality due to infectious disease in Burma. Eighty-nine percent of the estimated population of 52 million lived in malarial risk areas in 1994, with about 80 percent of reported infections due to Plasmodium falciparum, the most dangerous form of the disease. Burma has one of the highest TB rates in the world, with nearly 97,000 new cases detected each year. Drug resistance to both TB and malaria is rising, as is the broad availability of counterfeit antimalarial drugs (Human Rights Centre Report, July 2007, University of California: 1)

In response to the Burmese government's chronic neglect to care for the health of its citizens, UN agencies and international aid organizations began arriving in Rangoon in the 1990s. Under the watchful eye of the military authorities, they launched programs aimed at lessening the burden of infectious diseases, and by 2004, 41 aid organizations were operating in Burma with a total budget of approximately $30 million. That same year, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (Global Fund) signed a contract with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to disperse $98.4 million over a five-year period to combat infectious diseases in Burma (Beyrer 1998).

But in August 2005 the Global Fund terminated the contract, explaining that new travel restrictions imposed by the Burmese government had severely limited the ability of the UNDP and its implementing partners to access project sites. Four months later, Médecins Sans Frontières-France (MSF) announced it was pulling out of Burma for similar reasons, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said it had suspended visits by its medical staff to prisons because the Burmese authorities had insisted that ICRC doctors be accompanied by members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), a junta-backed social organization with direct ties to military leaders, including Senior General Than Shwe. In February 2006, the Burmese government issued guidelines to international organizations formalizing the kinds of
travel restrictions that had led to the departure of the Global Fund and MSF–France (Beyrer 1998).

To fill the breach left by the Global Fund’s withdrawal, the European Union, along with Australia, Britain, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden, launched the “Three Diseases Fund,” or 3D Fund, in October 2006. The fund, worth $99.5 million over five years, aims to bypass the central government to provide aid to UN agencies, international and local nongovernmental organizations, and civilian administrations to fight infectious diseases in Burma. The 3D Fund will target those most at risk of being infected by each of the three diseases, with a particular focus on those who have limited or no access to public health services due to geographical or security considerations, or for reasons of ethnicity, gender, stigmatization or financial status (Human Rights Centre Report, July 2007, University of California). The 3D Fund has stated that its resources will be used effectively, efficiently, transparently, accountably and equitably...with an emphasis on achievement of programme outputs (http://www.3dfund.org).

There are two major factors responsible for the poor health standards and the spread of the AIDS like epidemic in Myanmar. One is the education, which was under the control of the military junta since the year 1988. Lack of education had denied the Burmese people from the development of proper health care systems, and further the ignorance of the education about the AIDS like disease had rather expanded its spread.

The second factor is the economic one. The government whose aim is to remain in power, had prompted them to spend the money and resources for their sake, and not diverting their attention to deal with these types of problem. Even if, at any time they move to deal with the problem, they find themselves unable of the economic resources. And on the public side also, where poverty exists prior to any problem, prevented them to do anything positively. Thus the numbers of AIDS infected are rising immensely, with lowering of public health standards.

Myanmar is on the brink of a humanitarian crisis. This was the assessment of nine UN heads of mission in Myanmar in a letter sent in 2001 appealing to their headquarters

Moreover, human rights abuses can fuel the spread of HIV/AIDS. Such violations include discrimination against those living with HIV or believed to be at risk of infection; sexual violence and coercion faced by women and girls; abuses against commercial sex workers, injecting drug users, and men who have sex with men; and violations of the right to information on HIV transmission. In some war-torn countries, rape has been used systematically as a weapon of war, potentially exposing tens of thousands of women and girls to HIV. In addition, persons living with HIV/AIDS may be subjected to stigmatization and discrimination in the workplace and denied government services (Human Rights Centre Report, July 2007, University of California).

Though risky sexual behavior is the basic reason for the cause of AIDS like epidemic but it widespread prevalence in the society goes to the existence of massive sex industries in the frontiers. Nonetheless use of injection has also constituted to the rise of epidemic.

It is clear that the spread of HIV in Myanmar is the direct consequence of high levels of injecting drug use in some parts of the country and of substantial levels of unprotected sex, particularly in commercial transactions. But what is this behaviour driven by? It is very hard to provide strong scientific evidence for causal linkages between people’s economic, social and cultural situations and their risk behaviour.

But it is clear that Myanmar is a country in which most of the classic determinants of risk converge. It is one of the world’s largest producers and exporters of heroin. Inevitably, drugs intended for export leak into the local market. When escapist drugs become available to young people with little education, few job prospects and limited personal freedom, it is hardly surprising that the uptake is high. The hardline government
does not yet take a public health approach to drug injection, however, so access to sterile equipment is limited and sharing rates are high (ICG Report 2 April 2002: 3).

Poverty does not just drive people to drugs, it drives them to sex, too, both directly (as a survival mechanism for women) and indirectly (by fostering population mobility, breaking up families and communities, removing people from traditional social controls and sending them in search of easy companionship). Mobility has other another important consequence in the spread of disease: people on the move can easily carry HIV between populations with high risk behaviour in different corners of the country, as well as across borders.

