CHAPTER-IV

DEMANDING OF SOUTHERN NAGALAND OR SOUTH NAGALAND AND STRUGGLE FOR KUKI HOMELAND
It is the major tendency of highlanders of Manipur both the Naga and the Kuki that the people of the same race now scattered under different administrative units have a right to be grouped together and brought under the same administration or administrative unit, because they have already such unit in Nagaland and Mizoram. So the Manipuri Nagas want to merge to Nagaland and Manipuri Kukis to Mizoram. These are the dreams of the Nagas and Kukis underground outfits and their frontal organizations. To them it is merely a question of adjusting the state boundaries of Manipur. Naturally it is a great painful to the valley people. In short demanding of Mizo south district and south Nagaland in the territory of Manipur means to alter the territorial boundary of Manipur. The popular leaders of the valley

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1 Aide-memoir to the Prime Minister of India for immediate creation of Kukiland, submitted by Kuki National Front (KNF) on 8 April 1998.
including those who were ministers began to say “you are free to go and join your kinsmen in Nagaland or Mizoram if you want to, but leave the land behind”. Highlander’s answers —“if your king held away over our land by remote control, we have lived on it for centuries. We will continue to live here. Why should we leave our land belong to Nagaland or Mizoram”. ²

The basic argument of demanding Southern Nagaland and Southern Mizoram district is associated with Nagas and Mizos independence. No one denied the fact that within the paradigm of politicization of a nation or state formation; basically the masses are heeding to draw a definite political territory as essential element of state. For such they have need land (viable definite territory) and people (some nationality). Without one of each element, no one could form a state. Among the elements of the state, land is the crux of all. So the fourth world people always try to demarcate their own definite territory if that is not existed or

established. But having communal politics and narrow sight, it always based on racial boundary. It is better to close the chapter of it because if that is going on why not America merge to Britain, Kashmir to Pakistan and both of them should merge to Iran, Bengal should merge to Bangladesh and why not the people of north east should merge either Myanmar or Thailand or China. That would mean escalating unending nation's reorganization.\(^3\)

The same political formula is being applied by NSCN (IM) and its frontal organizations in Manipur. So one may assess very easily that it is not the clash of civilization though Huntington emphasis in the contemporary discourse because it is not related with culture, language and religion as civilized identity but it is related with the question of land. The main factor is that majority of NSCN (IM) cadre are from Manipur but they are fighting for the Naga cause i.e. sovereignty of Naga people. The territory is Nagaland, the land which all the Nagas are inhabited. If the success story of

their movement either sovereignty or maximum autonomy comes up, the fruit of it goes to Nagaland and its people only not in Manipur Nagas. So those Nagas in Manipur have been compelled to follow suit with the expansion of Nagaland or creation of a new Naga state separated from Manipur i.e. southern Nagaland or South Nagaland.\textsuperscript{4} That is the result that we have to see their aspiration in connection with Manipur Naga and Nagas of Nagaland vis-a-vis Nagas of Manipur with Meeteis.

In the relationship between Manipuri Meeteis and Manipuri Nagas, merger of Manipuri’s Nagas territory with Nagaland has a long story. After independence of Manipur in 1948 the Manipuri Nagas in Mao which adjoins Nagaland raised this slogan (Naga integration). The movement was led by Athiko Daiho, who later became the Finance Minister in the union territory of Manipur. At that time the demand was put forward and Manipur had not merged with the union of India and Nagaland was yet to be a state. It was then the

\textsuperscript{4} Interview with Pabung Iboyaima, on 6 April 2007.
state of Nagaland was yet to give birth and existed merely as a district of the Naga Hills of Assam. Manipur had a popular ministry in the system of constitutional monarchy with MK Priyobrata Singh as Chief Minister. Those in the Ministry includes Mr. Ralengnao Khathing, who later became chief secretary of Nagaland and Indian ambassador to Burma. Mr. Khathing, a Tangkhul Naga from erstwhile district of Manipur East was the minister in charge of Hill Areas. Thus, Mr. Daiho's integration movement was handled by another Naga leader. At that time Mr. Daiho began a non tax campaign against the Manipur rulers. There was police firing in one place of the Mao area. Mr. Daiho was arrested and put into the jail. The demand was gradually lost its initial momentum.\(^5\) He was later pacified by accommodating him as an advisor of Manipur administration.

It again resurfaced in 1954 that fourteen Nagas leaders of Manipur submitted a joint memorandum to the central government making out a firm determination for the

regrouping of the Nagas areas as one administrative unit. Angal Anal, a congress worker of Tengnoupal with some Nagas leaders put up a theory that the Naga hostile were gaining a foothold in the Manipur hills because of the discontent arising from the valley domination of the hills. According to them merger was the ideal solution for the problem posed by the hostile Nagas. But the union government did not give positive response. As a result of it, the merger issue of Manipuri's Naga inhabiting area to Nagaland was completely faded.

How to Merge with Nagaland

The different tribes of Nagaland such as Konyaks, Aos, Semas, Angamis, Chakesangs, Changs, Lothas, Phoms, Sangtams, Yamchungers, Zelians etc. are different from each other as the Mao, Tangkhul and Kabui Nagas. In Nagaland, pidgin Assamese locally known as Nagamese is the inter-tribal language of communication. In the remote interior areas even Nagamese is not understood. The same

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6. Ibid.
case is done in Manipur also. The different tribes of Manipur do not also understand each other languages. Even among the sub-tribes, one village does not understand the language of another two miles away.\textsuperscript{7}

According to L. Solomon, the Naga leader who was finance minister in the former union territory of Manipur, the language in which they can communicate each other in the state is Manipuri. Ninety percent of the Naga tribes are fluent in this language. That is why Nagamese of Nagaland is utterly foreign to the Manipuri Nagas. Even in the remote interior areas of Nagaland, Nagamese is not understood. So it is quite right to say that a major obstacle in Naga solidarity has been the diversity of the Naga dialects, there being as many dialects as there are tribes and there even being sub-tribes from village to village within a single tribe.\textsuperscript{8} English and pidgin Assamese (Nagamese) are the inter-tribal language or inter communication in Nagaland. Like the same way, the highlanders of Manipur are using English and Manipuri as

\textsuperscript{7} The Freedom, Imphal, December 1993.

