Introduction

In the recent years the concept like 'civil society' and concern for democracy has gained much of the space in academic discussions, debates and writings around the world. In the world of ideas, civil society is hot. It is almost impossible to read an article on foreign or domestic policy without coming
across some mention of the concept. Though the terminology 'civil society' and 'democracy' is as old as the social science is yet they have undergone radical change in its meaning and essence. For our understanding of the concepts, it would be desirable to have a look at the historical perspectives of these concepts, where different intellectuals have placed their thoughts in these directions.

The rise in popularity of civil society was largely due to the struggles against tyranny waged by resistance groups in Latin America, Africa and the former communist world. The period of 1980s and 1990s witnessed the advent of a global democratic revolution of unprecedented proportions, unions, women's organisations, student groups and other forms of popular activism provided the resurgent and often rebellious civil societies in triggering the demise of many forms of dictatorship. These developments encouraged the rise of the complex notion that if an invigorated civil society could force a democratic transition, it could consolidate democracy as well.
The term 'civil society' can be traced through the works of Cicero and other Romans to the ancient Greek philosophers. In its classical usage civil society was largely equated with the state. The modern idea of civil society found expression in the Scottish and Continental Enlightenment of the late 18th century. Here a range of political philosophers, from Thomas Paine to George Hegel, developed the notion of civil society as a domain parallel to but separate from the state where citizens associate according to their own interests and wishes. Hegel's nineteenth-century notion of civil society included the market in contrast to contemporary concepts of civil society as a non-profit sector. This new definition reflected changing economic realities: the rise of private property, market competition and the bourgeoisie. It also resulted in the mounting popular demand for liberty, as manifested in the American English and French revolutions. The term, however, lost its concurrence in the mid-19th century as political philosophers and sociologists turned their attention to the social and political consequences of the
industrial revolution. It bounced back into fashion after World War II through the writings of the Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci who revived the term to portray civil society as a special nucleus of independent political activity, a crucial sphere of struggle against tyranny. Although Gramsci was concerned about dictatorships of the right, his books were influential in the 1970s and 1980s amongst persons fighting against dictatorships of all political stripes in Eastern Europe and Latin America. Czech, Hungarian, and Polish activists also wrapped themselves in the banner of civil society, endowing it with a heroic quality when the Berlin Wall fell. Understanding the importance of the given concept, recently David Held tried to give shape to the concept of 'civil society' through a sociological definition. In his words, “Civil society retains a distinctive character to the extent that it is made up of areas of social life—the domestic world, the economic sphere, cultural activities and political interaction—which are organised by private or voluntary arrangements between individuals and groups outside the direct control of the
Suddenly, in the 1990s, civil society became a mantra for everyone from presidents to social scientists. The global trend toward democracy opened up space for civil society in formerly dictatorial countries around the world.

In the United States and Western Europe, public fatigue with tired party systems sparked interest in civil society as a means of social renewal. Especially in the developing world, privatisation and other market reforms offered civil society the chance to step in as governments retracted their reach. And the information revolution provided new tools for forging connections and empowering citizens. Civil society became a key element of the post-cold-war zeitgeist.

State and Civil Society: Meaning and Characteristics

It is very common to address society as civil society, civil society as political society, and political society as state. To understand each as one or the other is to know none of them. While the concept 'society' is a generic term, the term civil
society denotes a type of society particular to a time and set in a particular situation. 'Society' refers, in general terms, to the totality of 'social relationships', conscious or unconscious, deliberate or otherwise. 'Civil Society', on the other hand, concerns itself to matters relating to 'public'. This brings the term 'civil society' close to the concept of 'political society'. Indeed, the two terms presuppose a society where civility is their characteristic feature, but 'civil society' extends to areas far away from the reach of 'political society'. The institution of family, for example, is an area covered by 'civil society', but it is a domain where 'political society' does better to stay away from. 'Political society' covers a whole range of activities related to 'political' directly or indirectly, but it remains wider than the term 'state' when the latter is treated merely as a matter of governance. It is indeed, important to know the meanings of these terms clearly if one seeks to understand the relationship between them, especially between the state and civil society.

Meaning of State
The state, as a word *stato*, appeared in Italy in the early part of the sixteenth century in the writings of Machiavelli (1469-1527). The meaning of the state in the sense of a body politic became common in England and France in the later part of the sixteenth century. The word *staatskunst* became the German equivalent of *ragione di stato* during the seventeenth century and a little later, the word *staatrecht* got the meaning of *jus publican* Thus, came the use of the term 'State'.

The state has included, from the beginning, a reference to a land and a people, but this alone would not constitute a state. It refers also to a unity, a unity of legal and political authority, regulating the outstanding external relationships of man in society, existing within society. It is what it does, i.e., creates a system of order and control, and for this, is vested with the legal power of using compulsion and coercion.

A state, thus, is found in its elaborate system. It is found in its institutions which create laws and which enforce them, i.e., in institutions such as the legislature, the executive and the
judiciary. It is found in the bureaucratic institutions which are attached to every executive branch of the government. It is found in the institutions which are called into operation when its will is challenged, i.e., the military and the police. The state is the sum–total of these institutions. Ralph Miliband writes, "These are the institutions – the government, the administration, the military and the police, the judicial branch, sub-central government and parliamentary assemblies – which make up the state." In these institutions lies the state power; through these institutions come the laws of the state, and from them spring the legal right of using physical force.