Myanmar shares a long border with Thailand and China in the east. Expecting high income and better living conditions in other countries—usually no more than a vain hope—hordes of young people cross these porous borders. Up to a million Myanmar migrants are currently working in Thailand while significant numbers are also working along the borders with southern China and India. Most of these cross-border migrants do not have official papers, which hampers their access to prevention and care services. Their undocumented and illegal status also dramatically increases their vulnerability to exploitation. Many are unable to speak the language of the host country and end up in low paid sex, seafaring or construction work, where they are highly vulnerable to HIV infection and have little or no access to information (ICG Report 2 April 2002: 3).

Internal migration is almost as dangerous. With few other opportunities on offer and long running internal conflicts to escape, young people from all over the country, including many from ethnic minorities, are on the move. They are now gathering around the jade, gold and gem mines in the north and east, logging camps in the centre of the country, border trade in the north and east and fishing communities along the coasts.

The spread of military commands and battalions across the country contributes to internal migration. Add to this mix limited access to condoms, poor quality and overpriced treatment for the sexually transmitted infections (STIs) that facilitate the transmission of HIV, massive social stigmatization of the HIV affected, tight media
censorship, a rhetoric of impeccable national morality that hampers open discussion of HIV related issues and a government on the defensive against any criticism, and the result is a potent fertilizer for the epidemic (ICG Report 2 April 2002: 3).

UNAIDS, the coordinating body for the disease, within the organization (UN), estimates that 48,000 people in Burma died of AIDS in 1999. In that year the Burmese government officially reported 802 deaths from AIDS (International Herald Tribune, 26 May 2001). The UN believes that there are between 5, 00,000 and a million Burmese people infected, in a population of 47 million (International Herald Tribune, 30 September 2000).

About 1.3 per cent of Myanmar's adults are believed to be infected with the virus, one of the highest rates in Asia. Government spending on health and education is perilously low, and the economy has been grossly mismanaged by the military. HIV continues to present serious risks to the population, to security and to Myanmar's neighbours (ICG Report 16 Dec. 2004: 1).

Thus it had brought serious considerations not only for the country, which never opted to prevent such outcomes, but also to the international community (ICG Report No. 1, 19 June 2001). The critical condition has brought international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) led by World Vision and Medicines Sans Frontiers, to work in conjunction with UN agencies, on such problems of HIV/AIDS and child and maternal health care. By 1995, there were over 15 such NGOs operating in Burma, whereas in 1989 there had been none (Smith 1999:427).

Additionally, the United States Agency for International Development announced plans to spend $ 1 million, on a limited programme on Burma's HIV/AIDS crises (Clark 2003:133). In this way the efforts were although started to heal the conditions in Burma from the disease, but still doubts are there for the success. As in 1998, Burma's health and educational facilities are in severe disrepair, with only one doctor per 12,500 people. Also, UNICEF finds that, "health expenditure as proportion of the gross national product in Myanmar is one of the worst in the world" (Clark 2003:138).
Perhaps most importantly, in a rare interview with the Myanmar Times in January 2001, Secretary of the State Peace and Development Council, Lt. General Khin Nyunt, highlighted the importance of fighting HIV/AIDS in Myanmar. “HIV/AIDS is a national concern”, the general was quoted as saying “If we ignore it, it will be the scourge that will destroy the entire race” (ICG Report 2 April 2002: 7).

Economy

Economy is never perceived as a problem. But in case of Burma it is not at all the issue, rather one of the troubling things that together with the politics (of repression) had brought Burma to a juncture, where every other problem starts its origin. As a veteran scholar John Brandon stated, “Forty years of economic mismanagement and political oppression under a succession of military governments has denied the Burmese the quality of life they deserve. Burma suffers from the plethora of problems, from a shattered economy and failing health and educational systems to ethnic minority unrest and the proliferation of drug addiction and AIDS” (International Herald Tribune, 8 December 2001).

In many respects, the present political and ethnic crisis in Burma is underpinned by the collapse of the economy and the economic and social restructuring now taking place. Under the Burma Socialist Programme Party, all land, mineral, fishery and forest resources were nationalised, and farmers were ordered to provide set quotas in rice and other agricultural products each year for sale to the State (Maung 1999: 265-86). Little investment in the economy or the infrastructure ever followed these moves, and the idiosyncratic 'Burmese Way to Socialism' swiftly proved a recipe for disaster. In many parts of the country the traditional economy broke down due to a combination of factors, including mismanagement, corruption, the civil war and international isolation (Anti Slavery International Report, 1994: 96).

In this way the Burmese problems intertwined together with the economic performance of the country. Nevertheless, there are people who opposes the sanctions
policies of the international community, especially of the US, for responsible in
deterioration of economic grown in the country (Khosla 1998: 1639-69).