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.
inter-tribal language of communication. Therefore, Manipuri language is the only language which tries to integrate the tri-ethnic groups of Manipur because common language is the most important element of unity.

Even in customs and habits, the Nagas are not one. The tribe of Maram in Manipur north district does not eat pork. For the rest of the Naga community, pork is considered the main dish of any festive meal. Among the Tangkhul, who are one solid bloc among the Manipuri Naga sub-tribes, there are the people who eat beef and buffalo meat and those who consider it altogether taboo. Moreover in Manipur hill, the creation of enmity between the Naga and Kuki is happening since the beginning of 19th century. They seem to have the attitude of vengeance in both the movements of highlanders i.e. Kuki rebellion and Jadonang movement. Even there were bloodshed in the hill due to having high enmity and led to ethnic clash in between 1993 to 1997. But in Nagaland such enmity among the different tribes was not happened except driven out of Tangkhul from Nagaland.
Different Political Aspiration of Naga leaders of Nagaland and Highlanders of Manipur

In 1945, at the initiative of Charles Pawsey, the then deputy commissioner, the Naga Hills District Tribal Council (NHDTTC) was formed. In the next year the name was change to Naga National Council (NNC). At that time the political objective of NNC was local autonomy for the hills within the province of Assam and training of Nagas for self government. In 1947, as independence approach, Naga leaders submitted a memorandum to the last Governor General, Lord Mountbatten, suggesting that India might act as a guardian power for ten years after which the Naga people would be free to determine their political future. On 20th may 1947, when a subcommittee of the advisory committee on aboriginal tribes visited Kohima, the Naga leaders reiterated the same view. So in their discussion sir Akbar Hydari, the then governor of Assam with the leaders of the Naga National Council at Kohima the nine point agreement was made. Subsequently a controversy arose over clause 9th which stated that ‘the Governor of Assam as
agent of the government of Indian union will have special responsibility for a period of ten (10) years to ensure the due observance of this agreement; at the end of this period the Naga National Council will be asked whether they require the above agreement to be extended for a further period of a new government regarding the future of the Naga people be arrived. This statement indicates that Naga people would have the liberty to demand complete separation. On July 19th 1947 a Naga delegation under the leadership of Phizo met Mahatma Gandhi at Bhangi colony, New Delhi and confirmed the declaration of Naga independence though they had not agreement with the government of India.9

On the other hand, during this time tribal leaders of Manipur were very busy for drafting Manipur constitution Act 1947 and Hill Area Regulation Act. They were Mr. Daiho, Thangkopao Kipgen, Mr. F F Pearson, Shri Suisa, Shri Tiankham and Teba Kilong. They were important members of the constitution making body and drafting sub committee.

During that time they had not given the tendency of Naga integration in spite of their educational qualification and prevailing condition of Nagaland.

After release from Jail, Phizo became the president of Naga National Council. In May 1951 he organized a ‘plebiscite’ in which thousands of Nagas gave their thumb impressions in favour of independence. In the same year the first general election of independent India was to take place. Naga nationalists showed non acceptance of the Indian constitution and its sixth schedule. Single voter of Naga turned up to this first election of Nagaland though the government of India went through the whole process of preparing electoral rolls, calling for nominations and setting up polling booths. It was a total boycott of the election, no one filed a nomination and not a single voter turned up. But in Manipur three Naga political parties were contested in the election of 1952. They were Mao Maram Union, Manipur Zeliangrong Union and Naga National League of Manipur. In the Lok Sabha election of 1957 Congress Party (National
Party) captured the outer Manipur Constituency. The congress candidate defeated not only the socialist candidate but also four independent candidates in the outer Manipur constituency.\(^\text{10}\) During these days underground movement in Nagaland became so active.

In March 1956 the underground Naga Federal Government was formed. There was an underground Parliament called Tatar Hoho, and organization of Home Guards with a commander in Chief, and a council of Kilonsers (Ministers) with an Ato Kilonser. The President of the Federal Government was called Kedaghe. From 1956 to 1958 Nagaland witnessed large scale violence in action. The Indian armed Forces move in.

Seeing that violence causing worsen situation, the Naga Peace Organizing Committee (NPOC) was formed in 1956. Then Naga People’s Convention (NPC) was called. In May 1958 also the second Naga Peoples Convention was

held at Ungma. A liaison committee was appointed to contact the underground with a view to bring about a political settlement. In October 1959 the third NPC was held at Mokokchung and it was decided to propose that Nagaland might be made into a separate state within the Indian Union and the Ministry of External Affairs.\textsuperscript{11}

