CHAPTER VIII
The gradual consolidation of the political consciousness, fuelled by the participation of the Mizos in the political process, gave an agitational edge to the hill men's politics. The insurgency soon became the instrument for the expression of the agitational pressure at the mass level. The pent-up feelings of revolt surged through the adventure of insurgency, and slowly took hold of the land of the Mizos in a volcanic foray.

Insurgency in Mizoram is not accidental but the outcome of long planning and preparations clandestinely made by the dissident group in Mizoram. It was deeply rooted in the social, geographical, economic and political milieu of the society. The economic interest and psychological needs created a major political and social force that accelerated the movement with definite direction and goals. These were encouraged to an extent by the spatial distribution of geographical phenomena. It has also given way to the formation of political organisation and other institutions supporting the cause of sub-nationalism. Consequently, the inter-group and ethnic tension were intensified.

and led at times to direct violence in form of insurgency. The factors that gave rise to insurgency in Mizoram can be stated as follows:

**Coupland Plan of Crown Colony.**

A dangerous plan of 'Crown Colony' by R. Coupland was hatched before independence to take out the entire North-East India and to form an independent political unit separate from India and Burma. This carved out area was to be constituted into a special colony under direct British Crown. The plan was favoured by R. Ried (Governor of Assam) and L.L. Peters (Superintendent of Lushai Hills) but refused by the British Parliament. The plan indirectly encouraged the Mizos to demand a separate land on the basis of self-determination. This enabled the disinchantment to propagate the effective insurgency.

2. The tribal people of Mizoram always preferred autonomy and personal freedom which they enjoyed undisturbed before the advent of the British. The chiefs were their best friend, philosophers, and guides. It was a community life with clanish outlook. The British gradually introduced changes in the

traditional landscape of the Lushai Hills. The Christian Missionaries rendered immense services to them and reinforced the British influence in the regions. The Mizos smarted under a feeling of being deprived of after independence and became victim of fear-psychosis. The faceless bureaucracy which did not know how to deal with the tribals compounded the problem by their inexperience to tackle the problems specific to their environment. The fumbling bureaucracy and inaptitude and indifference of the Assam Government were some of main causes of frustration among the Mizos that ultimately resulted in the eruption of insurgency. The Government policy and approaches, increasing dependence on military forces and lavish grant of funds to speed up economic development were measures adopted later to first restrict and then eliminate the continuing violence and armed insurgency in the region.


The abolition of the chieftenship had mixed reactions. The commoners were satisfied with the abolition as they were freed from the shackles of slavery and exploitation of the chief and their 'Upas'. The autocratic rules of the chiefs passed

3. Information collected by the author in the field.

away. The chiefs who were deprived of their autocratic rights became frustrated and powerless. Their frustration and agony goaded the discontented elements to utilise the failures of administration for the realisation of their goals. The political uprising in 1966 was strengthened by the disgruntled chiefs who lended their tacit support to the disgruntled elements. This abolition of the chieftainship was untimely and premature.

4. Administrative Responses.

The Assam Government took hasty decision and showed lack of foresight in wooing the M.N.F. party leaders. This was in order to overshadow the Mizo Union, (which expressed contrary opinions to Assam Governments, which squarely blamed the Chaliha Government orders for the neglect of the Mizo hills by not pursuing the developmental work.*

* The M.N.F workers were also speaking in the same tone. Sualhranga, a close confidant of Laldenga spoke “We should have no development so long as we remained under the Assam Government. We are neglected by the officials, who are mostly Assamese whose treatment is very bad”. This indirectly sowed the seed of separation.


The Mizo Union, affiliated to the Congress party, was in power in Mizo District Council, which was looking after the relief work during the famine of 1959. Inadequate supply of relief materials and half-hearted measures to overcome the problems by the Assam Government led for differences between the Mizo union and the Assam Government. Moreover, the Assam state Official Language bill of 1960 augmented to the problem. The discontented elements exploited the opportunity and spread anti-government feeling in the famine struck areas of Mizoram. In this connection, it would be quite appropriate to cite the example of another hasty action of the Assam Government which took a lenient view of the prevailing political situation in the Hills, even as the intelligence assessments harped on the possibilities of emergence of insurgency situations.*

The intelligence coverage by the district administration was not adequate. The police apparatus for obtaining

* Laldenga along with La\ñnunawia and Sainghaka were arrested by the security guards while coming from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) but they were led off even at the startling disclosures that they sneaked into the erstwhile Pakistan for roping in the Pak support to their insurgency bid. Chalima later on admitted that he was personally responsible for the events in Mizoram, culminating in the outbreak of hostilities.

tactical as well as field intelligence and analysis was in a rudimentary stage. This was one of the reasons as to why the district administration was caught unaware when insurgency broke out.

Further, the geographical and territorial attributes which were most helpful in the conventional form of war gave a totally different perspective to the response i.e., it was more suited for insurgent operations. The location, size, shape, terrain, climate, vegetation and features of territory reinforced the prospect of insurgency. The continuous jungle infested with low mountain and sympathetic population across the international boundaries of India (Mizoram sector) provided favourable conditions for active insurgency. These were encouraged by limited accessible all weather road net-work and poor economy of the hills (as noted earlier the economy of the hills was dominated by Jhum with complete absence of industries. The mountainous terrain did not allow any effective linkage to develop.*

*Such a situation, always favoured the actions of discontent elements. Correspondingly longer distance, inaccessibility and inadequate facilities made the communication unreliable and expensive for counter-insurgency. Mizoram as a whole is flanked by erstwhile East Pakistan(now Bangladesh) which had unhealthy relation with India. Pakistan always encouraged anti-national activity and provided safe sanctuary for the insurgents where entire plan for insurgency was worked out in detail. It is the geographical location which favoured the movement of insurgents to Pakistan. In the classical insurgency scenario the proximity of an unfriendly neighbour is always exploited by the insurgents who look forward to obtain sanctuary facility and arms.

5. Impact and role of Participation.

The Mizos are proud, strong, stout, and courageous. inspite of their dark background (of 'head hunter' and practice of inhuman cruelty to their neighbouring people in the past). The Mizos provided a sizeable number in army and Para-Military forces. During the second World War, nearly 5000 recruits joined the British forces from Mizoram. The villagers were given guerrilla training. Most of the recruits served in different units of British Indian Army at different places of India. They also effectively participated in the Burma front. This, alongwith greater political and economic awareness radically transformed the action space of the inhabitants. Besides, the disbandment of units that participated in the mutiny of a battalion of Assam Rifles, indicated the strong undercurrent of change taking place in the hill society. As far as insurgency was concerned, these developments provided adequate personnel to activate the military phase of insurgency in the Hills. In this they were partially helped by arms dump left since the end of second World War in the area.


During the British days the tribals were preserved as the 'museum piece' and their contact with outside world
was restricted. As a result, the Mizos were deprived of coming closer to the plain people and to swim with them in main-stream of National life. The 'Inner Lines Regulations' restricted the movement and free exchange between the hill and the plain people. Obviously, mutual distrust between the hill people and the plains developed. The non-Mizos (plain people) considered the Mizos as nomadic, dirty, and uncivilised both in manner and habits (shabbily dressed) and developed hatred against the Mizos. The Mizos on the other hand, also looked upon them with distrust and called them the 'vias', a cheat a lier and selfish. This recalcitrant attitude on both sides poisoned the friendly relation between the hill people and the plains. This racial hatred culminated into open hostility.

7. Change in Life Style.

The British consolidation and extension of administrations in the Lushai Hills brought drastic changes in the life pattern of the inhabitants. Their earlier community life was gradually transformed through the introduction and extension of education, growing influence of missionary activities and money economy, etc. These changes undermined the traditional

society and brought forth vertical and horizontal cleavages into open. These along with administrative developments exposed the inhabitants to changes. This brought about the obvious response of discontentment, and resentment, which ultimately paved the way for insurgency.