Although there might some truth in their argument, but that is not the whole picture. Instead there were other factors that had made the economy to ruins. The opaque policy environment, together with the highly distorted exchange market, and heavy government intervention throughout the economy, have adversely affected economic efficiency and macro-economic conditions.

Also, the persistent delay in undertaking economic reforms has prevented Myanmar from realizing its full economic potential or substantially raising the living standards of the populations. Not only that but because Myanmar has made limited progress-oriented economy, it had lacked the progress (Seekins 2000:16-24). Thus it is cleared that sanctions are not wholesome responsible for the economy repercussions, as Debbie Stothard quoted, “While it’s clear that they have major humanitarian needs, the source of Burma’s economic problems is not sanctions but the economy” (International Herald Tribune, 8 May 2002).

Environmental degradation

Environmental degradation in Burma could be analyzed in two areas. Firstly, the deforestation did by the successive military regimes in the country. There inherited two basic aims behind that policy, one is to yield profits via export of timber to foreign countries, primarily Thailand and the second is motivated by the aim of clearing the dense tropical forests, which had become the sites for insurgent’s hidings.

Secondly, it is the ‘smoke haze’ that had contaminated the atmosphere in the country and nearby. The huge amount of forest fires intended towards the insurgent groups had resulted in the smoke haze. Thus for the country, it has to halt both the areas which are currently bringing problems to the country and the entire region.

Environmental rights as a special category, has its importance in context of Burma because the entire habitat of ethnic minority population depends upon it. Any
infringement on them definitely results in negative impact on the population. And since raw materials extracted from forests are the major source of revenue to the government, it usually transgressed its limits to breach their rights.

Massive wood extraction by the military regime from the forests has enormously depleted the rich resource of the forest. According to rough estimates, Burma has been losing as much as 800,000 hectares of forest cover annually since 1988. At current rates of felling, all its teak wood reserves, once the largest and best maintained in Asia, will have gone within ten years. In many parts of the Karen, Kayah, Mon, and Shan States, large areas have been stripped of all forest growth. Similar large-scale deforestation has taken place along the Chinese border in the Kachin State (Anti Slavery International Report, 1994: 100).

Also the developmental policies, which in different ways relate to the natural environment, cause destruction to their resources. Like the power projects of building hydroelectric dams in the river zones of the forest cause apprehension to these communities. It is because of the huge mass displacement of the people from their ancestral lands.

These policies are protested by ethnic people whose rights are affected by it. Like the Kachin villagers and exiles hope they can stop plans to build a dam that will flood an area they consider their ancestral homeland (The Irrawaddy April 2010).

Also their contention got escalated as the initiatives that harm their habitat were not having any favourable output for them. Usually ethnic people were not provided with the development, which got its foundation on their land. Recently Burma and China are preparing to build seven hydroelectric dams in Kachin State that will not provide the people of Burma with jobs, security or even electricity (The Irrawaddy April 2010).

Also, the infrastructural programmes were not intelligently laid down. Particularly the adverse impacts are not taken into consideration that induces long term irrevocable hazards. Like the problems of flood, earthquake, and drought were induced by the
construction of dams. Many times these projects force their displacements from the fertile lands, which are already in short availability.

In this way, Burma at present, from the successive rule of military government had reached to a point of saturation, where almost every field of the country is under the constant trouble. According to one example, the government spends 28 percent per child on education each year; according to the UN its budget to tackle the AIDS is 3.5 million a year. Public health experts estimated that the country needs about $50 million to fully fund treatment and prevention programme (International Herald Tribune, 8 May 2002).

Thus there is a sharp contrast on the demand and supply of funds for the development of economy. Also, it receives less than $1 per person in foreign aid, which is the lowest amount of any developing country. Then, how development could be done when resources are in short. Contrarily military junta, shunned by the West and cast adrift by the financial turmoil affecting its Asian neighbors, had placed five high-ranking ministers under house–arrest, in an anti-corruption drive intended to survive the economy and repair its image (Guardian, 28 December 1997).

While there is an urgent need for economic policies, reforms and openness which could only be fostered by the democratic establishment of the regime, military junta had pursued a policy contrary to that. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi suggested that, “the anti-corruption drive would make little difference; it only strengthens our resolve because we know the economy won’t improve until there is a democracy which makes use of the talent inside the country, instead of crushing it in the name of security, which really means the perpetuation of their power” (Guardian, 28 Dec. 1997).

Hence, it is an irony in the Burma, which needs political reforms before the economic reforms. From Refugees, Ethnicity and Human Rights problems to the AIDS epidemic, it is all now a problematic country.
The China Factor

Prior to 1949 the Sino-Burmese relationship were characterized by the word 'lukewarm'. But the year 1949, the ascendancy of communists to power in China had marked a new era of relationship. There existed many reasons that had made Burma to look towards China. The U Nu’s requirement of Left support to his regime, the pressure exerted by the then existed 40 odd Chinese associations in Burma, the international communist support to the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) and the apprehensions about the Chinese accusation of Tibet are few of the major reasons that had made Burma to recognized China and foster friendly ties (Lintner 1992: 225-259). However, Burma had pursued the foreign policy of neutrality and equidistant from India and China, the two growing superpowers of the Asia till 1988.