In July 1960, Prime Minister and Naga delegation reached 16 point agreement. On 1\textsuperscript{st} August 1960, Prime Minister Nehru announced the decision of the Government in parliament to make Nagaland the sixteenth state of the Indian Union. Subsequently, an interim body was set up and after the due preparation Nagaland state was inaugurated on 13 December 1963, by President Dr. Radha Krishnan. After 1963 it was a triangular situation in which the two major parties were the Naga underground and the Nagaland state Government, the third party being the Government of India. Thus underground Naga organization is again in the soil of Nagaland. But the notable thing is that the Naga territorial

integration or expansion of southern Nagaland was not also taken place. It was really the same case of missing the bus to the Manipuri Nagas leaders who wanted to integrate all the Naga inhabited areas of Manipur under one single administrative unit of Nagaland.¹²

The situation turned for the worse in the first half of 1970s. Several underground groups were sent to China for training in guerilla warfare. A spate of violence was witnessed throughout the state. In the General Election of 1974 a total of eighteen human lives were lost. The Government launched massive crackdown on insurgents. But it is true to say that peace at long last returned to Nagaland in the last quarter of 1975 when the underground leaders took the initiative for peace talks which culminated in the historic Shillong Accord of 11th November 1975

¹² A process of attempting to consolidate the Naga ethnic identity has been on forcefully after India gained its independence, and more so after Manipur became democratic state. This process has been marked by a flurry of activities-writing Naga history, constructing primordialism of Naga tribes. Influenced by NNC, some tribal leaders in Manipur had started involving in the ‘Naga movement’ with the formation of the Manipuri Naga Council (MNC) in 1960. Inspite of having such active organization in Manipur, the Manipuri Naga inhabited areas could not be included in the full fledged state of Nagaland because people are not interested and even angry with the Nagas of Nagaland because of their treatment to them as Kacha Nagas.
whereby the underground of their own volition, accepted the Indian constitution and agreed to bring down the arms held by their men. Action under the unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, by Virtue of which the underground organizations, ‘Nagaland National Council' ‘Federal Government of Nagaland (FGN)’ and ‘Naga Federal Army (NFA)’ had been outlawed, was suspended and the erstwhile rebels came over ground and joined their families to lead peaceful lives as citizens of India. The decision of the rebels to bid farewell to arms, may or may not have been motivated by a genuine change of heard, but there is no doubt that the major factor responsible to the changed stance of the underground was the altered situation in Nagaland in the proceeding four years. 

During this period the state had all round progress in all fronts. Zashie Huire and Biseto Medom became President and Home Minister of the Nagaland Federal Government respectively and were quickly to realize that the

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underground movement was petering out and there was no hope of keeping it alive for long in view of the mass surrenders and captures of the rebels. And so they took the initiative for the peace talks and signed the Shillong Accord.14

The Shillong Peace Accord was primarily responsible for the change of democratic process in the election of the state. In 1978 election record 80 to 85 percent voters turned out at various polling booths to elect their representatives to the state Assembly ignoring the faint boycott call given by a section of misguided element in what remained of the Naga underground movement. The popular enthusiasm in the electoral process was equally shared by a large number of erstwhile underground leaders and men not only unrolled themselves as voters but took active interest in the battle of ballot. But Phizo, who settle down in England following his escape from the Naga Hills in the late sixties, was quick to repudiate the agreement. Mr. Muivah, the pro Peking
General Secretary of NNC, the political arm of the underground who has been camping along with his china trained groups in the lightly administered Kachin Hills of Burma adjoining Nagaland, too rejected the accord. So the issue of southern Nagaland could not be beyond the question. Still the common political aspiration of Manipuri Nagas and Nagas of Nagaland are in different direction. One may realize that both the underground factions of NSCN have different views and set of ideas. The vivid example is the incidents of Kohima and Dimapur in 1995. Povezo Soho, deputy commander-in-chief of the federal government of Nagaland was allegedly assassinated by NSCN (IM) in 1995. Enraged by it, the Chakesang in Phek district of Nagaland issued a quit notice on Tangkhuls in Phek and NSCN (IM) responded with a death sentence on those who signed the quit notice. Further as many as 21 Tangkhul

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16 Bherges, "India's North East Resurgent", p.313 cited from Debasish Mitra, A setback to NSCN (IM), Nagaland newsletter from Kohima, Statesman; New Delhi, October, 6, 1995.
were killed in Kohima and Dimapur by unidentified gunmen during the period from 8 May 1995 to 6 June 1998. 17

In Manipur after the Daiho move was baulked, its leadership was taken over by Mr. Romeo, the Manipur Tangkhul Naga. He later joined the hostiles in Nagaland and occupied important position in the “Federal Government”. He belongs to the due Manipur Naga Council (MNC), a branch of the Naga National Council of Nagaland. By 1975 Mr. Romeo became the Chief spokesman of the merger move. The MNC called for the boycott of the 1962 parliament poll, but the Nagas in the Manipur hills cast their vote just the same. Disillusioned with the failure of their boycott call, most of the leaders of the MNC joined the hostiles. This spelt the doom of the integration movement. With hostiles taking up the issue it got inextricably mixed up with their demand for independence for the Nagas. Nothing more was needed to make the merger demand take on anti national hues and thus losing what democratic luster it had.

