# ETHNO-NATIONALISM AS A FACTOR IN INDIA-MYANMAR RELATIONS: A STUDY OF THE KUKI AND CHIN GROUPS, 1991-2014

*Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University*
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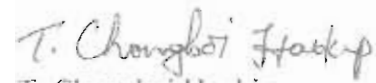
## DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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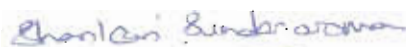### INDIA
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## DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled *"Ethno-Nationalism as a Factor in India-Myanmar Relations: A Study of the Kuki and Chin Groups, 1991-2014"* submitted by me for the award of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** is my own work. The Thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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## CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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*Dedicated to*

*my father*

**Mr. (L) T. Seijamang Haokip**

*Who envisioned in me the potence of education in my life*

*and*

*mother*

**Mrs. T. Vahjalam Haokip**

**Who unceasingly pray for our family**

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# PREFACE

The present study is a humble attempt to investigate ethno-nationalist movement manifested in the form of autonomy or self-determination with reference to the Kuki and Chin ethnic groups in India and Myanmar respectively. It also analyse the impact ethnic dimension on India and Myanmar relations which has been sidelined in the larger discourse of India's foreign policy with its neighbouring states especially with Myanmar. India and Myanmar are ethnically diverse nation plagued with ethnic issues in its domestic politics. Unless ethnic minorities' problems are taken care its ambitious projects as a part of its foreign policy initiative would be futile. Ethnic dimension of India and Myanmar relations is the main crux of the study vis-a-vis economic development, political and strategic relations. It also explores look east policy as a catalyst for the development of the border region. The study is divided into six main chapters.

The first Chapter is the '*Introduction*' which provides the conceptual background of the study, as well as focus on the theoretical aspects of ethnicity and nationalism. The study will further explores debates within primordialist and instrumentalist theoretical perspectives in understanding the Kuki and Chin identity assertion in its ethno-nationalist movement and concludes that, Primordialist approach to ethnicity is reflected well in the Kuki and Chin ethnic political leverage than instrumentalist approach. It is in this light that the current ethnic movements in North-East India are understood and their limitations are described and shown to result from the lack of a critical reflection.

The second chapter "*Historical Background of Ethno-Nationalism in the Frontier Region*" provides an overview of ethnic groups in the frontier region in general and Kuki and Chin ethnic groups on either side of India and Myanmar in particular. Moreover, it will also discuss the social and political life/ aspirations of the Kuki and Chin ethnic groups during and after colonial rule. It explains the origin and growth of Kuki and Chin ethnic groups. It would also trace the growth of ethnic consciousness and political aspirations of the Kuki in India's northeastern part and Chin in Chin' inhabited areas Myanmar respectively.

The third chapter "***Dimensions of Kuki and Chin Ethno-nationalism and its impact on India-Myanmar Relations"*** delves into the changing dimensions of India- Myanmar Relations and briefly highlights India and Myanmar relations since 1990's. It discusses the government's policies and programmes undertaken and its ramification upon the minority groups. The various dimensions of Kuki and Chin nationalist movement and demands are discussed in depth. It analyses the boundary demarcation and its impact on the ethnic Chin and the Kuki. India and Myanmar relations are rooted in shared historical, ethnic, cultural and religious links. Both were under colonial rule and were a part of British India. Burma was under British India rule until it got separated from India in 1937 as per the recommendation of the Simon Commission. Gradually, India and Myanmar got independence one after another. India became independent in 1947 while Myanmar then known as "Burma" got independence in 1948. It highlight the Kuki insurgent groups demand for autonomy and the Central government and state government initiative on Suspension of Operation (SoO) with the insurgent groups. It also discusses the Chin National Front (CNF) signing of ceasefire agreement.

The fourth Chapter ***"Role of Look East Policy in addressing Ethno-nationalism"*** outline the historical background of Look East Policy and its evolvement to Act East Policy of the government. The changes taken place under the UPA and NDA government w.r.t Look east policy vis-a-vis India-Myanmar relations. It examines the trend of ethno-nationalist movement with the onset of Look East policy initiative.

The fifth Chapter "***Economic Development and the Look East Policy***" delves into the internal aspects of Northeast Development. It also dealt with look east policy initiatives in enhancing the frontier ethnic groups especially the Kuki and Chin in the realm of development. It focuses on developing infrastructure and connectivity for an effective cross border trade in addressing their long standing economic deprivation.

Finally on the basis of in-depth analysis of each aspect discussed in the above chapters a conclusion has been drawn. Finding of the specific hypotheses has been revealed and with great caution at the concluding chapter. In the course of research the researcher confronted with several issues which have not been dealt here in detail as those were beyond the purview of this study.

**List of Abbreviation**

| | |
|---|---|
| AC | Autonomous Council |
| ADC | Autonomous District Council |
| AFSPA | Armed Forces Special Power Act |
| ARC | Administrative Reforms Commission |
| ASEAN | Association of South East Asian Nations |
| ASI | Anti-Slavery International |
| AFPFL | Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League |
| AH | Asian Highway |
| APEC | Asia- Pacific Economic Cooperation |
| ASEAN | Association of South East Asian Nations |
| BJP | Bhartiya Janta Party |
| BADP | Border Areas Development Programme |
| BSPP | Burma Socialist Programme Party |
| BRGF | Backward Regions Grant Fund |
| BCIM | Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar |
| BCIM-EC | Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar-Economic Corridor |
| BIMSTEC | Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi- Sectoral Technical and Economic |
| BGF | Border Guard Force |
| BLO | Border Liaison Office |
| CBO | Community Based Organizations |
| CNF | Chin National Front |

| | |
|---|---|
| CEPA | Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement |
| CLMV | Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam |
| CABE | Central Advisory Board on Education |
| CPB | Communist Party of Burma |
| DONER | Department for Development Of North East Region |
| DAB | Democratic Alliance of Burma |
| ENC | Ethnic Nationalities Council |
| EU | European Union |
| EAS | East Asia Summit |
| FDI | Foreign Direct Investment |
| FTA | Free Trade Agreement |
| FTAAP | Free Trade Area of Asia- Pacific |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GNLF | Gorkha National Liberation Front |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GMS | Greater Mekong Sub- region |
| KNA | Kuki National Assembly |
| KIO/KIA | Kachin Independence Organization/ Army |
| KNDP/A | Karenni National Democratic Party/Army |
| KNO | Kuki National Organization |
| KNU | Karen National Union |
| MHA | Ministry of Home Affairs |
| NEC | North East Council |
| NSCN | National Socialist Council Of Nagaland |

| | |
|---|---|
| NLD | National League for Democracy |
| SLORC | State Law and Order Restoration Council |
| MHA | Ministry of Home Affairs |
| NCGUB | National Coalition Government Union of Burma |
| NDF | National Democratic Front |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| NLD | National League for Democracy |
| SLORC | State Law and Order Restoration Council |
| SNLD | Shan Nationalities League for Democracy |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| USDA | Union Solidarity and Development Association |
| UWSP | United Wa State Party |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNODC | United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime |
| USDP | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| ULFA | United Liberation Front of Assam |
| UPF | United Peoples' Front |
| UWSA/P | United Wa State Army/ Party |
| WGEC | Working Group for Ethnic Coordination |
| ZRO | Zomi Reunification Organization |

# GLOSSARY

| | |
|---|---|
| *Haosa* | Chief |
| *Khua-bawi* | headman; the one who rules the village |
| *Khua-bawi* system | Chin traditional administrative system where the *Khua-bawi* ruled his village and community independently |
| *Khua-chia* | evil spirits, which, according to Chin traditional religious belief, caused all kind of sickness and harmed the soul and body of human being |
| *Khua-hrum* | Guardian god of village and community; the basic foundation for Chin traditional religion, for it was known as *Khua-hrum Biaknak* |
| *Khua-hrum biaknak* | Chin traditional religion, the religion of *Khuahrum* |
| *Khua-man* | religious tax imposed on village, not on individual person |
| *Khul* | Cave |
| *Phunglam* | ways of life, including religious system, political system and almost every aspect of life |
| *Ram* | nation-state, country, homeland, territory independently ruled by Chin traditional Chieftain called *Ram-uk* |
| *Ram-uk* | chief, the ruler of the land and the people, the lord of the soils |
| *Ram-uk* system | Chin traditional administrative system where tribal or local chief called *Ram-uk* ruled at least two villages, but usually the entire tribe or several villages and communities; feudal system |

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# *Political Map of Myanmar*

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# CHAPTER ONE

## *Introduction*

# Chapter One: Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Ethnicity and nationalism as a concept has come into regular usage rather recently. Montserrat Guibernau and John Rex stated that "the term ethnicity became increasingly crucial in the social sciences in the 1960's, a period marked by the consolidation of the process of decolonization in Africa and Asia as numerous new nation states were created" (Guibernau and Rex 1997: 1). The collapse of Soviet Union in 1990s resulted into fresh talk of ethnicity. Since then, the world is facing the problem of ethnicity in one form or the other. A.D Smith and J Hutchinson (1996) said, "The end of history, it seems to have ushered in the era of ethnicity". Further by the end of the twentieth century ethnic separatist-secessionist movements came up with new intensity, especially in multi-ethnic states. Multi-ethnic nations like India and Myanmar are no exception too, where secessionists or autonomy movements are based mainly on nationalism driven by ethnicity which in turn affects the pace of implementing its foreign policy in relations to other countries. So, ethnicity deals with each ethnic group interaction with other groups in the realm of political, economic and social sphere. Ethno-nationalism meant the "desire of an ethnic community to have absolute authority over its own political, economic, and social affairs. Therefore, it denotes the pursuit of statehood on the part of an ethnic group. Ethno-nationalist movements signify the perception among members of a particular ethnic group that the group's interests are not being served under the present political arrangements".

India and Myanmar shared 1643 km long border. This border region remain the most neglected and underdeveloped region since independence and inhabited by ethnic communities with history of continued unrest in both the countries. Interestingly, India's foreign policy initiative under Look East Policy provides an opportunity to enhance the bilateral relation between India and Myanmar, the two neighbouring states with mosaic of diverse ethnic groups. It is stated that Northeast India has geographical contiguity with Myanmar and therefore natural and geographical problems are similar. Both the states shared a common problem of ethnic separatist movement in their respective regions, manifested in the form of insurgencies and minority right issues.

Ethnicity and nationalism have become closely intertwined in the demand for self-determination by ethnic communities which were freed from the bondage of colonial rulers. The colonial masters for administrative convenience demarcated the boundaries of the ethnic groups during their rule without consulting the ethnic groups, which later on poses as serious challenges for the ethnic group in question. The demarcation of these political boundaries left ethnic groups divided across the countries reducing the once mighty ethnic group into a state of minority in their new territory. In the process, when these particular ethnic groups felt that their ethnic aspirations are neglected in the new set up they resort to ethnic mobilisation based on either political demands or armed movement in the form of insurgency, threatening territorial integrity of the state. Because of these issues, Myanmar and India have lately been facing unending ethnic separatist movement and intra- ethnic conflict in varying degree from time to time since independence. Therefore, the research delve into understanding the issues of ethnic nationalism as a legacy of British colonialism and the failure on the part of the respective state authority in subduing or apprehending the complex issues arising out of ethnic tensions, conflict, separatism or secessionist policy. It also draws the urgency for the peace reform process in the peripheral region.