8. Alarming Unemployment Problem in Mizoram.

Although the unemployment is a cancerous growth in modern India and all states big or small, industrialised or otherwise, suffer from this disease but it is more acute in Mizoram due to socio-economic backwardness of the state. Mizoram is economically not a viable state. Its economic potentialities are limited to agriculture only. Further, the rapid growth of general education without any employment generating programme, resulted in growing frustration among the educated youths. Moreover, lack of technical education at lower level has caused anxiety to the common man. The limited job opportunity within the state could not absorb the educated youths. Further, the westernised culture adopted by the young Mizos posed a further problems. The extremists leaders utilised this opportunity and recruited large number of unemployed youths as M.N.F volunteers on false assurance. 11

9. **Economic Backwardness.**

Economically Mizoram is not a viable state. The procurement of basic needs of the masses was difficult, the poor and the neglected means of communication, scarcity of drinking water, lack of power supply, inadequate schools and technical institutions, lack of medical and transport facility, exhorbitant price of essential commodities, regional imbalance, rampant corruption and nepotism created chaotic condition in Mizoram. The extremists made it as their main plank for movement.¹²

10. **Stress on rapid Economic Growth.**

The Government of India took interest in quick economic development in Mizoram by increasing per capita expenditure in the Plans for Mizo hills. There was an impressive increase in the plan expenditure. The extremists were afraid of this developmental programme which, if speedily expedited might dampen the militancy among the Mizos and the contemplated revolt would not materialise. This induced the extremists to take the initiative towards insurgency.

11. **Impact of Naga Insurgency.**

The evil design of separatism was sown by the Naga leaders. Sakhrie, the Secretary of Naga National Council paid

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a visit to the Mizo district in September 1946. He inspired the Mizo people by citing examples that Nagas would fight to the last for independence and secession from India. Later on, A.Z. Phizo and other Naga leaders visited Mizo Hills in April 1947 which was synchronised with the visit of Bordoloi Sub-Committee. Phizo aroused a feeling of anti-Indian in the heart of the Mizos.

12. Role of Pakistan in Aggravating the Insurgency.

The unfriendly relation between India and Pakistan enhanced tension in the eastern sector which was geopolitically more vulnerable. The then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) taking the advantage of geographical continuity under difficulty mountainous terrain openly encouraged the Naga and Mizo insurgents and allowed co-ordination between two groups of insurgents, supplied arms and ammunitions, provided safe sanctuary for their training or logistic planning, spared their Army staff for guerrilla training. Through their embassy the extremists easily contacted foreign embassy and convinced them of their sinister design. The Chinese embassy in Pakistan was more generous to the Mizo insurgents and their assistance was funnelled through Pakistan.

13. The Quality of Leadership.

Laldenga (MNF President) was the man behind the Mizo insurgency. He realised that it would be dangerous and impossible
to adjust in the prevailing situation vitated by socio-economic and political subjugation of the Mizos by the so called Indians. The failure to adjustment created social and psychological tension. Laldenga and his followers took opportunity to exploit the parochial and separatists tendency in order to materialise their ambitious plan. He mobilised the entire population in support independence for Mizo hills, twisted the term 'Excluded Area' to convince the people in different ways. Had there been no Laldenga there would not have insurgency. His shrewd nature and slippery customary design favoured the development of uprising and its trend in Mizoram.


The MNF leaders aroused religious sentiment and made it an issue against the Government of Assam and the Government of India. Mizoram as a whole is a Christian dominated state.

1st Plan - Rs.63,0000 2nd plan -Rs.211 lakh, 3rd plan Rs.562 lakhs. At the end of 3rd plan per capita expenditure was Rs.314 as against 166 for whole Assam.

*R.N.Haldipur is of opinion the tribal unrest also occurred in a situation where adjustment became difficult in the process of acculturation. At such a critical juncture, a new leader emerges and vocalises the dormant ideas under threatening conditions like famine, exploitation and excessive interference.

13. R.N.Haldipur Policy Toward Administration of the Tribes of North-East India (in) K.Surensingh(ed) Tribal Situation In India, Simla p4 118.
where more than 95% of population follow Christianity. Laldenga emphatically convinced the tribal brothers that the Hindu dominated India wanted to thrust upon us, their religion and intended to Hinduise us by all possible means. He convinced them that India was a land of Hindus and Mizoram a land of Christianity.

15. High Morale of MNP Volunteers.

Unlike the security forces the Mizos hardly ever feared attacks or lose their lives here and there. It hardly matters anything to them. They had became desperate. From the geopolitical point of view the Mizos had nothing to lose and nothing really to defend.


The unrest in North Eastern India in general and Mizoram in particular has been attributed to the neglect of weak periphery by the dominant 'core area'. Mizoram, an unmobilised peripheral area has been neglected by the Central core area (capital) to a great extent. This has given birth to counter political

15. Nibedan n.7,p.129.
movements like the MNF. This affected adversely the spatial system of the country. The spatial difference between the centre and the peripheral unit (Mizoram) had been exploited by the MNF.

**Insurgency: Development.**

The members of insurgency smouldering underground erupted ominously in Mizoram in mid-night of 28th Feb. 1986. It was well planned and calculated. The insurgents first cut off telephone lines, disrupted road communications and disarmed the state police. Its quick success could be attributed to its strategic location. Its location in the extreme corner of North East region, whose 70% of its total boundary faces international borders, mainly East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and Burma. Large tracts of the boundary are predominantly mountainous covered with dense bamboos and mixed forests. This natural cover facilitated the insurgents to move across the boundary without any resistance from the Security forces. Besides, complete lack of communications link between the interior villages and the district headquarters prohibited the flow of information. Added to it, the cultural similarity of many tribes of Chin Hills of Burma and Mizoram helped the insurgents to reinforce their activities.

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17. *Ibid*, p. 48
without any trouble. They were of the same stock whether they lived left side of the border or the right side.

The seed of insurgency is clearly evident from the proceedings of the conference of all Mizos and other similar political parties at Churachandpur, (Manipur). This was convened to settle the difference between the Mizo union leaders and the MNF in the month of January, 1965. This meeting was a turning point in the history of Mizoram. In the conference, the Mizo Union reiterated its stand to postpone the movement for independence of Mizoram and asked the MNF to eschew the sessionist demand. However, the political parties stressed upon the Mizo aspirations for a 'Greater Mizoram' comprising of all Mizo inhabited areas.

Subsequently, there had been a talk between the Mizo union and the MNF on the question of Independence of Mizoram. The Mizo Union requested MNF to withdraw its demand for sovereign independence because such demand would not be acceptable to the Government of India and the starvation, miseries and hardship of the Mizo people on the other hand would increase. But the MNF decided to go ahead with the demand for complete independence. The MNF leader, Laldenga,

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19. Amit Kumar Nag, n.22,p.44.
utilised the opportunity to mobilise volunteers during Indo-Pak war of 1965 when the Indian Army was deployed on the borders and more than 8,000 volunteers readily responded to his call. The party spread up its clandestine mobilisation and started organising its base in each village. This enabled them to widen and strengthen insurgent base at grass-roots level.

The shadow of insurgency soon loomed large with the MNF High Command set up a shadow Government named 'Mizoram Sawrkar' having legislature, executive and judicial wings. The Government was based on American pattern as the leaders did not like the British pattern which involved a lengthy tedious process in disposal of matters.

*The Office bearers of the 'Sawrkar' were as follows:

President - Laldenga
Vice President - Lalmumawia
Finance Secretary - Lalkhawliana
Defence Secretary - Zamawia
Home Secretary - Sainghaka
Chief Justice - Fohn F. Manliana
Foreign Secretary - Lalhminthanga
Transport & Communication & Education - Lianzuala

20. MNF Pamphlet and other literature.
Table - 35

Administrative divisions

Mizoram

South Division (Run)  Western Division  Eastern Division

(Dampa)  (Lurh)

Sub-Area
(under Dy. Commissioner & assisted by subordinate officers)

M.H.F. Defence Wing

M.N.V.
(at the time of operation fericho.)

Northern Command  Southern Command  Central Command  Eastern Command  Western Command
Aizawl  31 Div.
Town

V Div 2 SF.