The state as governance is a system related to what may be called the political system or the political society. It includes, on the one hand, institutions such as the political parties, pressure groups, the opposition, etc., and on the other, large-scale industrial houses, religious and caste institutions, trade unions, etc. These institutions, existing outside of the state system, attempt to influence the functioning of the state, somewhere
even dominating it, and somewhere in collaboration with it. Skocpol sums up what Neera Chandhoke calls the statist perspective of the state, "the state properly conceived .... is rather a set of administrative, policing and military organizations headed, and more or less well coordinated by, an executive authority. Any state first and fundamentally extracts resources from society and deploys these to create and support coercive and administrative organizations.... Moreover, coercive and administrative organizations are only parts of overall political systems. These systems also may contain institutions through which social interests are represented in state policy-making as well as institutions through which non-state actors are mobilised to participate in policy implementation. Nevertheless, the administrative and coercive organisations are the basis of state power." The other strand giving the state a meaning comes from Michael Foucault who regards the state as built on power relations already existing in society. Chandhoke writes about Foucault, "The state, he (Foucault)
concluded, can only operate on the basis of existing relations of domination and oppression in society.”

Rejecting both the perspectives of the state, Chandhoke says, “The statists (Skocpol and others) concentrate on the state at the expense of society, and the theorists in the Foucauldian mode concentrate on social interaction at the expense of the state.” She concludes that the state, with a view to understanding it in relation to society, and vice-versa, “is a social relation because it is the codified power of the social formation.”

Meaning of Civil Society

The concept of civil society, to give it a meaning, embraces an entire range of assumptions, values and institutions, such as political, social and civil rights, the rule of law, representative institutions, a public sphere, and above all a plurality of associations. Commenting on it, David Held stated that it retains “a distinctive character to the extent that it is made up of areas
of social life .... the domestic world, the economic sphere, cultural activities and political interaction ... which are organised by private or voluntary arrangements between individuals, and groups outside the direct control of the state."\(^{10}\)

Adding to political interaction, civil society constitutes what Jurgen Habermas called 'the public sphere'.\(^{11}\) Enlarging the view of civil society, one may include in it the structure of modern national state, economic modernization, great interconnectedness with other societies, free enterprise and what John Dunn refers to as "the modern representative democratic republic."\(^{12}\) Chandhoke sums up the meaning of civil society "as the public sphere where individuals come together for various purposes both for their self-interest and for the reproduction of an entity called society."\(^{13a}\) "It is a", she continues, "sphere which is public because it is formally accessible to all, and in principle all are allowed entry into this sphere as the bearers of rights."\(^{13b}\)
The concept of civil society came up as and when a social community sought to organise itself independently of the specific direction of state power. Historically, the concept, Chandhoke says, "came into existence when the classical political economists sought to control the power of the Mercantilist State". With the passage of time, the concept of civil society moved on progressively: becoming a central plank of democratic movements in eighteenth century.

Characteristics of State and Civil Society

State exists within the society. This makes the state and society analytically distinct. The two are not the same. Society is a web of social relationships and as such, includes the totality of social practices, which are essentially plural, but at the same time, are relational. The hierarchically organised and maintained social practices of a given community establish, in their turn, all kinds of power equations and relations among its members. The state comes in to give these power relations a fixity, and thereby
to society its stability. The state gives legitimacy to social relationships as expressed in social practices because it recognises them and codifies them through legal acts. It is in this sense that the state can be described as the codified power of the social formation of a given time. The state, so considered, is itself a distinct and discrete organisation of power in so far as it possesses the capacity to select, categorise, crystallise and arrange power in formal codes and institutions. And this capacity gives to the state its status – power, power to take decisions, power to enforce decisions, and also power to coerce those who defy them. But the state so considered derives its power from society. It is, in this sense, a codified power, but within the framework of the society in which it operates.

The state, as a social relation and also as a codified power in a given society, would have certain characteristics of its own. These characteristics can be stated as:

a) The state is a power, organised in it. It has the power to legitimise social relations and gives them recognition through
formal codes and institutions. This gives the state a distinct and irreducible status in society while making it autonomous from classes and contending factions existing in it.

b) The state emerges as a set of specifically political practices which defines binding decisions and enforces them, to the extent of intervening in every aspect of social life.

c) The state monopolises all means of coercion. No other organisation in the society has this power.

d) The state gives fixity to social relations, and social stability to society. The social order, according to Chandhoke, "is constituted through the state and exists within the parameters laid down by the state."

e) The state exists within the framework of a given society. As society responds to the changing conditions compelled by numerous social forces, the state responds to the changing society. The state always reflects the changing relations of society. As society constantly re-enacts itself, so does the state.
The liberal and the marxist perspectives of civil society differ drastically. For the liberals, civil society presupposes democratic states together with the accountability of the states, the limits on state power, the responsiveness to the spontaneous life and the interactions of civil society.

For the Marxists, civil society is the arena of class conflicts, selfish competition and exploitation, the state acting to protect the interests of the owning classes. A definition of civil society comprising the insights of both the liberals and the Marxists must take into account the following:

a) The state power must be controlled and it has to become responsive through democratic practices of an independent civil society

b) Political accountability has to reside not only in constitutions, laws, and regulations, but also in the social fabric or what Habermas calls the competence of the 'political public' which, in turn, has the following implications: (i) it implies that the people come together in an arena of common concerns, in
debates and discussion and discourse free from state interference (ii) it implies that the discourse is accessible to all (iii) it implies a space where public discussion and debate can take place.

c) Democratic norms and processes have to be imbibed in the social order.

d) Civil society is the public sphere of society. It is the location of these processes by which the experiences of individuals and communities, and the expression of experiences in debates and discussions, affirmation and constitution are mediated. It is also a theatre where “the dialectic between the private and the public are negotiated. It is the process by which society seeks to ‘breach’ and counteract the simultaneous totalisation unleashed by the state”.16 It is a site where the state is forbidden to shape public opinion and perceptions.