Before the advent of the Britishers, the Kukis and Chins inhabited a vast tract of territory which dispersed in three countries i.e. India, Myanmar and Chittagong Hill tracts of Bangladesh. This territory in question was given different names like 'Zalengam', 'Khulmigam', 'Kukiland' or 'Zogam', to designate this land. But the British colonial rule reduced them as a trans-border ethnic community separated by three international boundaries namely-India, Burma and Bangladesh. Piang (2013) stated that the Indo- Burma boundary was drawn without any consideration for cultural, linguistic, ethnic, religious and anthropological or racial origin but purely on the basis of political expediency or administrative convenience. This very reason is the root of ethnic Kuki-Chin nationalism for the re-establishment of their own homeland, wherein they preserve and promote their own traditions, culture and customs as a separate and distinct ethnic group.

In 1948, When Burma gained independence, the ethnic Chin attempted to create a separate state with a democratically elected parliament but only special division, not state, was granted. Till 1960's the Chins were contented in the federal union of

Burma. The government policy of making Buddhism the state religion in 1962 dissatisfied the Chin ethnic group. The 1974 constitution upgraded Chin special division to Chin state. Even then the Chins still suffer religious persecution. In 1988 the Chin National front, a group advocating democratic government was formed. Since the election of 1990, the tatmadaw has rapidly extended its control over Burma's northwest region, in the Chin state and Sagaing Region. The outcome of the increased army presence resulted in the persecution and impoverishment of the Chins and other ethnic minorities like the Kukis and Nagas. At present in Myanmar not only Chins even the other ethnic minorities strive for autonomy in their respective areas and larger participation in the political set up of the country as a whole in a democratic way.

Over the next decade with the implementation of the 2008 constitution, the *Tatmadaw* (Tatmadaw is the armed forces of Myanmar and is also the official military organisation of Myanmar, considered as the most powerful institutions in Myanmar politics) introduced Border Guard Force (BGF) scheme, which was seen as an attempt to absorb the ethnic ceasefire militia group into the *tatmadaw* or the military, in 2009. Resisted by the ethnic groups of this scheme, the government declared all ceasefire agreements null and void. However, the Chin prompts response to the Union government announcement regarding implementation of permanent peace in the Union of Myanmar worth mentioning. Following this, the representatives of Union Government and CNF signed a 9 point state level peace agreement on 6th January 2012. Additionally, on 9th May 2012, 15 point peace charter was signed. Further, agreement was also signed on 9th December 2012 by the CNF and 19 Peacemaking committee members. It was reported that the peace talk witnesses a good number of attendees as compared to other armed ethnic groups. These factors contributed to CNA (Chin National Army) camps being set up in the state carrying out of trade along the Indo-Burma border road. However, currently the CNF reiterates for a nationwide ceasefire agreement between the Government and the armed ethnic groups. Such step is a welcoming change for enhancing ties with its neighbour India as well in fomenting connectivity and development initiative vis-a-vis India's Look East Policy.

The 'Kukis' comprised of an ethnic minority community which established their presence in three countries namely- Myanmar, India and Bangladesh (Chittagong Hill tract). In India they are found mainly in all the North-eastern states except in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim. In Myanmar the Kukis inhabited mainly the North-western part bordering India i.e. in Chin state and Sagaing Region. This scattering across international boundaries is mainly attributed to the British colonial policy. In the post- independence era the demand for a separate state dominated the political scenario of the Kukis. The Kuki National Assembly (KNA) was the frontrunner in this regard. Despite, the State Reorganisation Act passed by the parliament the aspirations of the Kukis remained unfulfilled. Sectarian politics do occurs within the Kuki ethnic groups. Certain sub-groups within the Kuki emerged to promote 'Zomi as an alternative name to Kuki'. This hinders the pace of Kuki ethno-nationalist movement to a certain extent.

Dissatisfied with the Central government inaction in regards to their aspirations, armed movement in the form of insurgency became rampant in the late 1990's. Discontentment and dissatisfaction of the ethnic Kukis resulted in the mushrooming of dozens of armed ethnic insurgent groups. As a result of the government counter insurgency measures, anti-government activities are common in the region. This in fact, hinders the development of the region occupied by the ethnic groups. Later on, insurgency became a hindrance for both the state and centre government in advancing Look East Policy.

A major political breakthrough could be experienced with the government introduction of 'Suspension of Operation (SoO)', a mechanism to look into the long standing issues of the Kuki groups through political dialogue with the armed Kuki insurgent groups under two umbrella- KNO and UPF. On 10 August 2005, the Army, the state government of Manipur and KNO signed SoO and the UPF on 22$^{nd}$ August 2008 respectively. Owing to the utter neglect of the Kukis cause by the government the once mighty ethnic groups had experienced immense socio-political and economic deprivation. Therefore, the research focuses on the plight of the ethnic Kukis and Chin's which causes with intervention from the concerned government in power.

## 1.2 Literature Review

There is scanty literature available in this regard, so a careful selection is required for the logical understanding of the various issues. The literature review has been broadly divided into three themes- first theme focuses on the writings, concepts and theories or approaches on ethnicity and nationalism. Second theme mainly focuses on the writings on Kukis of northeast India. The third theme is on the literature of Myanmar's Ethnicity, Chin nationalism and India-Myanmar Relations.

### 1.2.1 Theoretical Framework on Ethnicity and Nationalism

After the decolonization of Asia and Africa, where multi- ethnic nations exist the importance of ethnicity on the formation of a nation-building has come to the forefront. During this time scholars have turned their interest on ethnic based nationalism study. Many theories on ethnicity and nationalism developed during this time. The impact has also been felt in Myanmar and India's northeast, which is referred to as a hub of ethnic group existence.

The concept of ethnicity and various theories associated with ethnicity is discussed in detail in the book *Ethnicity* edited by Hutchinson and Smith (1996). They say that "ethnic communities have been present in every period and continent and have played an important role in all societies". This book gave a theoretical understanding of the various variants, theories, history, and ethnicity in relation to nationalism. In this book, Max Weber discussed in depth on the origins of ethnic groups.

A deeper understanding on the theories related to ethnicity and nationalism has been added by Brass (1991). He provides two arguments as against primordialists in analysing ethnicity and nationalism. The first is that "ethnicity and nationalisms are not 'givens', but are social and political constructions. The second argument is that ethnicity and nationalism are modern phenomena inseparably connected with the activities of the modern centralizing state". He further states that, "Ethnic identity and modern nationalism arise out of specific types of interactions between the leaderships of centralizing states and elites from non-dominant ethnic groups, especially but not exclusively on the peripheries of those states". Therefore, in multi-ethnic society ethnicity and nationalism are found to be inextricably related in the activities of the

centralizing state. This situation is viable in both the ethnic nationalism studies of the Chin and Kuki ethnic groups.

Conversi (2007) discusses the various theories of ethnic nationalism with special emphasis on the Ethnosymbolic Approach developed by Anthony D. Smith. He states that "Ethnosymbolism underlines the continuity between pre-modern and modern forms of social cohesion, without overlooking the changes brought about by modernity". He concludes by highlighting the limitations of the theory in explaining the phenomena of modern conflicts and events.

Anderson (1991) provides a tentative suggestion for a more satisfactory interpretation of the anomaly of nationalism. He argues that nationalism is a cultural artefact of a particular kind. He defines nation as an "imagined political community- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'. The nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. It is imagined as sovereign because 'the concept was born in an age in which enlightenment and revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm". The book also emphasises the role of print-capitalism in enhancing ethnic identity formation among members of the group who shared common language through communication brought about by print- capitalism.

Phadnis and Ganguly (2001) work is not based on Southeast Asia but its insight acts as a useful guide for understanding issues related with ethnicity and nation- building. The book examines the dynamics of ethnic identities and movements in South Asian states in a comparative framework. Some of the pertinent ethnic movements- e.g., Jharkhand, Assam, Telangana and Gorkhaland in India, and Sindh as well as the Pakhtun movement in Pakistan- have been touched upon. Moreover, it also deals with issues of theoretical concern which helped in identifying certain broad parameters of ethnicity and the processes of nation building. They posit that ethnicisation of politics and politicisation of ethnic communities has diffused mutual toleration and has sharpened ethnic consciousness. It also talks about central leadership vis-a-vis ethnicity and the nation and provides an analysis of five case studies regarding the

autonomist-secessionist manifestations of ethno- nationalism. This input could help understand the ongoing ethnic autonomist-secessionist movement in the frontier region of Northeast India and Myanmar.

Tarling and Gomez (2008) also discuss about the pluralists and assimilationists theory of ethnic group formation in the context of Chinese and Vietnamese immigrants in U.S. while acknowledging that there are varied path and differing degrees of incorporation and ethnic identity formation. They say that ethnicisation can occur on the path of assimilation. Though the book did not talk about on Myanmar, it can be a helpful guide for building the theoretical understanding of Myanmar ethnic diversity.

**1.2.2 Ethnicity and Ethnic Nationalism of Kukis in Northeast India**

The historical understanding as to the rise of the Kuki nationalism and the politics of identity formation has been talked about by few scholars. Seilen Haokip (2010) in his work provides rather a good insight into Kuki identity and nationalism. It stresses on the terminological use of the term Kuki and the clan-centrism identity politics within the Kukis. It also traces the history and gives the present situation till 2003 in a lucid manner. He takes into account the British colonial legacy in shaping the society and its ramification. To quote, "British colonialism, which spurred Kuki nationalism, was also an external factor that led to its decline following the division of the Kuki territory and subjugation of the people". He also explains how the demands of the Kukis were unattended by both the central and state government. But the book fails to predict the future of course of nationalism in the hands of the people.

Piang (2013) argues that British demarcation of boundaries based on administrative convenience resulted in the partition of ethnic groups into different territory. This is true to the case of the Chins and the Kukis in which from a mighty ethnic community into two different states which further reduced them to the status of a trans-national ethnic community marginalised to the extent of ethnic minority status in their respective states i.e. India and Myanmar. Piang further posits that "Northeast India and the Indo-Burma borderland are not yet decolonised, as the government of India, without any rearrangement or alteration adopts the colonial administrative boundaries, which divided ethnic communities". The author draws the intervention of the

Government of India to find solution to the root of the problem rather just sidelining the issues as a mere political and insurgency problem.

