CHAPTER I
A PERSPECTIVE ON ETHNIC CONFLICT

Conflict is a part of the social system. The nature, patterns and behaviour of conflict changes in different socio-historical and technological context, with culture, political system, socio-economic development and the state influencing the dynamics of conflict. It is difficult to conclude whether ethnic conflict is just a subset of the larger set of political conflicts along clan, caste, party lines experienced by any developing countries. The divergence as to what constitute an ethnic group has put another problem while understanding the cause. Thus, a recourse to the medley of meanings as to what is "ethnicity" has become imperative.

The word "ethnic" has roots to Greek word "ethnikos": pagan, heithen; race or large groups of people having common traits and customs or groups "in an exotic primitive culture". But the term ethnic or ethnicity entered the lexicon of social science studies only in 1953. Many analyst used "tribal" communities as synonymous with

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ethnic groups, and used it as a substitute for minority or "people." However, many scholars including Soviet anthropologist argue that ethnic group encompasses not only small communities but those with large memberships, embracing the primitive, backward people but also those in industrialised, "developed countries."

There are three approaches regarding what are the major attributes of an ethnic group. The Objectivist emphasises on the cultural marker of social "givens" such as race, language, descent in the formation of ethnic groups. On the other hand, the Subjectivist maintains that self and group related feeling of identity distinctiveness and its recognition by others. The Syncretist assumes that there is a linkage between the Objectivist and Syncretist, and their complementarity "facilitates an understanding of the process of evolution and growth of an ethnic group, characterised by continuity, adaptation and change."

Thus, an ethnic group is defined "as a historically formed aggregate of people having a real or imaginary association with a specified territory, a shared cluster of beliefs and..."
values connecting its distinctiveness in relation to similar groups and
recognised as such by others.”

It has been argued from a socio-historical perspective that “ethnie” or
ethnic communities are in existence since time immemorial, or ethnic
identity is as old as history. What has changed is the transformation of
its character. However, ethnic group formation can be influenced by
situation and contexts. Anthony D. Smith defines ethnic community or
“ethnie” “as a named human population of alleged common ancestry,
shared memories and elements of common culture with a link to a
specific territory and a measure of solidarity.”

There are also ample evidence where the boundaries of ethnic
identity formation have shown flexibility and accommodation. In other
words ethnic group formation involves fusion and fission. Moreover,
in a different situation and context ethnic identity can be “imagined”

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7 Ibid.,
9 Anthony D. Smith, “Culture, Community and Territory: The Politics of Ethnicity and
Nationalism”, *Internationalism Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3, p. 447; For an extensive elaboration.
10 Phadnis, N. 2, p. 15.
11 Benedict Anderson, *See Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of
or deliberated "created." It is pertinent to take into account the categorisation done by Frederick Barth, on the boundaries and cultural attributes of ethnic group identity. However, a group has inclination to change its ethnic identity when there is a profit. Thus, Charles F. Keyes has defined ethnic identity as similar to a "gyroscope" which changes form, content and boundaries over time. The pressure of ethnic groups and identity per-se does not create conflict or contradiction in the society but it is the politicisation of identity or ethnicisation of politics that have created "ethnopolitical" conflict in the contemporary world. It calls for a distinction between what is "ethnic" group and what is "ethnicity". Ethnicity is defined as an "aspect of social relationship between groups who considered themselves as distinct from members of other groups with whom they have a minimum of regular interaction" Ethnicity provides an ethnic group a "quality and character" and a "summation of its impulse and


16 Erickson, N.12, p.12.
motivation for power and recognition." Ethnicity is often conceived as a "device and form for group mobilisation" through select use of ethnic symbols for socio-cultural and political-economic purposes.\textsuperscript{17}

In other words, ethnicity appears to be an ideology to resolve insecurities arising from the power structure within which they are located. The dynamics and influence or the interface between the state and the groups is of utmost importance.\textsuperscript{18} In a multi culture post colonial states there are marked tendency by groups to pursue goals and interest, be it political parties, pressure groups, clan solidarity, ethnic groups, caste or kinship, following introduction of representative democracy, opportunities which were never experienced earlier.\textsuperscript{19}

