CHAPTER-III

EXTREMISM AND VIOLENCE

‘ENGLISH NOVELS IN THE NORTH-EAST OF INDIA - A CRITICAL ANALYSIS’
"The ethnic groups are demanding autonomy for protecting their land, culture, conserving their language, customs and traditions. North East India which consists of different nationalities has their own history, language and ancestral culture and these factors distinguish them from mainstream. With backwardness, deprivation, exploitation and lack of economic development, the region has become a breeding ground for protest, which has led to insurgencies." (Achla Sonkar & Shubra Rajput 339-340.)

Insurgency is not a very new phenomenon in NE. It starts at the time of Independence in Nagaland. They were not satisfied when they were included with India. To them they were separated from India and they like to stay separately. So they (the underground) celebrate Independence Day for Nagaland in 14th August not in 15th August. In Assam, the insurgent groups appear much later. In Assam, the students' agitation which is known as the Assam Andolan '83 is the starting point of mass andolan or protest. And the aftermath or the result of the revolt or protest was not hopeful. The government could not fulfil the expectation of the people. So after 1983's 'Asom Andolan' there appeared an underground organisation, named ULFA. About the 'Asom Andolan' we find in the novel, Rebirth, and about ULFA we find directly in the novel, The House with a Thousand Stories. In other two novels - in The Collector's Wife and in the Sons of Brahma also find about the activities of the main insurgent group of Assam. But there we find fictitious names. In The Collector's Wife the whole events of the story
is interlinked with the activities of the MOFEH (Movement For an Exclusive Homeland), which is an insurgent group. In the same novel there also mention some other extremist groups. They are PFMG (The People's Freedom Movement Group) and VLS (Valley Liberation Eagles). All are fictitious names. In the novel, *Sons of Brahma* the name of the insurgent organization is Revolutionary Army.

In the novel, *The Collector's Wife* Assam’s Insurgency problem is described. The novel is written in such a time when insurgent groups played their active role like kidnapping, killing etc. In the novel the writer introduces the ultra group as MOFEH. The activities of the ultras become the main topic of discussion in the club, in the college and in everywhere. It is seen that there is not only one militant group in the novel. There is the mention of many militant groups in the novel. However MOFEH group is more active in the novel.

In the chapter thirteen of the novel Hrishikesh Deuri, the Superintendent of Police was killed in front of his wife Nandini, thirteen years old daughter Naina, seven years old son Ratul and eleven years old son Bhaiti. They were sitting in a Chinese restaurant called *Bamboo Shoot* or *Bamboo Doors* on MG Road for meal. Some gunmen killed Mr Deuri and he was dying in front of his near and dear ones and others and nobody could help him. Their atrocities, violence killings, kidnapping etc. are described in many pages of the novel. Readers can perceive a tense situation of Assam at that time.

Towards the end of the novel we come to know that the main male characters of the novels - Manoj Mahanta and Siddhartha also were kidnapped and killed by the ultras. Therefore Manoj could not connect with Rukmini for long time. Rukmini was
going to be mother of Manoj Mahanta’s child secretly. Her own husband Siddharth when came to know the fact, was ready to adopt the child eventually and he was also indulged in an extra-marital affair. Manoj could write a letter to Rukmini from the place where he was kept by the kidnappers. He wrote about the behaviours of the captors. He wrote that their behaviour was good. But he was ultimately killed by them. In the last chapter we find that Siddharth was also killed and thrown into the river. When Rukmini saw Siddharth’s dead body floating in the river her tears had come automatically. When a person is killed by the ultras his family has to suffer greatly in spite of the loss of the individual person. The dependants felt at loss at such moment. The novelist expressed her grief and her mental state by the following words:

“She hadn't been aware that the tears had come. Tears for two men. One who had died, not knowing that he was going to be a father. And another who had been prepared to be a father to an unborn child, not his.” (Phukan 349).

Here we find the plight of two imaginary families caused by ultras—the Deuris, Bezbaruahs. Such killing by ultras was rampant in that time. Here we find the peak time of the rising of ultras in Assam. At that time people feared the insurgents because of their violence and cruelty.