P.S Haokip, president KNO (Kuki National Organisation) tries to justify its political demand for a separate homeland through armed insurgent movement. He opines that throughout the history, the Kukis have always held a prized possession of their freedom and sovereignty with their own political and social system of self-governance. He says the Kukis lived in "Zale'n-gam" which refers to "the contiguous ancestral lands situated in present day northeast India, Northwest Burma and the Chittagong Hill tracts in Bangladesh in the Indian sub-continent without being separated by international boundaries until the early part of the twentieth century". He also discusses at length how the Kukis fought to protect their land against the British which was famously known as the Great Kuki Rebellion 1917-1919, and again during the Second World War. He agonisingly pointed out that the Kuki people were scattered into near oblivion today and they are reduced to a minority without even a state in each of the three countries. Even today, the Kuki demands have not been settle yet (Haokip, 1988). However, since India got independence, for the first time, tripartite political dialogue involving the state government, the Army (Centre representative) and the Kuki insurgent groups was initiated in 2005 and then again in 2008. But not much progress has so far been achieved.

**1.2.3 Ethnicity, Nationalism, Democracy in Myanmar and the Chins**

Brown (1994) in his work **"**sets out to explore different theories of ethnic politics through an exploration of five South- East Asian countries. Each of his five cases Burma, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia-is used to illustrate an alternative perspective". Brown begins "by identifying what he sees as a central tenet in examining ethnic politics in South-East Asia, an approach which he terms the ' primordial/pluralist society position. On Burma, Brown writes of an 'ethnocratic state', which has been 'captured' by a dominant ethnic group, the Burmans. The Burmese state, he argues, 'acts as the agency of the dominant ethnic community in terms of its ideologies, its policies, and its resource distribution'. Brown disagrees with those who have sought to portray Burma as an ethnically neutral state legitimately presiding over orderly ethnic groups".

Lintner (1989) focuses the political events shaping Burma with special focus on struggle for democracy during 1988 which led to the world attention. It talks at length the 26 years of the rule of military dictator in which led Myanmar cut off from the rest of the world. He pointed out and let the world know what is happening in the hill areas surrounding the Irrawady valley with detailed responsible accounts of the minorities, and the war between the Burma Army.

Ganganath Jha provides a regional perspective of the minority ethnic groups in Southeast Asia and examines the problems of their identity in the context of development and national integration by the authority. The author discusses the problems faced by the ethnic groups and offers insights into the background of their struggle to preserve separate cultural identity. The cases of ethnic Timorese in Indonesia, Moros in the Philippines, Patani Muslims in Thailand, Rohingyas in Myanmar and Hoas in Vietnam are analysed at length. Finally the author concludes by suggesting that the middle path of moderation from both the state and ethnic groups is desirable to address communal and inter-ethnic cleavages. He also traces the root of the integration of Northeast with British India and also with Burma. He says Northeast was 'integrated with British India after the first Anglo-Burmese war in 1824 and not only this but also Burma in 1885'. He was of the opinion that the Britisher annexed Northeast and Burma with the motive to strengthen their defence postures (Jha, 1997). He also discusses the ideological factors shaping Southeast Asia and India in the context of cold war and thereafter. It started off with a brief introduction on historical and cultural connection between India and Southeast Asia. He stated that the look east policy shaped the foreign policy of India in dealing with Southeast Asian countries after the outbreak of cold war (Jha, 2010).

Smith (1994) has briefly discusses the various main ethnic minority communities in Myanmar. He also highlights the plight of the ethnic minority groups under the successive military junta. He focuses on the tussle between armed ethnic groups and the military junta from 1989 which in 1993 the tension got exacerbated. The author acknowledges the importance of the ethnic minority group saying to the extent that it is a tragic loss to the country for their marginalisation. He examines Burma under military control from 1962 till 1988. He says "the military has had a firm hand on all life in Burma since 1962, but the grip tightened further after 1988 when the SLORC

took control". Despite the military overarching role, the author is yet still hopeful that Burma being a multi-ethnic country could still sets example for the rest of the world if reformation and ethnic harmony is restored.

Cline (2009) focuses on the on-going ethnic movement in Myanmar. He also points out the brutality of the junta regime in its counter insurgency campaign. Turnell (2011) article on *Myanmar in 2010"* examines the 2010 election, which is the culmination of the ruling junta's roadmap toward "disciplined democracy". Ian Holliday talks about the common factor looming in the government policy, which he described it as a call for harmony through top down approach of the government. He was of the opinion that due to "incessant demands the nation cultivates a narrowly conceived and centrally imposed unity that makes a degenerate case of governance for harmony" (Holliday, 2007).

Kipgen (2014) points out the conflict between the Kachin and Karen ethnic groups with the Military government of Myanmar. He traces the genesis of the conflict leading to the present secessionist-autonomist demand. His work also contains the central government unsuccessful attempts in solving the problems faced by the ethnic minorities despite adopting three version of constitution- 1947, 1974 and 2008. Burma not only under military rule but also even the parliamentary democracy under civilian ruled (1948-1962) failed to bring solution to minority problems. The article argues that "accommodating the interests of minorities by the majority group and cooperation among the different ethnic groups are essential for national reconciliation and for the success of democracy in the Union of Myanmar". He vividly stated the reason as to why the the Panglong Agreement was signed by the Kachin, Chin and Shan and not the Karens. The reason for signing the agreement was because of the "majority-Burman group assurance of autonomy after independence, while the Karen did not sign the agreement in anticipation of attaining an independent state directly from the British".

Wong (2012) talks about the continue violence to the ethnic communities in northern Myanmar. The author questions the President Thein Sein projection of his rule as the civilian rule by giving limited reform agenda. He further stated that just by mere opening to the West doesn't mean the country is tolerant towards the various ethnic

groups in existence. Many analysts in Myanmar are of the opinion that Mr. Thein Sein is unwilling to control the junta war upon the ethnic opposition.

Kuppuswamy (2013) discusses the Myanmar's Ethnic Divide and Conflicts and analysed the challenging Reconciliation Process. He gives a comprehensive view of various ceasefire agreement conducted at different time since 1990s. He also mentioned the Chins signing of the ceasefire agreement in 2012 as a part of the reform peace process. He highlighted that "The civil government of President Thein Sein since March 2011 has launched a three-stage strategy of initial ceasefire agreements, followed by union level talks and a political dialogue on the lines of a New Panglong Agreement".

Sundararaman (2014) in her article discusses the recent changes shaping Myanmar political transition process. She calls for the importance of ethnic conflict management and viable political space for all minorities within Myanmar as necessary for a fair 2015 election. Further, she emphasises the importance of the political dialogue which has to be initiated by the government in order to bring viable solution after every ceasefire agreement.

Thongkholal Haokip examines the emergence of "Look East Policy as an important foreign policy initiative of India in the post-Cold War Period with the aim of developing political contacts, increasing economic integration and forging security cooperation with countries of Southeast Asia". The article analysed in depth the evolution and approach of India's Look East Policy. The author was of the opinion that "The look east policy is also a means of reducing India's internal development disparity". He further stated that the "North-eastern states lag behind in economic development and this gap has widened since independence. The sense of neglect has resulted in various forms of unrest in the region. He believes that the Look East Policy is the new mantra for development of the North-eastern region" (Haokip, 2011).

Singh and Pandalai (2012) have talked about the geo-strategic importance of Myanmar with the emergence of Look East Policy as an important foreign policy initiative. They suggested that "India needs to show clear political will to equip the NER economically and strategically and also implement necessary plans already in place, use the NER as a bridge to reach out to Myanmar and the rest of Southeast

Asia, and develop it the way China has developed its Yunnan province. India needs to carry out a constant reappraisal of its Myanmar policy and deliver on promised infrastructure development in Myanmar". They also highlighted the objective of prioritising Northeast infrastructure development. So that there can be an effective economic integration with Myanmar.

*India-Burma Relations: Trends and Developments 1990-2011* (2011) published by Burma Centre Delhi delves at length the different aspects of the government policy and the development therein shaping the present Burma. It is one of the most recent publications covering on diverse issues in its domestic as well as in relation with India. It also contains the views and commentaries of various experts or personalities from both the sides on their stand on various issues like Prof. Ganganath Jha believes that changes are already taking place in the politics of Burma. He suggests that Suu Kyi and her followers should grab the opportunity to serve the interests of the people and the nation. He also emphasises the capability of the leadership of Aung San Suu Kyi.

Sakhong (2003), in his book *"In Search of Chin Identity: A Study in Religion, Politics and Ethnic Identity in Burma"* highlights the intricacies of religious and ethnic identity relation among the Chin people in Burma. In the identity formation of Chin, Sakhong pointed out the ethno-symbolist Anthony D Smith definition of 'ethnie' to fit the Chins as an ethnic group. Before the advent of the British the Chins were an "independent people ruled by their own traditional tribal and local chiefs called, 'Ram-uk' and 'Khua-bawi', respectively". He discusses at length on the tradition of the Chins and its culture. He delves into subjugation of Chins under the British and the subsequent Myanmar's military junta government.

There is substantial number of literatures available on the study of India-Myanmar Relations. With the economic liberalisation taking place in the 1990s, the study on India- Myanmar Relations has become the cynosure of all researches. However, most of the these works have focussed on- India-Myanmar relations on security and economic aspects, Look east policy, BIMSTEC, Role of big power nations; as an internal issues- ethnicity, insurgency movement, nation-building, nationalism etc., in diverse and  multi-ethnic India's northeast and Myanmar. It is interesting to note that ethno-nationalism as a factor in India-Myanmar Relations has remained untouched,

although one of the most important and undeniable aspect in a multi-ethnic societies where ethnic nationalist movement are rampant. With India's advancement of look east policy the importance of small minority communities plagued with insurgency like Chins and Kukis have been realised. For an all inclusive development and advancement of the Look East Policy, the importance of ethnic minority like the Chins and Kukis cannot be sidelined.

## 1.3 Definition, Rationale and Scope of the Study

The proposed study aims to examine the impacts of ethno-nationalist movement in India -Myanmar relations. The government decision making processes, the role of Look East Policy and its impacts on the minority ethnic groups in the frontier region, the reason behind nationalist movement will be the principal rationale of this study. The study, moreover will attempt to examine the causes of ethno-nationalist movement in the frontier region of India and Myanmar with reference to the Kuki and Chin groups. The scope of the study will be limited to a focus on ethno-nationalist dimension of India and Myanmar Relations for an all inclusive development of the region between India and Northeast India with a trickle-down effect on the development of the ethnic minority groups especially the Kukis and Chins. Through the look east policy, the region which has long been in neglect can be taken care of by the centre, so as to address autonomist-secessionist demand and incorporate them into the mainstream politics. The study will cover from 1991-2014, as the period marked a turbulent period for the following reasons:

a) For India-Myanmar relations: The year 1991 marked economic liberalization of India and changes in the foreign policy perception in building good relations with Southeast Asia in general and Myanmar in particular.

b) For the Kukis: The early 1990's marked the baseline for the emergence of Kuki nationalism in the form of armed insurgent movement which even persists today.

c) For the Chin group: the year marked the aftermath of the election and the Tatmadaw extension of control over Burma's North West region in the Chin state.

The year 2014 is taken, as the year marked the formation of new government under Narendra Modi in which Look East policy becomes Act East policy.