Mr. Rishang Keishing the Tangkhul Naga leader of Manipur who represented outer Manipur in the 1952-57 Lok Sabha (LS) and then again from 1962-67 lost the election, opposed the inclusion of Manipur areas in Nagaland under circumstance then prevailing in the later state. The view was that the situation in Nagaland was not very reassuring. There was a very real threat to national integration. In that situation, for the Manipur Naga areas to merge with Nagaland would mean throwing in their lot with a disturbed area. So, as long as national territorial integrity was endangered in Nagaland, it would be highly unwise to bring all the Nagas in the North-East into the state of Nagaland. But after his defeat (Rishang) in 1967 general elections, he formed the Naga Integration committee and took up the merger agitation in a big way. Whatever might have been his motivations, the situation in which he took over the leadership of the merger

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18. Rishang Keishing, the chief minister of Manipur, who occupied the longest term of chief minister in the political history of Manipur. It indicates that there is no communal politics in Manipur. If one accesses the seat ratio of hill and valley, it is 20:40. Even the micro minority Muslim could occupy chief minister of Manipur. He was Md. Alimuddin. But in case of Naga political leader, they always remain quite about the Naga integration issue whenever they won the election; they were at stake when they lost.
movement was qualitatively different from that which
dissuaded him from lending if support earlier. But not all
Nagas in Manipur are keen about joining Nagaland. They
are afraid that in an integrated Nagaland they will be hard
put to come into their own. For example in the matter of jobs
the Nagas enjoy rights by reservations. In a consolidated
Naga political unit like Nagaland, this right will not be theirs
any more. The whole state being that of scheduled tribes,
the Manipur Nagas will have to take equal chances with the
rest of them. Not only the above point of their advantages in
job but Manipuri Nagas also do not like to strain the long
blood relationship of hill and valley from the same ancestor,
having common historical background and inter-economic
dependency of each other. 20

In connection with above propositions, the present
discourse wants to cite interesting evidenced at the people
of hill objected the demand of greater Nagaland so called
southern Nagaland. Manipuri Nagas were only the people

20 Interview with Ito Tongbram on 9 April 2007. He was the Camp Director of
Committee for Peace and Integrity (COFPAI) campaign in 1995.
who reacted against the government of Nagaland when they tried to set up water supply project in the Zhuko River. Here, Manipuri Naga stated that Nagaland Government could not take a single drop of water of Manipur. If they did so, bloodshed should be the last decision. Then, another incident was happened in Mao area; when the government of Nagaland constructed a T.B Hospital by encroaching in a little portion of Manipur’s boundary. At that time, Manipuri Mao Nagas broke down the hospital. In short Manipuri Nagas and Manipuri Kukis are not in favor of NSCN’s claims. And they also realized that it was only the handiwork of India to alter the boundary of Manipur in order to aggravate voluminous internal contradiction. Still the Government fermented the issue and remains unresolved. Thus the main issue of internal contradiction in between Naga underground and Kuki and Meetei and Naga people is associated with different political aspiration of the leaders.

21. Seminar paper on “Land Reforms and Ethnic Crisis in North East India” held on 27th and 28th July 2005 organised by MAKAIAS & History Department, M.U.
22. Ibid.
Self-Determination (External vs. Internal)

In the early days of armed struggle all of them fought against the structural injustice. But in the later part, it was quite based on relative deprivation theory. Within that periphery comes up with rational choice theory of leader. In a democratic set up, self-determination is a basic right which gives a group independent statehood or expanded power within a federal state. Some scholars have classified self determination into various types. According to Ronen, self determination is classified into five types, such as

a) National self-determination as the aspiration to rule one's self, and not to be ruled or controlled by others;

b) Class self determination meaning the proletariat's quest for self determination to establish the true communist society free from bourgeois exploitation;

c) Minorities self determination meaning minority should not be forced under any sovereignty under which it does not wish to live but be given a fair chance to
decide whether it desires to live in an existing sovereignty state or to set up new independent state;

d) Racial self determination meaning the aspiration of people for self-rule on the basis of race and

e) Ethnic self determination meaning that ethnic groups should freely determine the forms of government which ranges from limited autonomy to independence. Renon himself admits of the inaccuracy of this classification and the minority and ethnic self determination could better be grouped as one under which racial self- determination may also come. Some other scholars are more inclined to broadly classify the right of self-determination into two: external self -determination and internal self -determination.23

External Self-Determination

As far as classification of self determination into two - it is related with the meaning of sovereignty because it has two important elements, internally supreme and externally

independent. That is why external aspect is concerned; it means creation of an independent state or integration of self-determining people with an independent state. In other words, the external self-determination also means separation of self-determining people from an existing state or country of which they are a part to set up a new independent state. According to R.N. Ismagilova, by external self-determination is meant the fight against relics of colonialism and neocolonialism and the achievement of state sovereignty, the solution of national and territorial problems of an international character, in other words, the struggle for a just settlement of relations with neighboring state's, land and peoples. The external self-determination thus inbreeds secession. External self-determination is practicable during the cold war period because each of the superpower tries to get more and more members in their block. But in the post cold war period, in this unipolar international politics internal self-determination is projected to minimize violent activities in the world.24

24 Ibid.
**Internal Self-Determination**

The internal self-determination primarily relates to self-government with a certain degree of autonomy within the boundaries of an existing nation-state. It means the right of people to determine their own social, economic and political system, to depose their resources and to create conditions for their own development within and existing state. It means the right of people to determine their own social, economic and political system, to depose their resources and to create conditions for their own development within an existing state. In other words, the internal self-determination refers to the autonomy and entity in its political decision making process. It is understood to refer to independence of action on the internal or domestic level while foreign affairs and defence are in the hands of the central or national government. The Sami homeland in Finland, the Greenland home rule in Denmark, the Nnuyukt self-government in Canada and the Kuna autonomy
arrangement in Panama are good examples of the implementation of the internal self-determination.\textsuperscript{25}

Today, in armed conflict situation of North-East internal self-determination becomes official projection of India to implement through various mechanisms and arrangements within the framework of a nation state and tried to pose up it as ultimately a powerful tool for genuine democracy and federalism.\textsuperscript{26}

So the different armed groups of North East are in the process of internal self determination. NSCN (IM) peace talk with the government of India is also the best example of it. But some are still in demanding external self determination. It leads internal contradiction among them.