In *The House with a Thousand Stories* we find many stages of ULFA. In the initial stage people like to join in the insurgent group. It is because the insurgent group did some good deeds like arranging marries between lovers, even they organised meeting publicly and told people about their goals of independent Assam. They told
how our resources are exploited. An extract is given below in this context from another novel, *Sons of Brahma*:

"...Think how this so-called democracy and the Constitution of India have allowed other people, outsiders, to take away Assam's wealth and our pride.

"...Look, look at our resources, our oil, our forest, our rivers...all drained away from us." (Kashyap 20)

People were impressed. They even felt proud to be a part of the insurgent group. In support of this point an extract is given below from the novel, *The House with a Thousand Stories* -

" Relatives used to whisper to their jealous neighbours that their son or daughter had joined the ULFA, pride gleaming in their eyes." (Kashyap 21.)

Then the people of Assam witnessed another scene. The government offered money to the insurgents to surrender. Many of them took the money and became surrendered ULFA and they are known as SULFA. The government army pressurised the relatives or the family members of the insurgent to give their insurgent relative, son or daughter to them to surrender. Such families were tortured by the armies. A few instances from the novel, *The House with a Thousand Stories* is given below in this regard:

"His only crime was that he was the elder brother of an ULFA member and the ULFA member, his brother, had refused to
surrender to the government was dishing out so that he could return to society out so that he could return to society by setting up a business." (Kashyap 52.-53)

This was known as secret killing. This secret killing was very fearful. People began to fear the insurgent group by witnessing such secret killings:

"...How the masked gunmen had entered the house before dawn and dragged him out. How his three young children had cried for help, tried to pull their father back. How his wife had fallen on the body of the man and asked them to kill her and not him, told the assassins that he was the only earning member of the family and that he had a small job in a local government school as a bearer." (Kashyap 69.)

People began to fear the insurgent group. Even they feared to marry such relatives whose son or daughter was in the insurgent group. This was happened in the novel, *The House with a Thousand Stories* where a marriage was cancelled. An instance was given below:

"Some said families of all rebels and surrendered rebels, were unfortunate. (So surprising. A decade ago, the same people showed off to others that they had ULFA members in their family." (Kashyap 211.)

The root causes of the insurgents groups are not thoroughly discussed in the novel. Politics and extremism both are like the both sides of a coin. It is the decision or wrong decision of the government or the negligence of the government which directly
or indirectly encourages the people to form some organisation. For example the unemployment issue encourages youths to join the underground. Some underground organisation are formed to make a separate county for their tribe and some to protect or safeguard of their resources, people and culture from the exploitation or unjust treatment of the central government. They regard the central govt. as different country. In *Bitter Wormwood* such dialogues are found. The two friends Mose and Neituo often talked about what they wanted. In a dialogue where Neituo told Mose about their struggle we find the relation between the politics and extremism. In the long dialogue it is also written that the Nagas are not Indian. Indian citizenship is imposed on them. The author gives the reason for it. When the Naga people go to the other places like cities of the country they are not well treated. The long dialogue is given below:

"First, we were fighting Indian occupation from 1947 and doing a good job of it until factionalism entered in 1975. Then we were plagued by infighting that made everyone think we were quite mad because the factionalism made Nagas kill their fellow Nagas...." (Kire 212.)

Both sides of the coin, i.e, politics and insurgency are not the same although they are interrelated. We can differentiate it obviously as the people's representative side, pressure groups etc. and on the other side those people who try to create a different state by fighting with the government and at one time the govt. declared them banned. One side run the government and the other side effects the government with a view to establish something new and beneficial to people concerned.

In the *Life on Hold* we get description of the life of a militant as the hero Roko joined in the Naga underground group. The condition of a cadre in a ultra group is
described while Roko told Nime about his present life. He knew that there was danger everywhere for him. He told her that as he joined the underground so she should marry someone else. He told her in the following words:

"What kind of a life that for us? Do you want to live the rest of your life as my widow? I have no right to love you, yet I do. More than you'll ever know." (Kire 39.)