Source:
see also N. Bebadan, n. 7.
p. 62.
The 'Mizoram Sawrkar' had three divisions (Table - 35) under the command of P.B.Kosanga, K.Hrangchunga and Ngurchhina (Brother of Laldenga) who were in charge of West, south and East Divisions respectively. These divisions were further divided into sub-areas headed by a Deputy Commissioner who was assisted by subordinate officers. The armed wing of the defence branch was called M.N.V Laldenga being the president of Mizoram Sawrkar was also the supreme commander of the Army. Self-styled (S.S) Major General Vanalhururia was the chief of the army before uprising. The recruitment in the Army of the Mizoram Swarkar was made from the students, farmers and even ex-service men whose response encouraged the MNF. Leaders. The M.N.V was divided into four commands and officers were placed to command the area. Thus the administrative and defence wing were well organised which made the leaders bold enough to make preparation for revolt. Apparently, before the public the MNF leaders pleaded for non-violent method of getting their demands fulfilled. Laldenga and his followers realised that in view of the geographical location, infrastructure and economic condition of region, it was a herculean task to give a smashing blow to the well equipped Indian army. Further, military force had never solved any political problem
of the world. Under such camouflage he directed his followers at all levels to prepare for mass uprising. In fact, Laldenga strategy was to create confusion and hence he adopted double standard policy like that of Phizo in Nagaland. In this way planning and organisation went on simultaneously. Finally on 30th October '65 the MNF president Laldenga and General Secretary S. Lianzuala upped the ante and gave a call for the secession from India in a memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister of India (Appendix IV).

The memorandum, in fact, was an eye-wash simply to divert the attention of the Assam Government and the Central Government. A full-scale preparation for revolt was intensified. The M.N.A raised many Battalions of armed volunteers and equipped them with sophisticated weapons available and obtained from the neighbouring States of Pakistan and China. Training in guerrilla Warfare was given by both China and Pakistan. The MNF placed armed volunteers at certain vulnerable points in both rural and Urban areas to blow of vital installations. The spirited volunteers came out for fund collection by terrorising and exhorting the service holders, traders and Contractors. 22


22. Information collected by the author in the field.
The large scale preparations, of course, did not catch the civil administration unawares. The Government braced up to tackle in underground menace as purely a law and order problem (in the initial stages of insurgency). The administration also infiltrated into the insurgent hierarchy for the obvious purpose of ferreting out the field intelligence was proved when the M.N.F. liquidated Col. Laimana on charge of being an Indian agent.

Chaotic condition prevailed in Mizoram and the normal life was paralysed. The MNF activities spread to every corner of the district. The M.N.A volunteers were jubilant and the top brass of the party decided to take recourse to violent method to wrest independence on the line of what was being done by Naga insurgents. Thus the political ambition of a small section of Mizo fuelled by Laldenga ignited the spark of insurgency, which marked the saga of strife, suffering and turmoil. The insurgency started on Feb. 28th, 1966 at 10.30 p.m. (it was named 'Operation Jerico'). The telephone lines and other wireless transmitters were smashed, road communication between Silchar and Aizawl was disrupted and cultivrets were blown off. The Government Sub-treasury was ransacked. The guards were disarmed and booty of Rs.64,000/-
were taken away. Simultaneous disturbances were sparked off at vai'rengte, Kolasib, Lunglei, Champai, Demagiri, Khawzawl and Chawngte. The armed revolt spread like wild fire, although the majority of population and parties did not fully support such movement.

The MNF declared independence (Appendix V) which contained the following main objectives:

1. The principle of self-determination denied to the Mizo people will be revised.
2. The Mizos are a separate nation having distinct Mongolian characteristics.
4. Mizos are dominated, exploited, despised, persecuted, tortured, manhandled and murdered by the Government of India.
5. The Government of India did not allow the Mizo to procure food materials during the famine from the neighbouring friendly countries and consequently, Mizo people faced starvation.

Laldenga wanted to internationalised the issue. He appealed to nations for external help.*

The MNF strategy was well-planned. The main line of communications (Silchar-Aizawl) was disrupted intentionally to stop the reinforcement of army and para-military force at Aizawl or to interior places like Champhai and Demagiri.

* He wrote letters to Sukarno, the President of Indonesia. "Historians claimed that we, the Mizo people are the Mongoloid originated from southern part of China and migrated towards the present habitat between India and Burma through the Shan States of Burma in about 15th century A.D. Our Chief ruled over separate hills and valleys with supreme authority and their administration was very much like that of the Greek city of the past. India's top leaders and spokesmen like Pandit Nehru released a press statement on 9th August, 1946 and said "The tribal areas are defined as being those along the frontiers of India which are neither parts of India or of Burma nor of any Indian State nor of any foreign power".

However, these reference to this statement has not been quoted. In what context this has been made is not put by Laldenga. Again Laldenga said 'The British gave an assurance to the Mizos that they would become independent after the 2nd World War" In fact, there is no record to this assurance. But Laldenga said consequent upon the proclamation the Lushai Brigade and the Lushai Scouts actually fought on the Burma front against the Japanese aggression. In fact, we were semi-independent state during the British period. This letter was recovered by the security force and it was not despatched to the President.

Even the Air Field at Turial was not free and safe for the Indian forces. The MNF volunteers took away from P.W.D. S.D.O at Vairengte, a jeep and some explosive materials on 1st March 1966 (at 1-30 a.m.). On 2nd March Government of Assam declared the district as disturbed area. Troops were dispatched by air and road. The armed Police was put under the operational command of the army. However, the army could not reach before 5th night. By that time the MNF caused maximum damage in the district. On 3rd March, 1966 the Assam Rifles patrol party was ambushed nearly the Government High School, Aizawl, and on the same day first Assam Rifles at Aizawl was attacked, but they held out 5th March, 1966. The hostiles made attempt to capture the Chinluang post on the first night of insurgency. However, the initial attempt failed and they realised that the army reinforcement would be reaching from Silchar, they changed their plan.

The hostiles attacked Lunglei and heavy firing from both sides continued. The post of First Bn of Assam Rifles and B.S.F. were captured by the rebels and arms and ammunitions were taken away by them. The S.D.O. (Civil) R.V. Pillai and other Civil Officers were kidnapped, and taken first to an

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unknown place and then to Pakistan. The M.N.F. flag was unfurled at S.D.O's residence. At Champhai the wing H.Q. of Assam Rifles with two platoons fell to rebels and the post was destroyed.

There were encounters between the security forces and rebels at Chawngte in which many M.N.F. rebels were killed. But finally, overpowered by them. Thus apart from Assam Rifles H.Q., Aizawl all other posts in Mizo Hills district fell in hands of M.N.F which took more than a month for the troops to regain the centres of administration.

The news of M.N.F. uprising was spread throughout the district with the village signaling organisation of MNF (torch signaling) The district H.Q. was under the rebels command for nearly 6 days. This uprising, in fact, brought Laldenga and his party into sudden limelight and it also proved effective in removing the people's aloofness, and baptised them in crucible of fire and destruction.

The army moved from Silchar to Aizawl by road and even by helicopters from 3rd March onwards. The forces reached

26. Goswami n.18 p.155
on 5th evening after clearing of all hurdles on the way. The security forces started re-capturing the post and centres already captured by the rebels. The district headquarters became free from the rebels who left the town and moved to the interior places. The army columns moved towards Lunglei and reached there on 13th March. The army column had threatened to bomb the town because the town was under MNF control. On 9th March two Baptist leaders reached Aizawl and requested the Army not to harm the innocent people by bombing the town. There were minor encounters between the security forces and the MNA volunteers. But finally the volunteers recinded and took away large number of arms, explosive and Vehicles from B.R.T.F. 29 The Army column moved to Champhai and relieved it from the rebels on 17th March. 30 The Home Minister made a statement in Lok Sabha that all important posts and towns had been made free from the clutches of the armed Mizo gangs and the Mizo National Front volunteers have either gone to the jungles or are trying to escape into Pakistan or Burma. Mopping up operations were continued.