So some are at stake on autonomy, some are fighting for expansion of territory or creation of a new state within the Nation and some are for national liberation (sovereignty). Here one could see vivid picture of conflicting in the same

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
demand of self determination. It means to determine their political, economic and social status by the masses. In other words it is externally supreme closer with complete independence. But on the other hand, granting of autonomy and creating of a new state or expansion of existing state’s territory are within the frame work of internal self determination. Besides, good numbers of ethnic armies are being formed in Manipur to protect their ethnic groups and asserting their interest only. At present these are being practiced by Kuki militants. They are the by-product of ethnic class in between Naga and Kuki from 1993-1997.27

Really speaking, demanding of Kuki homeland and expansion of Mizoram are not burning issue in Manipur. These are the counter proposition of Naga factor and to bargain the Meetei to understand their position and stands. For them, the problem is mushrooming of ethnic army and possession

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of ethnic nationalism. These are the views of political implication in the discourse of Identity crisis.28

Logic behind the Ethnic Nationalism and Racial Boundaries

Their logic and discontentment which distorted the common political aspiration of North East India in general and particularly in Manipur are that the creation of ethnic states may have satisfied the bigger communities, such as Assam for the Assames, Arunachal for the Arunachalis, Nagaland for the Nagas, Mizoram for the Mizos, but it failed to accommodate the smaller communities and tribes, which remained embedded within the larger ethnic groupings of the respective states, all of which contain a multi-ethnic constellation of populations. Ironically, the existing democratic systems primarily function through the representatives of majority population located within a politico-administrative territory in a state. The wishes and aspirations of the minority communities are often ignored;

28 Ibid.
they find themselves completely marginalized in areas where they do not form a majority.\textsuperscript{29}

Moreover, state boundaries have been drawn up in such a way that they often cut through the socio-cultural boundaries of certain communities, destroying their natural habitation. The plight of the Kuki-Chin tribes scattered in contiguous states of South Assam, Mizoram and Manipur and across the chin state of Myanmar, the Nagas separated between India’s Nagaland and Western Myanmar, is the result of this artificial division. The complete marginalization of the indigenous communities through relentless influx of more organized immigrant communities like Bengali and Nepali is also another terrible story. Naturally, most of these communities have resorted to arms to secure their homeland, when they realized that they had little chances to retain control over the resources, or at least ensured of their share of it, within the areas where they became minority.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{29} The Imphal Free Press, 26 January 2005, Imphal, p.2.
The same views are in the minds of ethnic minority in Manipur mainly to the Kukis and Nagas. Among them also, Kukis are treated as foreigners by the Nagas. So they launched ethnic cleansing by the Naga militant against the Kukis. But the Kukis claimed that they are not foreigners on the ground that they were subjects of the Meetei King who were settling in the areas of Kabow Valley. After Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, handed over this precious land to the Myanmar, they became foreigners. They were facing the problem of transfer of population, so they could settle in any part of Manipur. No one could restrain them. From that point of view, they defended the attack of Nagas in 1990s' ethnic cleansing. In short, logic behind the ethnic nationalism and ethnic armies could be justified by them but they have different demands and aspirations. That is also part of making confusion for the demanding of self determination.

Here one scholar rightly remarked in his work that "these different demands and aspirations of the various groups, when, compounded with people's movement
without streamlining the movement, it becomes confusion day by day. So we have to distinguish clearly nationalism, sub-nationalism and ethno-nationalism. Moreover we have to identify the group which is demanding internal self-determination and external self-determination”. He further stated that “Moreover, we have to have very clear demarcation in between ethnic army and national liberation army. Otherwise, branding of different names will create more and more confusion”.31

The same case is happened to both the movement launched by Nagas and Kukis. In the case of Naga’s movement, Shillong Accord 1975 was opposed by NSCN. It was formed on 31st January 1980 by Issak Chisi Swu, Thuingaleng Muivah and S.S Khaplang. Since then it has been carrying for an armed struggle to bring an end to Indian colonialism over the Naga people and establish a People’s Republic of Nagaland. The Indian Government’s persistent efforts to start a dialogue process created

differences among the leadership of NSCN and this disagreement took its toll on the organisation. On 30th April 1988, after an attempt to assassinate Muivah failed, in which several cadres were killed, the NSCN split into two factions, namely the NSCN led by S.S. Khaplang, NSCN(K), and the NSCN led by Isaac and Muivah, NSCN(IM). The former suspected Isaac and Muivah of secretly initiating talks with the Indian Government.32

All the two groups have their base areas in Myanmar, and training camps in the Chittagong Hills of Bangladesh and Arakan and some parts of Somara Hills of Myanmar. They have links with the Karen and Kachin rebels of Myanmar. NSCN groups have link with the ULFA and Bodo rebels. But that is not cordial after it claimed directly greater Nagaland by embracing the surrounding areas from Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.33

32 V Sumi and K Timothy, “Cry for Justice”, (MIP, GPRN) date not cited. Pp. 36-60
33 Personal interview with Anup Jyoti Das, Secretary NEPI on 7 September 2007 Guwahati.
Today NSCN is in the ongoing process of peace talk with the government of India by demanding maximum autonomy with greater Nagaland. The Kuki militants are also in the process of S.O.O (Suspension of operation) with the Indian army. The Indo-Naga peace talk is started since 1997 yet not amicable solution is in the hands of the masses. Instead both the hill and valley people are creating more and more enmity because of governmental initiatives for peace. The following pattern emerges from governmental initiatives for peace in the North-East:

i) Un-conditional denial of the demand for complete sovereignty or the right to self-determination.

