CHAPTER: I

ARMED CONFLICT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT
IN MANIPUR

Introduction

Manipur literally means the “land of gems” and has been referred to by various connotations like “jewel of India”, “a little paradise”, “a flower on lofty height” and “the Kashmir of eastern India” while Jawaharlal Nehru called the region to be “the Switzerland of India”.\(^1\) Multiple histories, multiple cultures and multiple identities are spread out. Manipur with geographical territory of 22,327 square kilometer is surrounded by series of enchanting hills and mountains and located in India’s northeast with 25.7 lakhs inhabitants.\(^2\) The state is divided into two regions, the hills and the valleys. The hilly regions constitute 90% of the total land of the state. The majority people of the state are “Meiteis” inhabitants of the valley, forming 60% of the total population and as many as 33 schedule tribes are residing in Manipur. On the south of Manipur Mizoram is situated, on the west, it is bounded by Cachar and on the north, it is bounded by Nagaland and it is bounded by Myanmar on the east. Manipur lies between 13.830 N and 25.680 N latitudes and between 93.030 E and

\(^1\) Rinku Khumukcham, Governance in Manipur, “Pardon us your Excellencies” published by Manipur News Publication, Imphal, 2005, p-1

\(^2\) Sangai Express English edition, December, 2013, P.3
94.780 E longitudes on the eastern frontier of India.\(^3\) British colonialism in Manipur ended on 14\(^{th}\) of August, 1947. Manipur merged with the union of India on the 9\(^{th}\) October, 1949. Since the accession of the state of Manipur to the Indian Union, the state has been witnessing unrest and experiencing of violence by armed struggle. Over 20,000 people have been killed in armed violence in the last five decades.\(^4\) More than 22 armed groups operate in Manipur.\(^5\)

Many battalions of the Indian army and several units of the Indian paramilitary forces are stationed in Manipur. Manipur is one of the most conflict zones in India. In the year 2006 alone, nearly 300 people lost their lives in armed violence between the government forces and the militants.\(^6\) According to the human rights groups such as Human Rights Alert, Human Rights Law Network, Women Action for Development, Manipur, to name a few, not a single day passes without gun killing. The women of Manipur suffers most in conflict, they continue to bear the brunt of violence. Many innocent women have been facing a lot of repression, Manipuri women have had to pass through many agonizing moments, even to the extent of them been killed, tortured, kidnapped, maimed and raped by both the government forces and the rebel groups. Manipuri women though they are not directly targeted, they are traumatized by the death of their family members. These women bear the brunt of emotional and the socio-economic impacts of the armed violence. Many women have become impoverished after the killing of the male members of their families.

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\(^1\) Ibid
\(^4\) Ibid
Manipur is a small state but very difficult to understand. Manipur becomes more and more complicated after completely becoming an armed conflict area. Stories of menace in India’s northeastern states, Manipur continue. Public suffering at the hands of both the government forces and rebel groups still continues. It has been many decades that state has been reeling under the grip of bloodshed and unrest. The news of death in encounter, bandhs and blocked, agitations, curfews are the order of the day which is certainly a matter of panic for the state as the brutal dramatic saga never ends. The innocent ordinary public seems to be trapped in between the fight for supremacy between different ideologies and principles though some form of potential conflict is obvious in any existing society but its nature and intensity always makes the difference.

The year 2009 alone accounts more than 300 violent incidents and the number of civilian killed related with the violent incidents is still rising up. The various conflicts in the state adversely affect the developmental plan and economy of the state.

The state lacks behind specially in the functioning of law and order situation. The ongoing conflict situation in Manipur seriously affects the students as the number of days lost due to bandhs, curfews and strikes comprise an alarming figure is noticed. As maintaining quality education in the state is concerned, people cannot expect the desirable output as the academic atmosphere is electrified by filling from the pinch of collateral damages.

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Incidents of violations of dignity of the women in the state are rapidly responded to by civil organisations working for the welfare of the women victims. A new trend has emerged to pose a serious threat to the tranquility of the society. The deliberate planting of bombs and blasting it, using remote controlled devices, in heavily populated areas has brought new dimensions to the insurgency movement in the state of Manipur is noticed. Militants are into the new strategy in order to convince people that they can reach anyone anywhere despite the security measures taken up and to make their presence felt. A means to an end for them, this has resulted in the death and injuries of several innocent civilians in the past. Serious threat in the manner of throwing bombs and firing of guns within the compound and the houses of those people who failed to pay the amounts militants asked for, have adversely and seriously disturbed the peaceful life of the civilians.

Another conflict-bred threat is the taking shelter by militants in civilian house which might cause incidents of tragic consequences for the host family as they may be caught up in the radar of the armed forces as one of the sympathizer of militants. In such circumstances, the threat comes much after the militants have left host family. Informers of the police report of such activities to police and consequently, the police come to inquire about it leading to torture and mental harassment of the family members by the police personnel. The other half of the threat is completed by extreme excesses of the police personnel which is the result of looking at people with suspicion of having links with rebel groups. Both the militants and the government forces use their power to intimidate innocent public. Significantly, the confrontation between the security forces and the extremist destabilizes the normalcy, making the region prone to violence and unwanted incidents. The Manipur security forces are
deployed with the objective to maintain law and order in the state but on the contrary they sometimes become the law breakers. The region has been grievously suffering due to endless and unmitigated violence and social restlessness caused by armed struggle. Over five decades, the problem of insurgency has become a part of life of the people of the state.