There are different approaches and explanation to the study of ethnicity or ethno-political conflict. But a complex interplay of economic, political, psychological, and symbolic factors determine the nature and patterns of ethnopolitical conflict. However, despite the influence of these factors, "antecedants to a conflict are usually structural in nature."\textsuperscript{20} The premordialist assumes that ethnic identity

\textsuperscript{17} Phadnis, N.2, p.16.
\textsuperscript{18} In the context of South East Asia, which can be applied in other situation, this aspect is dealt by David Brawn, \textit{The State and Ethnic Politics in South East Asia}, (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 1-31.
\textsuperscript{19} Atul Kohli, No.1, pp.326-28.
are based on social "givens" of human conditions which "tie" an individual to a region, kin, religion, dissent, social parties. Therefore, states, parties, bureaucrats and political structure and bureaucracies manifest these pre-existing ethnic cleavage and identities which lead ethnic groups to conflict.

The "cultural-pluralist", while recognising the ethnic distinctiveness on the lines of the primordialist but focus is on "dominant-subordinate" pattern of interaction or "mutually incompatible values" of various groups having institutional systems led to conflict. The "instrumentalist" and "Modernist" assumes ethnicity as "plastic and malleable, an instrument for other ends, usually those of political elites".

The "post-modern" views ethnicity as a "cultural artefacts, constructs of cultural engineers or chefs who tailor pre-existing mythologies, symbols and history for their own ends." However, such a line of thinking exaggerates the role of the elite's ability to manipulate the masses.

The manipulation of pre-existing ethnic and sectarian particularities along with the effects of modernisation,

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22 Phadnis, n.2. pp. 17-18.
24 A.D. Smith n. 9. pp.446-47.
communication, education have broadened the vista for participation in political process, which has led to a heightened sense of ethnic consciousness. These factors have also given to the rise of "vernacular leaders and counter elite's. Thus democratisation with its need to mobilise voters has given an edge to leaders espousing the ethnic or regional cause."25 Because individual, actions can hardly make effective demands as a forum like political parties, pressure groups, class organisations, etc. as medium for influencing the body politics.

The Marxist and neo-Marxist assume that ethnic conflict occurs where ethnic identity, which is defined as 'false consciousness' are manipulated by political leadership and vested interest. And when there is cultural division of labour and policy adopted by the state lead to subordination of a particular ethnic group(s) within a state and at the global context it is due to persistence of international division of labour.26 The practice of "internal colonialism"27 can also lead to ethnic conflict. In sum, ethnicity has a strong political overtone or desire for an effective participation in the political-economic process of a polity. If politics is concerned about the authoritative allocation

26 Phadnis, n.2 . pp. 18-19.
of values or resources.\textsuperscript{28} Ted Gurr's idea of "relative deprivation ie. the persistence of gap between value expectation and value capabilities" vis-a-vis a group to another group in the share of economic and political power also generate new political conflict. In other words, ethnicity is concerned with group formation, and thus with power relation. And it is a particular network of power relation at the world level which makes the ethnic self-affirmation of minorities respectable and useful as a tool in the distribution of material goods.\textsuperscript{29}

Then how can a group or ethnic identity manages or mobilises itself for an effective participation in the socio-political process in a given polity. This question takes us to the very case of ethnicity: mobilization, which is of course, "situationally\textsuperscript{30} determined. There are five dimensions which cause groups to organise groups on the basis of ethnic identity in their pursuit for political ends. Urbanisation, increased scales of organisation, the expansion of secondary and tertiary sections of the economy, the supra national organisations have expanded the appropriation for ethnic mobilization on a scale never known before.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{28} David Efron, \textit{A System Analysis of Primitive Life} (New York: John Wiley and Son, 1965).
\textsuperscript{29} E. Roosen, N.14, p. 158.
\textsuperscript{30} Joane Nagel and Susan Olzak, noted in J.F. Stack, N.15, p.5.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid, p.6.
Besides these dimensions ethnicity possesses objective makers, such as race, kinship, religion, language, customary mode and livelihood and regionalise for political mobilization. Moreover, in a transitional society where demography can dictate political power structure, ethnic mobilization is high, more so in a context where a single ethnic group dominate the rest.\textsuperscript{32}