But the whole scenario had changed as the junta government was trapped between the peculiar problems generated by it, forcing it unconditionally to move towards the China. There are many factors, which in one way or the other had contributed to this diversification of policy.

Firstly, the deteriorating economy and the depleting foreign trade had forced Burma to look for new opportunities for overcoming the problem. Secondly, the loss of legitimacy and the negative image as it had in the international community, which it wants to overshadow. Thirdly, to prevent the communist uprising in the northern border troubling the government, which had been supported by the communists in China (Lintner 1992: 225-259). Hence, Burma wants Chinese cooperation to suppress them. And lastly, to the insurgent problem, which is deepening in the Burma since they have their weapon support and sanctuaries in China. Thus, Burma seeks to have closer ties established with the China (Kurlantzick 2003).

Defense cooperation is the first to lead, when on 5 August 1988 i.e., just three days before the infamous 8 August 1988 massacre by the army had signed an agreement to purchase US $1 billion worth of weapons from China, the largest arms deal in Burma’s
history (Seekins 1997:534). And further Burma had looked towards China for its air and naval build-up, from time to time.

Political relations had started in strengthening when in October 1989 SLORC’s first Secretary Khin Nyunt visited Beijing, accompanied by General Than Shwe and 24 other officials. In August 1991, the incumbent SLORC chairman, Senior General Saw Maung, made an official visit to Beijing with an entourage of 53 officials at the invitation of President Yang Shangkun. Prime Minister Li Peng reciprocated by visiting Rangoon in December 1994. Similarly, in September 1994, Khin Nyunt and in January 1996 Than Shwe made there next visits, enhancing the political level visit and dialogues to foster cooperation. Also the cooperation in trade, development and infrastructure strengthen day by day, in the last decade as U Set Maung puts, “We (Myanmarese) ask and they (Chinese) give” (Ahmed 1996:139).

Eighty five percent of Chinese external trade transported by sea. This in turn necessitates the development of blue-water naval capability to protect vital sea lanes of communication. A major hurdle in Chinese ambitions to dominate the Malacca Straits and to ensure the safe passage of goods through the vital sea-lanes was the lack of any maintenance bases in and around the Indian Ocean for its naval ships. With Burma offering its port facilities for repair and maintenance, a key strategic objective—that is, opening to the Bay of Bengal/Andaman Sea via China’s Southwest frontier—has now been realized (Singh 1995: 80-87).

A high ranking officer and Director of the Chinese Academy of Military Sciences, General Zhao Nanqi, was quoted in 1993 that China would extend its naval operations farther than the South and East China seas, to check attempts by India to ‘dominate’ the Indian Ocean and other regional waters (Mallik 1997:58).

Accusing India of seeking to develop a navy to rival that of ‘large global powers’, General Zhao said that; “this is something which we cannot accept...we are not prepared to let the Indian Ocean become India’s Ocean” (Malik 1997: 116). Thus China prompted to build naval facilities in Burma, and to a step forward had succeeded in that objective.
China while upgrading Burma’s naval facilities had built four electronic listening ports along the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman sea; Man-aung on an island off the coast of the Western Arakan or Rakhine State, Hainggyi Island in the Irrawaddy Delta, St. Matthew Island just north of the entrance to the Malacca Strait; and the strategically important Coco Island. Chinese technicians have also been spotted at the naval basis at Monkey Point near Rangoon, and the Kyaikkami Facility south of the port city of Moulmein (Linter 2002:19).

Hence China in the 21st century had sufficiently acquired the naval bases for its further strategies. Also, by providing almost every possible help to Burma, China had succeeded to make it under its area of influence, as called by many critics as the “Tibetisation of Burma” or “Chinese satellite” (Malik 1998:114).

From a military deal of 1988, to the Kunming initiative (China Report 2000), undertaken by the Chinese government, to enhance cordial relationship with Burma does have serious implications for the entire region. Among them, five are the major threats to the economic and strategic interest of the region.

First, is the spread of small arms; second, an increase in illicit drug-trade; third, the problem of Refugees and the spread of AIDS; fourth, the insurgencies in the pious borders; and last, is the naval build-up of China. All these problems although in some extend do exist in the region but are limited. If China at possible succeed to interfere in the Burma, then these problems will obviously exerbate and intensify to a degree where controls could be out of reach, endangering the peace and human rights of South Asia and Southeast Asia.

Burma, at the beginning of the 21st century is extremely apprehensive of its future while having relationship with China. Burmese culture, traditions and policies were always contrary to that of China. There were some additional enduring contrasts like; China since 1978 had moved decisively away from Maoist isolationism, Myanmar had sustained Ne Win brand. China since 1978 had refocused world attention on itself, as a
growing economic and military power, Myanmar since 1948 has further diminished its importance in the eyes of the world (Times of India, 9 August 1998).