Today in Manipur, killing of persons in insurgency related crimes, intermittent clashes of militants with security forces and police forces, factional fights among the militants, armed-struggle for an independent Manipur by some insurgents are the order of the day. The situation in Manipur is unpredictable; anything can happen anytime, anywhere. There is no human security in the state. Manipur is in a more complicated situation than the other violence prone states of India. In Manipur, fear, insecurity and injustice reign, thus peace and security cannot be preponderated. All kinds of violence, wickedness and uncertainties of life are prevailing in the state.

Conceptual clarification of the term armed conflict

Conflict is a state of resistance, holding different opinion, contradiction between two or more people or groups of people resulting in deadly violence on either side. It is a means of protection human beings have experienced over the past few centuries when two or more groups of people with incompatible ideals seeking each others defeat to their respective objectives. A conflict exists between two or more forces if there emerges strong divergence in the revealed preferences of the parties concerned including the state.

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Conflict often occurs when there is collusion of interest, values, activities or objectives. Whenever someone says that there is a probable conflict, it means that there is already a conflict of direction even though a clash may not yet have occurred. Conflict is a clash deriving from incompatible or resisting needs, drives, wishes or demands. Conflict, if not timely settled, usually becomes a matter of very eagerness and helplessness to the concerned parties.\(^9\)

Conflict as an abstract idea may help to explain many features of social life such as social difference of opinions, clash of interest and struggle between individuals, groups, organisations and nations. Politically, conflict may turned into wars, revolutions or other forms of struggles involving the use of armed force as in case of armed conflict.\(^10\)

Carl Von Clausewitz, in his “seminal work” expressed war as the continuation of political intercourse carried on with other means. He opined that war is a “struggle of wills” between two or more militaries interacting each other.\(^11\) As a civil war, it is a dispute inherent to a given society, and the conflict has more concern with the state of governance rather than sovereignty .Military conflict differs from murder or genocide because of the usually organized nature of the military’s participation in the struggle and the organized nature of the units involved.\(^12\)

To achieve limited political or military objectives, there may be armed struggle or struggle between nations or within a nation. In conflicts irregular forces often predominate although regular forces are often included. Conflict continues for

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\(^12\) ibid.
long periods, confined to a specific region, and forced in weaponry and level of violence.\textsuperscript{13}

In spite of various global bodies and independent groups to look into the situation of ongoing conflicts, the interpretation of conflict, armed struggle, armed violence, war, revolution, terrorism and some other terms which define violent opposition between states or armed organized groups, are not clear enough to distinguish completely one from the other. For instance, the very word terrorism is used indifferently by many governments to delegitimize every kind of armed revolt and at the same time by many rebel groups to delegitimize the armed repression of the government.\textsuperscript{14}

Defining an armed conflict

At the later part of the 1940s, the United Nations Organization (U.N.O.) declared war of all forms unlawful except the wars of defense and war sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council and the laws of war existed earlier became irrelevant.\textsuperscript{15}

The International Committee of the Red Cross coined the term International Humanitarian Law by the mid 20\textsuperscript{th} century to replace the laws of war. Since then wars of all forms are term as armed conflict.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{13} ibid
\textsuperscript{14} wikipedia.cis-17717, dated 22 July, 2008
\textsuperscript{16} ibid
As per the interpretation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, an international armed conflict includes the armed forces of at least two states in the conduct of armed hostilities. A non-international armed conflict is a confrontation within the territory of one state between the regular armed forces and identifiable armed groups, or between armed groups.¹⁷

Internal disturbances occur when the state uses armed force to restore and maintain order, without there being a full fledged armed conflict. Internal tension occurs when, in the absence of internal disturbances, force is used as a preventive measure to maintain law and order.¹⁸

Defining the armed conflict is not free from controversial interpretation due to conflicting national and regional vital importance and different compulsions and clashing interests between two nations.

Wallenstein, Peter and Margareta Sollenberg observed: “An armed conflict is a contested incompatibility which concerns government or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths.”¹⁹

A 25 battle related deaths per year as a minimum figure and per incompatibility is really an unclear area in the above definition. The separate elements of the definition are operationalised as below.²⁰

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¹⁹ ibid.
²⁰ ibid
Used of armed force: Use of arms in order to promote the parties general position in the conflict, resulting in deaths.

Arms: Any material means like that of the manufactured weapons and also sticks, stones, fire, water.

25 deaths: A minimum of 25 battle-related deaths per year and per incapability.

Party: A government of a state or any opposition, organisation or alliance of opposition organisations.

Government: The party controlling the capital of the state.

Opposition Organisation: Any non-governmental group of people having announced a name for their group and using armed force.

State: A state is an internationally recognized sovereign government controlling a specified territory or an internationally non-recognised government controlling a specified territory whose sovereignty is not disputed by another internationally recognised sovereign government previously controlling the same territory.

Incompatibility: It is stated as generally incompatible positions concerning government and / or territory, as stated by the parties.

Incompatibility concerning government: Incompatibility concerning type of political system, the replacement of the central government or the change of its composition.
Incompatibility concerning territory: Incompatibility concerning the status of a territory, for example, the change of the state in control of a certain territory (inter-state conflict), secession or autonomy.

International armed conflicts as in cases of Afghanistan and Iraq have no different perceptions as in case of internal armed conflict. In case of the latter, one may say it as a secessionist movement and called it as martyr’s duty for self determination while others simply term it as internal law and order problem created by insurgents or terrorist.