Concept of Civil Society: An Overview
The concept of civil society is associated with the Western intellectual tradition. With the epochal changes in the West, the idea of civil society has grown progressively. Many factors have gone into developing the concept of the state as it has come to stay with us. These factors, to mention a few, include the emergence of secular authority, the development of the institution of property, the decline of the absolutist state, the growth of urban culture, the rise of nationalist and democratic movements, until the end of the nineteenth century and the rule of law. As the capitalist economy with its democratising features has developed, so has the concept of civil society.

The Pre-Modern Tradition

If the idea of civil society contains in it the idea of what relates to public, the pre-modern times may well be regarded as opposed to the concept of civil society. The Platonic rulers alone were the administrators and a large number of those who constituted ‘the producing class’ had no role to play in public
affairs. The Aristotelian notion of 'zoon politikon' (man as a political animal) was elitist in the sense that (i) the political animal was a male, (ii) he alone was a citizen and (iii) he alone was a property holder. The rest of the population, the women, the slaves etc., constituted Oikes, i.e., the private world and that could hardly be termed as constituting the civil society. As the 'private' was not 'public', it was not political and none belonging to it had any citizenship rights. The Greek society, Chandhoke points out, did not 'possess any notion of inalienable rights of man to individual freedom which became so prominent a feature of early version of civil society.'

By developing the concept of rights, legally ordained, and especially relating to property of the individual, there did emerge the notion of 'civil society' in ancient Roman thinking. Indeed the notion of 'civil society' did need such an atmosphere to shape itself, but the ancient Roman thought could hardly rise above that, notwithstanding the attempts at making distinction between 'private' and 'public' which the ancient Romans really
did. During the whole medieval period in the West when politics took the back seat, the idea of civil society got eclipsed. What related to ‘public’ as ‘political’ was limited to a very few people called the feudal lords, barons, dukes and counts. The idea of civil society was almost unknown.

The Liberal-Individualist Tradition

The early modern period with Machiavelli and Bodin saw the emergence of politics, but the period itself did not witness the corresponding growth of the idea of civil society. The civil society, as a concept, rose with the idea of individuals with rights, individuals related to the state, and individuals related to others in society.

There is the clear reference to civil society both in Hobbes and Locke when the two sought to make a distinction between the ‘state of nature’, and the ‘civil society’ or the ‘political society’ after the contract was made. Both talk about the rights-bearing individuals; both sought the state to protect these rights.
It is difficult to regard the contractualists, Hobbes and Locke, as theorists of civil society because (i) their formulations on civil society are found in an embryonic form and (ii) their attempts, despite a rational and persuasive explanation on state and society, remained arbitrary.¹⁷

The concept of civil society has emerged clearly between the seventeenth and the nineteenth century, especially with the classical political economy theorists such as Adam Smith. Classical political economy, echoing individual rights like laissez faire, freedom, equality, made the institution of state as simply irrelevant, devaluing it, and that of civil society as what Marx had said ‘theatre of history’. This helped “the civil society”, Chandhoke writes, “as a historically evolved area of individual rights and freedoms, where individuals in competition with each other pursued their respective private concern.”¹⁸

The advent of the idea of civil society, coming from the writings of political economy theorists, was to have its shape
vis-à-vis the state. J.S. Mill and De Tocqueville who thought that the state had become much more powerful than desired, sought to limit the power of the state through the mechanism devised in the ever developing concept of civil society. Chandhoke sums up this phase of liberalism, saying: "... Civil society was used as a concept primarily for organizing state-society relations. The expansion of the state, it was perceptively recognized, would contribute to the shrinkage of the civil arena. State power could be limited only with the expansion of civil society."¹⁹

The process of democratisation in the west made it possible for civil society to expand itself, and in the process, restricted the area of the state. But elsewhere, the concept of the state gained prominence restricting thus, the arena of civil society. The views of Hegel, and therefore, of Marx and Gramsci should be of some interest.

The Hegelian, Marxian and Gramscian Traditions
There is a definite relationship between the state and civil society in the writings of Hegel (1770-1831). He views the state as the latest link growing out of the development of various institutions. Describing the state as the synthesis, representing universality, of the thesis of families and the anti-thesis of civil society, Hegel recognises the state as higher in kind than civil society. Hegel regards the state as the highest, the latest, and even the final form of social institutions. For him, civil society, as the anti-thesis of the thesis of family is "an expression for the individualist and atomistic atmosphere of middle class commercial society in which relationships are external, governed by the 'unseen' hand of the economic laws rather than by the self-conscious will of persons." So, civil society, a negative institution as it is for Hegel, belongs to the "realm of mechanical necessity, a resultant of the irrational forces of individual desires", governed, as Sabine says for Hegel, "by non-moral casual laws and hence, ethically anarchical." The thesis (the family) and the anti-thesis (the civil, the bourgeois
society) merge into what Hegel calls the state (the synthesis). Thus, the state comes to have the universality of civil society and the specificity and the individuality of the family.

Thus, while the political economy and the liberal-democratic theorists had given primacy to civil society, and had given the state a back seat, Hegel reverses the position and puts the state in the position of civil society. According to Hegel, ultimately civil society is subordinated to the state, and the individual, to the whole. "Consequently, in Hegelian formulation", Chandhoke says, "there can be no interrogation of the state, of its designs for universality, or of its rationale. The resolution of the contradiction of civil society is the state, and therefore, between the people and the state, there is no dichotomy, only legitimacy and acceptance."