But the MNF rebels were in form and adopting multi-pronged strategy - full Scale insurrection, equilibrium

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29. See R.N. Prasad, n. 11 p. 185.
30. Information collected by the author in the field.
operation in selective places, intimidation of officers on coercive terms, terrorism, extortion and politicization by overground Mizos (Extremists Group). Thus, certain strategically insignificant places like Tuipang on the southern border was left alone. Demagiri was the main target of attack due to its importance as the opening of supply line from Chittagong. The mountainous terrain with zig-zag roads and narrow passes were the main points for ambush by the MNF volunteers. The hostiles ambushed the military supply convey at Zawlawn village (excellently located on mountain pass) on 6th May 1966 causing death to security personnel and looting of supply ration and burning the vehicles completely. The army being infuriated burnt some villagers on the plea that they might have given help to those hostiles.

The army was determined to knock down the insurgents but occasional resistance due to ambush or sniping, the mobility of army was retarded. Since the army was in aggressive form the MNF headquarters also went on shifting (from Aizawl to the Caves of Reiek, east of Aizawl). Laldenga escaped to East Pakistan.

32. Palit, n.25, p.262.
The hard-core extremists continued their operation despite the appeal made to maintain peace by the Chief Minister at Aizawl on May 10, 1966. The underground rebels had a series of encounters with security forces at Bungman on 16th May, 1966, and these resulted in the death of Laizama and Chhunkhuma. However, the M.N.A. volunteers ambushed the security forces on the outskirts of Bilkhawthlir on 23rd May and managed to extricate 12 rifles, 2 stenguns and one L.M.G. and killed 12 soldiers. This operation was named as 'operation Humnalhma' by the rebels. The rebels further attacked an army posts at Sialsuk on June 14, but the army repulsed the fire and burnt the villages nearby. Two days later, the M.N.A. launched attack at many places under 'Operation Monsoon' and kidnapped some local officers. There was slight changes in the M.N.F. tactics and they concentrated on 'hit and run' the particular object and not to ambush army column. The primary aim of the rebels was to promote disorder, increase tension in rank and file of the security forces, disrupt line of communication and foil counter-insurgency measures. The volunteers were asked to watched the army movement, intercept the communication line, put the postal delivery in haywire and keep them engaged.

Unfriendly countries like Pakistan and China were sympathetic to the rebels and were extending all possible
help in imparting guerilla training inside Pakistan and fermenting trouble inside India. Their objectives were to disintegrate the unity of India, to support secessionist movement, to put strain on the country’s economy and to keep the army engaged in these area so that Pak army could get free hand in other vulnerable part of India (Kashmir).

Laldenga, who was living in Dacca, returned to attend M.N.F meeting at Sailulak on Nov. 6 1966. The meeting was held and the M.N.F. constitution was framed. In the meeting he reiterated the demand of independence of Mizoram and desired to meet the Government of India as government to government level which means indirect recognition of their government by the government of India. In the meeting a section of Mizo including pastor Zirema requested M.N.F. leaders to abjure the cult of violence but the request fell flat. Laldenga left for Dacca to give more time to internationalise the issue. He gave instruction to other leaders to continue movements on two definite lines - One in favour of independence and other for negotiations. Some civilians (M.N.F. called Dumptaw group, Dum means black, Pawl means blue - a derogatory term) were negotiating with the Government. The extremists group

33. Goswami, n. 26
was applying violence and agitation. The M.N.F. cabinet meeting scheduled to be held on 10th Dec. 66 at Sialsir (near Serchip) was cancelled due to army operation. But a serious encounter took place on 16th December near Kawlkulh, south east of Aizawl on Champhai road resulting into death of seven soldiers.

In June, 1967 the M.N.F. boys launched 'Operation Crusade' which aimed at consolidating forces in the Mizo inhabited area of Manipur under the command of 'Lions Brigade'. The volunteers crossed the border and slipped into Minipur. The rebels battalions were planning for 'Operation Monsoon' (furthlipui in Mizo). In the meantime the MNF launched daring attacks on several points including Aizawl town to kidnap local officials. On 27th Dec. 1967 the rebels again ambushed the security forces near Chawngte (south west of Lunglei, near Pakistan border (now Bangladesh), killing six soldiers. This was a guerilla tactics to inflict major attack elsewhere. The M.N.A. headquarters had moved from the Ralvawng Range near Baite. The vanguard platoon taking easterly direction for crossing over Chin hills of Burma.

35. Ibid, p.110.
36. Information collected by the author from the field.
On 3rd March, 1968 the Ch.Bn. led by SS Lt.Lianhnuna launched 'Operation Refinement' against 6 Maratha Company in which the Coy Commander was killed. A fortnight later, gun fight took place on Mizo-Manipur border in which 20 security personnel were killed. Similarly, a gun battle took place at borapansuri Out-Post (south of Demagiri in Jan.69. The M.N.A. took position on the other side of the border and went on firing on Indian security forces. Two days later the rebel groups in northern part of Tripura attacked C.R.P post Tulpaibari on 23 Jan. 69. The rebel forces crossed into the southern Tripura (Jampuri range). The Indian security force had also monitored the location of M.N.A. camp on Pakistan side, closed to Indian 37 border. Towards end of 1969 about 200 armed Mizo rebels entered Mizo Hills district from Chittagong hill tracts in small groups and infiltrated into interior villages. They created troubles in the villages and put the administration in tight corner. There was encounter with the security forces on Feb.16, 1970 near Marapara area (border of Mizo hills with East Pakistan).

After being driven out from main territory of Mizoram, the M.N.F. volunteers took shelter in East Pakistan. The border was not sealed and their movement was not intercepted by the

37 . Nibedan n.3\textsuperscript{4}, p.151.
army due to geographical contiguity and natural hazards. A large number of them were taking shelter in Chittagong hill tracts and set up their camps. Chittagong port was the centre of international smuggling where from arms and ammunitions were smuggled. The M.N.F. men had to depend on the charity of the imperilist who used to help the insurgents for their global strategy. Till the creation of Bangladesh the East Pakistan was virtually the operational headquarters of the M.N.F. and their volunteers were trained by the Pak army. After the liberation the headquarters shifted further east and set up a new operational base in the Jungles of Arakan where Arakanese insurgents extended hospitality to M.N.F. men. The Arakanese base of M.N.F. was the trijunction of Arakan – Bangladesh and India.

The people and the volunteers were moving to different places for tactical gains. Intelligence chief of the M.N.F. volunteers was trekking northward from jungles of Burma towards north to establish contact with Kachin Independent Army (KIA) through hectic walk along the Chindwin river. He got hospitality from the Mizo villagers on the way but the strenuous journey gave him physical and mental strain for many days. Bualhvanga, a close confidant of Laldenga was busy in southern areas motivating

40. Ibid, p. 67
the people on the movement. He was fomenting trouble by making publicity to the fact no development would take place in Mizoram so long as we were under Assam Government.

Lalnunmawia moved south ward to meet the President of the Arakan National Liberation Front (ANLF). The Arakanese leader Krahlalung accompanied with his party General Secretary Tunhlsaung, their security for the unknown place (R.V.). There was some understanding between the two that M.N.F. could give arms and ammunitions to them for the exchange of their hospitality for sanctuary in their area.

The M.N.F. volunteers had their access to China also through the corridor across the Somra Tracts, east of Manipur. The Naga underground acted as the go between. The Pro Peking Burmese Communists Party also gave them sanctuary in Chin Hills and Arakan. But the MNF preferred training in Chittagong Hill Tracts than Yunnan province in China due to the basic ideological differences and Christian background.

After the liberation of Bangladesh and the formation of Union Territory of Mizoram, the insurgents had to face awkward situation and accordingly MNF revised strategy and operational tactics. Besides, internal rift in the rank and file of the MNA was also surfaced.
In 1974, the hardcore M.N.F. regrouped their forces to make fresh attack on security forces from the side of Burma, Arakan and Chittagong hills. Inside Mizoram they started terrorising and intimidating the loyalist and at the same time gave proposal for solution of problems. Malsawma Colony was called to Aizawl for talk which continued for a month but failed and he went back to his hide outs in Arakan. The hard-core M.N.F made a desperate attack on Lt.Governor S.P. Mukherjee on March 10, 1974 while travelling on Silchar-Aizawl road and wounded him.