Global and local views do have drastic differences on the same situation of armed conflict. An opinion poll of 1,044 Pakistanis jointly conducted by D3 systems and Pakistan Institute of Public Opinion in August, 2007 about the popularity of the former Pakistan president Pervez Musharaf and Al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden, the latter scored 46 percent of votes while the former follow him with 38 percent. After the invasion of Afghanistan by the U.S. led coalition force, tribal areas of Pakistan has become new centre for the Taliban and the Al-Qaeda. A 15,000 strong militants of the fundamentalist forces are now barred at the new centre at Pakistan. In global view, attempt to root out the militants from such centre by Pakistan or with the help of the American forces is the law and order problem of the Pakistan alone. But if the result of the above opinion poll is to be believed than why should not the majority of the local populace of the said tribal area of the Islamic country sees it as an armed conflict between the Islamic forces and the American interest.\(^\text{21}\)

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\(^{21}\text{Bush stimulus plan under pressure, The Hindu, 27 Jan. 2008, New Delhi, p-12}\)
The then Shri Lankan president Mahindra Rajapakse accused Britain for playing double standard in dealing with the global terrorism as the latter allows the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) collecting funds to buy weapons to fight against the Shri Lankan government. Accusing British government for adopting double standard, he said “you (U.K.) cannot have two different attitudes towards terrorism. I do not agree that there are good terrorist and bad Terrorist. There is only one kind of Terrorist”.  

The Shri Lankan government used heavy hand in dealing with the bloodshed to protect human rights in the Island country. But due to clever propaganda by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, it has succeeded considerably by convincing the International community about its compelling necessity of using violent measures for the cause of self determination as the government was cultivating discontent in the Tamil dominated region in the country.

Dr. Benerji Chaka, former Legal Officer, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), South Asia Delegation, New Delhi, observed the defining criteria for an armed violence to become an armed conflict as below.

Recognition by the International community: An armed violence in any region remains a mere law and order problem so long as the International Community does not recognize it as an armed conflict.

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22 Sri Lankan Prez accuses UK of double standards on terrorism, The Times of India (Guwahati Edition) June 14, 2008, p-15
23 A Talk with Dr. Banerji Chaka, former Legal Officer, ICRC, Hotel Vishwaratna, Guwahati, Aug 31, 2006
Magnitude of conflict: The International bodies or the influential countries of the world have no option but to recognize the situation as an armed conflict, in view of the heavy cost of lives and the properties in an armed violence in a region.

Existence of Armed Conflict in India

The question as to whether armed conflict really exists in India is a very controversial one which can be clearly understood by analyzing some facts and situation which are taking place presently. On one hand the Government of India does not accept the fact that armed conflict do really exist in India and merely project the view that the various disturbances taking place are merely law and order problem while on the other hand some of their acts totally contradicts their opinion. The Indian government is allowing the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to serve humanitarian activities in Kashmir and this very act of them goes against their interpretation of defining the activities being carried out by various non-state actors merely as law and order problem because the Red Cross provides humanitarian service in armed conflict zone only. In spite of this fact no political boss of India even by mistake concedes that there is armed conflict in any part of the country, either in the northeastern part of the country or in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The global power that can define and redefine an internal armed conflict are also maintaining silence at the development of armed violence with regard to secessionist movements in India and the voice of dissent is becoming less and less heard to the international community and the reason for such an act is not very far to seek. Indian emergence as a nuclear super power and is booming economy makes many influential countries of this world as its friends. Rising India is a force to be reckoned with in the emerging
knowledge based economy of the third millennium. The government of India has successfully to a significant extent, influenced American perspective and has changed the long time held U.S. perception on the Kashmir issue. India really has toned down the voice of advocacy even for the United Nation agreed plebiscite in Kashmir that was settled in January, 1949 with the intervention of the world body during the Indo-Pak war. Even the United State and the United Kingdom once considered being lopsided with Pakistan, have become equivocal on the Kashmir issue, the bone of contention between India and Pakistan. The government of India has succeeded considerably in manufacturing a global perception favorable for it about the armed rebellion in India. However, the ever increasing magnitude of the armed confrontation between the government forces and identifiable secessionist outfits in the northeastern part of the country, the state of Jammu and Kashmir and the naxalite belt of the eastern, central and the southern India has made it necessary to reconstruct another insight of the prevailing situation. The government of India’s treatment of the armed rebellion in these region as a law and order problem, and its failure to contain the same, have brought another second thought to the earlier held pro-India perception.

The central government’s proclamation of the disturbed area status to the state of Manipur, Nagaland and Jammu and Kashmir and its subsequent enforcement of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958 which empowers the army and the Paramilitary forces of the government of India to almost impunity even when they have committed extra-judicial killings curtailing the fundamental right to life and personal liberty guaranteed by the constitution of India to its citizens, lends credibility to the perception that there is an armed conflict situation between the government and the armed rebels which the normal laws have failed to tackle. India’s northeast region, an
isolated region wedged between Bangladesh, Bhutan, China and Myanmar with only a thin corridor connecting it to the rest of India is also beset by conflict. The northeastern part of the country in which not less than 357 communities inhabited is reeling under the impact under insurgency for almost half a century and the growing ethnic strife has brought more complexity to the issue.\textsuperscript{24}