Since, some of the domestic reasons which might have enforced Burma in the late 1980s to move towards the China, but enduring long term relationship cannot be feasible. Indeed, the Burmese leadership is extremely sensitive about the country’s sovereignty and independence and always suspicious of Beijing’s long-term intentions, sees its current closeness with China as ‘a temporary measure only’ (Malik 1998:125). Nevertheless, Burma does many times have bargained the countries of ASEAN in the policies while using the ‘China Card’ or the implications of the closer Sino-Burmese ties. Hence, the Burmese foreign policy acts as a pendulum, which swings between the China and ASEAN countries. As A.B. Mahapatra says, “Myanmar rulers cannot decide whether to maintain friendship with China or keep distance” (The Pioneer, 13 May 2003).

Also, focusing on the Sino-Burma relationship, J. Mohan Malik quoted, “There is reason to believe that the present and future Burmese leaders would find it very difficult to withdraw completely form China’s sphere of influence. Nor would the Chinese government allow them to do so because Burma now occupies the some place in China’s calculus of deterrence in South and Southeast Asia, that Pakistan does in South and South West Asia” (Malik 1998:110). Thus, even if Burma willingly tries to pull back its hand from the China counterpart, it will never be allow it to do that. Hence, as a veteran scholar, Donald M. Seekins said that the Chinese influence in Burma is like “Playing with fire” for Burma had become true (Seekins 1997: 525-39).

But Burma still in the present state of chaos is not totally lost to the China as M.S.N. Menon in his article “Is Myanmar lost to Chinese dragon?”, (Tribune, 31 May 2002) optimistically denied that argument and stressed on the positive policies which could prevent Burma to decay and lost to Chinese dragon. Overall to the international community and the ASEAN, this is a challenge to be dealt in an appropriate manner and within the framework of time.
Problems Intertwined

With the hub of various problems existing in the country, there is one common feature in between them and that is their emergence. It is now sufficiently clear that all the problems surviving in Burma are directly or indirectly originated from the mismanagement, ruthless and despotic policies of the successive military rule. Also, these problems are intertwined together in their existence.

The problematic military government by its policy of suppression had generated the problem of human rights violations of the various people. This oppression results in ethnicity turning to insurgencies and rebellion. Further they opt to illicit drug trade and weapon trade. Terrorism could also be an option for some. Suppression has also resulted in increased number of refugees and displaced people. While the mismanagement of rule had turned out poor infrastructure, deteriorating economy, and social-unrest paved the way for secessionism and civil war.

Hence one thing is clear, that the military rule is the major cause of the country's present state of affair. And any further positive development could only occur when the major problem is sorted out. Until that these problems will remain there to trouble the entire region and the world community particularly on human rights issues.

Implications for India

As already stated the policies of the military government did impact India in many myriad ways.

First, the insurgency problem, which already rooted in the historical past, was excelled by the junta government. So the intensity of these insurgencies has risen by the time. And it has created problems in the India northeast. People with minimal grievances now rise to present their dissents frequently, and when not addressed properly they turn hostile to wage war against the state. And since they get hideout in the neighbouring country, it is nearly impossible to contain them (Banerjee 1996: 689-705). Hence the peace in Northeast has been severely jeopardized by these insurgencies.
Second, is the problem of mass exodus of people who were victimized by the repressive government. These people constitute in huge numbers of refugees. In context of Burma, Rohingya Refugees are the largest that migrate in the western frontiers of the country. Though their number in greater in Bangladesh but they are also not minimal in India (Shakoor 1991: 55-74). At this point of time when India already has a million refugees illegally migrated from Bangladesh, it is about impossible to entertain any of them in future. Since illegal migration from the pious borders is hardly to contain, the number of refugees are still rising.

Huge influx of migrant population not only dwindle the demographic balance of the country but also diminishes the available resources for consumption. Nevertheless these people when found themselves deprived of resources and opportunities, underwent in illegal activities of crime and terrorism. Hence they are extremely dangerous for the social, economic and security perspective (Singh 1999: 74-91).

Third, the illegal migrants from Burma are usually engaged in drug trade and other narcotic substances. They themselves are also heavily drug addicted which only bring adverse impact on the health of those whom they interact and come into contact. Any substantive number of refugees in a particular area could be hazardous for the health of people who habitat there.

Fourth, is the apprehension of the migrant population whom majority were infected with AIDS like syndrome. If they contact the local people in the neighbouring states then they only induce the disease. The right to health will come into risk.

And last, is the increment in weapon trade and weaponisation of the ethnic people in the northeast states could only jeopardize the peace and stability of the region. Any act of violence will escalate into a serious conflict while endangering the life and liberty of the common innocent people.