In 1975 (30 Jan.) another daring act was made in Aizawl when senior Police officers were holding a conference in Police H.Q. Three M.N.F rebels entered into the office and gunned down top officers. This dastardly action shocked the nation. Accordingly, security arrangements were tightened and administrative machinery was overhauled.

In this way, time went on rolling. Laldenga was losing his grip over his men and a crack developed in the rank and file of M.N.A. Laldenga felt the pulse of his men. The subsequent development led to the famous July Agreement of 1976 which was widely welcomed by all and life became normal in Mizoram. But it was a temporary euphoria. The design of the
M.N.F. leaders did not allow the volunteers to surrender arms as per terms of the agreement. Laldenga's tape recorded speech was circulated everywhere. Massive propaganda for fresh struggle for independence of sovereign Mizoram started.

The mid-term election in May 1979 despite Laldenga's directives to boycott, was held and the P.C. party led by T.Sailo voted to power. This development irritated Laldenga who gave direction to M.C. Lalrimthanga to revive insurgency. In June 1979, the M.N.F. issued 'Quit Notice' to non-Mizos (Vais) to leave Mizoram by July 1979. This created a great panic in Mizoram.

A trouble erupted in which the house of the agriculture Minister, P. B. Rosanga was burnt and R.C. Choudhury (SDO, PWD) was murdered. This was well planned to invite trouble at Silchar (a dominantly Vais dominated town) to disrupt supply line to Mizoram. But the situation did not worsen as anticipated.

On July 2, 1979 the M.N.F attacked the transmission Centre of A.I.R., and Police complex at Shivaji Tilla, Aizawl. A Police out-post at Serchhip was attacked. Attempt on the life of Ved Mehra, I.G., and R.S. Chopra, D.I.G. was also made. Pro-Laldenga group was infiltrating into Mizoram from Parva to start fresh trouble. The combing up operation was again intensified. On June 13, 1979 an S.D.O (PWD) was killed

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41. Ibid p.74

by the rebels at Saitual and S.D.O. Kolashib was also attacked
A few days later, State Bank of India, Aizawl Branch was also
fired upon. The Government took serious view of the develop-
ment and declared M.N.F. as unlawful organisation.

In a broad day light on August 7, 1979 a civil truck
carrying few civilians was attacked and seven persons
were killed. The M.N.F target was to attack in a small gang
on civil Government employees, Police and paramilitary
forces and to avoid counter-insurgency measures. In January
February, 1980 many Assam Rifles vehicles were attacked
resulting into the death of many Jawans who were going on
leave, A B.R.T.F camp near Thenzol was ransacked on 21st
March, 1980 and administrative centre at Bungmun near Champhai
on Burma border was burnt by the insurgents. Consequently,
curfew was clamped in Aizawl and other towns. But sporadic
insurgency and counter-insurgency went on in Mizoram.

The general election of Mizoram Legislative Assembly
was held in 1984 and the Congress-I headed Lalthanwhawla
was voted to power. He took initiative to restore peace
and harmony. Subsequent development resulted into signing
Geographical Impact on Insurgency.

Geographical elements have a great impact on the origin and development of insurgency in Mizoram. Among the elements the prominent are peripheral location, geographical isolation, and proximity to the unfriendly nations like Pakistan (East Pakistan, now Bangladesh) and China. Mountainous terrain and rugged topography covered with natural vegetation put the insurgents in advantageous position. The insurgency made these features as their cover and inflicted surprise attack on security forces. There were several difficult passes, uphill ranges through which the army columns had to pass. The insurgents could easily attack from the upper ridges causing maximum harm to the security forces and they could easily scramble to the safer places after the ambush is over. The caves at many places particularly in the Reik areas, provided safe hideouts to the insurgents. The insurgents took advantage of the known terrain which was difficult for the security forces.

The inaccessibility of the State was another factor favouring the insurgents. The lack of proper road communication was equally favourable to them. The limited roads trending north-south direction due to natural constraints
favoured them. The only road, i.e. Silchar-Aizawl (NH-54) was the vital link with rest of the country was disrupted and culverts were broken at two places, thus retarding the mobility of the forces after the outbreak of the insurgency. Had there been any alternative route, the insurgency could have been properly tackled in the beginning. But the geographical factors thwarted the mobility of the security forces for 5 days (the forces reached Aizawl town on 5th evening). Even the air field at Aizawl was not safe from the enemy fire due to natural hazards. The road communication down south was in abysmal state. The Champhai and Demagiri outposts were unsafe which were under rebel's control for many days only because of unfavourable geographical surroundings.

The locational factor was most vital point in the development of insurgency. Mizoram is located in the close proximity of unfriendly countries like Pakistan and China which helped the insurgents with men and material. The safe sanctuary including rebel headquarters in Chittagong Hill tracts was well known. It is the inaccessibility factor that Parva area was the main hide-outs of the MNF inside Mizoram which has openings in Arakan and Bangladesh. The security forces failed completely to search the rebels in
That area. The Government of India remained helpless to intercept the insurgents while crossing the international border which was geographically contiguous to Bangladesh and Burma and covered with thick vegetation. On the eastern front also, the Burmese insurgents and people of the same Mongoloid stock helped the insurgents by providing sanctuary. The Arakan National Liberation Front (ANLF) and Kachin Independent Army (KIA) extended support to the Mizo rebels. The activities of these unfriendly nations supporting the rebels were successful due to geographical location in the vicinity of unfriendly nations. Its location elsewhere would not have achieved success to that extent.

Finally, the elements of human geography have also cast great impact on the origin and development of insurgency. The Mizo belong to a well-knit society and their unity and clanish outlook also helped the movement. Though there were stringent panel measures and army surveillance, the Mizos did not lose their exclusive character, and did not feel deterred from extending all possible help to the insurgents. The MNF extremists were not only considered as their brethren, but were hero-worshiped, as they espoused the latent sub-nationalism of the Mizos.
Counter Insurgency: Aims and Objectives

The whole nation was shocked to hear the news that insurgency has started in Mizoram in the dead of night on 28th February, 1966. The act of violence, looting of arms and cash from the Government treasury at Aizawl, explosion at electric veng, disruption of telephone lines and road communication between Silchar and Aizawl, retreat of para military posts at Champhai, Lunglei and other places were the highlights of the MNF insurrection in February, 1966.

The Government of India and the Assam Government took prompt action in consultation with G.O.C of Eastern Command. The Assam Government declared the Mizo Hills District as disturbed area under the Armed Forces Special Power Act, 1958 which gave powers even to Assam Rifles personnel (above the rank of Havildar) to open fire and to destroy arms dump and to enter into and search any place without warrant. The army was given power to deal firmly and the security arrangements were tightened. The Assam Government declared the area disturbed within 16 miles of both sides of Silchar-Aizawl Road and protected area under Sub-Rule(I) of Rule 80 of D.I.R. 1962.

43. The Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers Act, 1958, Sec. 4(c).
The Deputy Commissioner of Mizo Hills district promulgated Rule 80 of the DIR, which prohibited the possession of carrying and use and sale of arms and ammunition in the district. He also prohibited order against production, import, storage of cells and purchase of torch lights, cells and Military Uniforms, typewriters and duplicators. The Government of India declared the MNF as unlawful organisation indulging in anti-National activities which endangered the security of the district. Accordingly, the Government was empowered to deal firmly with the MNF volunteers and its supporters. The army and para-military forces were immediately deployed in the district and at various vulnerable places. Great chaotic condition prevailed in Mizoram. The normal life was disturbed for which a small section of Mizos (extrémists) was responsible. Troops were immediately despatched to Aizawl from Silchar. But it could reach Aizawl before 5th March, due to obstruction put by the rebels.