The more to add in this intricate scene is that the prevailing situation of the region is being treated as law and order problem and not even as low intensity internal armed conflict. The situation in Manipur is a clear case of an “internal disturbance” or non-international armed conflict requiring invocation of Article 355 in the chapter XVIII of the Constitution of India and not of a “public order” problem. However, the authorities have viewed it for too long as “a law and order problem”. Invoking emergency powers under the Constitution of India obligates the government of India to follow the Article 4(3) procedure of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). According to a news report by the Associated Press (AP) which has been published in many newspapers of the world including “The Guardian” (of London), more than 10,000 people have died in separatist violence over the past decade in the region.\textsuperscript{25} The region is also known to dozens of separatist groups who accuse the Indian Government of exploiting the area’s natural resources while doing little for the indigenous people. Many social elites of the region also do not subscribe to the view of the Government that the prevailing situation is merely a law and order problem and not that of an internal armed conflict. They view the armed


revolutionaries of the region as a force to be reckoned with and clearly termed their struggle as a case of internal armed conflict and prefer a long and ever lasting solution by conflict resolution modalities and not by ways and means of controlling law and order. Almost all the movements of militant ethno-nationalistic mobilization in the north eastern region of the country and its environs claimed that their ultimate objective is the attainment of sovereignty and freedom for the people. The fact that this part of the country became a part of the British India through conquest and annexation between 1826 and 1891 and later, of the modern Indian state as a consequence of the arrangement that lead to the transfer of power on August 15, 1947 and merger of new states to the Dominion of India in 1949, is almost cited as clinching proof that territories and the people of this region were historically never a part of India. Since the modern Indian state has never agreed to negotiate on this fundamental issue, the argument goes, the only path left for the people of this region is to wage an armed struggle to regain their lost independence and sovereignty.  

Negligence of the remote part of the country by the centre in the years gone by, regional and political disparity, discrimination of human rights etc. also have aggravated the situation, and now the state of affairs have gone from bad to worse. The manner in which almost two third of the state of Jammu and Kashmir came into the Union of India in January,1949 and the remaining fall under Pakistan’s control when the United Nation brokered ceasefire terminated the first Indo-Pak war, remains unacceptable to some sections of the Kashmiris.

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Prabhakara, M.S. “War: against Indian state: real victims and outcome”, the Hindu, June 12, 2008, New Delhi,p-12.
According to an official source of the United Kingdom Government, the Islamic militancy in Jammu and Kashmir has claimed an estimated 35,000 people during the period from 1989-1999.\(^\text{27}\) Amnesty International Report on India, 2007 indicated that some 10,000 people had been victims of enforced disappearance since 1989 in Jammu and Kashmir. The Association of the Parents of disappeared people of the state reported that the authorities failed to provide information to the families of the victims about their whereabouts.\(^\text{28}\) The Naxalite movement began in 1967 as a peasant uprising in West Bengal village of Naxalbari, when a group of activist split away from India’s mainstream Communist Party. The government of India is saying that one of the country’s 28 states are affected one way or the other by the insurgency.\(^\text{29}\)

The Time, one of the largest circulated and most influential magazine of the world has reported that the conflict between the Naxalites and the government security forces have killed 837 people in 2007, enough to make it deadlier than the Kashmir conflict for the first time ever.\(^\text{30}\) All these means that there is an alarming magnitude in terms of the cost of human lives claimed by the armed rebellion in the country.

Besides, the biggest news agency of the world, the Associated Press (AP), one of the most reputed dailies of the world –The Guardian (London) and a top executive of the New Delhi Based conflict management alma mater have stared to brand the

\(^{27}\) Fiona Dunlop, The Kashmir Conundrum, www.fco.gov.uk (Foreign Office advisory website of the United Kingdom)
\(^{29}\) India’s Secret War, TIME, Vol. 171, No.22, 9 June,2008, Time Asia Ltd, Hong kong.p-26
\(^{30}\) Ibid.
prevailing situation of India as a conflict or a war between the regular government forces and identifiable armed outfit within the territory of India. Hence, one may contend that situation of armed conflict are to be found in different parts of the country.

Development of insurgency problem in Manipur

Freelance writer Lt. Col. AK Sharma once commented that one of the root causes of insurgency problem in Northeast India is physical isolation and psychological alienation for years. The political, social and demographic imbalances have led to the revival and survival of insurgency in Northeastern states of India. The leading problem here is of social, ethnic, economic and political deprivation. These people are not anti-Indian but essentially anti-establishment.\(^{31}\) When the British Empire in India was on the verge of ending, Manipur had agreed to hand over its defense, currency and foreign affairs to India in August, 1947.

Manipur merged into the Union of India on 9 October, 1949 under the Manipur Merger Agreement. From 26\(^{th}\) of January, 1950, Manipur became part-c state of India. In lieu of ratifying the Agreement by the State Legislative Assembly which was established under the provisions of the Manipur state constitution Act, 1947; the legislative body had to be dissolved as a direct result of the agreement, to pave way for another set up of governance. It was shattering news for some section of the people with the way Manipur got merged with India and the question of legitimacy of the Merger Agreement of the state of Manipur into the union of India comes up even now in regional as well as international fora. The decades that followed Manipuri