Hence for the sake of peace and tranquility in the northeast it is utmost necessary to have democracy and human rights establishment in the neighbouring state. Here Sanjay Hazarika has rightly observed that, "If the north-east is to become stable,
politically, economically and security-wise then it’s time that, those of that region and policy makers in India realized that the bridge between India and Southeast Asia is not the north-east. It is Myanmar” (Hazarika 1995). And it’s the right time to give attention over the country, whose ills had jeopardized the peace of northeast India.

Myanmar with a number of problems inter-wined had a very bleak prospect of change and improvement in the nearby future. But if efforts are laid with the some positive motives then history can be changed. For those problems that had deepen their roots in Myanmar, solutions were there to initiate a few them. Here are certain positive developments that can be hoped in the future of the Myanmar.

Federalism

Democracy is not the wholesome solution for the various problems that are penetrating deeply in the Burmese society. A multiethnic society of Myanmar do require social harmony and fraternity between the various groups that are divided on the lines of religion, culture and various language and the subsequent dialectics.

But the country contrarily is facing the problems or regionalism, succession and terrorism. On the various issues of power sharing, autonomy or independence from the country, these ethnic groups are deemed to have brought trouble for the present and future regimes. As a nature of political problems any civilized democratic country could find the solution by the constitutional mechanism of establishing ‘federalism’.

Similarly, the best suited solution for this problem is federalism. But that is not new for Myanmar, as the constitution of 1948 represented a federal structure with more scope for democratic principles (Ghosh 1997:44).

Nevertheless the former freedom fighter Aung San had tried the best to resolve the issue during the early period of independence. His efforts resulted in the signing of Panglong Agreement in 1947, which deemed to have almost resolved the issue. But that never came into force (Fink 2001).
Also, efforts were done under the U Nu government but before any outcome could result, there held a coup by Gen. Ne Win. And the efforts done by his predecessors were washed out when the 1947 constitution was declared banned (Fink 2001). Since then no efforts were employed in this direction by the government. In the name of national unity the successive military government had completely denied such federal solution for the problem of ethnicity.

Contrarily only the federal solution could prevent the problem. And the best way to do this is to return to Pang Long, where the founding fathers of the country placed their trust in each other and agreed to co-exist and co-operate (Naing Oo 2002:25).

Thus a federal solution could be the best. It was also sought by the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) and the multiethnic Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB) in the Manerplaw Treaty on 31 July 1992, for a federal union of eight states (Steinberg 1992:179).

Still doubts were there about the nature of federalism that could, best be for the state. And the answer lies in the federalism of a genuine ‘Indian type’. To bring unity in diversity as was the aim of Indian federalism, Myanmar should opt for that or somewhat near to that. The federalism co-opted by Myanmar should have crystal lined the various principle to avoid any contradictions.

The basis of the federalism should lay in the division of powers, to be enlisted in the legal constitutional provisions. With providing substantial autonomy to the various states, the integrity should be preserved in every way. Also, that the states should not be instrumented of central control, except in certain exceptional conditions (Carey 1997). Hence, the best way to bring down the ethnic minority groups form creating troubles is to provide them with sufficient legal powers at least to govern themselves.

Although, this solution was also supported by NLD which has proposed a return to the ‘Family Spirit’ of the 1947 Pang Long Agreement and the 1947 constitution. But Silverstein remarked a contradiction in the NLD's policy. The NLD proposed that, after establishing a ‘democratic system’ a National Consultative Convention (sometimes
dubbed a 'second Pang Long') is to be set up, which would debate and find solution for all ethnic nationality issue (Silverstein 1990: 114-34). Also, Aung San Suu Kyi defended that once a civil government was established it would not be difficult to resolve the question (Smith 1999:439).

This implicate that the people of the Burma heart land would first from a government and then they would take up the issue of majority / minority relations as two separate and identifiable groups with separate interests. Silverstein argued that the result would be the organization of a Burman dominated polity first, then after the constitution is written, began negotiated with the minorities. With no say or participation in the parliament at the outsets, the minorities will not be equal partners in the future state of Burma (Silverstein 1990: 114-34).

This diversification or dilemma in the policies of Suu Kyi and her party NLD not implicit that they were somewhat affected by the long repressive rule rather their priority to independence first of all, then to other problems. So, a federal solution shall be given the priority as Aung San Suu Kyi said, “Once you have democratic institutions, you have the proper means of conflict resolution” (Silverstein 1990: 114-34).

**Civil Societies**

The legacies of the repressive rule will continuously bring troubles for the future generations of the social evils that were induced by the junta government. Of the various problems that had ruined the societal structure of Myanmar, only the civil societies could effectively heal.