The future of such a cadre is grim. This becomes the future of many youths of this region. Nime requested him to leave the underground group. But it was not possible for Roko to leave the ultra group. He told Nime like this:

"Life is a little more complicated than that. The enemy are everywhere, Nime, the only way for me to escape them is to go back to the group. So long as I am a soldier, I am protected. The day I quit, I won't have a chance anymore. You do know that they shoot unarmed men as well, don't you? (Kire 40.)

In the novel Surface also we find an insurgent group. The group is formed in Manipur. The short form of the group is MORLS; it stands for Movement Organized to Resuscitate the Liberation Struggle. About the group the narrator says the following:

"What is MORLS? Movement Organized to Resuscitate the Liberation Struggle. An insurgent group that intends not only to fight the Indian army and paramilitary for the secessionist cause, but also to control the deviation of older insurgent groups from the liberation struggle." (Deb 162.)

The insurgent group indulged in killing of people and abduction. The narrator went to Manipur to write a ground report for the killing of an actress named Leela who
worked in bad films. They also abduct the director of an NGO named Prosperity Project. The name of the director is Mr. Malik. Although from government side negotiation process was trying but the leaders refused it. They even held press conference. An extract shows it:

"The MORLS leadership present (at the press conference) were taking few questions; they were under pressure because of the peace negations other groups were participating in. They made it clear that they feared no one ,least of all the deviationist groups talking peace with the double-dealing Indian government." ( Deb 163.)

In the *Surface* the author writes about the violence in Kohima. The insurgent group kill people and they also demand money from people. When Amit, the hero reached Nagaland he tried to collect information from a woman journalist named Maria, who wrote an article about woman. Amit, the narrator went her at the office of *Nagaland Post*, the newspaper published from Nagaland. He talked with her. He wanted to know about the girl in the photograph which he took with him. Maria told him to inform about the girl. But the narrator could not go to her place next day as there was demonstration against the beating of civilians by paramilitary forces. So there was curfew in that evening. In Kohima curfew is an everyday event. Maria told him that curfew given different times indicated different meanings. A curfew given five o'clock means it was mildly serious, at three o'clock it meant that it was bad meant a soldier or civilian or insurgent had been killed, twelve or one meant that multiple death had occurred. One example of violence by insurgent group, MORLS is given bellow:
"The MORLS (Movement Organized to Resuscitate the Liberation Struggle) leadership today exhibited a porn film actress as an example and warning to the people of the state. They shot as her as punishment to impress upon the people the importance of detesting from all corrupt activities encouraged by Indian imperialism." (Deb 71.)

In another place of the novel *Surface* we find about the state of Manipur because of the insurgent groups. The writer not only writes about the insurgent groups of Manipur but he also refers the insurgent groups of Nagaland also. He writes about the plan of the Naga people about their imagined state Nagalim and the reaction of the Manipuri people about it. The following extract shows it and it also explains their day to day fearful state of existence:

"The Nagas and the Kukis have been fighting battles and burning each other's villages all summer long. The Meiteis in the Imphal valley are resentful and hostile against the Nagas because they're not getting supplies of essential things, and they are also worried that an independent Naga nation will include a big chunk of Manipur....In this kind of atmosphere, people don't travel far unless they are forced to. They stay in their own villages, with their own communities, because every journey is potentially a farewell." (Deb 150.)

Insurgency and violence are related. But there can be violence without insurgency also. In the novel, *Surface* we find ethnic violence issue along with other ultra organisation's violence. The following information about Manipur is given to Mr.
Amrit Singh, the protagonist by his friend Rabiul in a conversation before he went to Manipur from Kolkata about the investigation of the murder of an actress:

"In Manipur, the Kuki tribe has been fighting the Nagas for all of last year. Villages burnt on both sides, passengers pulled out of buses and gunned down. Now who were the Nagas attacking before that? The Indian government, the parliamentary, the police. How did the Kukis get arms suddenly so that the Nagas were kept busy fighting them? You see. But there is more. There is always much more." (Deb 47.)