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One of the purposes of the study is to assess the respective government policies in dealing with the long standing minority ethnic groups demands, through political dialogue not coercion. At this note, the Suspension of Operation (SoO) signed by the Kuki insurgent groups in 2005 and again in 2008 with Army and State Government of Manipur; and the Peace Agreement signed on December 2012 by the CNF and its 19 Peace making committee members with the 10 peace making of the Government of Myanmar, would be examined.

Moreover, the ethnic 'Chin' in the Chin state and Sagaing Region of Myanmar and the 'Kuki' ethnic group in India's North-eastern state of Manipur are taken for the study. They are chosen for being the most vulnerable ethnic groups in the frontier region with same descent or ethnic ties. The research would also focus on the stake of the Chins and Kukis with respect to, from the "Look East Policy" to "Act East policy" of both the government concerned, as the policy provides an opportunity for developing the region.

## 1.4 Research Questions

- Why ethnic nationalist movement continue to persist in Northeast India and Myanmar?
- What are the issues of common concern for both India and Myanmar with respect to ethnic minority issues?
- Can India manage its diverse ethnic groups in the northeast region in order to advance its policies towards Myanmar?
- Is ethno-nationalist movement responsible for underdevelopment of the frontier region between India and Myanmar?
- How far can Look East policy transform the conditions of the frontier ethnic groups especially the Kukis and Chins?
- Can friendly ties between Myanmar and India contain the issue of ethnic nationalist movement?

## 1.5 Hypotheses

- In the quest for national identity, Kuki and Chin groups use primordial ties as a means of political leverage.

- Ethno-nationalist movement has negative impact on development of the frontier region between India and Myanmar.
- The Government's concerted effort in bridging gap through the Look East policy has slowed down the pace of Ethno-nationalist movement in both India's Northeast and Myanmar.

## 1.6 Theoretical Aspects of Ethnicity and Nationalism

In this part of the introductory chapter the concepts to be used throughout the research is highlighted. It also discusses the theoretical approaches in the study of ethno-nationalism. Since the Second World War ethnicity and nationalism as well as any form of identity formation has gained political mileage. In the words of a renowned social scientist Thomas Hylland Eriksen, the terms like ethnic groups, ethnicity ethnic conflict, Nation, nationalism "the meaning of these terms frequently ambiguous and vague" (Eriksen 2002: 1). During 1980s and 1990s, ethnicity and nationalism studies gained momentum. "in social and cultural anthropology, ethnicity has been a main preoccupation since the late 1960s, and it remains a central focus for research after the turn of the millennium"(Eriksen 2002: 1). The reason for academic interest in ethnicity and nationalism studies is attributed to the fact that in the era of diverse nationalities, the issue of ethnic conflict becomes unavoidable and has become impossible to ignore such issues in the society. Ethnic struggle for recognition, power and autonomy becomes the norms in the borderland region between India and Myanmar. The following concepts for understanding ethnicity and nationalism studies are explained as under

### 1.6.1 Ethnic Groups

Most of the terminologies like ethnicity, ethnic groups, nation, and nationalism are hard to define and are used interchangeably as there are no clear cut boundaries to the concept. "The word 'ethnic' is derived from the Latin word 'ethnos,' meaning nation, which is itself defined as a group of people belonging to a common blood or descent. An Ethnic group is a human group that has a subjective belief in their common descent on the basis of either physical resemblance or common cultural practices or a shared history" (Cornell and Hartmann 1998: 15-21, Aman and Jan 2015: 233). Hutchinson and Smith defined "an ethnic group or '*ethnie*' as 'a named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more

elements of common culture, a link with a homeland and a sense of solidarity among at least some of its members" (Hutchinson and Smith 1996: 6, 15-21, Aman and Jan 2015: 233). Whereas Montserrat Guibernau and John Rex made a point that the "term Ethnic group may be used only to classify minorities and inferiors, whereas a majority and dominant groups do not see themselves as ethnic at all" (Guibernau and John Rex 1997: 4). This shows ethnicity is based on subjective interpretation rather than upon some scientific sociological truth.

## 1.6.2 Ethnicity

According to Hutchinson and Smith, "The term 'Ethnicity' first appeared in the 1950's in the English language. It is first recorded in a dictionary in the Oxford English Dictionary of 1953" (Hutchinson and Smith 1996: 4). The English derivative of the term Ethnicity goes back to the Middle Ages from the word "Ethnic". Again the English derivative of ethnic in turns derives it from the Greek word *ethnos*. The ethnos was used as a synonym of gentile.

> The term ethnicity is quite clearly a derivative of the much older term and more commonly used adjective 'ethnic' which in the English language goes back to the Middle ages. The English adjective ethnic in turn derives from the ancient Greek term ethnos; it was used as a synonyms of gentile, that is, non-Christian and non-Jewish Pagan (itself a rendering of the Hebrew god) in new Testament Greek. In French, for example, the Greek noun survives as *ethnie*, with an associated adjective *ethnique*. As the English language has no concrete noun for ethnos or ethnie, the French term is used here to denote an ethnic community or ethnic group (Hutchinson and Smith 1996: 4).

So the Greek used the term ethnos in a variety of ways. It denotes a band of friends, tribe, swarm of bees or birds, Persians, race of man or women or the gentile peoples etc. It meant the "number of people or animals who share some cultural or biological characteristics and who live and act in concert" (Hutchinson and Smith 1996: 4).

According to Hutchinson and Smith there are six main features of an ethnies. They are listed below:

1. "a common *proper name*, to identify and express the essence of the community;
2. a myth of *common ancestry*, a myth rather than a fact, a myth that includes the idea of common origin in time and place and that gives an *ethnie* a sense of fictive kinship, what Horowitz terms a 'super family';
3. shared *historical memories*, or better, shared memories of a common past or pasts, including heroes, events, and their commemoration;
4. one or more *elements of common culture*, which need not be specified but normally include religion, customs, and language;
5. a *link* with a *homeland*, not necessarily its physical occupation by the ethnie, only its symbolic attachment to the ancestral land, as with diaspora peoples;
6. a *sense of solidarity* on the part of at least some sections of the ethnie's population'' (Hutchinson and Smith 1996: 6-7)

From the above main features suggested by A.D. Smith, which serve to define 'ethnic nationality' Kuki and chin is appropriate to be considered as an 'ethnic groups'. Sakhong (2003) explored the "first four features, which correspond to traditional Chin concepts of *Miphun* and *Ram. Miphun* involves the common name and the myth of common descent, and *Ram* covers the concept of a common homeland and collective historical memories".

> The common proper name of the 'Chin' is inseparably intertwined with 'the myth of common descent' and the 'myth of the origin' of the Chin. According to the origination myth, the Chin people emerged into this world from the bowels of the earth or a cave or a rock called 'Chinlung', which, as we will see below, is spelled slightly differently by different scholars, based on various Chin dialects and local traditions: 'Chhinlung', 'Chinnlung', 'Chie'nlung', 'Chinglung', 'Ciinlung', 'Jinlung', 'Sinlung', 'Shinlung','Tsinlung' and so on. (Sakhong 2003: 1)

However, Chinnlung also known by various names such as Khul by the Kukis. Khul is translated as 'cave' or 'hole'.

Sakhong (2003) further stated that

> For the Chin, the concept of *Ram,* or what Anthony Smith calls the 'ethnic homeland', refers not only to the territory in which they are residing, i.e. present Chinram, but also the 'original homeland' where their ancestors once lived as a people and a community. What matters most in terms of their association with the original homeland is that 'it has a symbolic geographical center, a sacred habitat, a "homeland", to which the people may symbolically

return, even when its members are scattered ... and have lost their [physical] homeland centuries ago' (ibid.). Ethnicity does not cease to exist simply because the Chin were expelled from their original homeland, or because they are artificially divided between different countries, 'for ethnicity is a matter of myths, memories, values and symbols, and not material possessions or political powers, both of which require a habitat for their realization' (ibid.). Thus the Chin concept of *Ram* as 'territory' and 'original homeland' are relevant to *Miphun* (Sakhong 2003: 7-8).

Race and ethnicity is also a closely related term. Wan and Vanderwerf has given the closeness of the term race and ethnicity. According to them "before world war II, the term 'tribe' was a term choice for 'pre-modern' societies and 'race' for modern societies. Due to the close link between the term "race and Nazi ideology, the term 'ethnicity' gradually replaced 'race' within both the Anglo-American tradition and the European tradition" Wan and Vanderwerf 2009). Therefore, the term ethnicity is of recent origin. Understand ethnicity also depends on understanding others concept particularly ethnic identity and ethnic group

### 1.6.3 Ethnic Identity
In the study of ethnicity certain key concepts emerged like- ethnic identity, ethnic origin and ethnicism. "ethnic identity and ethnic origin refer to the individual level of identification with a culturally defined collectivity, the sense on the part of the individual that she or he belongs to a particular cultural community. 'Ethnic origin' likewise refers to a sense of ancestry and nativity on the part of the individual through his or her parents and grandparents; although the concept may also have an even more problematic collective dimension, referring to the (usually diverse) cultural groups and migration origins of ethnies" (Hutchinson and Smith 1996: 5). Guibernau and Rex stated that "identity is both a psychological and sociological term.... on the one hand it helps the individual to produce order in his or her own individual life. On the other it helps to place that individual within a group or involves 'identification' with a collectivity" (Guibernau and Rex 1997: 4). Hutchinson and Smith defined the term ethnicism as a "movements of protest and resistance by and on behalf of *ethnies* against oppressive or exploitative outsiders; and again such movements have frequently punctuated the historical record" (Hutchinson and Smith 1996: 5). The

Kukis and Chins as an ethnic groups resisted against the oppressive and exploitative colonial rule during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in the form of Kuki Rebellion 1917-1919. The group solidarity as an ethnic Kuki or ethnic Chin is still relevant even today in its fight for independence or autonomy movement.

Baumann has also cited Jonas explanation of the terms ethnicity, ethnic identity and ethnic groups in his article titled "Defining Ethnicity". According to Jonas, "Ethnicity is defined as "all those social and psychological phenomena associated with a culturally constructed group identity. Ethnic identity is defined as that aspect of a person's self-conceptualization which results from identification with a broader group in opposition to others on the basis of perceived cultural differentiation and/or common descent. An ethnic group is classified as any group of people who set themselves apart and/or are set apart by others with whom they interact or co-exist on the basis of their perceptions of cultural differentiation and/or common ancestry." (Baumann 2004: 12-13). Moreover, Anthony D. Smith "locates the core of national identity in the collective historical memories of a culture and religious symbol".

However, the British and Americans typically ascribe ethnicity only to minority groups in a society while in the European tradition; ethnicity is synonymous with "nationhood" or "peoplehood". According to Wan and Vanderwerf (2009) "Most Americans, when they hear the term ethnic immediately think of minority groups like African-Americans, Vietnamese, or Hispanics. It reminds them of a people outside of, alien to, and different from the core population". Therefore, the term minority group refers to "sociological group, such as an ethnic group, that does not constitute a politically dominant plurality of the total population of a given society" Wan and Vanderwerf (2009). Therefore, in certain region like as in Chin state of Myanmar, the Chins are the majority group while in certain regions of the country as a whole the Chins are the minority groups.