Civil society generally refers to all organized groups, small and large, which act independently of the government. This includes the private media, business and legal associations, religious, cultural, and social welfare organisations, student groups, and political parties. A flourishing civil society implies an open political and economic system and the dispersion of power. A weak civil society is generally related to the centralisation of power and a lack of tolerance for dissent (ICG Report No. 27, 6 December 2001: 7)
Under military rule in Burma/Myanmar, independent groups have had little space in which to emerge and develop. Some religious, cultural, and social welfare organisations have been allowed to function outside direct government control, particularly at the local level, but many seemingly innocent organisations have either been eliminated or co-opted. Meanwhile, the regime has established numerous military-led organizations which promote loyalty to it and its policies. (ICG Report No. 27, 6 December 2001: 7)

There are no legal human rights groups in Myanmar. The only groups that able to survive were those based in areas controlled by armed ethnic organisations or on the borders of neighbouring countries. These included the Chin Human Rights Organisation, the Federated Trade Unions of Burma, the Human Rights Foundation of Monland, the Karen Information Centre, and the Shan Human Rights Foundation (ICG Report No. 27, 6 December 2001:7).

The rest are curtailed and even diminished by the policies that were initiated by Ne Win regime to the presently ruling military government. Only certain political parties were allowed to exist in the society, but restricted to political arena. Major legal parties are, the National League for Democracy (NLD), the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy, the National Unity Party (regime-backed), the United Karen League, the Union Pa-O National Organisation, the Shan State Kokang Democratic Party, the Mro (or Khami) Unity Organisation, the Kokang Democracy and Unity Party, the Lahu National Development Party, and the Wa National Development Party (ICG Report No. 27, 6 December 2001: 13).

Another viable force of civil organisation is visible in the student groups. Students have a long tradition of political activism starting from the colonial period. The historic All Burma Federation of Students Union, which was banned by Ne Win in 1962, emerged again in 1988 to spearhead the pro-democracy demonstrations. It went underground after the coup but 1988 members and new recruits continue to search for ways to support the pro-democracy movement (Fink 2001). More than others in the society, students are motivated by commitment to justice, belief they have a historical
legacy to fulfill, and relative independence from family responsibilities. While most parents are reluctant to see their children risk their lives in political activities, student activism is generally viewed favourably, because students are seen as genuinely acting for the public good (ICG Report No. 27, 6 December 2001: 16).

Religious organisations, particularly the ones headed by Monks are also sturdy in raising the discontent against the regime (Human Rights Watch, 22 September 2009).

The role of the civil societies is one of the most significant but under examined to bring positive result. With only limited options available for national level transition, the re-emergent civil society networks represent an important vehicle for long-term, “bottom-up” democratization in Myanmar (Smith 1999:439). These civil society network work in two ways.

Firstly, by engaging national and international agencies to work on the ground level. For example, UNDP activities in Myanmar have been restricted to programs having grass-roots level impact in a substantial manner. Civil society engage themselves with such programs to bring positive outcomes. Basically the motives behind these initiatives were to implement a broader range of development oriented programs, and especially the community development program. These efforts will promote the path for the resolution of various problems like HIV/AIDS, Refugee settlements, halting opium cultivation and vice versa.

Secondly, by the mechanism of education and awareness programs, these organizations employ efforts to re-built an entire new society of educated and learned people. These organizations specially the INGO’s had worked out to make an outcry of the deteriorating conditions of people in Myanmar, in front of international community (South 2004: 233-55).

Thus together with international non-governmental agencies, they will try enough to heal the deteriorating conditions of their people. Hence, it will work in an effective way to produce social harmony and tolerance that will result in a complete new and strong societies. Also, needed is international aid and assistance, but only in the selective
manner of humanitarian principles. Thus the resurgence of the civil societies can only root out the social evils to foster human rights prevalence.

**Economic Liberalisation**

Nearly about half of the economic problems will be solved out, if democracy succeed to emerge in the near future. And the rest should be dealt cautiously.

A degree of liberalisation by the military-backed regime in the late 1980s unleashed massive popular discontent and led to a country-wide pro-democracy uprising in 1988 (ICG Report No. 11, 21 December 2000: 2). Following a decade of poor economic performance in the 1980s, Burma/Myanmar has recorded good economic growth in the 1990s, claimed to have averaged more than 5 per cent every year since 1991/92, with a peak in 1992/93 of 10 per cent according to official figures. Some Asian Development Bank and other foreign economists question the official figures, but still credit Burma with a good growth each year in these years. The three main sources of growth have been liberalisation in favour of the private sector, the inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI), and impressive gains in the first half of the decade in agriculture. The more important growth sectors in the economy in 1998/99 were mining, communications and financial institutions, between them accounting for nearly 50 per cent of GDP growth (ICG Report No. 11, 21 December 2000: 18).

Although the junta had initiated the policy of economic liberalization in 1989, to depart from “Burmese way to socialism” to the “Burmese way to capitalism” (Sundararaman 1988: 1539). But the results had only benefited the regime, that had tight control over the economy. The junta policy was to prevent any emergence of economic viable class that could probably confront the rule. Hence, the fruits of liberation were only enjoyed by a clique of rulers, rather than the entire society.