In another page also we find the same kind of information about Manipur when the protagonist, Amrit talked with a German, named Herman. There we find about the history and the present state of Manipur in a short passage. The passage is given bellow:

"Manipur is on the border with Burma, an old kingdom that was conquered by the British and then made part of the Indian republic. The people there aren't happy and there are many insurgency movements.

(Deb 30.)

There is another type of violence which occurs because of some ignorant, grotesque or criminal like people. Such type of violence we find in A Bowstring Winter and in Khanduma's Curse. However the violence by insurgents is most reflected in the novels like A Bowstring Winter, The Collector's Wife and Life on Hold. The insurgents group kidnapped and killed people in the NE at that time greatly. Even now also the activities of the insurgents group can be seen.
In *The Collector's Wife* we find that many people were killed. The prominent male characters like Siddharth, the DC, Manoj Mahanta, the businessman and the SP Hrishikesh Deuri all were killed at the hands of the militants. We find how people feared the militant group named MOFEH. The following paragraph shows it:

"It seemed that the activities of the people of MOFEH had drastically changed even the shopping habits of the people of Parbatpuri. Normally nobody would have moved out of their homes if it had been safe to shop after sundown. But now, even the afternoon siesta time was not sacrosanct." (Phukan 95)

In *Bitter Wormwood*, Mose saw how a man was killed by some factionists and later he was also killed by such militant. The earlier fight of the Naga people was different from the later fight. They received people's support then. But later even one faction does not hesitate to kill the person of another faction. The main character, Mose ponders regarding the change like the following:

"In the village they had entered they had been hailed as heroes, soldiers of the Naga army who the villagers never grudged sharing their meagre food supplies with. He had felt so proud to be a soldier back then, a freedom fighter. But now, these killings, this terrorising of their own people - was this what it had come to? Mose checked himself as a sob rose in his throat." (Kire 10.)

In the novel *Surface* also we find about the Naga movement. In *Bitter Wormwood* also we find about the Naga demand. They demand a separate country for Naga people. The story of the novel is mingling with the Naga movement. The love story of Mose and his wife Neilhounguo is also mingling with the movement. The writer
not only describes the movement through the story but also puts her arguments forward why they demand a separate country. In a book named, *Ethnic Conflict and Identity Crisis in North East India* the writers, Pankaj Kumar Sarmah and Jahnabai Debi write about the Naga movement and its causes as the following:

"Naga movement is a movement for self determination and nationality. What initially appeared to be demand for autonomy aimed at safeguarding the Naga 'way of life' soon snowballed into a people's revolt led by the Naga National Council. The basic fact is that Nagas and they want their right of self determination outside India. Unity among the Naga tribes took place on the basis of construction of self and other. This has given rise to greater Naga nationalism." (Sarma and Debi 169.)

The insurgent problem creates a huge problem of socio-economic growth. In the novels also we find how govt. tries to end the problem. In *Life on Hold* the grim situation of violence and its effects are expressed in many places. The heroine Nime's father Pusalie became so frightened that he did not dare to talk. One day he came home began to tell in whispers. The following dialogue shows this:

"Don't shout, please don't, they are killing everyone who shouts. They sent me back to tell you that from now on, people should talk only in whispers." (Kire 46.)

His mental condition became so bad that they had to call in a doctor. The doctor told that he had suffered from delusional disorder and paranoia symptoms. He became a mental patient because of tension over debts and his business was not going
well. Violence of the militant also had an impact on him which also made him a mental patient. His condition became pathetic. The following description shows it:

"They had all learned to whisper, when speaking to him. If they forgot to whisper, he became very agitated and could not sleep." (Kire 52.)

The general people, and even children all become fear ridden when they saw killing of people around them. Children became fearful when then saw a dead body lying in the open. Such a description is given in the novel by the following paragraph:

"The factional killings, as they were referred to by the local people, began in the later half of the 80s. Nime and Zeu, walking to school one morning, were horrified to see the body of a young man lying in the woods near their school. He was lying on his back. At first Nime thought he was drunk. But when she walked past him, she saw that his shirt was bloody. She was so scared, she pulled Zeu's hand and they ran off. The police came later and chased away curious onlookers from the spot. Then they took the body to the morgue. After that, Nime and Zeu didn't dare go by the woods for many weeks." (Kire 19.)