Marx, unlike Hegel who had made the civil society a hostage and who had idealised the state, seeks to restore the civil society to the position of making it the theatre of history. But the civil society, Marx argues, has failed to live up to its
promises, had failed to create a situation where the individual could find freedom and democratic transformation, had to seek ways and means through which individuals could integrate into the society and the state.

Gramsci (1891-1937) following Marx and developing his theory of state takes into account the reality of civil society. His main proposition is that one cannot understand the state without understanding the civil society. He says that the 'state' should be understood as not only the apparatus of government, but also the 'private' apparatus of hegemony or civil society. Building on the Marxian notion of the state, Gramsci makes a distinction between the state as a political organisation (the integral state, the visible political constitution of civil society) and the state as government. The integral state keeps reproducing itself in the practices of everyday life through activities situated in civil society. It is hegemony which provides moral and intellectual leadership to practices in civil society. Hegemony, for Gramsci, works for both, for the dominant as
well as the subaltern class in civil society. Each class must, Gramsci says, before seizing power, hegemonise social relations in society.20

To sum up, it may be said that for both the liberals and the Marxists, civil society is primary. While the liberals argue for the separation of civil society from the autonomy of the state, the Marxists, on the other hand, create an alternative tradition of civil society, in which, the civil society, with its all potentialities, has to keep itself always reorganised and transformed.

Relationship between State and Civil Society

The relationship between state and civil society is important in so far as it suggests the comparative position of each in relation to the other. In some analyses, this relationship is depicted as a zero-sum game: the stronger the state, the weaker the civil society; the weaker the state, the stronger the civil society. Obviously, the expansion of the area of state activity would help minimise the role of civil society; the expansion of
the area of civil society would help, on the other hand, minimise the role of the state. In modern liberal societies of our time, the civil society 'sphere' is larger than that of the state, while in dictatorial regimes of any sort, the state's 'sphere' is larger than that of civil society.

State and Civil Society: Integrative Relationship

State and civil society are not two opposite concepts. One does not stand in conflict with another. Neither is one the antithesis of the other. The two should not be regarded as usurping the area of each other. It is not a zero-sum game relationship between the two. Indeed, the relatively stronger state would put a premium on the role of civil society, but this, in no way, diminishes the effectiveness of civil society. The libertarian view, expressed in the writings of Hayek or Nozick, that the state is likely to oppress civil society is, more or less, ill-founded. The fact of the matter is that the relationships between state and civil society are reciprocal; the relationships are of an integrative
nature, each strengthening the cause of the other. It is, in fact, difficult to conceive of civil society functioning successfully without the state. We see the citizen simultaneously constrained by the state and protected by it. It is the state which provides the integrative framework within which the civil society operates; civil society cannot function properly without the state. The integrative framework, as expressed in laws and rules, is accepted as valid by all, the framework needs to be administered neutrally and in a manner consistent with the shared culture of society. We cannot imagine life without this integrative framework, which creates a degree of coherence and without which civil society is likely to become uncivil. Civil society has to open up, in the face of the all-powerful state, to challenge the bureaucratic devices lest it ends up in rigidity. It is, thus, the reciprocity between state and civil society that is significant or at least, should be considered significant. State power is to be exercised within the larger and wider sphere of
civil society, and civil society has to keep state power on its toes so that it does not degenerate into absolutism.

State, Civil Society and Democracy

The two concepts, state and civil society, are not in conflict with each other. Democracy integrates the two. The claims of the state get strengthened by civil society and civil society is made more stable through the state. The two have to work in a democratic frame: the democratic state within the framework of democratic civil society. In a democratic system, state and civil society can collaborate for effective functioning of each. The state has to be constituted democratically, wherein its powers are decentralised and its functions are performed within the rules and procedures already laid. Such a state has to respond to the ever-growing demands of civil society. Its role, more or less, is to coordinate, it has to interfere least in the social and economic life of the people; it has to be regulative in character. Civil society has to be more open and diversified. It has to keep
the dialogue continuous and constant with the state and within all the constituents making it. Its area has to be ordained freely and openly, devices making up public opinion and public discourse state-free. In liberal-democratic states, there is a constant interplay of forces belonging to the state and civil society, each putting an imprint on the other. In dictatorial regimes, state power is used to control civil society and civil society gets integrated into the state: the state speaks for the civil society. Democracy alone unites the state with civil society. The state cannot exist for long if it is not democracy laden; civil society cannot exist unless it is democratically structured and functions democratically. A democratic state cannot exist if it is restrictive, coercive, prohibitive, and imposing; it cannot exist if it does not provide the civil society frame in perfect order; it cannot exist if it does not guarantee rights and freedoms to individuals. Likewise, a democratic civil society cannot exist if it does not allow every individual to act in the public sphere, it
cannot exist if each and every citizen does not have equal claim on the state, if each citizen is not respected as a human being.

**Relationship between Civil Society and Democracy**

It is emphasised here that in certain conditions civil society can contribute to the democratisation of authoritarian regimes and can help to sustain a democratic system of governance once it is established. For example, in the Eastern European countries, South Africa, Serbia, Philippines, and recently in Georgia, citizens have used civil society organisations to wage struggle for political independence by learning about democracy and by mobilising millions of their fellow citizens against repressive regimes. In democratic setup, civil society organisations provide basis for citizens to pursue common interests in political, social, or spiritual domain; here they participate freely, collectively and peacefully. By their involvement in civil society, citizens learn about fundamental democratic values of participation and collective action and they further disseminate these values
within their communities. Civil society movements that represent citizen interests can considerably influence both government policy and social attitudes. Independent activities of the civil society can pause a counterweight to state power.

Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottaway provide two interesting contributions to the discussion on the potential collaborative role of the international community and civil society in consolidating democracy. "Aiding Democracy Abroad" is one of the most comprehensive and important published work on current practices in U.S. democracy promotion. Carothers without going into the international relations debate over whether democracy promotion as a strategy, corresponds to realist security interests or idealist, humanitarian motivations. He claims that it is the blend of the two. To substantiate his view point in a systematic manner, he discusses three central aspects of democracy aid: electoral assistance, institutional reform, and civil society assistance. He does this by elaborating on four case studies of countries on the
receiving end of various types of U.S. democracy assistance: Guatemala, Nepal, Zambia, and Romania. Democracy aid, in Carothers's view, is the byproduct of democratisation, not the vise-versa. The political space created by democratizing regimes has made it possible for international assistance to pursue democracy promotion in these countries. In his conclusive observation, he remarks that despite variations in local context, U.S. democracy promotion activities follow a 'one size fits all' democratic template, which is not a healthy promotion scheme.21

This template of aiding democracy, he propounds, has developed in the course of practice rather than by conscious application of academic theories. The strengthening of civil society in different parts of the world is frequently offered as the answer to the questions pervasive in Washington, How can the Arab world democratise? And what should the United States do to help democracy there?
Though one cannot concur U.S. interference in the internal affairs of any other country yet there is strong consensus among scholars that civil society is uppermost to the incarnation of democracy. John Keane expresses this view when he notes that "where there is no civil society there cannot be citizens with capabilities to choose their identities, entitlements and duties within a political-legal framework."\textsuperscript{22}

**Functions of Civil Society in a Democratic Order**

Throwing light about the functions of a civil society in promoting democratic polity, Larry Diamond says, "Civil society plays a significant role in building and consolidating democracy." He opines: "The democratic civil society...the more likely it is that democracy will emerge and endure".\textsuperscript{23} In Diamond's view, civil society performs following important functions:

1) To limit state power — By checking its political abuses and violations of the law and subjecting them to public scrutiny.
Diamond maintains, “a vibrant civil society is probably more essential for consolidating and maintaining democracy than initiating it.”

2) To empower citizens by “increasing the political efficacy and skill of the democratic citizen and promoting an appreciation of the obligations as well as rights of democratic citizenship.”

3) To inculcate and promote an arena for the development of democratic attributes amongst the citizens—Such as tolerance, moderation, a willingness to compromise and respect for opposing viewpoints.” According to Diamond, this is an important function as it allows “traditionally excluded groups—such as women and racial or ethnic minorities—access to power that has been denied them in the ’upper echelons’ of formal politics.”

4) To provide avenues for political parties and other organisations allowing them to articulate, aggregate, and represent their interests- This enhances the quality of democracy
as "it generates opportunities for participation and influence at all levels of governance, not the least the local government."

5) To function as a recruiting, informational and leadership generating agency especially in economically developed societies—Where, Economic reform is sometimes necessary, but often difficult to bring about if it threatens vested economic interests. The massive economic collapse in Indonesia unleashed mass discontent and made President Suharto suddenly vulnerable. This transformed the environment to allow civil society groups and opposition parties to mobilize citizens in an unprecedented fashion.

6) A well founded civil society could act as a shock absorbing institution, where wide range of interests that may cross-cut and mitigate the principal polarities of political conflict.

7) To generate public and political support for successful economic and political reforms—which require the support of coalitions in society and the legislature.
8) A well-rooted civil society also helps in identifying and train new political leaders—As such, it can "play a crucial role in revitalising...the narrow and stagnant" party dominated leadership recruitment patterns.24

9) Election monitoring— Many non-partisan organisations engage in election monitoring at home and abroad. Such efforts, says Diamond, "have been critical in detecting fraud, enhancing voter confidence, affirming the legitimacy of the result, or demonstrating an opposition victory despite government fraud."25 The Philippines in the mid 1980s and Panama in 1989 are cited as examples.
a) Strengthening citizen attitudes toward the state— Civil society enhances "the accountability, responsiveness, inclusiveness, effectiveness, and hence legitimacy of the political system."26 In so doing it gives citizens respect for the state and positive involvement in it. Here, civil society is crucial to the development and maintenance of stable, quality sensitive democracy.
10) In addition to this, other scholars have also come out with their viewpoint on the subject. Borrowing from Robert Dahl’s classic work on democracy, Alfred Stepan in his work, Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation (1996), states that among the basic requirements for democracy “is the opportunity to formulate preferences, to signify preferences, and to have these preferences weighted adequately in the conduct of government.” According to Robert Dahl for the proper functioning of the government, it should ensure the following institutional guarantees which include:

1) freedom of association and expression;
2) the right to vote;
3) run for public office;
4) free and fair elections;
5) the right of political leaders to compete for support and votes;
6) alternative sources of information;
7) policy making institutions dependent on votes;
8) Other expressions of preference.
However, while accepting the importance of these institutional guarantees, Stepan considers them as a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the functioning of democracy. Not sufficient, 'because no matter how free and fair the elections, and no matter how large the majority of the government, the political society' lacks quality unless it is able to produce a constitution that provides for fundamental liberties, minority rights, and a set of institutions and checks and balances that limit state power and ensure accountability, necessary for any given democratic system.30

Dr. Jan Aart Scholte, in an article, 'Civil Society and Democracy in Global Governance', makes a comprehensive analysis of the concepts. She not only visualises positive aspects of the relationship between civil society and democracy, but also evaluates the unenthusiastic side of it too. Taking a positive note of the civil society as promoter of democratic form of governance, Scholte identifies six areas where civil society could advance democracy.
1) Public education—Awareness is key to any democratic system. The civil society might enhance democracy through educating the public. An informed citizenry could sustain effective democracy; civic associations can contribute a lot by raising public awareness and understanding of worldwide existing laws and regulatory institutions. To accomplish this goal civil society groups can prepare handbooks and information kits, produce audio-visual presentations, organize workshops, circulate newsletters, supply information to and attract the attention of the mass media, maintain websites on the Internet, and develop curricular materials for schools and institutions of higher education.