## 1.6.4 Nation and Nationalism

The concept of Nation and Nationalism gain popularity around late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, as divergent from the concept of monarch. Smith (1983) states that "as an ideological movement, nationalism first emerged in late eighteenth century

Western Europe" (Smith 1983: X). Phadnis wrote that a "large number of ethnonationalist movements in South Asia stimulated the end of the colonial regime and the creation of Pakistan and India" (Phadnis, 1989). The notion of nation is the central component of nationalism. Nationalism becomes the central issue of the modern world. The disintegration of Soviet Union led to the resurgence of studies in nationalism and ethnicity. Podoksik quoted John Breuilly's definition of Nationalism which states as "Nationalism is generally conceived as an ideology or movement aiming at attaining and maintaining political autonomy, mainly in the form of state sovereignty, for a group of people called nation" (Podoksik 2017: 303). Even though nationalism is a complex phenomena as view by many leading theorists it is "impossible to reduce it to one theory or definition". From this definition Podoksik concludes that this definition of nationalism is coherent and widespread enough to enable a meaningful theoretical investigation of the phenomena to which it refers. Nationalism and nation are closely related terms. He further states,

> ...Although it is relatively easy to arrive at a coherent definition of nationalism, it is much more difficult to attain a clear understanding of its central component: the notion of nation. (Podoksik 2017:303)

Guibernau and Rex states that "Nation is an emotionally charged object and nationalism emerged as an ideology centred upon the sentiment of belonging to a particular community and the subsequent desire to see it flourish and develop. The nation state was created as a political institution with a territorial base which utilized the doctrine of nationalism in its foundational moment to generate a common culture and a sense of belonging among its member" (Guibernau and Rex 1997: 4-5). Benedict Anderson, well –known post modernist defined nation as an "imagined political community".

Kohn has stated that "Nationalism is the term historians used to characterize the modern sense of national political autonomy and self-determination from the late 18th century onwards" (Kohn 1944). "Connor's work is another exception to this rule, and today he is regarded as one of the scholars of nationalism and ethnic conflict who has contributed most towards establishing a conceptual grounding for the study of nationalism" (Conversi 2004: 1). "National identity is based on the emotional psychology of perceived kinship ties – a sense of the nation as the fully extended family – and accordingly belongs to the realm of the subconscious and non

rational"(Connor: 202-03). Nationalism is usually based on the concept of nation-states where it preserves identity. Nationalism also connotes "self-determination. Nationalism is usually associated with patriotism but can also lead to chauvinism, imperialism, racism and xenophobia, militarism, or ultimately to fascism"".

In the study of nationalism the question of ethnic roots cannot be ignored. To quote Smith, "too great an emphasis on the 'modernising' potential of nationalism overlooks the importance of its ethnic roots in the distant Past" Before the 1960's nationalism was closely linked to 'modernisation'. However, since 1960s the terms like underdevelopment or the penetration of capitalism into the periphery has taken the place of modernisation while in the West the concept of modernisation is increasingly associated with the coming of a post-industrial society (Smith 1983: ix). Taking note of the importance of ethnicity from that of modernisation in the study of nationalism Smith wrote

> The study of nationalism needs to be reoriented to take account, not only of the new forces associated with the French and Industrial Revolutions, but also of the retention of older ties and sentiments, often long antedating the 'modern era'. The new focus of study, while not neglecting 'modern' factors like capitalism, urbanisation, bureaucratism and science, must take into account that whole new field of research into ethnicity and the 'ethnic revival', which has flourished particularly during the last decade. (Smith 1983: X)

Therefore, the nationalism study is more firmly attached to the study of ethnic relations. As an "ideology nationalism links a *primordialist* understanding of ethnicity with the doctrine of self-determination." (Wan and Vanderwerf 2009).

## 1.6.5 Ethnonationalism

Connor was a staunch advocate of the term ethnonationalism. Just as ethnic nationalism for Anthony Smith and mini-nationalism for Louis Synder, so is ethnonationalism for Connor. Ethnonationalism denotes "both the loyalty to a nation deprived of its own state and the loyalty to an ethnic group embodied in a specific state, particularly where the latter is conceived as a 'nation-state'. In other words, ethnonationalism is conceived in a very broad sense and may be used interchangeably with nationalism" (Conversi 2004: 2). In other words, 'ethnonationalism is a term

linked to the ideology "promoting the unity of peoples of similar culture, ethnicity, or history in a manner that trandscends national political boundaries" (Warnes 2013). Black nationalism in United States is a clear example of ethnonationalism. Black Nationalism also ranges from radical demand to create a separate all black state in North America with clearly demarcated borders and sovereignty to a more popular black ethnonationalist movements that seek to maintain and celebrate African cultural and ethnic unity. "Whatever the form of American black ethnonationalism or transnationalism, they are all unusual forms of nationalism with no easily definable link to a specific geographical center, yet bound by a recognizable dissatisfaction with certain aspects of American life" (Warnes, 2013). In the light of Black ethnonationalist movement it could be applied in the case of the Kuki and Chins ethnic group ethnonationalist movements is also a result of dissatisfaction with certain aspects of governance from the authority .i.e. the government from both the respective countries.

The term ethnonationalism refers to a "particular strain of nationalism that is marked by the desire of an ethnic community to have absolute authority over its own political, economic, and social affairs. Therefore, it denotes the pursuit of statehood on the part of an ethnic nation. Ethnonationalist movements signify the perception among members of a particular ethnic group that the group's interests are not being served under the present political arrangements" (Ethnonationalism Glossary, 1990). English Oxford living Dictionaries also defined ethnonationalism as "advocacy or support for the political interests of a particular ethnic group, especially its national independence or self-determination. Experts agree that the driving force behind the insurgency is ethnonationalism".

Ethnicity and nationalism are closely related terms. According to Hutchinson and Smith, "the dichotomy between a non-ethnic 'us' an ethnic 'others' has continued to dog the concepts in the fields of ethnicity and nationalism" (Hutchinson and Smith 1996: 4). Connor is also of the view that "Ethnicity is so intimately connected to nationalism that we are best served using the term ethnonatonalism to refer to such phenomenon. It is the increased contact between ethnic collectivities that comes with the late modern period that forces group members to develop a significant sense of subjective self awareness and identity. This for Connor is the essence of

ethnonationalism and is the driving force behind expressions of nationalist feeling. It has also become known as the primordial view of nationalism"(Conversi 2002).

### 1.6.6 Types of Ethnonationalist Movements

Nagel (1993: 103-11) identified two major types of ethnonationalism: a) historical ethnonationalism or anti-colonialism and b) ethnic subnationalism or secessionist movements. The first wave of ethnonationalism, also known as decolonzation , can be traced to various indigenous ethnic movements in many Asian and African Countries after World War II pursuing  independent  secessionist movements against the western European colonial powers. For example, many "artificial" states were carved up by colonial powers in Africa without regard to ethnic demography, so that most of the borders of the emerging nations were arbitrary colonial boundary first. These ethnic secesioinist movements were designated by the colonial powers as Indian nationalism, Ghanian nationaliosm, Nigerian nationalism, and so on. (Kourvetaris 1996:170). The subnationalist ethnic movements have sometimes been more violent than the first wave of ethnonationalism that strove against the colonial powers of national independence and statehood. However, not all ethnonationalisms lead to ethnic conflict and ethnic subnationalist secessionist movements. The majority of the sub-nationalist movements, however, are occurring in the developing world. A separatist movement in India by the Kukis and in Myanmar has been going on for years since the colonial master hand over authority to the respective states concerned (Kourvetaris 1996: 171).

Kourvetaris has also discussed as to how ethnonationalist movements become secessionist movements, if they develop certain characteristics citing five major factors contributing to these movements as given by Premdas (Kourvetaris 1990:14-16). These are

a) "An organized struggle; any ethinic group within a multi-ethnic nation state, whose members share peimordial ethnic ties,  can organize, mobilize, and struggle for territorial  autonomy and independence;

b) Territorial self-government; an eth;nic group participating  in a secessionist movement seeks a territorial base that it calls its homeland, such as the Palestinian sin the West bank  and Gaza Strip in the state of  Israel;

c) Primordial and secondary factors; primordial ties are mythical claims of ethnic identity and ethnic consciousness which may lack historical objectivity and authenticity. Secondary claims may include feelings of discrimination or oppression of the minorities by the dominant groups who pursue territorial self-government. These two factors are believed to facilitate ethnic identification with a secessionist movement;

d) The principle of self-determination is another contributing factor to secessionist movements. Under this notion every nation has a God-given, natural right to pursue its own destiny through self- rule and independence. This principle, as was pointed out, can be traced to World War 1 and the League of Nations, the antecedent of the United Nations. Finally,

e) International recognition; recognition by other nations is essential for the legitimacy of the secessionist movement and self-government by and ethnic group" (Kourvetaris1996: pp 169-170).

**1.6.7 Theories of Ethnicity/ Approaches to Ethnicity**

There are multiple variants on theories of ethnicity but in this study two most important schools of thought on ethnicity is discussed. This two school of thought onethnicity have produced several interesting studies of the political role of ethnic ties and movements on various parts of the world. They are-

1. Primordialists and

2. Instrumentalists

**1.6.7.1 Primordialist View**

The concept 'Primordialism' or 'Primordial attachments' was first used by Edward Shils, who was influenced by his readings in the sociology of religion. Sakhong (2003) has observed in Hutchinson and Smith that "Shils sought to distinguish certain kinds of social bond-personal, primordial, sacred, and civil tie- and to show how even in modern civic societies the other kind of social bonding persisted" (Hutchinson and Smith 1996: 8). Clifford Geertz, an American anthropologist further developed the concept of Primordialism and inisists that ethnicity is something that cannot be manipulated at one's own will. He argues that "every individual is born into a particular culture that structures his beliefs and his identity" Further, "Primordiality is

attributed by individuals to the ties of religion, blood, race, language, region, and custom; it does not inhere in these bonds. Geertz suggests that the drive for an efficient, dynamic modern state interacts with the other great drive for personal identity, which is based on primordial ties" (Hutchinson and Smith 1996: 8). "Both Shils and Geertz use the concept of primordialism as a means of describing certain kinds of social attachment, rather than as an explanatory concept" (Scott 1990:150). Primordialism "assumes that group identity is a given that there exist in all societies certain primordial, irrational attachments based on blood, race, language, religion, region, etc". "Primordialists believe that ethnic identity is deeply rooted in the historical experience of human beings to the point of being practically a given. Sociobiologists take this perspective a step further and assert the biological character of ethnicity. Primordialist approaches contend that ethnic bonds are 'natural', fixed by the basic experiences that human beings undergo within their families and other primary groups" (Llobera 1990: 3). Primordialist view of ethnicity and nationalism holds that "ethnic affiliations and kinship ties of belonging precede nation-state formation"(Conversi, 2005). Connor links the idea of an ethnic homeland and peoples' identity.