Ekkart Zimmermann has strongly argued that it is the mobilization of differences that cause ethnic conflict but not the prevalence of cultural markers. Zimmermann argues that ethnic mobilization encompasses the concentration of resources, such as people, skills, money, belief, system, commitment and time (availability), media access in favour of an ethnic group. Based on Karl Deutsch's social mobilisation model, Zimmermann argues that social mobilisation by means of communication, urbanisation and alphabetisation lead to assimilation and integration or conflict depending on the phases in the mobilisation cycle. Conflict is more likely in those societies which are heterogenous and undergoing "mobilization."\textsuperscript{33}


\textsuperscript{33} Ekkart Zimmermann, "Ethnic Mobilisation and Conflict" N. 12. p.74.
Another approach to ethnic mobilization, purely from an economic angle, is outlined by Alberto Alesina and Enrico Spalaore. Their thesis were based on “widening economic markets” and changing “cost-benefit calculations.” For instance, resource rich territories have a propensity to buy from a world market at cheaper prices than they buy it from regional suppliers, Tatarstan in Russia is an example. In such circumstances, there is possibility of conflict. This line of thinking was provoked by Emmanuel Wallerstein, while referring to a situation in Congo, he observed that “inevitably some regions will be richer (less poor) than others, and if the ethnic claim to power combines with relative wealth, the case for secession is strong”.

According to Zimmerman, ethnic mobilisation thus necessarily leads ethnic conflict or competition are likely to occur:

(i) If the population undergoing modernisation is heterogenous
(ii) If ethnic competition is involved
(iii) If an ideological apparatus of interpretation has been developed for these “imagined” communities
(iv) If the world market would tolerate running one’s own policy.

34 Zimermann, N.12, p.77. fn.19.
35 Emanuel Wallerstein, cited in Phadnis, N.2, p.49.
36 Zimermann, N.12. p.78.
But the problem is more of these postulations can anticipate or predict where ethnic conflict will erupt. In these connection Sidney Tarrow's framework is quite instructive. Tarrow argues that "political opportunities widen in the context where there is elite dissent" which in turn lead to reduction of state repression against heterogenous groups. "When the political system opens up, new coalitions are likely to be formed and ethnic entrepreneurs become active." Tarrow therefore opines that in the post-cold war era the possibility of proliferation of small states are very high.

The ethnic consciousness is increased following increased contact, improvement in transport and communication, media, literacy or the "print capitalism." Besides, in the post-independence era the state has taken the responsibility to a welfarist oriented programme which have revolutionised people's expectations. Gradually, internationalist nature of the state's activitites have left private spheres rarely untouched. In a representative democracy collective identities and collective groups become an effective mechanism for demand articulation and aggregation. Therefore, ethnicity is a handy collectivity who can rightfully claim for not only

37 Ibid., p.78.
"equality of opportunity" but for "equality of result." Moreover, in a situation where state intervention in a poor setting controls state's economic resources intense competition over state's resources politicises numerous cleavages.

Ethnicity has proved to be a more resilient and powerful force subsuming even communism. Socialist movements have tolerated ethnic ties or ethnonationalism during the World War I in Europe. This incident prompted Soviet revolutionary V.I. Lenin and others to devise a strategy to accommodate "self determination." Moreover, the failure of communist regime to subordinate ethnicity to clan identities is a manifestation of the endurance of ethnicity.

Presuming that ethnic conflict is endemic in any heterogenous and multi-cultural society, then there would have been innumerable cases of conflict. But this has not happened. These may be because the identity and group formation appears to be quite flexible and notion of exclusion-inclusion i.e. ethnic boundaries quite malleable. Moreover, there are differences on the number of ethnic groups based on different cultural markers. For instance, Bernard Nietschmann

40 Atul Kohli, N.1., p.327.
41 Stack, N. 15., p.7. & N.41.; Also see Hobsbawn, N. 32., p.145-446, 148.
believes that there are about 5,000 separate peoples in the world. Whereas, Ted Gurr has identified, based on certain criteria, about 273 politically organised non-state identity groups, but there was only 230 before the break-up of erstwhile Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.43 Gurr’s identification of ethnic groups which are politically active or what he terms as “ethnopolitical” groups are based on two criteria: people who are subjected to discriminatory or “invidiom” treatment because of cultural, ethnic or religion traits; when people or ethnic groups are mobilised for political action to promote or defend their common interests. For Gurr, communal groups who qualify are of the above criteria in ethnopolitical groups”.44