The insurgency is a threat to peace in society. In The House with a Thousand Stories also we find how a marriage was cancelled because of insurgency. People fear to tread the place where a dead body was lying.

The killings were not from one side i.e. the militant side; the government army also killed them in counter attack. And also Roko the male protagonist in LOH who
joined the underground group, was killed by army. In an article named *Ethnic Issues, Political Movement and Insurgency in North-East India* Arpana Nath and Ranjit Taku write the following detail about the killings of people in NE:

"In 2008, 1057 persons were killed, almost double as compared to 539 in Jammu and Kashmir, in the terrorist related violence in the seven states of North-East. The region has registered a sharp rise in the terrorist violence in the last few years. The number of death has increased from 640 in 2006 to 1057 in 2008. The two worst affected states are Manipur and Assam." (Nath and Taku 157)

In all the novels where we find about insurgency we find about the violence of the state. In the *Bitter Wormwood* we find how Mose's grandmother was killed while she was working in the field. In *The House with a Thousand Stories* also we find about the secret killings and military harassment on innocent people. Thus violence is not only done by insurgent but also but the government also in trying to control the insurgency.

Why have people been joining the underground groups? There are many reasons. In *BW*, the novelist Easterine Kire tries to find the reason behind it. The atrocity of army is one of the reasons which prompt some youth to join the underground. Mose's grandmother was shot dead by army while she was in the field cutting grains. When another woman was found missing and murdered then he told his decision to his mother that he would join the underground group. The following extract shows it:

" The missing woman had been raped and murdered and decapitated. There was great anger at her funeral. Men spoke
loudly of revenge and no one quieted them because this had never happened before. The soldiers who had done it made no secret of their crime.

...That night, Mose spent a long time explaining to his mother why he was joining the Naga Underground. In the end she simply said,

'Do what you have to do, son, and may Jisu go with you" ( Kire 82-83.)

Economic backwardness is also another reason for insurgency. In an article named, *Insurgency and Administrative Reforms*, H.N.Das mentions about the cause of the insurgent problem. The following extract is from the article:

"Insurgency's fertile ground is where economic backwardness, inequality and inequity prevail. Add to these is high unemployment which make the youths uneasy. These are the youths who are prone to join insurgent outfits without much introspection." ( Ray and Bhattacharya 127.)

Unemployment and economic backwardness are the main cause of the insurgents' uprising. In *Life on Hold* we find how many young people joined the insurgent group. The following lines are given from the book:

"Unemployment and corrupt practices in the government had created a deep sense of helplessness that pushed many young men into the Naga Underground movement." ( Kire 36.)
In the book, *Globalisation and North-East India* we find about the detail of unemployment in the North-East. The following extract is given from the book which shows the rates of unemployment in the North East.

"Assam experienced the highest rate of unemployment in all categories except for urban males in 1999-2000. The lowest unemployment rates for rural male, rural female, urban male and urbane female were found in Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. Unemployment rates for rural males rose in Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland. For rural females the unemployment rate rose for Manipur, Meghalaya and Nagaland. The unemployment rate for urban males rose in Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland." (Singh 402.)

Political decision is also another cause of increasing insurgency in NE. When Nagaland was given statehood they were not satisfied. They want a separate country for them. On the other hand other ethnic groups also start to raise the demand of separate statehood for themselves. They think that they are different from others. In *Bitter Wormwood* we find many reasons for it. Discrimination is also one of the reasons. In the novel, the hero Mose's grandson Neibou studies in Delhi. He met several unexpected incidents there. He faced discrimination and even violence because he came from the NE region and he looks different. But all the people are not the name. Neibou found a boy who is not like others. They became friends. As their friendship becomes deep, Rakes invites him to their house. There he came to know that his grandfather was an army officer who worked in Nagaland at that time when Neibou's grandfather Mose was an active cadre. Rakes's grandfather Himmat has high regard for the Naga militant. He
told they are expert in fighting and they fight for their imagine country. Rakesh also came to Nagaland and stayed in their house. By doing this the author seems to show unity of India in spite of diversity. However while Rakesh visited Nagaland he found that as if he were in a foreign country because people look different, talks different and wear differently.