2) Voice to stakeholders—Civil society could promote democratic governance by giving voice to stakeholders. Civic associations can opportune the concerned parties to relay information, testimonial, and analysis to governance agencies about their needs and demands. Civil society organisations can give voice to neglected social circles like the poor, women and
persons with disability who tend to get a limited hearing through other channels including their elected representatives in executive and legislative bodies. In this way civic activism could empower stakeholders and mould politics toward greater participatory democracy.

3) Policy inputs—Government policy formulation is considerably influenced from the Inputs given by the civil society not only at home but also in the international arena. For example, civic groups have been pioneer in sparking debate about the so-called ‘Washington Consensus’. They have also constantly raised issues pertaining to ecological imbalances, made qualitative assessments of poverty, and pressurised for the schemes of debt reduction in the South.

4) Transparency of governance—Vigilant civic mobilisation can cause public transparency in governance. Constant pressure from civil society can help in bringing regulatory frameworks and operations into the open, where they could be accessed for public scrutiny. Generally citizens do not have the awareness
about what decisions are taken by the government, by whom, from what options, on what grounds, with what expected results, and with what resources to support implementation. Civic groups through their well lit networks can question the currently popular official rhetoric of ‘transparency’ by asking critical questions about what is made transparent, at what time, in what forms, through what channels, on whose decision, for what purpose, and in whose interest. What is civil society? What are its functions in a democracy?

5) Public accountability—Civil society can hold various concerned agencies accountable to public. Civic groups can keep an eye on the implementation and effects of policies regarding people and press for corrective measures when the consequences are adverse. For example, independent civic agencies have impartial policy evaluation mechanisms for the World Bank and the IMF. Whereby, they have more often criticised their policies towards the Less Developed Countries. The Western countries, which claim to be democratic in the
behaviour, often while as a part of global player some times become far more dictatorial than those whom they criticize and put sanctions against them. Here, the civic agencies through an accountability function can push authorities in global governance to take greater responsibility for their actions and policies.

6) Legitimacy—The sum total of the preceding actions by the civil society could lead to a legitimate democratic rule. Legitimate rule prevails when people concede that an authority has a right to govern and that they have a duty to obey its directives. As a result of such consent, legitimate governance tends to be more easily, productively and nonviolently executed than illegitimate and dictatorial authority. Here, it is important to understand that democracy should not be understood only in terms of national governance. The civil society should have a larger agenda of democracy as a policy of global governance. The civil society not only could promote democracy at home, their impact could be clearly seen in the democratisation of
global order. Civil society can offer a means for citizens to affirm that global governance arrangements should guide and where necessary, constrain their behaviour.31

Apart from this, the international concerns for human rights, women rights, rights of the disabled and concerns for environment have great impact on the domestic policy formulation and its implementation too. For example, various development related NGOs and think-tank’s who lobby for global debt relief and socially sustainable structural adjustment, have gone on to scrutinize public finances in national and local governments. In addition to this, women’s movements have often used international laws and institutions in their favour to democratise the state on gender lines. The rights of the persons with disability also get impetus from international concerns for human rights.

Civil society’s contribution to democracy in domestic as well as global governance is well placed in context. But here it must be noted that civil society might in certain ways actually
detract from democratic governance of international relations. In these situations it is not that civic activities fail to realise their democratising potential but that they, in fact, obstruct popular rule.

To conclude our discussion on civil society with positive academic note the essential idea that has been put into practice is that democracy requires a healthy and active civil society. The international community, by providing resources and training to different civic groups, can help to build up domestic civil society in democratising countries. However, at the same time caution should be duly taken in imposing one’s ideas and culture in the name of civil society or as a matter of fact democracy. Though democracy is one of the healthiest systems of governance both in domestic and international arena yet there is no final word in social sciences. There are so many ancient cultural systems and practices in the East which are far better than the existing western way of life. They should not be discarded merely because we have fantasies and fondness for the West. More
importantly, the debate and enthusiasm for promoting better lifestyle should continue in order to benefit the people who are living in authoritarian societies with abysmal poverty and sufferings.

Civil Society: The Manipur Context

Manipur an erstwhile independent kingdom in South East Asia came under British colonial domination consequent upon her defeat in the eventful Anglo-Manipur War of 1891. She formally became a part of India since 15th October, 1949 which was described as signed under duress. 32 Though, Manipur was defeated yet the country was not directly annexed into the British Empire. Rather she was put under the system of indirect rule by restoring the monarchy. Under the system of indirect rule, no colonial official was allowed to undertake any major reform or changes. Through this system the British colonial authorities could extend their Influence without the economic and political costs of direct
annexation. If there was any necessity for affecting changes it was done in the name of the king of Manipur. In other words the colonial authorities exercised authority without responsibility.