In the aftermath of the Cold War “ethnopolitical” conflicts have intensified. In 1995, 268 groups with a total approximate population of one billion or 18 percent of world’s have intensified their “ethnopolitical” demands. In South-East, East and South Asia (19 countries) Gurr identified “ethnopolitical” movements which represent about 15 percent of the regions population.45 Since 1995, there are about 50 cases of genocide and mass political murder targeted at more than 70 different ethnic or religious minorities. These events in turn have rendered at least nine million and as many as twenty millions

44 Ibid., pp.4-5.
civilians casualties,\textsuperscript{46} and is responsible for creating an estimated 23 million internationally recognised refugees and left 27 million internally displaced.\textsuperscript{47}

The preceding passages were an attempt to capture the dynamics of ethnic conflicts. Now a review of “ethnopolitical” conflict in South Asia is undertaken. South Asia although it comprises India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives, for the purpose of this study few countries have been taken up where “ethnopolitical” conflicts continue to persist.

“Ethnopolitical” conflicts or competitions in South Asia have shown complex trends and patterns. South Asia has the highest diversity, or the most diverse region in the world. As a result ethnopolitical conflict in the region have shown a similar, and peculiar trends. South Asia qualifies as a region because of “shared, historical, cultural and economic features and which, in foreign affairs, have behaved as inter-related parts.”\textsuperscript{48} India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka under the British domination of about a century acted as inter-related units. However, one unique feature of the region is the “Indo-

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., p.8 & fn.7.
Centrism” or Indo-Centric contiguity. Moreover, these countries are in the same geographical region and cultural and political heritage stem from common though varied, ancient and medieval roots.

However, a major transformation took place during the colonial rule, a major change under the British colonial rule relates to “irreversible changing peoples image of their collective selves.” And under conditions of identity one’s being Muslim or Hindu “acquires a new unconventional dimension.” Not only that in the social spheres, under the colonial administration the region experienced demographic constellation never experienced earlier and introduced “codification” of traditional social related norms. The objective was to “divide and rule”, make ruling easier and to some extent for development and progress. This also created an indigenous elite. But following decolonisation these factors have left a disquieting trend. More so, once the state power was transferred to the indigenous elite, elite disequilibrium took place, dislocation and problem of legitimacy, within the new states.


Ibid., p.118.
Nevertheless, optimism that ensued following independence could sustain the new states up until the 1960's. Strident efforts and claims towards nation-making and forging a national culture were buoyed by confident expectation of expanding economic horizon on the lines of Western style democracy, adult franchise and centralised economic planning and centralised power structure. In other words, the state was seen to be encompassing many roles as the initiator, director, adjudicator and controller of countries destiny. The state, then became the initiator and agent of social change, for development, equality and justice. The states is looked upon as the primary agency of redistributive policies, whose role and penetration have all the more magnified in a multi-cultural post-colonial status.

The introduction of "representative Government" conferred masses an opportunity for participation in the political process with powers to elect and reject parties to power. However, the representative Government could not fulfill expectations as it is based on the universal principle of individual rights. Therefore, collectivities either ethnic, caste, biradari communal, religious sectarian or a combination of any cultural markers became the rallying point for political mobilisation seeking legitimate group entitlement.

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53 Tambiah, n.32. pp.342-43.
54 Sudipta Kaviraj, n.51, p.120
As a corollary, equal opportunities and access to education, occupation, material resources, income, privileges, titles and offices, power prestige, material goods or quest for group equilvalization became the foci in the politics of ethnicity. 55

In such a context where there is a “weak interface between state and society” 56 the role of the Central leadership- the state- its perception, policies and strategies vis-a-vis ethnic groups is crucial in analysing ethnic relationship. 57 Along with this the dynamics of demand - divergence of ethnic groups demand also dictates the nature of the ethnic conflict. 58 Lastly, the role of external powers 59 can also determine the nature, prospects and outcome of ethnic conflict in South Asia, as elsewhere.

The ethnopolitical conflict in Pakistan presents a complex pattern. Pakistan was created on the principle of Muslim or Islamic nationhood. However, even after five decades, a common Islamic identity have failed to integrate disparate ethnic groups. Although such traces of ethnic incompatibility, notwithstanding subscription to a common religious platform, can be detected from the beginning. In the aftermath of the announcement of Urdu as the official language

55 Tambiah. N.32. p.345
56 Ishtiaq Ahmed, n.50, p.39.
57 Phadnis, n.2, Chapter 4.
58 Ibid., Chapter 5.
59 Ibid., Chapter 6.
there was as strong protest. Because Urdu is spoken mostly by Mohajir (Refugees) who have mostly migrated from India.