In *Bitter Wormwood* we find the brief history of Naga movement. They have been demanding a separate country. But they are given statehood by the centre. Their problems were tried to solve by the political parties or the ruling parties. But their demand is not fulfilled. On seeing them getting statehood other ethnic groups also start demanding separate state. In the article, *Ethnic Issues, Political Movement and Insurgency in North-East India* the authors Arpana Nath and Ranjit Taku try to find the reason of it in the following way:

"From one Naga insurgency at the time of independence in 1947, the number of insurgencies has multiplied to over hundred, spreading all over the region. Being aware of danger to India's integrity and security, Prime Minister Nehru took a number of steps to win their loyalty and meet their aspiration for separate identity. The division of Assam in tiny states on ethnic lines became the main plank of his policy. With hind side one can say that this was the beginning of trouble in the region. Ones the central leadership allowed identity politics to play a free role, it was only a matter of time before the other ethnic group started demanding their own separate state. " (Nath and Taku 157.)
Although violent acts are taken place in NE now- a-days by the insurgent groups and the state authority to dominant the insurgency yet there are other sorts of violence also in this region. There are many types of conflicts and violent acts happening in the NE regions. All are not included in insurgency - some are individual and some conflicts have public importance. In this regard Tom Mangattuhaze writes in an article named Is Peace achievable in North-east India like the following:

"The North-East has a rich cultural heritage and long history of coexistence of a diverse anthropological mix of tribes and communities. An unfortunate corollary is that the region has a complex history of conflict and it is the single most important issue that impacts all associates of life and development in the region...It is to be noted that more often people tend to associate conflict primarily with insurgency, i.e, between the people and state. However, there exist conflicts of different descriptions in this region, which can broadly be classified into four:

Inter and intra tribal

Tribal and non tribal

Tribal autonomy and the state

Inter state." (Tom 247.)

The all kinds of conflicts reflect in the novels Easterine Kire's Bitter Wormwood, Anjum Hasan's Lunatic in My Head and Siddarth Dev's Surface. In the Bitter Wormwood the factional strife is shown. In some novels we find the extremism related

The novel, *A Bowstring Winter* by Dhurba Hazarika is a novel full of violence. John Dkhar is a professor of Political Science in St. Edmund's College of Shillong. But he becomes one of the accomplices with the teerman Kharkongor of his revenge. John Dkhar once took the volume of *The Golden Treasury* in his pocket to read in the park. But he became a changed man. As Kharkongor and others included him in their groups as friend after an unfortunate incident he became like them thereafter. He was reading a novel at the restaurant named Kaizang. There he saw violence as one man was about to be killed. Kharkongor's friend's, James's life was saved and they thought that it was because of the presence of John Dkhar. Kharkongor and other thought Charlie left James because in that cabin John was present. He was reading a novel. The atmosphere of the novel was also full of violence. An extract is given below:

"Of the two exits from the restaurant, he knew that the kitchen was his last bet, for to cross the cabin next to his would mean discovery. From the sinister tone of their voices and if anybody was present in his cabin, John Dkhar was sure that the men were bent upon violence. Violence is exhilarating, he thought, but only in the pages of a book like the one I am reading .This is real." (Hazarika 9.)
The professor, John Dkhar had his good qualities which he showed time and again. He asked them many questions. Hanshu, the teerman Kharkhongor's friend told him,

"'You ask questions like woman. I not like. You ask other things. That is better.'

'Sorry, Hanshu. Only I couldn't help being curious.'" (Hazarika 128)

John Dkhar, the Professor also indulged in violence as he became a partner of the Kharkhongor's group in spite of his good qualities.

In *Lunatic in My Head* tribal, non-tribal issue occurs. However the author tries to give peaceful message through the novel. Though Sophy was neglected in a marriage where she was taken by one elder Khasi girl Elsa, Elsa loved her and reminded the girl to serve Sophy when she was neglected. And in Aman's 'happening also' he was helped by his Khasi friends except one named Max who is brother of Aman's friend Ribor. So this conflict is not a big conflict than insurgency. It is hoped that it will completely disappear with the spread of proper education.