Wan and Vanderwerf (2009) has highlighted two crucial factors in a primordialist perspective as:

> a) one's ethnicity is ascribed at birth and b) one's ethnicity is more or less fixed and permanent. Primordialist theories view human society as a conglomeration of distinct social groups. At birth a person "becomes" a member of a particular group. Ethnic identification is based on deep, 'primordial' attachments to that group, established by kinship and descent. One's ethnicity is thus "fixed" and an unchangeable part of one's identity.

Primordialism is criticised for presenting a static and naturalistic view of ethnicity and for lacking explanatory power. "Some scholars frequently point to the malleability of ethnic identity, its overlapping with the other kinds of social identity, and people's capacity to assume various kinds of identities in different situation" (Hutchinson and Smith 1996: 8). Jangkholam Haokip has given that "Joireman points out four problems with primordialism; first, although claimed to be based on blood ties the primordialists, in reality, did not based their theory on actual biological fact, which obviously is impossible; second, if ethnicity truly is primordial then it cannot be

changed; third, it cannot explain the issue of multiple ethnic identities; and fourth, it is difficult to distinguish whether primordial ethnic ties are in fact primordial and different from other types of social ties and social experiences" (p.64). Even though primordialist theory fails to explain the phenomena, it cannot be denied the potency that primordial attachments have for the members of an ethnic group to sustain their attachments.

### 1.6.7.2 Instrumentalist View

The instrumentalist approach became popular with the work of Fredrik Barth (1969) and Abner Cohen (1974). Instrumentalist perspective became widespread in the 1970s and 1980s. Many similarities is observed in the work of Barth and Cohen,

> they both focus on the organizational features of ethnicity, and ethnicity is regarded as constituting the shared beliefs and practices that provide a group with the boundary maintenance and organizational dimensions necessary to maintain, and compete for, socio-economic resources. They can both then be defined as instrumentalists. However, they also reflect two persistent positions within instrumental approaches to ethnicity: those who focus on the socio-structural and cultural dimensions of ethnicity and adopt a more objectivist approach; and those who focus on the interpersonal and behavioural aspects of ethnicity and take a more subjectivist stance (Jones 1997: 74-75).

To Barth ethnic identity is an "individualistic strategy" in which individuals move from one identity to another to "advance their personal economic and political interests, or to minimize their losses" (Buanmann 2004: 13). "Instrumentalists believe that ethnic identity is flexible and variable; that both the content and boundaries of an ethnic group change according to circumstances. Some instrumentalists insist that ethnic affiliation is simply a ploy to promote economic interests, and that individuals are ready to change group membership if that suits their sense of security or their economic interests. Marxists have tended to see ethnicity as false consciousness, as a ruse of the dominant groups to hide class interests of a material kind. Furthermore, the persistence of ethnic ties in modern societies does not quite tally with the expectations of Marxist theorists, who predict that these ties will eventually fade away and be substituted by working class solidarity" (Llobera 1990: 8). Therefore, the main argument of instrumentalist approach is that ethnic identity is an instrument to achieve

a common goal of a group concern. In other words, ethnic groups are not natural but are constructed so as to achieve some common interests of the members involved.

The Primodialist understanding of ethnicity took a major shift with the publication of Frederick Barth's article in 1969 titled, "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries." In that essay he "questioned the belief that "the social world was made up of distinct named groups and argued that the identity of the group was not a quality of the container (i.e. an essence or a fixed, objective reality belonging to a cultural or ethnic group) but what emerges when a given social group interacts with other social group"s (Wan and Vanderwerf 2009).

> This interaction itself highlights differences between the groups and these cultural differences result in the formation of boundaries distinguishing "us" from "them". "A group maintains its identity," he wrote, "when members interact with others." Ethnicity, Barth insisted, is based on one's perception of "us" and "them" and not on objective reality that actually exits "out there" in the real world. Markers, such as language, religion, or rituals serve to identify these subjective ethnic "boundaries." Since these can change, ethnicity is not fixed but situational and subjective. He believed the focus should be placed on the "boundaries" between groups, not on the groups themselves. It was there, at these "boundaries" that ethnicity was "constructed." By separating ethnicity from culture, Barth made ethnicity an ever changing, socially constructed, subjective construct. (Wan and Vanderwerf 2009).

Like primordialism, an instrumentalist approach to ethnic identity has limitations. Instrumentalist approach fails to advocates the ability to cope with ethnic durability, ignoring mass passions evoked by ethnic ties and cultural symbols observe Spencer. If the difficulty with primordialism is lack of mutability, the problem with the instrumentalist view is overlooking the durability of ethnic groups. (Jangkholam Haokip 1997: 67). Buanmann also outlined five major critiques of instrumentalist theory as given by Jones (1997). They are

> 1. "Many instrumentalist approaches fall into a reductionist mode of explanation whereby ethnicity is defined in terms of the observed regularities of ethnic behavior in a particular situation.

2. The reduction of ethnicity to economic and political relationships frequently results in the neglect of the cultural dimensions of ethnicity. This neglect is a consequence of the idea that ethnic categories provide an "empty vessel" into which various aspects of culture may be poured.

3. The reductionist model of analysis in many instrumentalist studies also results in the neglect of psychological dimensions of ethnicity. Research has suggested that cultural ascriptions of ethnic identity may comprise an important aspect of an individual's sense of self, creating conflict for people whose social relations and cultural practices become removed from their sense of identity.

4. The assumption in many instrumentalist approaches that human behavior is essentially rational and directed toward maximizing self-interest results in an oversimplification of the perception of interests by culturally situated agents, and disregards the dynamics of power in both intragroup and intergroup relations.

5. As a result of the tendencies to define ethnicity as a politicized or mobilized group identity, and to neglect the cultural and psychological dimensions of ethnicity, it is difficult to distinguish ethnic groups from other collective-interest groups (e.g., race, class)" (Buanmann 2004: 13-14)

In the word of Jonas, "The rapid growth of what can be broadly termed instrumentalist approaches to ethnicity has contributed to an understanding of the common processes and structures underlying the formation of ethnic groups and the politicization of ethnic identity" (Jones 1997: 76). Jones (1997) summarizes that, "primordialist approaches to ethnicity and related phenomena attempt to explain the psychological dimension of ethnicity and the potency of particular symbols, which are inadequately addressed by many instrumentalist theories of ethnicity. However, at present, knowledge about the purported psychological and/or biological bases of primordial attachments is vague, and the level of explanation fails to address the dynamic and fluid nature of ethnicity in varied social and historical contexts. Moreover, primordialist approaches often incorporate ideas derived from nationalist ideologies without adequately historicizing these ideas" p (72).

### 1.6.7.3 Conclusion

Ethnicity and nationalism are inseparable term. Both are closely related and intertwined. "Ethnonationalism and subnationalism are movements of peoples to exit or pursue independent statehood or regional autonomy within a multi-ethnic multi-religious state. This movement or revolt of people against the unitary nature of the state is reinforced by indigenous rights and contention of power. While ethnic diversity and multi-culturalism are compatible with democracy and pluralism, ethnonationalism and subnationalism lead to ethnic mobilization and ethnocracy for political and economic advantages of one ethnic group against another" (Kourvetaris1996:182).

In the study of identity construction, it is important to note the stand of Weber which emphasised the role of the members of the group in constructing their own ethnic identity, not in biological terms, but rather based on a belief in common descent. Buanmann also observes that, "Overall, the underlying truth of ethnicity is that it is a product of self and group identity that is formed in extrinsic/intrinsic contexts and social interaction. Ethnicity is not the same as nor equal to culture. Ethnicity is in part the symbolic representations of an individual or a group that are produced, reproduced, and transformed over time" (Buanmann 2004: 14). The Kuki and Chins struggle for identity and representation in the so-called mainstream politics represents the struggle of many people around the world in general and ethnic ridden northeast India in particular.

To conclude identities in North-East India are the products of the given context. Historical experiences have played a crucial role in formation of a growing ethnic consciousness rooted in primordial attachment. In this note Kuki and Chin identity is constructed around cultural affinity, common descent, or belief in a common origin, language, and culture. 'Kuki' and 'Chin' identity is linguistic and culture based. In the light of the primordialism-instrumentalism distinctions referred above, the primordialist approach is more appropriate to the study of Kuki and Chin groups.

# CHAPTER TWO

*Historical Background of Ethno-Nationalism in the Frontier Region*

# Chapter Two

# Historical Background of Ethno-Nationalism in the Frontier Region

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to highlight historical background of various ethno-nationalist movements in the frontier region between India and Myanmar. It will give an overview of ethnic groups in the frontier region in general and Kuki and Chin ethnic groups on either side of India and Myanmar in particular. In addition, it will also discuss the social and political life/ aspirations of the Kukis and Chin ethnic groups during and after colonial rule.It would also trace the growth of ethnic consciousness and political aspirations of the Kukis in India's Northeastern part and Chins in Chins' inhabited areas Myanmar respectively. In this study the term 'ethno-nationalism' is use interchangeably with 'nationalism' to identify group's identity formation that assert right of self-determination for autonomy or independence.

Likewise, in Myanmar Pro-democracy supporters prefer the term 'Burma' over 'Myanmar'. The military junta in 1989 changed the name from 'Burma' to 'Myanmar' which the ethnic groups failed to recognise and was considered as an illegitimate government. Country Condition Report also maintained that "To some, the use of Myanmar equates to sympathizing with the military junta. To the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), the use of the word Burma might indicate subversion. Additionally, many ethnic minorities do not identify with Burma or Burmese, and simply refer to themselves by their ethnic minority" (Country Condition Report 2011: 2). In this study the term Myanmar is used as the study is based on the year 1991 to 2014, when the state functions as Myanmar and not Burma. But on discussing the historical part, the term 'Burma' is used. Therefore, the term Burma and Myanmar are used interchangeably depending on the era.

## 2.2 Locating/Defining the Frontier Region

According to Dictionary.com, "a frontier region is the part of a country that borders another country; the land or territory that forms the furthest extent of a country's settled or inhabited regions". Jailley opines that "Borders, Boundaries, frontiers, and borderlands are human creations that are grounded in various ethical traditions" (Jailley 2009: 1). The borders as we know today are usually the product of social practice, social conflict, and modern nation

state. The present border area is a product of colonial administration. For the sake of administrative convenience boundaries are marked and which later on segregate the same people into different countries today. Clear example can be cited to that of the Kukis and Chins.

The border studies laid down that "The border as we know it today was invented by the modern nation-state and combined the ancient forms of marches and limes. The border in this way became a line that had administrative, military, fiscal, juridical and linguistic functions. One could argue that the invention of the border transformed the previously more indefinite and heterogeneous space into territories" (Limology 2010, para.3). In the border studies the question of identity, belongingness and identification has also become an important ingredient. Sometimes the terms boundary and border are often used interchangeably even though there is a small distinction between them. According to limology,

> The term boundary comes from bounds, it has an inward orientation. Boundary is a more broad term than border, which is the territoralized line on the ground that separates political (id) entities, that creates an inside and an outside an interior and an exterior. Identities are produced through boundaries. A boundary may create a sense of 'Us' and 'Them'. Boundaries also define borderlands and borderlands from transborder regions. Borderlands and transborder regions lie in close proximity to the border. Besides boundaries and borders there is also the term frontier. This term is, as at already suggests etymologically, derived from front and has a slightly more outward orientation than the previous two. In the past a frontier was called the foreland, borderland or march (Kristof, 1959). In this sense, borderland can be seen as the frontiers of the nation state. Traditionally, borderlands and frontiers were considered as a buffer zones or places of mutual antagonism (Limology 2010, para.3).