General Manekshaw, the Army Chief suggested the Government to hand over the district administration to the Army for effective control over M.N.F. but the Government did not agree on political grounds. However, the Army columns moved in all directions from Aizawl and Lunglei to stop the movement of rebels and their activities. Consequently, many Mizo villages, to mention a few Knowngbawk, Pangzawl, Pukpui and other were burnt. The army consoli-

44. Deputy Commissioner, Mizo District No:ASLD/1/67/1 dated, Aizawl June 9, 1967.
45. Goswami n.35, p.145,
dated its position in the district to break down the morale of the insurgents. Some of the hard-core rebels went underground and the MNF Headquarters shifted from Aizawl to Reiek cages. Afterwards it went on changing and took on mobile character. Taking their advantages of difficult terrain and bad communication the rebels adopted the tactics of hit and run, thereby inflicting harm to the army and other security forces. This type of guerrilla activity was thought to be best strategy of the underground rebels.

The underground rebels whose number was small at the beginning and succeeded in intensifying their activities to terrorise the loyal section of Mizos including Government Officials, in order to paralyse the civil administration in the district by blanketing them under a pall of fear. They adopted subversive activities and their atrocities brought immense harm to their own people.

The rebels were getting smashing rebuff from the Indian security forces. They took shelter subsequently in the jungles which were the safest hideouts for them. To meet their essential requirement like food articles, clothes, medicines they moved to the interior villages and forcibly extorted from them. So the security arrangement was recast with three main points:

(i) To isolate the insurgents both physically and politically from the bulk of population.

(ii) To make the zone difficult, even treacherous, for underground movement.

(iii) To enable the security force to operate on a wide scale for a very long period to wean out the rebels without the civil population coming in the way.

The whole idea of security operation in Mizoram was based on the text of Robert Thomson on Counter-insurgency under the supervision of the Eastern Command of the Indian Army. General Manikshaw had suggested from military point of view that regrouping of villages should be given priority in order to control the rebels effectively. This is intended to bring the villages into protected parameters to snap the supply line to the guerillas. In other words, it was an attempt to control the ration of the loyal tribes so that it may not be parcelled out to the rebels camping in the jungles.

Thus the regrouping of the villages was the best measure to achieve the target. The main criteria while selecting site for regrouping centres were: (a) Good water supply (b) Good hygienic condition, (c) Sufficient land for agriculture.

In broad terms the counter-insurgency action consists of three main tasks:

47. Bibedan, n.34, p.107
48. Ibid
(a) to defeat the guerrilla militarily and to destroy its basis.

(b) to sever his connection with the general population.

(c) and to institute reforms which would establish Government prestige and authority.

(d) To fight a guerrilla like a guerrilla. It is not like a conventional warfare. There is much greater involvement in the task of ferreting the guerrilla. The emphasis was on the understanding of the local conditions, ethos and socio-economic cultural systems. In counter-insurgency a soldier is expected to sell the image of his Government to the population, which has already been influenced by the insurgents, imbued with what they feel is an ideological cause.

Intelligence gathering and analysing of available information is a key fact of the counter-guerrilla tactics. As the guerrillas are moving band of people committed to a cause, which arises out of unsolved social contradictions and always manipulated the population for their implicit or explicit support, the task of the counter-insurgency operations boils down to what is described a psychological


50. The Telegraph, Calcutta, Jan.,18,1987(Article by S.Ghose)
operation. It aims at winning the hearts and minds of the people for isolating the rebels. Thus the army deputed to counter-insurgency measures were taught to be a social worker, civil engineer, school teacher, nurse and a boy scout. A soldier is not to take a reprisal against the tribals soon after an ambush as such actions tend to consolidate local support for the guerilla.

The counter-insurgency measures have, therefore, to be particularly oriented from the standpoint of civil administration because it is the civil population of the area which has to meet the challenge. Thus the problem has to be tackled in the light of social, economic and political spectrum. The development of the region by launching various schemes is also one of the essential aspects of counter-insurgency to win the heart of the populace and thereby deflecting them from the rebels. The development of the villages scattered in isolated pockets of the mountainous region was not possible unless small villages situated on the hill top and quite distant from one another are clustered together which might be nearer to the centres of development. It can be said that the small villages scattered in the farflung area should be grouped together into the bigger villages.

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51. Ibid.
with road communication where welfare scheme's fruit would be shared by all.

Groupings of Villages.

Thus the grouping of the villages was planned as a counter-insurgency measure to keep the rebels at bay, to stop the recruitment and cut off the food supply to the guerrillas. There were four categories of grouping of villages in Mizoram.

(a) Progressive and protected villages (PPV)
(b) New group centres (NGC)
(c) Voluntary group centre (VOC)
(d) Extended loop areas (ELA)

Groupings of the villages in Mizoram was done both on compulsory and voluntary basis. In case of voluntary grouping no communication charge was paid while in the latter, due compensation was paid. The first stage of grouping started on 4th January, 1967 under the order of Central Government Liaison Officer for Mizo Hills District in accordance with D.I.R. 1962. Accordingly, 50,000 people

52. Roy, n.27, p.170.
from 106 villages were resettled in 19 centres, along Silchar-Aizawl Lunglei road which started from Vairengte village covering a distance of 400 km. The shifting of the population was strictly done under the supervision of the security forces according to a well-laid plan of shifting and rehabilitating quickly. The people carried their personal effects with the help of security forces to the new sites where they were given free building materials and free ration till the next harvest in new cultivation.

Civil Administration and Developmental Changes.

Each P.P.V. unit was placed under the charge of Civil Officer called Administrative Officer (A.O.) of Junior Assam Civil Service either S.D.C or B.D.O were appointed A.O.S$ and small Office under him including extension officer and a Gram Sevak, a few clerks, and porters. The services of other Government Departments like forest rangers, Soil Conservation Officers and School teachers were at the disposal of A.O.S$. Each P.P.V had a security post consisting of one Company of the Army under a commissioned Officer called Post Commander. They were concerned with the prevention of the hostility in to the village’s and also maintenance and law and orders.
63 villagers with a population of 40,000 were recognised into 17 PPV along the sensitive borders with Burma and Manipur. But the Pawi-Lakher region minus Chakma region with Headquarters at Lowngtlai and Saiha were left out because these were not being used for shelter by the hostiles. Again, there was no grouping along Aizawl-Thanzol road (60 Miles) because the habitation around these areas were mostly on road side. Thus with the launching of operation the MNF movement was adversely affected and the disappointed rebels sought refuge in erstwhile Pakistan.

Table - 36

Abstract of the population involved in the grouping as in 1970

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PPV</th>
<th>NGC</th>
<th>ELA</th>
<th>VGC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>19 Centres</td>
<td>16534</td>
<td>30241</td>
<td>46775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>40 Centres</td>
<td>34450</td>
<td>34465</td>
<td>88915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>17 Centres</td>
<td>15919</td>
<td>18276</td>
<td>34195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>26 Centres</td>
<td>23721</td>
<td>23435</td>
<td>47156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

54. Information collected by the author in the field.
NGC:

The second category of grouping (NGC) started immediately after completion of PPV in 1969. In Mizo Hills District 132 villages into 40 group centres affecting 55,000 population were brought under re-grouping. These 40 centres were divided into six sectors on the three borders of the district. (1) Tripura border (2) East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) border. (3) Lunglei-Demagiri Road (4) Lunglei-Lawngtlai Road (5) Selling-Champhai Road (6) Darlawn-Khawbung North Vanlaipai-Serchip Road.

The third category of grouping namely Voluntary Group Centres (VGC) which started in 1970. And 110 villages were grouped into 26 centres voluntary under the supervision of the Security forces with all facilities extended to them as in case of other two.

Extended Loop Area (ELA).

Under this category of regrouping, 63 villages were grouped in 17 grouped centres covering a total population of 40,000 along with border with Manipur in the North and Burma in the East. The grouping was completed by the end of 1969.


and the Army authority handed over to the civil authority by the middle of 1970. This grouping along the eastern border facilitated operation in Manipur Sector.

Regrouping was urgently needed to prevent hostile activity of the MNF volunteers who made their hideouts in the interior villages and were depending on the supply of innocent villagers.