\(^{31}\) Sharma AK-Insurgency Defies Solution, Communicator, April-June, 1998, IIMC, New Delhi, p-27
Merger into the Union of India and her becoming part- C State leads to the emergence of various insurgent groups in the tiny state. Janaaneta Hijam Irabot who was an elected member of the state legislature, was not happy with Merger Agreement of the state into the Union of India. Irabot opposed the possible formation of “Purbanch” which would also include Manipur. Before he carried out his plans into actions, Janaaneta Hijam Irabot breathed his last on 26th September, 1951 at Tangbo, Myanmar.\(^{32}\) In the year 1953, Manipur Revolutionary Nationalist Party (MRNP) appeared but as a result of the tightening of the security forces across the state and arrest of the party leaders, the MRNP sank into oblivion.\(^{33}\) MRNP’s demand was the restoration of an independent Manipur. Later, after the complete collapse of the MRNP, another insurgent group called the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) surfaced on 24th November, 1964.\(^{34}\) UNLF was formed by many Manipuri educated youths for liberating Manipur under the leadership of the Secretary General Arambam Somerendra. Another insurgent group called the Meetei State Committee (MSC) was formed in 1966 in the Sardar hills areas of Manipur.\(^{35}\) In November 1967, police arrested 63 members of the MSC including its president and General Secretary and seized documents.\(^{36}\) That day onwards the MSC could not attract popular attention. A minor group of the UNLF was formed by the name of Revolutionary group of Manipur (RGM) in the year 1968 and Y. Pramod, N. Bisheswor and O. Sudhir were the leaders.\(^{37}\)

\(^{32}\) Phanjaobam Tarapod, Bleeding Manipur, Har-Anand publication Pvt.Ltd, New Delhi, 2005 (second ed), P-175.

\(^{33}\) Ibid., P-176

\(^{34}\) Ibid.

\(^{35}\) Mangi S, A Study of Some Selected Socio-political problem of Manipur (1947-1980), PhD thesis, Department of Political Science, Manipur University, page-274.

\(^{36}\) Paonam Labonga Mangang, Kagleipakta Revolution, Imphal, Khurajam Sanatombi, 1997

In the 1972 Manipur obtained statehood and a general amnesty was announced for the insurgent groups. Those cases of political offences against the youths were withdrawn and as a result of the general amnesty granted to the political offenders in 1972, all political offenders in jail were released. It brought important change in the RGM as several distinguished members left the RGM and work over ground. In 1975 Bisheswor came out from Sudhir’s group and formed the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) on 25th September, 1978. The PLA than became an armed wing of the Revolutionary People’s Front (RPF) which was established on 25th February, 1979. As the law and order situation was deteriorating due to the intensification of the insurgent’s revolts, the security patrolling was enhanced to dislodge the insurgency movement throughout the state. On October 8, 1980, security forces attacked the PLA camp at Choro village near Myanmar border and killed four prominent Lhasa trained PLA activist. The activities of the PLA under the leadership of Bisheswor became very strong during the early period of 1980’s. On July 6, 1981, an army operation was conducted and arrested Bisheswor and killed seven of his top aides at the PLA camp at Tekcham, 25 kilometres Southeast of Imphal. After Bisheswor, Th.Kunjabihari became the new leader of the PLA. On 13th April, 1982, Kunjabihari including eight other members were killed in an encounter and four members were also arrested with arms. After the arrest of Bisheswor and killing of Kunjabihari by the Indian army, Tembam became the leader of the PLA. Leadership conflict arose among the cadres and Irengbam Bhorot alias Chaoren became the leader of the PLA and later on he became the chairman of the RPF and the supreme commander of its armed wing, the PLA.

39 Bleeding Manipur, Phanjaobam Tarapot, Har-Anand publication Pvt Ltd, New Delhi,2005 (second edition) p-184
On 9\textsuperscript{th} October, 1977 The People’s Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) surfaced at Koubru Hill in the northwestern of Imphal. Tulachandra was the leader of its group.\textsuperscript{40} On 16\textsuperscript{th} February 1980 Tulachandra was arrested and differences of opinion erupted among the group. Tulachandra, in a tape recorded speech broadcasted from All India Radio, Imphal, had appealed to its party members to observe ceasefire for a period of one month with effect from 14\textsuperscript{th} March 1980.\textsuperscript{41} Tulachandra’s appeal was opposed by section of the said group and thus, distinct factions came up within the PREPAK, one led by Tulachandra in jail and another one led by Maipak Sharma. On 15\textsuperscript{th} May 1980, Maipak Sharma in collaboration with some members of the Meetei state committee (MSC) formed a new insurgency group called the Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP).\textsuperscript{42} In 1994 the Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL) was formed by faction groups of the UNLF, KCP and PREEPAK in Bangladesh. Its aim is to unite the revolutionary organizations operating in Manipur and fight together in the struggle for independence. Namoijam Oken is the secretary and Achau Toijamba is the chairman of the organisation.\textsuperscript{43} Later in 1999, PREPAK, UNLF and RPF formed a common group called the Manipur People’s Liberation Front (MPLF) and their aim is to accelerate the progress of liberation struggle. RK Sanayaima is the convener of the joint front.\textsuperscript{44} Inspite of attempt to work together in a harmonious condition among the insurgent groups of the state, several internecine killings among the underground groups had come up and these factional fights have adversely affected to the PREPAK, KYKL, KCP and UNLF. In 1945, the Naga Hills

\textsuperscript{40} Ayekpam Ibemcha Chanu, Insurgency Movement in Manipur, OKDISCD, 2005
\textsuperscript{41} Mangi S, A Study Of Some Selected Socio Political Problems of Manipur, PhD thesis, Department of Political Science, Manipur University (1947-80) p-304.
\textsuperscript{42} op cit, p-306.
\textsuperscript{43} Phanjaobam Tarapot, Bleeding Manipur, Har-Anand Publication, Pvt.Ltd. New Delhi, 2005 p-18
\textsuperscript{44} ibid
District Council was formed with an object to educate the Nagas to rule over themselves in a democratic manner and later change into Naga National Council (NNC) in 1946. On 11th December 1950 A Z Phizo was appointed the president and the Naga movement for self-determination obtained considerable momentum. On 16th May 1951, a plebiscite was held in a congregation at Kohima on the issue of the Naga self-determination where the Nagas voted for complete independence and secession. The Indian government did not approve the verdict and the NNC resorted to armed struggle afterwards.