The studies on India and Myanmar border can be substantiated by understanding Policy Practice Perception approach which states that "Policy practice perception approach which considers boundaries as products of social practice and integrates analyses at different levels of scale. It looks at the practice of borders, what happens at a border, what are the cross border activities and what kind of businesses and people are involved. It also considers the policy, the strategy of states and the actions of local and regional governments". Whereas the post-modern or post-structuralist studies the perception of border whereby questions of identity, belonging and identification are important.

**2.2.1 India-Myanmar Border**

Mizoram shared (510 km) with Myanmar's Chin state inhabited mainly by the mizos and chins. Nagaland shared (215 km) with Sagaing region of Myanmar comprising Bamar, Shan and Naga population. Manipur shared (398 Km) with Chin state of Myanmar in the south and Sagaing region of Myanmar in the East with Kuki, Naga and Chin population. The state of Arunachal Pradesh of India shared (520 km) with Sagaing region and Kachin state of Myanmar. Therefore, four states of India's North Eastern region shares 1643 km with two states and one region of Myanmar.

**Table 1. International Border between Myanmar and Northeast Indian states (in Km)**

| Sl. No. | States of India | Myanmar |
|---------|-----------------|---------|
| 1. | Arunachal Pradesh | 520 |
| 2. | Nagaland | 215 |
| 3. | Manipur | 398 |
| 4. | Mizoram | 510 |
| | Total: | 1643 |

Source: Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, International Borders (in Km)

It is important to note that border regions on both sides of the border are underdeveloped and marked by ethnic group's strife for autonomy and self-determination and to the extent demand for sovereignty from the respective government. Moreover, in these regions generic identity formation is very strong. "Due to historic ethnic linkages, people in border villages own land/property and have socio-economic interests across the borders. Their interests are protected by Indo-Burma treaty of 1952 on Border Affairs which allows free movement of the local ethnic tribals on both sides for the purpose of carrying on local trade and social visits". (Sanjay Thakur, 2014, para 2).

**2.3 Overview of Ethnic Groups in the Frontier Region**

The Northeastern part of India which shared a porous border Myanmar is inhabited by a mosaic of ethnic groups. The region is ethnically diverse in biodiversity, ethnic composition, culture, language, tradition etc. Even in a small state like Manipur, there is an existence of 32 ethnic tribal groups apart from the dominant Meeteis and a section of Meitei Pangal. Myanmar is no exception; there are as many as 135 ethnic national races in Myanmar. Most of the States in Myanmar are inhabited by the ethnic minorities like – the Chins, Kachins, Shans, etc.

**2.3.1 Indian Region**

North-eastern part of India is an extremely diverse region and exhibits unique features as compared to the other regions of India historically, socially and culturally. The region is surrounded by four international borders namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar and China. The frontier region between India and Myanmar is inhabited by numerous ethnic groups. The north-eastern region of India comprises of 8 states altogether. But it was earlier known by the name "seven sister" states namely- Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Tripura and Assam and later Sikkim was added to the seven sister states and some called it as "seven sisters and one brother". The region is so diverse that some called it as 'Mini India". The people of Northeast India are mostly of Mongoloid stock. They have unique culture, belief and orientations. The most important and unique feature of this region is ethnic and cultural diversities. There are diversities within each state.

The Northeastern states of India has an area of about 2.6 lakh square kilometres and a population over 39 million. It has a total of around "475 ethnic groups and sub-groups, speaking over 400 languages/dialects. The region accounts for just less than 8 per cent of the country's total geographical area and little less than 4 per cent of India's total population" (Indian Chamber of Commerce, Vision 2020 Annexure, NE Vision). "It is hugely diverse within itself, an India in miniature. Of the 635 communities in India listed as tribal, more than 200 are found in the North East. Of the 325 languages listed by the 'People of India' project, 175 belonging to the Tibeto-Burman group are spoken in the North East" (Bhaumik 2009:1). The region is plagued by ethnic resistance or nationalist movement. This often hinders pan-India movement. Even today the problem of ethnic movement is not solved. Ethnic-based insurgency movement is rampant and despite the government effort in suppressing the

insurgency movements by imposing a draconian act like AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Power Act). Bhaumik states that "The tensions within the generic identities have often led to mayhem and violence in North East. India's federal government has often played on the tribal-ethnic fault line to control the turbulent region" (Bhaumik 2009:4).

### 2.3.1.1 India and its People

India is a country situated in South Asia which is also the seventh-largest country by area, the second-most populous country after China and the most populous democracy in the world. It is bounded by the Indian Ocean on the south, the Arabian Sea on the southwest, and the Bay of Bengal on the southeast. It shares land borders with Pakistan to the west; China, Nepal, and Bhutan to the northeast; and Bangladesh and Myanmar to the east. In the Indian Ocean, India is in the vicinity of Sri Lanka and the Maldives. India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands share a maritime border with Thailand and Indonesia.

Indians are the people who are the nationals or citizens of India, the second most populous nation containing 17.50% of the world's population. "Indian" refers to nationality, but not ethnicity or language. The Indian nationality consists of many regional ethno-linguistic groups, reflecting the rich and complex history of India. India hosts all major ethnic groups found in the Indian Subcontinent. The Diaspora populations with Indian ancestry, as a result of emigration, are somewhat widespread most notably in other parts of Asia and North America.

### 2.3.1.2 Demography of Manipur

Manipur is situated in the extreme North-eastern border of India. It is bound by Nagaland on the North, Mizoram and Chin Hill state of Myanmar on the South, and Cachar Hills district of Assam to the west and Somrah ranges and upper Chinwin river of Myanmar to the east. "The state covers an area of 22,327 square kilometres. Manipur is situated strategically, since it virtually is the meeting point between India and South-East Asia" (India 2016: 915). It is also known as gateway to Southeast Asia. Interestingly, the people of Northeast and Southeast Asian countries are of the same mongoloid stock. North-eastern India has lot of cultural and linguistic affinity with Southeast Asian countries as compared to the mainland India.

Manipur is an ethnically and linguistically diverse land. It comprises of a mosaic of ethnic groups mainly divided into three main groups- 1)Kukis 2)Nagas and 3)Meiteis. All the tribes

of Manipur are clubbed under Kukis and Nagas. Manipur has a long record of insurgency and inter-ethnic violence.

According to the latest census 2011, Manipur has a total population of 28.56 lakh (2011 Census). Geographically, Manipur is divided into two region- "The Hills" and "The Valleys". The hilly region is dominated mainly by the tribes of Kuki and Naga whereas the valley region is mostly dominanted by Meeteis and a small section of Meitei Pangal. Even the Kukis and Nagas settlements are found in the valley region. The Kukis and the Nagas are the major tribe conglomerates and are sub-divided into about '"thirty two smaller tribes according to difference in culture, language and customary practices. No clear-cut boundary line can be drawn between the areas occupied by the Kukis and the Nagas as they are all mixed up in all the hill districts except Churachandpur. In the present district of Ukhrul of north east Manipur, though the Tangkhul Nagas are predominant, a large number of Kukis also settle there" (Dena, 2016). Ethnic consciousness among the group is very high. Ethnic heterogeneity often resulted into ethnic consciousness and sometimes led to ethnic feud among the groups resulting into ethnic conflict and rise of ethnic movement.

### 2.3.2 Myanmar Region

Myanmar also has a long history of movement by the ethnic groups against the government. Most of the minority ethnic groups in Myanmar are of the opinion that they were never a part of direct Burman government rule before British annexation in the 19th century. After the British left the many ethnic minorities are scattered in many neighbouring countries because of the borders drawn during the colonial period which was drawn for their own administrative convenience. At present

> Several ethnic groups are found on both sides of the land frontiers surrounding Burma: notably, the Chin (Mizo) and Naga are also present in India; the Kachin, Wa and Shan in China; the Karen, Mon and Shan in Thailand; and the Rakhine and Rohingya Muslims in Bangladesh. The Smaller hill communities of the Lahu, Akha, and Lisu are even divided across four modern-day borders, being split between Burma, China, Laos and Thailand (Smith 1994: 21).

Due to colonial's demarcation of land, the Kukis and Chins today are widely dispersed throughout Bangladesh, India and Myanmar without any guaranteed of right to autonomy.

Sadly, today they are reduced to a minority status in their respective places of settlement. Disgruntled by the abrogation of their rights they fight for secession or autonomy in the form of armed movement. It would be a wise step on the part is to the wisdom of the government to appease these groups and integrate them into the larger mainstream or grant them autonomy or sovereignty for the sake of peace in the region.

### 2.3.2.1 Myanmar and its People

Myanmar is "situated in Southeast Asia and is bordered on the north and northeast by China, on the east and southeasaxz zt by Laos and Thailand, on the south by the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal and on the west by Bangladesh and India. The country covers an area of 677,000 square kilometres (261,228 square miles) ranging 936 kilometres (581 miles) from east to west and 2,051 kilometres (1,275 miles) from north to south, Myanmar is made up of 135 national races, of which the main national races are Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Bamar, Mon, Rakhine and Shan" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Republic of the Union of Myanmar). "The mountainous Chin state is bordering with Bangladesh and India on the west, and Rakhine state on the south, Magwe and Sagaing divisons on the east. The whole region is made up of high hills and deep valleys, and there is hardly any plain or plateau" (Asterism Travels & Tours – Myanmar).

According to Embassy of India Yangon, "Myanmar shares a long, sensitive and porous border of over 1600km with India as well as a maritime boundary in the Bay of Bengal" (India-Myanmar Relations, para.1). There is a growing consciousness among the ethnic minorities for preservation of their ancestral land.

### 2.3.2.2 Demography of Chin State

Christina has given that "Chin State is located in the southern part of Northwestern Burma (Myanmar), bordered by Bangladesh and India to the west, Rakhine State to the south, and Magwe and Sagaing Region to the east. The entire state is about 14,400 square miles, an area slightly smaller than Switzerland. Chin State is also known as the Chin Hills due to its mountainous geography that has an average elevation of 5000-8000 feet"(Christine Annie Scarlis, Chin cultural Profile, June 2, 2010). "Chin State is located in the west of Myanmar. India is to its north and west; Rakhine State, to its south; Sagaing and Magway Division are to its cast. It has an area of 13.907 sq. Miles" (MODiNS.NET 2017: Para.1).