The language riot of Karachi in 1972, following announcement of Sindhi as second official language in the Sindh province is also an illustration of ethnic incompatibility. Not only that the then Chief Minister of Sindh province Mumtaz Ali Bhutto (first cousin of Z.A.Bhutto) also demanded preferential job quotas for Sindhis in Sindh province. During the language riot, the Mohajir, who are concentrated mostly in Karachi, have started demands for separation of Karachi from Sindh. The large scale refugee influx of Pathan following Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and immigration of Punjabi significantly eroded the economic equation of the Mohajir. Nevertheless, the Mohajirs, with roughly ten percent of the country's total population control one-third of Pakistan financial and industrial assets, and Mohajir have a strong hold over country's powerful civil services.

The Sindhis also formed the Sindhi Awami Tehrik, as a counter to the Mohajirs, whom the Sindhi identifies as the usurper and responsible for Sindhis economic and political deprivation. On the

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60 Ishtiaq Ahmed, n.50, p.194.
62 Ishtiaq Ahmed, n.50, p.211.
other hand, the over representation of Punjabi's also an important factor for breeding ethnopolitical conflict in Pakistan. For instance, the Punjabi are over represented in the Armed forces with a population of roughly 50% of Pakistan’s total population. Punjabis constitutes 85 per cent of Pakistan’s total army.

In Baluchistan, Baluchi separatism has been simmering. The roots of Baluchi “ethnopolitical” problem can be traced to the Treaty of Accession in 1947. Baluchi constitute roughly five per cent of Pakistan’s area. The Baluchi demand range from autonomy, confederation, secession to irredentism.63

The state of Bangladesh was curved out from the erstwhile East Pakistan on December 16, 1971. Because of the overall dominance by the Muslim Bengalis “ethnopolitical” competition and conflict have revolved around the Muslim Bengalis and Hindu Bengalis, who constitute a little more than ten percent of Bangladesh’s total population.

However, it is the conflict between the tribal population of Bangladesh and the state/centre, who makes up roughly one percent of the Bangladesh total population, that have continued uptill now. The tribals of Bangladesh are mostly concentrated in the Chittagong Hill Tracts where the boundaries of India, Bangladesh and Myanmar met.

63 Phadnis, n.2, pp.174-190, Also Ishtiaq Ahmed, n.50, pp.185-86.
The tribals of Bangladesh have always wanted to be part of India but the Radcliff Award have allotted the tribals areas against their wishes to join erstwhile East Pakistan. The Chakmas, who are mostly Buddhist, since then have been endeavouring to address their problem.\(^{64}\)

The Chakmas problems have aggravated following displacement of nearly 100,000 without proper and adequate compensation in 1956. Government decision to construct the Kaptai Dam. Besides, there has been a great influx of Bengalis into the Chittagong Hill Tracts. This development programmes without proper attention to the needs of the tribal as well as the large scale influx of Bengalis have tilted the demographic balance in favour of the Bengalis. Besides, the low level of literacy, 17% in comparison with 25% of the Bengalis, to compete in the educational and other employment opportunities for the tribals are bleak.

The Shanti Bahini or the Garo Mukti Fauj, the armed wing of the Parbottya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti with an estimated cadre of 8000 to 10,000 are waging a war of separation in Bangladesh:

In Sri Lankan Tamils "ethnopolitical" conflict various factors such as racial, religious as well diaspora and erosion in the socio-

\(^{64}\) Ishtiaq Ahmed, n.50, pp.220-238; Also in Nidhi Sharma, "Ethnicity in Bangladesh" World Focus, Vol.15, No.4-5. April-May 1994, pp.23-26, 29.
political power structure are at work making it one of the most complex problem in South Asia. (The problem began with the introduction of majoritarian principle of representative democracy after independence.) Thus, in post-independence era institution of preferential quotas for Sinhalese in educational, professional and other occupation were introduced. In the higher state service and in lucrative white collar profession, the majority Sinhalese are disproportionately represented to the detriment of the Tamils.\(^{65}\) The central-state-policy also exacerbate the Sri Lankan Tamils demand from autonomy to secession.\(^{66}\)