In the latter part of 1956 the secessionist movement of Nagaland reached notably in Manipur particularly in the East, north and west districts. The Nagas of the East, North and West districts of Manipur organized themselves into Naga Home Guards and came to be involved in acts of violence like kidnapping, murdering local villagers, looting government properties, vigorous and harmful attempt at the government forces etc. Initially these Naga organizations were armed with weapons left behind by the Allied and Japanese forces at the time of Second World War but later on the Nagas insurgent groups obtained training by using sophisticated arms and ammunitions from the elsewhere East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) and China. Afterwards, the Naga Home Guards was reconstituted as Naga army.

The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) was formed on 31st January, 1980 and Isaac Chisi Swu, a Sema tribe of Nagaland, Thuingaleng Muivah, a Tangkhul from Manipur, and SS Khaplang,a Pangmi Naga from Myanmar were

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45 Mangi S, a study of Some Selected Socio political Problems of Manipur (1947-80), PhD thesis, Department of Political Science, Manipur University, p-321.
chairman, general secretary and vice-chairman respectively.\textsuperscript{46} The Nagas of Manipur are more concerned with the Naga rebellion. Afterwards, in 1988 the Naga insurgency group divided into two factions, one group led by Issac Chisi Swu and Thuingaleng Muivah called NSCN-IM and another group led by SS Khaplang called NSCN-K. After the split, NSCN-IM and NSCN-k have been fighting each other but their aim and object remains the same that is to liberate Naga areas of India and Myanmar in order to form an independent Nagaland and to maintain a separate identity of the Naga people.\textsuperscript{47} Their demand for a separate Nagaland includes four hill districts of Manipur which covers more than sixty percent of the Manipur’s geographical area. The government of India and the NSCN-IM and NSCN-K’s peace talk is still undergoing. In 1988, the Kuki National Front (KNF) and the Kuki National Army (KNA) too surfaced. The Kuki Liberation Army (KLA) was established in 1991 and The Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA) and the United Kuki Liberation Front (UKLF) were organized in 2000. The Kuki insurgency groups were fighting for a separate state of Kuki’s from the Kuki inhabited areas of Myanmar and some portions of Thoubal, Ukhrul and Chandel districts of Manipur and the Churachanpur district.\textsuperscript{48} The Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA) was established in 1990 and its demand is to have a separate statehood of Zomi inhabited areas from different parts of India mostly in Churachanpur district of Manipur, Bangladesh and Myanmar which consist of Paite, Simte, Vaiphei and Tiddim Chin tribes.

\textsuperscript{46} Phanjaobam Tarapot, Bleeding Manipur, Har Anand Publication Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 2005, p-181.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid
Almost all the Kuki insurgency groups in Manipur are in the initial stage for a peace talk with the government of India as the Kuki militants and the Indian government has signed an agreement for Suspension of Operation (SoO) which consist of Paite, Simte, Vaiphei and Tiddim Chin tribes. Hmar Revolutionary Army (HRA) was established with the objective of protecting Hmar community from the hostile nature of the Mizos, Kukis and other larger sections of the society.

Hmar People Convention (HPC) surfaced in order to fight for a Hmar autonomous district council from Hmar inhibited areas of Manipur, Assam and Mizoram.\textsuperscript{49} As per intelligence report, by 2001 there are about 19,590 insurgents operating in the state. According to the report, about 9070 insurgents were operating in the valley and about 11,510 insurgents were scattered in other parts of the hill areas of the state of Manipur, North Cachar hills of Assam and some areas of Nagaland. The report further estimated that there are about 11,635 sophisticated weapons and arms possessed by the insurgent groups in Manipur. The total number of the over ground workers or sympathizer of the insurgency groups ranged between 78,360 and 97,950 in the state. Major insurgency groups in the state are United National Liberation Front (UNLF), Peoples Liberation Army (PLA), Revolutionary Peoples Front (RPF), Peoples Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK), Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP), KangleiYawolKannaLup-Oken(KYKL-O),Kanglei

\textsuperscript{49} ibid

Yawol Kanna Lup-Toijamba (KYKL-T), National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Issac Muivah (NSCN-IM) and National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang (NSCN-K). Some of the minor insurgent organizations of the state are People’s United Liberation Front (PULF), North East Minority Front (NEMF) and Islamic
National Front (INF), Islamic Liberation Front-Kanglei (ILF-K) and minor insurgent groups in the hill areas are Hmar Peoples Convention (HPC), Hmar Revolutionary Army (HRA), Kuki Liberation Army (KLA) and United Kuki Liberation Front (UKLF). A new combined group comprising of seven major rebel groups known as Coordination Committee (CorCom) was formed in the month of November, 2013.

The conflict situation in Manipur has a pronged character. The people of Manipur are like puppets under the aggressive commands either from the insurgents or the government forces as the most common happening in the state are the armed conflict between the state forces and rebel groups. Now in Manipur, it appears that the general population has become wearisome to get along with the wear and tear of the insurgency movement, on the other hand, the incidents of human rights violation from the state forces has become a thing of normal affairs of the state. Several insurgents group have been still indulging in extortions resorting to reckless bombing and random firing for non-compliance. The present situation has pushed Manipur into a crucial period of armed violence between the state-actors and non- state actors. Many people decried against the armed violence but both the security forces and the militants still continue to commit the armed violence in utter contempt of the voice of the people. Both the central security forces operating in the state (numbering 45,000) and the state security personnel (numbering 50,000) are combating the insurgents group in the state. Among the insurgent groups, there is inter- organizational armed conflict and intra organizational factional conflicts. Armed struggles among valley

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50 Ibid
51 An interview with deputy chief Minister of Manipur, Shree Gaikhangam by the media person on 12, October, 2013 at press club.
based outfits of the state, fighting among hill based Naga and Kuki outfits and fratricidal killings among the valley based and hill based prescribed organizations of the state flared up from time to time.