ii) Using developmental initiative for particular schemes to create the context of peace has been a constant theme in the center's policy on conflict resolution in the North-East. Since 1996,

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34 Bharat Bhusan, seminar paper on "Ongoing Peace Process and Negotiations in NE India - An Analysis" organised by NEPI at Guwahati on 7-9 September 2005.
billions of Rupees have been announced as special packages for the North-East.

iii) Poor implementation of each and every government programmes, including the special packages continues to create beneficiaries of conflict.

iv) Surrender of a section of militant and another section continuing to flee.

v) Breaking of existing states and Re-organization of States.35

From this Governmental initiative for peace in North East states, one comes to understand that Government is using developmental initiative to create the context of peace as a constant theme and cream for negotiating with underground organizations, there is possibility of altering the existing boundary of the state. It seems that the gun fighting in between the underground militants and the security forces

will be stopped but invites fighting among the various communities. In other words, breaking of existing states and re-organization of states should lead such enmity among the various ethnic groups. That is what the Southern Nagaland is fermented since last 50 years.

**Kukis for Kuki Homeland**

The people of north east have witnessed the vibrant activities of Mizo’s armed struggle in the mid sixties. That was the Mizo National Front (MNF) under the leadership of Laldenga. He led an armed struggle for a sovereign state of Mizo’s. Demkhosit Gangte, who was one of the delegates of KNA in the Mizo People’s Convention (MPC) at Kawnpui in 1965, also joined hands with Laldenga. Thus the KNA (Kuki National Assembly) – MNF axis was established in the struggle for the common cause to secure a sovereign state for the Mizos.

In their ongoing armed struggle for creation of a separate state for all the Kukis and the Mizo’s who are scattering under different administrative units, the
autonomous district council of Aizawl, then a part of undivided Assam as a district passed a resolution for creation of a state on 14 April 1971.\textsuperscript{36} It said,

“To put all Mizo tribes including those living in our neighborhood under one set up of administration, the house consider lasting peace and tranquility and statehood as of imperative necessity and decided to bring this to the notice of the central government as soon as possible.”

It was done in reaffirmation of the decision taken earlier at Kawnpui Convention to create an administrative unit so as to build up territorial integrity of the areas inhabited by the Kuki-Mizo. On the eve of signing the Mizo accord Laldenga, in his statement appeared in the times of India on 8 may 1985, claimed that the government of India has agreed inclusion of Kuki/Hmar inhabited areas to the newly created state of Mizoram and further claimed that a large chunk of

\textsuperscript{36} Op. Cit. “Memorandum submitted to the PM by KNF on 8 April 1998”.
Manipur territory contiguous to Mizoram will be merged with the state.

On 18 May 1988, Pu Nehlun Kipgen founded the Kuki National Front (KNF) at Molnoi with the objective for the continuation of demand for Kukiland.\textsuperscript{37} According to T S Gangte, the said front was established to accelerate the demand earlier raised by the Kuki National Assembly for creating Kukiland. Another of KNF was to defend the Kukis from the atrocities and brutalities of the anti-national Naga activists. The Kukiland demanded by KNF consisted of the districts of Churachandpur, Chandel, parts of Tamenglong and parts of Senapati. Another armed Kuki ethnic outfits, Kuki National Army (KNA) active in Manipur and Myanmar also claimed these areas as the constituents of Zale'ngam or the Kuki nation. \textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{38} Personal interview with T S Gangte on 27 July 2005.
Nagas and Kukis in which Direction

It would be a profound error to allow geographical dimensions or statistics of population or complexities of religion, caste and language to be little the significance of what is called the integrated Manipur of the past. Hinduism, Sanamahism, Islam and Christianity all of them have played their important role in the social development of Manipur. We have witnessed some social movements they are Nupilal Ahanba (First Women Agitation 1904), Thoubal Agitation (1912), Kuki Rebellion (1917-19), Jadonang Movement (1921 onwards) Irawat Movement (1936 onwards) Nupilal Anisuba (Second Women Agitation 1939), and statehood movement. Thoubal Agitation in of 1913 was shared by Meetei Pangal as one of the leaders, his name is Alip Chaoba, and Kuki Rebellion was also shared by Meetei leader named Chingakham Sanajaoba as Master brain of rebellion. But any authors of each group never mention such role in their works. All the ethnic groups do not need the hiding force of religion in the structural work of society and its politics. They have not
common religion but have developed common traits of character and have common economic and cultural interest. The ethnic clash among them is of a recent growth and is the outcome of manipulation by interested politicians and underground group.\textsuperscript{39}

Besides what is important in the formation of an integrated Manipur is not more physical relationship like race, languages and religion but a common memory in the past and a common ideal in future. That is why the common masses of both hill and valley do not try to fade the spiritual bond of unity except a few handfuls of political leaders and underground leaders and its frontal organisation.\textsuperscript{40}

Manipur had been for centuries the home of several ethnic groups. Almost nine-tenths of the area of Manipur is hilly regions and about seven hundred square miles comprise the fertile central valley. From time immemorial the central valley of Manipur had been the home of the Meetei while

\textsuperscript{39}From the statement given by camp director Ito Tongbram in COFPAI (committee for peace and integrity) campaign in 1995.