After the war of 1891 it was expected the Manipur would be annexed to the British-India. However the British authorities had other schemes in their mind and accordingly native rule was reestablished in the state by appointing Churachand Singh a young boy of about five years old and a great grandson of Nar Singh (1844-1850) the late king of Manipur. During the minority of Churachand, administration of the state was carried out in his name by Maxwell, the British political agent in Manipur. The regency administration operated in the state from 1891 to 1907 and this period was fully utilized for making all major decisions and also introduced several changes in the administrative set up of the native state which the raja even after his formal installation of the gaddi of Manipur with full power would find
impossible to change. During this regency period, Maxwell, the political agent and superintendent of the state dictated by imperial interest introduced a number of new socio-economic measures which affected the people in different ways.

People's response to the administrative changes and policies of the colonial authority were of mixed feelings. The abolition of slavery and lallup system freed people from servitude and introduction of patta system in land enabled common people to own land however were subjected to strict payment of land tax. The imposition of annual house tax in lieu of lallup, the forcible disarmament of local populace, unpopularity of the new ruler which was appointed against the wishes and expectations of the people coupled with the declining authority of the Rajkumars and Brahmins made the new regime unpopular in the eyes of the people. The Nupi Lan of 1904, the Kuki rebellion of 1917-1920, the Kabui Rebellion, 1927-1932 under the charismatic leadership of Haipou Zadonang and Gaidinliu and the second Nupi Lan of 1939-1940
had created a sense of social and political consciousness among the people of Manipur. Besides these anti-colonial popular movements Manipur witnessed demand for socio-political reforms spearheaded by Nikhil Manipuri Mahasabha under the leadership of Hijam Irabot Singh, 1896-1951, the most popular leader Manipur had ever produced in the 20th century.

Starting with the 1920's Manipur witnessed a literary renaissance heralded by the trio of Chaoba, Kamal and Anganghal through their rediscovery of the beautiful language and literature of the land.\textsuperscript{36} It is indeed worthy of mention that the writings of this newly educated class were able to widen the weltanschauung of the gradually emerging Manipuri middle class and the need for the promotion of Manipuri language and literature. This consciousness culminated in the establishment of Manipuri Sahitya Parishad in 1935 at Imphal. However, a not so promising feature of the so called Manipuri renaissance was its overemphasis on the promotion of Meiteilon which in the long run created a misconceived notion of Meitei exclusiveness' or
hegemony among the various ethnoses inhabiting the state. Another weakness of the Manipuri intelligentsia during the period was its inability to promote or adopt a secular agenda as they are brought up within the Gaudiya Sampradaya of Hinduism with imposition of Mangba-Shengba restriction on social interaction.

Thus beginning with the first Nupi Lan of 1904 the state of Manipur at least witnessed some form of movement or agitation in every decade. A very interesting feature of these movements were that these were led and organised by the illiterate and marginal sections of the society viz. women and tribal. The movement launched by the educated elites since the 30's of the twentieth century till the attainment of independence has altered the course of Manipur history to a new course. The women's war of 1904 was essentially a reaction against the unjust policies of the colonial administration, the Kuki rebellion was more or less political in nature as the Kukis refused themselves to be submitted under the repressive measures of the
colonial regime. On the other hand the so called Zeliangrong or Kabui rebellion under Jadonang, is initially a socio-religious movement which later on turned militant and having political overtones. Some influence of impact of Indian national movement can also be seen in Jadonang's movement. The second women's war of 1939 though started out of the scarcity of rice in the state, later on took the shape of freedom movement as it demanded the end of British rule in Manipur and has greatly influenced the future mass movement in the state against the unjust actions of authority.

Setting - The Land of Manipur

Manipur is an ancient Kingdom having its own territory and isolated from the neighbouring states and country by chain of natural hill ranges. Its physical geography shows that it is a union of hills and plain. It was neither created by the Government of India nor formed by an act of Parliament under the Constitution of India. Noted historian Gangmumei Kamei
has described Manipur as a 'Gift of History'. It may be noted that no part of territory was added to the existing boundary of Manipur state after Manipur became a part of Indian Union but on the other hand there was subtraction of its area from its territory.

At present its total area is 22,327 sq. km. The historical records and writings of eminent historians clearly reveal that the territory of Manipur was much bigger than the present existing boundary. Captain Pemberton in his report of 1835, states "The territories of Muneepoor have fluctuated at various times with the fortunes of their Princes, frequently extending for three or four days' journey east beyond the Ningthee or Khywendwen river, and west to the plains of Cachar. Its present boundaries as far as they have been fixed are on the west, the Jiree river, from its source to its confluence with the Barak, and from this point south, to the North of Chikoo or Jooyai Nullah, which flowing from lofty ranges bordering on the Tripura country, falls into the Barak at southern extremity of a range of Mountains, three sides
of which are embraced by the tortuous course of this river".38

From Alexander Mackenzie's account in his "The North East Frontier of India", it appears that the boundary of Manipur was one time extended up to the edging limit of Brahmaputra valley.39 Further according to the remarks of Sir James Johnston in his "My Experience in Manipur and Naga Hills" the territory of Manipur varied according to mettle of its rulers. Sometimes they held a considerable territory the east of Chindwin River in subjection, at times only the Kabo Valley, a strip of territory inhabited not by Burmees, but by "Shans".40

However, it appears that the extension of territories of Manipur up to the bank of Brahmaputra or subjugation of Kohima or up to Tripura or beyound the Ningthee river or up to the plains of Cachar was of one time or at different times. In other words there is no record to show the continuity of the extent of boundary for considerable number of years.