Human security in armed conflict situation in Manipur

If human development is about expanding choice and advancing rights, violent armed conflict among and within nations is the worst suppression of human development. The right to life and security are the most important and basic inherent human rights. These two basic human rights are most widely and openly violated during armed struggle between the government regular forces and the militants or among those groups fighting for self-determination. Insecurity connected to the armed conflict appears to be one of the greatest obstacles to human development. Violent armed conflict is a main hindrance in achieving human security, development and peace which leads to mass poverty.

The armed revolution for a separate statehood or self-determination has claimed many lives in Manipur and the most shocking truth is that majority of the victims of the human made devastation are innocent civilians and not those combatants who are taking part in the armed conflict. Manipur is one of the gravest among the armed conflict regions of the country if one look upon the quantum of lives claimed by the ongoing armed confrontation between the regular government forces and the rebel groups. Manipur is having a population of 25.7 lakhs and the number of the deaths in armed struggle is up to 2856 including 1110 civilians. Nearly 1249 militants have been killed by security personnel and nearly 497 security personnel
have been killed by the militants in armed violence during the past decades.\textsuperscript{52} As per news paper report 1000 people die per day in armed violence all over the world and India’s share is 12 people per day.\textsuperscript{53} In Manipur, approximately one person died per day of armed struggle in the past three years and as such the states share of death in the armed violence is enormously high according to the population parameter with the global as well as the national figures. When the percentage of death in the armed struggle is compared on the basis of population parameter, the ratio of the number of death in Manipur per day to that of the world is 5:2 and the ratio of the number of death in Manipur per day to that of the country is 50:1.4.

This clearly indicates that the rate of death in the armed struggle in Manipur is more than two and half times the global figure and more than thirty four times national figure. The population of the state of Manipur accounts only one tenth of the total population of the whole of the Northeastern India, the state shares 45\% of the killing statistics of the region.\textsuperscript{54} From the beginning of 2004 to the end of September 2007, there were 183 cases of kidnapping, 168 cases of bomb blast, 205 cases of extortion, 175 cases of ambush, 308 encounters between the state actors and the non-state actors.\textsuperscript{55} According to a daily Manipuri local news report, on July 16, 2007, the armed conflict in Manipur during the period from January 1980 to May 2007 had claimed 2675 lives of civilians. During the past 27 years, nearly 1314 rebels have lost their lives in armed conflict with the security forces and the civilian casualty is counted at 2061.

\textsuperscript{53} Small Arms Bleed, North East, The Times of India (North East Edition), September 29, 2008, p-2.
\textsuperscript{54} Manipur became killing field under Ibobi Regime, Huiyen Lanpao, November 11, 2007, p-5
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid
The number of the rebel killed in the above mentioned period are: PLA-411, UNLF-162, PREPAK-96, KCP-100, KYKL-87, PULF-23, INF-8, NSCN(IM)-66, NSCN(K)-23, KRA-18, KNF-18, KNF(MC)-47, KNA-11, KNA(P)-11. ZRA-10 and 171 other minor factions of the insurgent groups.\textsuperscript{56}

During the year 1980-2000, fifteen politicians of the state of Manipur had been killed by the militants and many senior officials of the state government also lost their lives and many high ranking officials had faced life attempts. Many state government high officials like engineers, University Professors, Directors, Doctors to name a few are kidnapped for monetary demands. Nearly 14,879 insurgents including 12,124 activists from valley based outlawed organisations have been arrested. 1447 persons including 138 rebels from the hill areas of Manipur are detained under NSA (National Security Act). During this period, the insurgents group had snatched 2000 arms from the security personnel and rupees five millions as cash have been looted from banks and state government offices. During this period 865 insurgents have surrendered to the government. The people of the state of Manipur live in a state of perpetual fear which leads to disease like mental depression and anxiety. There is no peace and tranquility in the region and civilians are crushed between the government security forces engaged in the counter insurgency operations on one side and militants whom the government forces are pursuing on the other hand. The people of Manipur have undergone tremendous hardships and they cannot openly criticize misfeasance and misdeed of anyone having gun in his hand. Manipur has truly become a killing

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid
field and human rights violations are the order of the day. Such incident has affected many innocent lives and fight for justice is becoming extremely difficult for the traumatized families who have to live through the horrific experience over and over again.