\textsuperscript{40}Op.cit. seminar paper on “Land Problems and Ethnic Crisis in North East India”.
the surrounding hilly regions of the state are inhabited by the hill men (Today they are known as the Nagas and the Kukis). According to 1881 census the total population of Kukis were 25,385 and Nagas were 69,904 while the Meeteis were 1,17,103.41

Meetei people are known as ‘Tammi’ (plains man) and Naga and Kuki are commonly called as ‘Chingmee’ (Hill folk). There are some tribes also who denied including either Naga or Kuki. Under the Indian constitution 33 tribes have been recognized as the schedule Tribes of Manipur.42

All of them are known as Manipuri’s (including Meetei and Meetei Pangal) because they inhabit in Manipur. But Nagas and Kukis always claim that Meeteis are only Manipuri’s in order to assert their hidden agenda and interest of balkanisation of Manipur.

Now-a-days hill folk are settling to different precious parts of valley and living with love and affection by extending helping hand with Meeteis. There is no clash between them because they clearly understand their originality. Meeteis remain silent when Jadonang, Naga leader, killed four unarmed Manipuri’s, probably as sacrifice to his new gods, in 1929. As result of it he was hanged on the 29 August 1931.43

Different legends had given that the highlanders and the valley people are common ancestry. According to one such story still retold in Manipur, the whole valley came under a deluge during some prehistoric period. (The detail history is highlighted in the first chapter of the thesis). The people living in the valley fled to the hills and lived there as long as the floods lasted. When the time came to return to the plains, some of them stayed on the hill others come back to their original habitat. The people of the valley thus got divided into the hill folk and the plains folk. (The plain areas of

43 Robert Reid, “History of the frontier areas bordering on Assam”, Eastern publishing house, Delhi, 1983, p.86.
Manipur were under water at one time is a fact on which geologists agreed) All the groups had blood relationship from time immemorial. The first king of Manipur Nongda Lairen Pakhangba married highlander girl, her name is Laishna, it is not a hill folk name but it is likely that the prince gave her a name of his choice. Another king also married a tribal girl known in Manipuri history as Linthoi Ngambi. It happened in the beginning of the 15th century. 44

Raja Paikhomba also took Ingallei, daughter of Marram Khullakpa as his wife. Some kings had tribal women in their seraglios. That means a few of the rulers of Manipur were direct blood relations of the tribal. Still this social practice is going on among the Meetei to take tribal women as wives vis a vis Meetei girl also married to hill folks. There was no caste system during the pre-Hindu period of Manipur. Even today caste system is not practicing in Manipur. There was class system instead.

The early Meetei population may be broadly classified into three categories, the noble, the commoners and the slave. Nobility was not hereditary for all sections of the population and one could become a noble if one received recognition and favor of the king. Tribal chiefs also got it. During the time of Pamheiba (1709-1740), the ministers and the Sardars of Manipur used to receive Naga chiefs quite frequently and dealt with them good friends. The slaves on the other hand did not comprise as separate community or group though the Nagas claim that they were used by the king as slave of him. They were mainly discharging their duties for royal family members and nobles. Both Meeteis and tribal were working under this category. But slavery institution in Manipur was different from that of other parts of the world. They live in the same house as their master, ate with him and were altogether like members of the family. The valley and the hills also had the same food habits. Before Vaisnavite came, the meat was the best part of the valley's

menu. Even today also Meeteis are not vaisnavites completely.\textsuperscript{46}

They had inter-dinning from very early period of history. King Charai Rongba invited the different tribal chiefs to the grand feasts. His son Pamheiba made the great days of hill valley entente, almost a close thing to harmony. He, like other rulers, ascended the throne in Naga tribal costume. He did not arrange the Royal feasts without inviting the chiefs of different hills. In short the Meeteis had similar habits, manners customs and beliefs with Naga people before contact with other advanced groups and adoption of Hinduism.\textsuperscript{47}

It is undisputed fact that in the history of Manipur hill people both Naga and Kuki accepted the king as the lord of the valley and the hills as well. His write ran not only in the hills now forming part of Manipur but even beyond it towards the north of Nagaland. The whole area looked upon the king as the supreme of all (sovereign) and his Meetei subjects of the

\textsuperscript{47} M Horam, "Naga Polity", Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1992, p.42.
valley were submitted to in the Naga Hills. According to Col. Johnstone, all the villages in the present Nagaland had Manipur names in addition to their own. King Gambhir Singh (1825-34) reduced several villages in the Naga Hills, including Kohima where he stood on a stone and had his foot print sculptured on it in token of conquest. The Nagas greatly respected this stone and cleaned it from time to time.

In short Nagas gave maximum loyalty to the Meetei king and his subjects. Johnstone says that the people of Manipur valley could go to any village on the former Naga Hills and be sure of warm hospitality at a time when the Britishers venturing into those areas unprotected, ran the risk of being murdered. The Nagas were very much severe to the foreigners.

In the relationship between highlander and plains man they had different political and economic system on account of geographical condition and existing of some evil

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49. T C Hodson, "The Meithei's".
social practices. There were no mass-mixing among the different ethnic groups of highlanders and valley people due to having unsound communication system. Only the chiefs of highlanders could contact Meetei King and his valley subjects. Moreover there was no any good trade system, there was practicing of head hunting among the different tribes of highlanders in olden days.