Mose and his group aimed to make a separate nation for the Naga people only after the partition. The underground even disliked to celebrate the Indian Independence Day. They celebrated it on 14th August, one day before India's Independence Day. Their activities were so noticeable that the Govt. had to pass an Act. The army tried to dominate them. The Nagaland State Legislative Assembly passed the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act. Mose told his friend Neituo regarding this in the following conversation:
"And to prove that, they are getting the Disturbed Area Act passed. Which means the army gets immense powers again. Which also means the army has abrogated the cease-fire terms. But who is going to listen to that? Especially when it is upheld by the State Assembly of Nagaland?"

'They can't possibly compare to Pakistan. The problem is entirely different. The Indian army may have liberated Bangladesh but that doesn't give them the right to crush Naga freedom. The East Pakistan issue is completely different from the Naga issue." (Kire 121)

Thus this novel can be called a political novel. The underground group's activities; the policies of the govt. all are political issues. Some of the Naga people were not satisfied after getting statehood. The narrator informs the readers in the following words:

"In 1963 the dismal news that Nagaland was being made into a state in India came as a shock to all in the Underground. It was not welcome news. Something had gone terribly wrong." (Kire 103)

Most of the Naga people are not satisfied with the decision of statehood. So they decided to continue their fight. The following excerpt is from a dialogue Neituo says to Mose which also means as above:

"Naga statehood means nothing to any of us. The freedom struggle is not over." (Kire 113)
But some of the underground cadres are disillusioned. They do not see any positive result. They are now aware of the loss of lives. More's wife, Neilhounuo felt like this:

"The struggle had now gone now beyond its twentieth year and there was still no end in sight. At 30, she felt a little disillusioned by it all. Too many had died. Needlessly India was such a large nation. It could keep sending its soldiers in for hundreds of years.'

(Kire 113)

However Mose's and his wife Neilhounuo started a new life by starting business, there were many who stayed in the underground. They even divided into many fractions. Thus we find many political elements in the novel along with the domestic life of Mose's family, the social life of Nagaland.

In the novel Surface we find a very real picture of politics. When ex-Minister Vimized came to meet Mr Amit Singh, the journalist who came to Manipur from Calcutta (now Kolkata) to investigate the killing of an actress by a local insurgent group named MORLS then we find a real picture of the state. We come to know that the Minister and his government tried to negotiate peace talk with the insurgent group. But they refused. He came to inform the condition of Manipur by telling the activities of the insurgent group. The peace negotiation process was started with the help of the director of an NGO named Prosperity Project. There we find the Minister also referred to the progressing peace talk of the Naga insurgents group.

"MORLS will not agree to sit at the table for talks. Therefore, the valley remains the problem even while the hills have quietened down. The insurgents here are coming and beginning to listen to
us, even though they have been fighting for a long time. Do not forget that a Naga nation was demanded on 14 August 1947, one day before your Indian republic even existed. Still, they will talk, because they some commitment to the cause and the suffering they see in the people." (Deb 166)

In the novel *Surface* we find how govt. tries to bring the insurgent group named MORAL in to discussion table. They refuse it by showing their greater demand. In *Bitter Wormwood* also the writer tries to change the mind of people not to indulge in violence by telling that not revenge but mercy is the main thing. When Mose's grandson asked his grandmother after his grandfather's killing whether he would take revenge or not then his grandmother told him to forgive and forget. The following conversation shows it:

"Grandmother, in our culture we are supposed to take revenge on those who kill our loved ones." (Kire 241)

Grandmother's reply was not in support of his statement. His statement was truth in earlier days. It is not true or applicable in present situation. Even if someone applies it in the present days, it will not be appreciated. She says:

"That is the old culture, my child. We cannot live like that anymore. It will destroy us. Before our people came to Jisu, we did that. But now, we are to take our burdens to Jisu and leave it with him." (Kire 241)

It is seen that the peace talk in progress with the insurgent group of Nagaland and the Central Government.
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