Further, there is no material show what was extent of the boundaries of Manipur at the time when it was annexed by
British. However it is very much clear that extent of the territory of Manipur at the time when it was annexed by British, was the present areas of Manipur, with that of Kabo Valley even though it was put in a different status and this remained when Manipur was a princely State under the British rule and also when it regained free on 15th August, 1947. In other words, the present boundaries of Manipur which is an area of 22,327 sq. km. with that of Kabo Valley were more or less remained fixed till the transfer of Kabo Valley to Burma, now Myanmar. This was continued at the time when Manipur was merged into the Dominion of India on October 15, 1949. After merging into the Indian Dominion, Manipur became part of India, and Kabo Valley was completely transferred to Burma, now Myanmar in 1953 by the Government of India.

The People of Manipur

Coming to its people, it is to be noted that Manipur is inhabited by various communities of which Meiteis mainly
reside in the valley and Tribals settled in hills. But it is said that Meiteis who are now settled in the valley, were those people who came down from and left the hills now inhabited by their hill brethren. The inhabitants of Manipur are of different communities and out of them about thirty indigenous communities are Aimol, Anal, Angami, Chiru, Chothe, Gangte, Hmar, Kabui, Kacha Naga, Koirou, Koireng, Kom, Lamkang, Meitei, Meitei Pangal, Mizo, Maring, Mao, Mongsang, Moyon, Paite, Poumai, Puram, Ratte, Sema, Simte, Thangal, Thadou, Vaiphei, Zou, Tarao, Mate, Kharam etc. These communities are known, as a whole, Manipurites. There is no tribe known as "Naga" in Manipur and it does not find place in the list of communities in this State. However, only after the coming of British in the Eastern parts of India and Manipur, it appears that they coined the word "Naga" to indicate some communities such as Angami, Kacha Naga, Sema etc. as a whole. Robert Reid, the Governor of Assam had observed that even the Angamis, one of the major tribe within the Naga conglomeration are not even
aware of the ‘Naga’ as late as 1942.41 Like the Nagas, some tribe of Manipur are also known as ‘Kuki’ though there is no unanimity among the scholars about the origin of the term. Therefore, the term ‘Kuki’ and ‘Naga’ are more a generic term rather than representing identity of a particular community. However, whether one likes it or not these two communities are in the process of evolving a homogenous identity inspite of fissures within and without. But unlike the Kuki and Naga, the Meitei’s have already evolved into a well knit community through a long historical process of assimilation and integration. Thus, in present-day Manipur one witnesses three major ethnic formations viz., Kuki, Meitei and Naga co-existing with a shared historical past. Besides these indigenous people, there are some latecomers which include the Bangalees, Marwaris, Panjabis, Nepaleese etc. and they are now part and parcel of the Manipuries or people of Manipur. There has been unity in diversity amongst the different inhabitants of Manipur. There are linguistic cultural affinities between Meitei’s and hill people
of Manipur and it is an undeniable fact that there are many similarities in customs, habits, manners between the Meitei's and hill people of Manipur. There has been peaceful coexistence of multi-ethnic communities. "Mera Haochongba" is a living example of the integration of hill and plains. There is not a single ethnic, community clash between Meiteis and hill tribes of Manipur. Manipuri or Meiteilon is the lingua franca of the hill people of Manipur whose mother tongue is other than Manipuri.

Background

Manipur became a part of India on 15th October, 1949 consequent upon signing of a treaty between the two entities which later scholars have termed as a coercive agreement signed under duress. It is also one of the primary reasons for the growth of armed militant activism in Manipur during the last fifty years or so. The effort of the government of India in containing the insurgencies in the region is far from satisfactory.
The massive deployment of central paramilitary forces that lack knowledge of the realities of the region also contributed in aggravating the situation. There have been allegations of human rights violations committed by armed forces in Manipur and her neighbouring regions. This has given rise to the birth of many civil society organizations in Manipur. There is also a perceptive threat to the territorial integrity of Manipur on account of the government of India entering into a ceasefire agreement with NSCN (IM) which have come into force from 1997. Against this backdrop a movement for protecting territorial integrity of Manipur was launched by several civil society organizations including the All Manipur United Clubs' Organisation (AMUCO), United Committee Manipur (UCM) and others in the state. Manipur had witnessed a mass movement whose scale and intensity had no parallel in her history. On the other hand ethnic based civil society organizations like Kuki Inpi Manipur and United Naga Council which have a fair share of influence and authority over their respective communities are espousing
the interests of the respective communities which run contrary to the established notion of Manipur as a historical entity. The present study proposes to examine and analyse the nature and character of four civil society organizations viz., the All Manipur United Clubs' Organisation (AMUCO), United Committee Manipur (UCM), United Naga Council (UNC) and Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM), their activities in the contemporary socio political landscape of the state within a historical framework.
Notes and References:

2. Zeitgeist - a German word which means the spirit of a particular period of history as shown by the ideas, beliefs etc. of a time.
8. Ibid, p. 37
9. Ibid, p. 38
10. David Held, op. cit., p. 285
13. Chandhoke, op. cit., p. 64
14. Ibid, p. 78
15. Ibid, p. 79
17. Chandhoke, op. cit., p. 72
18. Ibid, p. 73
19. Ibid, p. 73
24. Ibid, p. 5
25. Ibid, p. 7
29. Robert Dahl, op. cit., p. 76
30. Stepan, op. cit. p. 27
32. PDM, The Annexation of Manipur, Imphal, 1995, p. 6
34. Ibid., pp. 49-50
35. Ibid.
36. Chaoba, Kamal, and Anganghal are known as the triumvirate of modern Manipuri literature.
38. R.B. Pemberton, Eastern Frontier of British India, Gauhati, 1966, p. 95
40. James Johnston, Manipur and Naga Hills, Delhi, 1982, p. 85
41. Robert Reid, History of Frontier Areas Bordering Assam, Delhi, 1988, p. 87