The following are the issues arising out of armed conflict situation

1. Torture, harassment, physical abuse, killing of innocents.

2. Rape and killing of women by security personnel.

3. Involuntary disappearances of persons after arrest by the security forces.

4. Emergence of women movement called “Meira Paibi” (women torch bearer) movement since 1980.

5. Looting, extortion of money and kidnapping of persons by antisocial elements.

6. Emergence of many voluntary civil organisations and student body organisations.

7. Deterioration of law and order.

8. Violation of Human rights.


The killing statistics in Manipur in the armed conflicts between the insurgent groups and the government security forces and the fratricidal killings between the
minor factions of the insurgent groups in the last decade may be looked from the table given below.\textsuperscript{57}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Civilians killed</th>
<th>Militants killed</th>
<th>Security</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>personal killed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>129</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Types of arms and ammunition used by the insurgent groups

The types of sophisticated weapons in used include M-14, pistols, M-16, M-20, M-22, G-series, AK-47, AK-56, AK-74, 9mm pistol, 7mm pistol, M-16 rifle round, lathod bomb, 2 inch Chinese made mortar shells, light machine guns, carbine,

\textsuperscript{57} ibid
revolvers, Chinese hand grenade, rocket propelled grenade, rocket launcher, sten-gun, general purposed machine gun, self-launching rifle, air defense gun. On 18th of February 2010, troops of Assam Rifles killed five insurgents during an armed struggle between the Assam Rifle personnel and insurgent groups at the Indo-Myanmar border in Ukhrul district of Manipur. The government security personnel recovered two AK-47, seven AK 47 rounds, one 9mm (M-20) pistol, one 7mm pistol, two live rounds, two Chinese hand grenades, six fired cartridges of AK-47, three fired cases of nine pistols.

In another incident the state force on 18th of February 2010 arrested three insurgents and recovered huge numbers of ammunitions. The recovered ammunitions include 2100 rounds of AK series rifle, 500 M-16 rifle rounds, 70 lathod bombs, 10 Chinese hand grenades with detonators, 13 Chinese made 2inch mortar shell, two AK series. On the same day in another incident the state security forces have nabbed 11 cadres of KCP.

State government policy towards insurgency

The insurgency problem in Manipur is considered to be a law and order problem by most of the policy makers. Hence these policy makers act within the parameters repression as a tool to put to an end of the problem. They therefore prefer to deploy security personnel and central army personnel to press insurgency. The so called draconian laws, The Armed Forces Specials Power Act, 1958 was imposed in the state since 1980 to maintain law and order of the state and for curbing insurgency

60 ibid
61 ibid
with the help of the security forces of the Indian government. Some sections of the state of the Manipur feel that they have been deprived of the rights of freedom, liberty and democracy for a long period.

So far the government of Manipur has not taken up any specific policy to solve the insurgency problem in the state permanently. The temporary measures like counter insurgency activities with the help of the police, counter operation, Paramilitary forces are taken up by the state government to deal with the insurgency problem. The centre rolled on operation “Sunny Vale”.  

However the operation launched by the Indian army had faced sat backs due to non-co-operation of the local administration. In the month of April-May, 1995, an operation called “The Golden Duck” was conducted jointly by the Burmese army and 57 Mountain Division in the border area of Burma and India to crush NSCN, the ULFA and the Manipuri insurgent groups. In mid 2004, the United Command Structure of police and the central forces for “Operation All Clear” was formed in Manipur with Chief-Minister of the state as its chairman. In Bishnupur and Churachandpur districts of Manipur, a counter insurgency operation was started. The Indian Reserve Battalions (IRB) was set up by the state government with the help of the central assistance. A counter insurgency operation was taken up from the seventh of March till the first week of November, 2002 and nearly 200 insurgents were killed, 1704 militants were arrested along with 247 sophisticated weapons in Manipur.

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62 ibid
63 Centre asked Manipur and Nagaland to fight militancy. The Sentinel, September 3, 1995, p-1.
The state Government of Manipur is making proposal for peace talk but insurgents defies it. In the year 2000, the state Government of Manipur decided to provide government jobs to 18 surrendered insurgents. At present, the surrendered militants are taking shelter in the state government custody. Some of the surrendered rebels are appointed as the state police commandos. On 2nd of March 2010, the central government and NSCN (IM) had started peace talk.

Concluding remarks:

India’s emergence as a nuclear super power and its blooming economy has made many influential countries of the world its friends. The ever increasing magnitude of the armed confrontation between Government forces and identifiable secessionist outfits in Jammu and Kashmir, North-East India and the Naxalites belt of central, eastern and southern India has made it necessary to reconstruct another insight of the prevailing situation. The clashes in North-East India, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir or regions hit by Maoist violence have killed far more lives then all of India’s clashes with its neighbours put together. The armed conflicts between the regular armed forces of the Government and identifiable armed groups have claimed more then eighty-one thousand lives.65

The central government’s proclamation of disturbed area status to Manipur, Nagaland and Jammu and Kashmir and its subsequent enforcement of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958 which empowers both the Army and Para-military forces of the Government of India to almost impunity etc. also lend credibility to the perception that there is an armed conflict situation between the Government forces and the armed rebels which the normal laws have failed to tackle.

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In armed conflict zone of Manipur, many women have been tortured, raped and murdered either by the regular forces of the Government or identifiable armed groups. Many physical attacks and other forms of sexual harassments upon womenfolk by the state actors and the non-state actors are reported in the region. Among the armed conflict zones in India, the situation in the state of Manipur is the gravest and worst one if one looks upon the quantum of human lives claimed by the ongoing armed conflict between the government regular forces and the militants. In the state of Manipur with the population of 2.4 million only, the number of the armed violence related deaths in the past decades is added up to 2856 including 1110 civilians. Everyday, 1000 people die of armed struggle all over world and India’s share is 12 people per day. As per human rights activists approximately one person dies everyday of armed violence between the state actors and the non state actors in the past year in Manipur. If the percentage of death in armed violence between the regular government forces and the rebels is calculated on the basis of population parameter, Manipur’s rate of death is more than double the global figure and more than 34 times the national figure. While the population of the state accounts one tenth of the total population of the whole of the Northeastern India, the state shares 45 percent of the killing statistics of the region.

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