Knowing that, even then, the regional countries had accelerated the economic activities with Myanmar, providing economic support to the illegitimate rule while strengthening their hold on the country. This is what the countries said “Asian Way” or the “constructive engagement” (Thompson 2004: 1079-95).
The most important multinational investment has been in the oil and gas sector. After the discovery of two major offshore gas fields (Yadana and Yetagun) with massive proven reserves, multinational investment in this sector took off. The US$1 billion Yadana gas pipeline joint venture agreement was reached in 1995 between the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE), the Petroleum Authority of Thailand Exploration and Production (PTTEP), the French multinational Total and the US Unocal Corporation. The result was a 30-year contract for the export of gas via an overland pipeline route into Thailand’s power plant in Ratchaburi province (Larsen 1998: 3-13).

The armed forces leadership have benefited from this economic upturn, for which they must accept some of the credit. The military’s involvement in business has been firmly institutionalised in Burma. This has been achieved through two military enterprises in particular—the Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd (UMEH) and the Myanmar Economic Corporation (ICG Report No. 11, 21 December 2000: 19).

To the decaying economy, two kinds of initiative could prove to be fruitful. Firstly, to bring economic liberalisation with an open environment out of political and other unfair restrictions. This would definitely produce economic development and infrastructure built-up while profiting the entire population. And secondly, the policies of liberalisation should be target-oriented, which direct towards development while preventing the country to fall in the hands of foreign powers or the neo-colonialism.

Thus economic development requires political openness and accountability with transparency in the policies, which are possible only in a democratic society. Hence, it is true enough in the case of Myanmar and elsewhere that political development precedes the economic development.

*International Conflict Resolution*

Although a hard and determined stand of the international community was suggested, on the lines of sanctions to push the regime towards democratization. But that did not mean to throw the country again in the status of pariah, where it will only
descend to decay. Rather a comprehensive international approach should be taken to deal the country.

Various mechanisms of the conflict resolutions shall be opted to deduce the problems. Of them, there are two major approaches of conflict resolution that could be employed. The first and the foremost approach is the ways of conflict resolution employed under the auspicious of UN and its subsequent organizational bodies. As the symbol of international consensus it is hard enough for Myanmar to deny the international opinion. Also, the nature of these activities were only to provide humanitarian assistance, in the ways of substantial grass root level developments.

Since these activities did not have any negative effect on the junta's rule it will find no opposition. UN by the subordinate bodies like UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, UNODC etc. could employ the efforts to heal the deteriorating sub standards of human life in the local level areas. UN by this mechanism, although cannot impose pressure on the government for any political change, but do a little more in resolving the various issues, like HIV/AIDS epidemic, refugee settlement, drug control and education like issues.

A step further achievement had already made by UN in various fields. Like, it had been patiently employing the reparation of refugees in the frontiers of the country, spreading education among the 'liberate zone' (frontlines behind the war) of the ceasefire agreements, between various ethnic minorities. The UN Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) had been directly engaging with the ceasefire groups, and with their partnership it has already built schools, class and other facilities that resulted in reduction of opium cultivation in the UWSA (United Wa State Army) controlled areas, the largest drug producing hub (UN Office for Drugs and Crime, http://www.unodc.org/pdf/myanmar/myanmar_country_profile_2005.pdf).

Thus the UN efforts of conflict resolution had worked on two pronged motives, first to minimize tensions and conflict, and second to built infrastructure, and peace.
Hence, it had been the only successful mechanism that had retained the favourable conditions for human rights in Myanmar.

The second approach is on the parameters of civil societies, working globally. The big and mighty NGOs could be the next better approach in the conflict resolution. The organizations like World Vision, CARE, World Concern, Swissaid, SCF-UK etc. could be the best to deal with the problem. Although their workings were parallel to that of the domestic agencies, but a step forward, they will proved to be a powerful instruments. The scarcity of economic resources and in-experience do halt the processes of domestic agencies. But the obstacles are not for these organizations, of international standards. Thus they could works to bring positive outcomes in the crisis affected zones.

Hence, both the approaches could be valuable enough to resolve the various problems confronted by the country. But the nature should be target oriented and only in the humanitarian field. Either democracy find the way in the country or not, these problems could only be sorted out by the grass root level works, that are substantially done by these various conflict resolution mechanisms. Hence, it is considered as a valuable instrument in resolving the various issues, for a better future prospects.

Similarly the others problems can be solved out, if democracy wins. But still there is one new obstacle in that path, which might dilute the dynamics of internal and external pressure. And that is what the present government is dire to establish - the government on the parallels of Indonesia.

The internal conditions of Burma, ranging from the problems of ethnicity, drug-trade, refugees to the bilateral Sino-Burmese relations, had inherited in themselves the seeds of intensifying insecurity, conflict, and war, which do had serious implications not only for the country itself, but to the entire world community.

Although efforts are employed by the various countries and organizations to heal the condition in Burma but prospects are very few. Presently Burma is standing on the edge where it might lead to collapse which will definitely bring negative impact on the
world. Hence, sincere and sound efforts together with a pragmatic approach are needed to deal with the problems to foster peace and human rights.