India had become a Nation State in 1947. Its very survival as a Nation State has been challenged by a number of threats both from neighbouring countries and within the country internally. However, we have withstood the test of time for more than half a century as a democracy. The basic task of the Security Forces especially the Army is to ensure the territorial sanctity of our borders. However, over a period of time they had been employed to maintain law and order for controlling the situation within the country.

There are innumerable problems faced by the Security Forces in handling the situation and keeping it under control. At the time of our Independence nobody would have ever thought that one day there will be insurgency and militants problem in Assam. There had been increased militarization in this part of the country. But we have seen it for ourselves how a State like Assam which was a part of the mainstream of India has reached this sad state of affairs. Since Independence, India has been facing problems with the border States. There had been an ongoing war in Jammu and Kashmir, there had been problems in Tamil Nadu because of the ongoing insurgency in Sri Lanka and in the North-East. Four foreign countries are bordering the North-East. They provide an ideal terrain for the militants training and hideouts. The ethnic similarity adds as a catalyst to the problem.

The Security Forces to include all uniformed personnel i.e. Army, BSF, CRPF, CPO, PMF, State Police etc are called upon to act as Law-Keepers of the region. They have to maintain law and order and ensure that the State machinery functions and the life of the common man is not affected. This is a great challenging task for the Security Forces personnel who have to operate in a place totally alien to them. They face multidirectional problems and great challenges in execution of their task which are hardly known to the outside world. He is supposed to maintain law and order and at the same time not to create any excesses. These two appear to be contrary to each other. The human rights organization and mass media keep a vigil on any excesses committed by the SFs.
The insurgency in the North-East has peculiar dimension as compared to the insurgency in the rest of the world. With the balkanisation of the North-East, today there are seven sister States i.e. Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya and Assam. The in-depth study reveals that the problems of each State is peculiar of its own and different from each other. At the National level the entire North-East has been perceived as one entity. The in-depth study reveals that, to understand the real issues, one has to carry out the study of the seven sister States separately. It is with this in view, Assam was chosen as a State which forms the major part of the North-East for this research. In this thesis, an earnest endeavour has been made to carry out the study of the North-East in general and the problems of the State of Assam in great detail.

One striking feature which stands out very clearly in the case of insurgency in Assam is, it is of a State which is part of the mainstream of the country which had very strong civilizational bonds with the rest of India. It is also a State dominated by the Hindus and plainsman. Therefore, this State reveals a separate identity amongst the North-Eastern States. An earnest effort had been made to identify the problems of Assam to include its historical perspective, geo-strategic importance, the genesis of insurgency, various militant groups and their mode of operation and the difficulties faced by the Security Forces in carrying out their tasks. In the chapter on counter-insurgency, a theoretical frame work has been suggested.

Having 25 years of service in the Army and served in Jammu & Kashmir, Sri-Lanka and North-Eastern States of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam, I felt that I should work on the topic where I could use both the theoretical knowledge and professional experience gained over a period of time. Serving in this area at Guwahati which is the hub centre for information during the period from October 1998 till the completion of the thesis, attending the various seminars and carrying out the field work at various places in Assam helped me in having an in-depth understanding of the problems relevant to the topic.
A topic of this nature is generally not chosen by a research scholar because of the inherent problems like axis to Security Forces, availability of material, threat from the militants and so on. I am grateful to my guide Prof. Niru Hazarika who had motivated me and gave the support in working on a topic of this nature. In fact, the topic itself was suggested by my guide and I willingly accepted to work on the same.

While working on this topic, all the available literature on insurgency, especially insurgency in the North-East was perused. To have a real pulse of the problem, a cross section of people to include various citizens, Security Forces Commanders at all levels and surrendered militants were interacted with. A deep analysis of the problem was carried out with frankness with an interview schedule with His Excellency Lt Gen (Retd) S K Sinha, PVSM Governor of Assam. I received a lot of appreciation and encouragement from the academicians, various citizens of the State of Assam and the Security Forces Commanders when working on this topic which motivated me to do more justice.

The thesis has been divided into seven chapters. The first chapter which is introductory gives the background of the insurgency problem in Assam. For clear understanding the historical aspect is also covered briefly.

The second chapter deals with the geo-strategic importance. This includes the relevant aspects of the North-East and also of Assam forming part of it.

The third chapter is written to elucidate the crux issues which led the mainstream State like Assam to an insurgency prone area.

The fourth chapter covers the details of the various militant groups operating in this State to include their ideologies and their nexus with other militant groups of neighbouring States and external connections with foreign countries.
The Challenges of the Security Forces forming the fifth chapter gives the multidirectional problems faced by the Security Forces in tackling insurgency which includes both urban and rural areas.

The chapter on counter-insurgency gives the theoretical frame-work which was made from available literature and personal experience.

The last chapter covers recommendations, suggestions and outcome of the selected hypotheses. This was purely from the experience gained by me over a period of time both as a soldier and a research scholar.

After all, it is the duty of each citizen to ensure that peace and tranquillity is maintained in this part of the country so that we all can lead a happy life.

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