So they feared each other of village to village. That is the result that their isolation and geographical barriers could not be broken down. In the earlier period of Manipur history there was no hill leader who was trying to give good message to the masses for tribal unification. Instead of it, they were taking henoise action against each other. This evil reaction over remain in the minds of different tribal groups. But in valley the seven clans were united under the Meetei King in time and had common political aspiration, culture, religion and custom. In other words they were united under one name is the Meetei, which was the tireless effort of the king. Most of the tribal chief was under the control of him. So
the history of Manipur is the history of both plainsman and highlanders – the ruling community of the state relationship with chiefs of hill men. That is the result that most of the subjects of early period of hill and valley conceived the idea that Manipur is for both hill and valley people. In our Pena (indigenous musical instrument) ‘Eshei’ (song) all the signers are always starting with blessing of hill and valley people from God. But the main defect of the Meetei king was that he did not make adequate provision for the administration of the hills. Chiefs of the highlanders were also not giving any message about the close relationship with valley people. Moreover king and his nobler (including chiefs of highlanders) could not launch mass ethnic canvass of hill men, different ethnic groups, as Meetei. That was confined only in the plainsman area. That is why the factor of cleavage the hillfolk and valley people was emerged. This was done due to existing local administration in the hill and monarchical form of government in the valley.
In reality, the king was the head of all the inhabitants of Manipur both hill and valley. The kings of Manipur who ruled in the later part of history were not having the tendency and spirit of improving their administration towards the development of social, political and economic for both valley and hill people. They simply collected taxes from subjects in order to meet the British demands. There were force labour commonly known as ‘chakthak’ (feeding state servants) ‘Yarek Shantri’ (Guarding the state servant at night when they came to villages) ‘Chandon Senkhai’ (subscription of a little amount of money for decorating chandon, a paste of sandal wood, on the forehead of all Hindu Meeteis) ‘Pothang’ (carrying luggage of state’s nobility without payment) etc. Even they charged the tax of ‘Mangba’ (pollution or impure) while he or she turned as ‘sengba’ (clean or pure) by offering some money. The people of valley got the severed test of feudal system when the hill people simply had given tax to the British. So Meeteis were really in grave condition when they were under the
control of British and the native king. In short valley people were under the control of feudal lord and British colonial system. Thus before merging to the Indian Union the hill and valley of Manipur seem to exist separately having separate political culture and political socialization with different methods. That is the seed for germinating the theory of two sons of soil, which is articulated in the minds of the hill and valley people.

After independence of Manipur on 14th August 1947 maximum effort was given by the ruling elites under the Manipur constitution Act 1947 in order to bridge the gap between the two groups. But it was for a few months because Manipur was annexed to India in 1949. She was ruled by India just like the British with the political status of part ‘C’ state. There was not assembly and all the administrative works were done by the outsiders. So, all the facilities were confined to the Imphal areas only as a path of development. Thus the tendency of Naga integration or expansion of Nagaland or demanding of Naga home land
and demanding of Kuki homeland are being increased day by day within the territory of Manipur.

Read together, one should realize that the major issue is concerned with identity construction and its territorial dimension. That is why the question of identity crisis and its political implication is arising. Here one may give the proper answer of it by stating that ethnic consolidation in Manipur is the gift of participant political culture in democracy. As stated earlier about the involvement of some section of the tribes in the Naga movement in 1960 encouraged and motivated to identity as Nagas at the social level. Rajat Kanti Das writes;

"The Marings, one of the Nagas of Manipur were motivated to call themselves Naga more by the Church leaders than by any other agency".50

The same process is going on in the 1990s with over tone of fear ness by the ethnic feuds. A good numbers of

Kuki tribes in Manipur such as the Monsang, Anal, Moyon, Lamkang, Chothe, Chiru, and Kom were identified as Naga, their migration from parts of Chin Hills of Myanmar and their being closer to Mizo-Kuki-Chin group both culturally and linguistically notwithstanding.\textsuperscript{51} This process of Nagaisation of the tribes to come under the fold of or identified with the term ‘Naga’ is linked to the kind of power structure that the state has come to experience a democratic political setup in which democratic institution is there but not democratic politics at all.

In democratic set-up, politics may be operated in existing categories of people and institution. And in the process categories of people change and so do the institutions. In a plural society like Manipur these groups have come to serve as the bases for political mobilization. In an attempt to gain support elite mainly political elite seeks to manipulate the identity of the groups. Therefore identity of the groups tends to be consolidated. But politics is also about

\textsuperscript{51}Ibid, p.246.
acquiring power and getting a share of the resources which are always scarce. This makes the elites compete with one another in pushing the primary of the group they represent. It is within this context that ethnicity manifest in its intensive forms resulting occasionally into the bursting of conflicts in violent forms.

And this consolidated identity by the politics of “Devil’s advocates” in the hills became the opener to the underground leader as well as civil society leaders. So they could use all the devices of the democratic institutions and tried to invent a new history which is devoid of facts and full of concoction. These are animated by the theory of deprivation. For this also our existing democratic institution gave more and more space to them. For instance the division of Manipuri’s population into scheduled tribes and other categories helps reinforced the “tribal identity” (within internal differentiation) among the tribes which is further aggravated by their settlement places in remote areas. Separate reserved political seats also sharpen the sense of
different. It has contributed to a sense of belonging to common political and economic category, and that feeling, in turn, is exploited by the elite. Therefore it is the fusion of various forces— the attempts by the elite to construct a unified identity, nature of the state, policies of the state and resource competition— that together help consolidate a Naga identity (wish competition and conflicts within that fold) which seeks political unification on the basis of a shared ethnic identity with a territorial base. And both ethnicity and nationality are the expressions of a more general process of identity formation. In the case of Naga through a process of assimilation and appropriation of symbols and cultural traits, though without a common language, the identity formation was slowly extended to envelop many different groups. And as its (Naga) identity expands, its territorial claim also proportionately expands. These should be in vain as long as the majority Manipur Meeteis work on common interest and the ruling elites play democratic politics. Instead, having different laws in one state and playing communal politics by
the majority elites, automatically the cleavage will be larger day by day.