While keeping watch on the strategic and vulnerability of the area, the security forces performed commendable works in shifting the villagers to the new group centres. The main target before them was to unnerve the rebels cut-off their main supply line and make the civil (loyal) population free of rebels harassment. Their constant patrolling on important urban areas led to the sharp fall in the harassment by the extremists. The only vulnerable area where extremists continued to be activate were the North Eastern (Manipur-Burma) side and Western area along East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and Tripura border.

Grouping of the villages (Table - 6) marked the beginning of a new pattern in the socio-cultural scenario of the Mizo Hills district. Many people were uprooted from their ancestral hearth and were forced to be herded in

57. D.C order under section 13-D of Assam Maintenance of Public Order, Act, 1953.
the clustered places by the security forces. Thus, they had to compromise with their freedom. From morning to evening they had to endure the pangs of a regimented life. All of them had to carry individual photo-identity card and movement permit. Night curfew made their life miserable. They were not to carry extra food articles out-side the group centres. Their 'Thalawmbawka' huts, near the jhum sites (where jhummias) used to stay at night was dismantled. All these affected their socio-economic life.

The grouping of the villages was mainly done with a view to segregating the rebels from the rest of population. The scheme was devised on the lines of British and America against the Chinese squatters in Malaysia and the Vietcongs in South Vietnam respectively. The grouping was intended to divide the well-knit Mizos. It was a political strategy to divide and rule. However, this policy could not make any headway. The traditional custom of 'Tlawnrangaihna' kept them ever green to help their fellow being in hour of distress. (though they were insurgents) The regrouping did not solve the problem rather it aggravated the situation. The scheme felt to cut off the sources of food supply to MNF rebels. It increased the frustration and alienation

among the Mizos. The rural economy suffered a major setback. The psychological depression among the Mizos surfaced. The security forces instead of winning the hearts antagonised them during 'Operation Security'.

The tight security measures caused immense trouble to the loyal and ordinary peace loving Mizos. Even a section of rebels were also frustrated and they wanted to come back to their normal life. The Government realising the good gesture, offered a amnesty on 28th January, 1967 and consequently, the rebels started surrendering to the Government encouraging response from the rebels enabled the Government to offer second amnesty on 21 November, 1967. The response was good. But the hard-core insurgents were desperately charging on the security forces, taking their advantages of familiar natural covers and support from the local people. These were the negative points for counter-insurgency operations by the security forces. Even then the encounters continued from both sides.

The Government of Assam decided to pardon the rebels and not to prosecute them provided that they could surrender their serviceable arms to the nearest Police Out-Post or Army or Assam Rifles Posts.

60. Nebedan n.58.p.129.
The Government also decided to offer cash reward to the rebels surrendering arms at the following rates:

1. L.M.G. - Rs.4,000/-
2. 2" Mortar/Rocket Lancher - Rs.600/-
3. S.L.R. - Rs.500/-
4. .303 Rifles/Sten gun - Rs.300/-
5. Revolver/Pistol - Rs.250/-

Consequent upon the announcement the M.N.F. volunteers respond satisfactorily and they started surrendering arms. The loyal Mizos who wanted peace and stability in the district also appreciated their good gesture.

The 'grouping concept' was primarily intended to act as 'strategic hamlet', but it turned out to counter productive. The support of the local people to the count-insurgency forces to deal with MNF insurgents was not up to the desired extent due to close-knit Mizo society. The intelligence which is the principal source of information on guerrillas, was to come from the Mizo population, did not reach correctly as the people did not feel safe because of the fear of the rebels.

The grouping fostered some ideas, no doubt, but the sense of belonging among the Mizo people was lost. Uprooted from their ancestral hearth made them dissatisfied as the link between the land and the people was lost. The man-land affinity was burnt which disturbed the geopolitical order of the area. Though the counter-insurgency got partial success, it gave birth to regional political parties. The excessive atrocities by the Security Forces led the formation of a human right committee which subsequently converted into a political party named The People's Conference.

The geographical hazards came on the way of success. The inaccessible area remained the intelligence post office of the guerrillas. The success was achieved partially on the roadside. The Security Forces could not win the heart of the local populace despite honest and friendly dealings with the people.

Heavy and lavish grant in course of grouping of the villages made the Mizo people parasitic, depending on Central Government grant, which in the long run cost the exchequer heavily.
The outbreak of insurgency in Mizoram created a great havoc in the minds of peace-loving countrymen. Even a sober section of Mizo did not like loss of their life and property. Hence, from the very beginning various groups of people made their efforts to solve the vexed problem of insurgency. Rev. Zirema met Laldenga at Sabual (39 miles south of Aizawl) on November 1, 1966, and asked him to abjure the cult of violence which was contrary to their Christian teachings. The pastor again wanted to know from the MNF leader Laldenga persisted with his demand of the main demands 'Independence' and recognition of their government. The talk between the two ended in failure.

The second important attempt was taken by B. P. Singhal, (a senior RAW Officer) who contacted Laldenga in Pakistan and clandestinely brought him over to Geneva where official talk began. Laldenga wrote a letter to Prime Minister on 20th August, 1975 from Geneva, in which he pointed out that the sovereignty for Mizoram would not be pressed upon. Laldenga returned to India and negotiations started leading to the

63. Nebedan n.60, p.99
64. Ibid.,p.213.
signing of famous July Agreement (1st July, 1976) which included the following: (main context in the Appendix).

1. The M.N.F. accepted that Mizoram was an integral part of India and expressed desire to accept settlement of all problems within the framework of the Indian constitution, and also agreed to abjure all violence. The Government also decided to suspend operations by the security forces. The agreement was widely cheered by every section of the society and the Government of Mizoram celebrated 7th July, 1976 as thanksgiving day.

However, the spirit of agreement fizzled out immediately when Laldenga asked his men not to surrender arms. In this way arguments and counter-arguments went on increasing. The security measures were also tightened. But the desire to settle the matter persisted in both camps. In July, 1980 meetings were arranged between M.N.F. leader, Laldenga and the Prime Minister of India and agreement was made. Laldenga agreed to stop all underground activities. The government reciprocated by suspending all operations by the security forces. Laldenga acknowledged that Mizoram was an integral part of India and agreed to settle the matters within the framework of the constitution. But this agreement also failed and both parties continued their clandestine operations.

Initiative was also taken by Jaspal Kapoor, Congress(I) M.P, to sort out problem. He proposed to the MNF the christian gift of statehood to Mizoram as part of Package deal to settle the insurgency. The statehood was conditional on the surrender of all arms and cession of the hostilities. The MNF harped on the demand for free zone in Chmuitupui district. Apart from the rehabilitation of his underground colleagues, Laldenga also wanted that the Sailo Ministry be dismissed and asked for the President's Rule under Article 356. But the Government did not concede the demand and suggested that normal procedure of election would follow. The government allowed Laldenga to visit MNF Headquarters in Arakan to have talks with his men, Accordingly, Laldenga made a trip to Parva on 9th March, 1981. After talk he returned to Delhi and informed the Government that his party men had agreed to lay down arms. Laldenga also put before the Government 26 items of demands.

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Some important demands include:

1. Constitution of a State with safeguard on Kashmir pattern.
2. Constitution of Greater Mizoram including Mizo inhabited chunks from Cachar, Manipur, Tripura, within the proposed State of Mizoram.
3. Abolition of provision of Sixth Schedule in case of Mizoram.
4. Formation of interim Government ousting Chief Minister T. Sailo and installing Laldenga as the head of the interim Government.
5. Dissolution of Mizoram Legislative Assembly.
6. Inclusion of existing inner line regulations in 9th Schedule of the Constitution.
7. Separate flag of Mizoram
8. Separate University for Mizoram
9. Membership of Mizoram in U.N.O.

The high-striving demands of Laldenga put the Government in a quandary. However, the Government agreed to grant certain feasible demands, like the grant of Statehood for Mizoram and a separate University. The proposal of MNF to amend the Sixth Schedule making it inapplicable to Mizoram would create a problem for the minority tribes like the Lakher, Pawi and Chakmas, who would be deprived of regional autonomy. The Government also did not like to concede the demand of dissolution of Assembly and the legally constituted Government to facilitate Laldenga to head an interim Government.