Following the mass exodus of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees, India had to intervene in the affair of Sri Lanka. India's intervention had revived the bogey of India's South Asiatic ambition. This also fuelled suspicion that India is instigating the Tamils on the line where the state of Bangladesh was created from the erstwhile East Pakistan. Even after an accord was signed in 1987 between Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President J.R.Jayawardenene the ethnopolitical conflict has not been settled. Thus, an all out war by


\(^{66}\) Phadnis, *n*50, pp.239-269.
Tamil separatist led by the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) continues even today.

It is problematic given the divergence of opinion and flexibility of the cultural markers how to categories ethnic groups in India. As a result, “the question of what constitute an ethnic group, remains as unclear in India as it does in so many multi-ethnic societies where ethnicity itself has been in a state of flux.67

By employing the various categories of group identity, i.e. race, religion, tribe, language, “imagination” or belief, there are thousands of groups in India. At times there is congruence of a set of cultural markers and in other cases another different set.68

In some context various tribal groups try to “create” an ethnic community by aggregating number of tribes e.g., Nagas, Mizos in North-Eastern India.

Looking at the ethnopolitical movement as a political process, most of the movement typically follows the shape of an inverse “U” curve whereby the central-state and various groups discuss their relative power balances.69 In such a context, mobilised ethnic groups confront the state-centre-authority followed by negotiation, and then there is lull followed by repression or co-option of leaders and mutual

67 Quoted in Phadnis, n.2, p.35; Also in J.Manor, “‘Ethnicity’ and Politics in India” International Affairs, Vol.72, No.3, 1996, pp.450-475.
68 Phadnis, N.2, p.35.
69 Atul Kohli, N.1, p.326.
accommodation is reached. This of course depends on how well or weakly the leadership strategy are accommodative or not.  

The Kashmiris, who are mostly Muslims have been waging a war of independence. The “ethnopolitical” movement of the Kashmiris is a unique case where religion, strategic consideration and external party involvement making it an intractable issue. The Kashmir case does not fit into the inverse “U” curve hypothesis. The movement has escalated since the late 1980’s.

Various political movements have mushroomed in the North-Eastern India since independence. Culturally, and racially North-East India is different from the rest of India. This cultural discrimination as well as a rooted sense of deprivation and dissemination -real and attitudinal- have posed a diverse pattern of demand articulation and aggregation.

Incessant waves of migration which can be traced to the colonial era have and physical isolation of many tribes have played significance role in the ethnic dynamics of the region and in the nature of “ethnopolitical” demands.

70 Ibid., pp.329-344.
The Assamese movement began as a protest against the domination of the Bengalis, who poses a socio-cultural threat. The Assamese demand also included a rightful claim for the “sons of the soil.” But how the movement has turned to a demand for a separate Assam, explicates Indian internal colonialism to a large extent, not only in the ethnic terms per se but in the structural characteristics of capitalism operation in India. For instance, Assam produce 60% of India’s crude oil production but receives less than 4 percent of its value in the form of royalties.

In Assam, the Bodo movement which began as demand for equitable representation following the coming of State of Nagaland from the Assam State has gone beyond control. The Bodos, the plains tribals of Assam, autonomy demand within Assam political structure has now started voicing for separation from the Indian Union.

The Nagas case has been an intractable issue since Independence. The Nagas demand for a sovereign State by seceding areas where various Nagas tribes have been settling since time

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73 Myron Weiner, Sons of the soil: Migration and Ethnic Conflict in India (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Also in Amiya Kumar Das, Assam’s Agony (New Delhi: Lancers, 1982).
immemorial has not waned. To meet the demands of the Nags, Statehood was granted to Nagas by carving out Naga inhabited areas of Assam in 1963. Even then the Nagas' determination and demands for a free sovereign Nagaland have not diminished. Armed groups continue to fight for the cause of Naga independence. There was a lull in the activities of the Nagas fighting for independent Nagaland following Shillong Accord in 1975. The optimism generated in both parties -the Government of India and Naga insurgents following the Accord was short lived. Heavily armed separatist groups have resurfaced again since 1980’s.

The next chapter will discuss the historical perspective and evolution of the Naga Ethnic Movement.