The Government realised the futility of prolonged dialogues with Laldenga who adopted a stiff attitude. The talk thus ended in failure on 12 January, 1982. The MNF and its armed wing M.H.A. were banned, but they continued their activities of intimidation and forceable collection of funds and harassment of Non-Mizos. The MNF was rigid in its stand and wanted certain safeguards like legislative power to enact on employment, grant of scholarship, trade and commerce and land settlement including acquisition of immovable properties. The Government of India was reluctant to concede their demand and was also unwilling to make amendment in the
Sixth Schedule even to a limited extent. According to Laldenga, MNF movement is a political movement and its goal is not a war to defeat the Indian Army. The whole crux of the problem is the struggle of the Mizo people to maintain their distinct identity and special safeguard within the framework of the constitution.

Laldenga was keen on early political settlement with the Indian Government while the neighbouring hostile Bangladesh Military rulers were pressing the MNF leaders not to come on a negotiating table with the Government of India. The MNF leaders were given assurance to get all possible help by the Bangladesh authority in continuation of their activities. The tactical headquarters of the MNF was situated at New Longoor of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (only 5 km from Mizoram-Chittagong border). Some top brass of MNF were also hostile to the idea of settlement.

However, Laldenga was willing to make early settlement. He held a series of talks with the Government official and finally with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The talk continued

and on 23rd December 1985 an agreement was signed in New Delhi Between Arjun Singh, the then Vice-President of AICC(I) and Laldenga. Consequently, it was made clear that the present Government would be dissolved and a coalition Government headed by Laldenga as Chief Minister and Lalthangawala as Deputy Chief Minister would be installed. The Ministry will be shared by MNF and the Congress (I) in the ratio 4:5.

The Memorandum of Settlement included the following issues:

1) The MNF party agreed to end all underground activities. The underground MNF would surrender all arms and ammunition within the stipulated time. It also ensured the return to the civic life by the underground personnel. The MNF withdrew its demand of Independence 'and secession of Mizoram from the Union of India. It agreed to work within the framework of Indian Constitution. The MNF agreed to rescind the support to Tribal National Volunteers (TNV) and People's Liberation Army (PLA) of Tripura and Manipur respectively. It would not provide training or protection or supply of arms to them. The Central Government agreed to resettle and rehabilitate the underground MNF coming over ground. The Central Government also agreed to confer Statehood on the Union Territory of Mizoram in order to satisfy the
aspiration of the Mizo people. For that necessary amendment in the constitution would be made. Again, the protection of the Mizo people in respect of religion, social customs and Mizo customary laws or administration of criminal and civil justice and ownership and transfer of land will be safeguarded. The Central Government also agreed to allow border trade in locally produced or grown agricultural commodities under a scheme to be formulated by the central government subject to international arrangements with neighbouring countries. The Government also agreed not to amend, repeal the existing 'Inner Line Regulation' without the consent of the State Government.

The rights and privileges of the minorities in Mizoram as envisaged under the constitution shall be preserved and protected and their social and economic advancement shall be ensured. It was also emphasised that on behalf of the Government that as soon as Mizoram becomes a State,

a) The provision of part XVII of the Constitution be applied and the state would be at liberty to adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the state as the language to be used for all or any of the official purpose of the state.
b) It is opened to the state to move for the establishment of a separate university in accordance with the prescribed procedure.

c) Mizoram will be entitled to have a High Court of its own if it so wishes.

Finally, it was agreed that arrangement will be made to expeditiously disburse payment of ex-gratia amount to heirs or dependents of the killed MNF personnel, compensation for damage of crops or buildings and claims or rental charges for land buildings occupied by the security forces during disturbances in 1966 and there-after shall be paid.

The MNF settlement with the Government of India is a landmark in the history of Mizoram and marks the beginning of new political era. It paved the way for new life and prosperity within the framework of the Constitution with a clean slate of spirit of cooperation and compromise. The settlement reflected neither the victory nor defeat of Union Government or the MNF. It is not a sign of emotional subordination to the will of the stronger party. In this connection it would not be out of place to refer the example of solution of a situation of conflict in which force is used, open or full scale conflict is surfaced. History teaches us that a situation of conflict when arises there are two
alternatives of resolutions: one is agreement based on compromise; the other subordination to the will of the stronger party. However, the modern case of today provide example in which the tensions offer atleast five alternative for the resolution of the conflict.69

1. Compromise and agreement*

2. Contentment or limitation of conflict

3. De Facto penetration or sphere of influence

4. Sub-ordination of the conquered nation

5. Elimination or biological extermination ( a solution practised by Hitler and his followers).

The Agreement also made scope for proper respect and honour of the people, their language customs, values and traditions with love and respect. This is also focused in agreement between the Government and the MNF. There is no question of cultural domination or exploitation of Mizos by non-Mizos. The psychological feeling between the two is temporary which is mainly due to communication gap and bottleneck of information flow. With the improvement in the

68. Feliks Gross n.1, p.35
69. Ibid., p.36

*Compromise or agreement, according to Felik Gross indicates an adjustment of goals, a coordinated effort by both parties to reduce an open conflict and an adjustment of the mutual relation, without total subordination of one or the other. The settlement between Great British and 13 American Colonies after the revolutionary wars seemed to have had the qualities of a Compromised agreement.
mode of communication the temporary feeling would vanish and Mizo people will be a legitimate partner of national feeling of pleasure and sorrow and sense of belonging would be equally shared by them.

Though the peace accord has been signed the two potential reasons of friction with the centre still persist. The first is the MNF demand for a Greater Mizoram incorporating Mizo inhabited area of Manipur, Tripura and Southern Cachar within Indian territory and the neighbouring foreign countries of Burma and Bangladesh. This demand, though kept in low ebb, has not died out completely from their heart. Every political party in Mizoram project the image of greater Mizoram emotionally to attract the masses in their favour.

Secondly, the question of Chakmas, who comprise about 8% of the state population inhabiting the south-west part of the state adjacent to Bangladesh, is kept smouldering. They enjoy certain measure of autonomy under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. While the centre wants their autonomy to continue, both Laldenga and Brig. Sailo have been against it on the ground that it aids influx of Chakmas from Chittagong. The researcher has managed to interview

70. The Indian Express, New Delhi, August 23, 1986.
different cross-sections of Mizoram and has formed opinion that Chakmas are viewed the Mizos as outsiders - both culturally and linguistically as such they are branded in the category of 'Vai' (outsiders) though legally they are bona-fide inhabitants of Mizoram. This ill feeling against Chakmas by the Mizos will be a problem in future if allowed to continue. Keeping this observation in mind the long standing stalemates in Mizoram under the insurgency staged by MNF ended in a compromise between MNF and the central Government. According to terms of accord both parties made adjustment of their demands and agreement in spirit of cooperation and within the framework of the constitution. The MNF abjured the demand of the independence and secession from India and agreed to remain as an integral part of the country like other federal units. The special status and privileges given to Sikkim and Kashmir was dropped. The Government of India upgraded the status of Mizoram to a fullfledged State. The MNF leader Laldenga was allowed to head an interim Government.

The demand of greater Mizoram which is deeply rooted in the heart of all Mizos did not materialise. The Government of India did not make any commitment in this regard. It suggested to abide by the Constitutional provision laid down
under Article III of the Indian Constitution. Further, there is no question of insubordination or surrender or defeat of the MNF party. Though to some it is treated as the surrender of the MNF party before the mighty force of Indian security forces or the political leadership, to many others it is a family dispute and there is no question of defeat or loss of prestige. The Mizos are the part and parcel of the Indian life.

The ethnic antagonism, difference in language, religion, customs and value and behaviour pattern resulting into hostilities is a temporary phase. It is due to the force of circumstances and historical or political blunder committed by the Britishers that could not be brought to the mainstream of the National life. It does not mean that they are not the sons and daughters of the same mother land.

The Government of India did not behave like enemy in dealing with the insurgency in Mizoram. Every step under counter-insurgency measure was considerably taken with love and affection to the innocent Mizo people.