The Chin state of Myanmar lies in the North-western part of Myanmar bordering with Bangladesh and India. Chin State is Myanmar's poorest and least-developed state, sparsely populated and lacking in infrastructure. It has a population of 478,801 ethnic Chin groups (Census Report Volume 3-D 2015: 1). While the term "Chin" generally refers to one of the many ethnic groups in Burma, the Chin themselves are ethnically and linguistically diverse (Human Rights Watch 2009: 9). The chin society is characterised by the existence of chieftainship or chiefdom.

The **"**Chin territory originally encompassed not only the Chin Hills of modern-day Burma, but also neighbouring regions of Burma, Bangladesh, and India's northeastern states of Mizoram and Manipur. Foreign occupation by the British in the 18th century, however, marked the end of a unified and free Chinland" (Human Rights Watch 2009: 9). At this note, it can be related that the Kuki extend of territory is the same as that of the Chins. Therefore, Kuki and Chin had the same origin and inhabited the same territory with the same history, ethnic ancestry, and cultural practices. Today it is just the territory which differentiates the two groups namely as- the Kukis inhabited the Norteastern Part of India mainly Manipur and Mizoram while the Chins as in the Chin state of Myanmar.
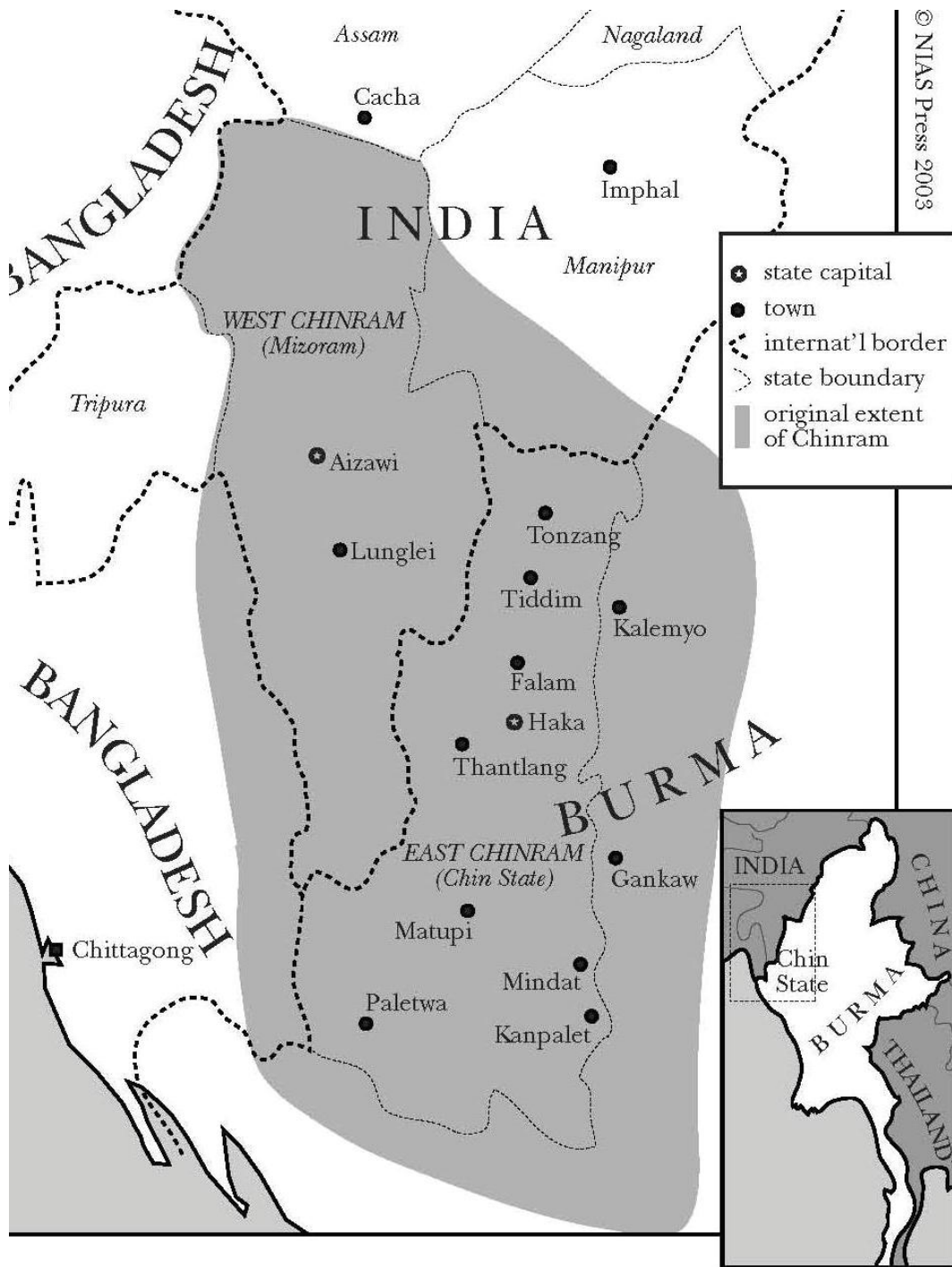
Map 1: Chinram (Meaning Chinland) (Sakhong 2003: xxiv , Human Rights Watch January 2009: )

The chin state of Myanmar is considered as Myanmar's most underdeveloped state. The Chin state is also sparsely populated owing to bad geographical terrain supported by mass migration to the neighbouring countries and in United States of America after ethnic and religious persecution meted out by the military junta during 8-8-88 uprising or incident in Myanmar's political history.

**2.4 Understanding the Terminology Kuki and Chin Groups**

Generally Kuki, Chin and Mizo (Lushais) are used interchangeably depending on the geographical or territorial location. It is a name given to them by the outsiders. All of them trace their origin to the place called Khul. The details of which are discussed below.

**2.4.1 Origin of the Kukis and Chins**

The origin of Kuki is still shrouded in Mysteries (Guite 2014: 93). The Chin-Kuki-Mizo seems to represent different group today politically but history or myth is the fact that they are one and the same group of people residing in different geographical location i.e. India, Myanmar and Bangladesh today. They all belong to Tibeto-Burman Linguistic group. They all have common myth and oral tradition tracing their origin from Khul. The different tribes of Kuki-Chin "held a common belief that they originally emerged out of a cave or hole according to their mythological stories put in different but in analogical versions. This mythological cave known by various names like Khul, Khur, Khurpui, Lungkhur, Sinlung, Chinlung or Chhinlung" (Suantak 2012). Kamkhenthang in his article *Migratory movements of Chin-Mizo-Zomi Tribes* stated that

> "They share a common belief in their emergence from a cave or a hole in the earth invariably called Khul, Khur, Khurpui, Lungkhur, Sinlung, Chinlung or Chhinlung and so on. Each group locate the place where the cave or khul is situated in their own myths" (p.99).

They further stated that Chin, Kuki and Mizo groups share one and the same legendary story of Khul or cave. Therefore, "Khul" (cave) is the most commonly accepted origin of the Kuki. Moreover, mythologically it can be said that they are the descendant of the same ancestors.

However, Gangte opines that "Christianity and modern education played a major role in the development of the historiography of the Kukis during the 20th century but till some fifty

years back, common origin theory of the Chin people was not accepted however, today, anthropologists and sociologists including historians give emphasis on common origin" (Priyadarshini Gangte 2011).

**2.4.2 Who are the Kukis, Chins?**

According to Ray (1990), "the term Kuki is a canopy term covering a large number of tribes and sub-tribes other than the Nagas" (p.12). Hunter also mentioned the Kukis as "those tribes whose home is in the mountainous tract lying between Burma, Manipur, Cachar and Arakan" (Imperial Gazetter of India: 189). According to Lt. Colonel Shakespeare, "the term 'Kuki' has a definite meaning and includes Aimol, Chothe, Chiru, Koireng, Kom, Purum, Anal, Lamkang, Moyon, Monsang, Gangte, Vaiphei, Simte, Paite, Thadou, Hmar, Zou etc. G.A. Grierson stated that the tribes connoted by Kuki are Anals, Aimols, Chirus, Gangte, Hmars, Koms, Lushais, Paites, Purums, Raltes, Suktes, Thadou etc, each able to understand another's dialect". (Haokip 2009: para. 2) Moreover, the government of India, Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 included 'Any Kuki Tribes' to indicates the Kukis of Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Meghalaya.

Sangkima also states that the "Mizos in Mizoram were known in early times to the British and others by various names such as Kuki, Chin and Lushai" (Sangkima 2004: 15). He further states that the popularity of the term Mizo suggests a feeling of a separate identity and to represent their political ideology (Sangkima 2004: 15).

Neng mentioned about Lt. Colonel Shakespear, remark on the kukis and Chin state as

> "The term Kuki has come to have a fairly definite meaning, and we now understand by it certain—clans, with well marked characteristics, belonging to the Tibeto-Burman stock. On the Chittagong border, the term is loosely applied to most of the inhabitants of the interior hills beyond the Chittagong Hills Tracts; in the Cachar it generally means some families of Kuki. Now-a-days, the term is hardly employed having been superseded by Lushai in the Chin Hills, and generally on the Burma border all these clans are called Chin. These Kuki are more closely allied to the Chakmas, and the Lushai are more closely to their eastern neighbours who are known as Chin.——Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the Kukis, Lushais and Chins are all of the same race." (Neng 2009: para. 15, Shakespear, *The Lushai Kuki Clans*,7-8)

So the terms, "Chin, Kuki and Mizo being of one and the same generic term ethnic tribal groups mostly are of Kuki origin'' (Gangte 2011). Today the Kukis are dispersed in almost all the states of Northeast India, Burma and Chittagong Hill tract of Bangladesh. They are known for their bravery in fighting against the British colonial expansionism. At present in Manipur, the Kuki groups inhabited all the Hill districts of Manipur.

A.S. Reid, a Surgent Lieutenant Colonel and a Medical Officer in charge of 2nd Battalion 4th Gurkha Rifles, was of the opinion that considerable confusion arises from the various names under which the inhabitants of the Chin-Lushai Hills have been described

> "Previous to the expedition of 1871-72, the wild tribes which had been in the habit of raiding our North-Eastern Frontier were generally spoken of as "Kukis" a Bengali word meaning hill-men or highlanders. Since that event, however, the term "Lushai" has come into more common use; and although originally applied to the tribe or tribes occupying the tract immediately to the south of Cachar, is now employed, in a comprehensive sense, to indicate all those living to the west of the Koladyne river, while those to the east are designated Shendus. On the other hand, to any one approaching them from the Burma side, the Shendus would be known as Chins, and I think it would therefore be better to drop the term Shendu, and divide the people with whom I am going to deal in the following pages into the two broad classes of Lushais and Chins, the course of Koladyne river forming the line of demarcation. Various derivations have been suggested for the word "Lushai" among which are "Lu" meaning head, and "Shai" to cut, or "Shai" long –haired, and I leave it to philologist to decide the question. I believe the Lushai call themselves "Zao." "Chin" is a Burmese term, and, on the authority of Colonel Woodthrope, synonymous `with Khyen (pronounced "Chin." (Reid 2008: 5).

Further he found that the Chins called themselves "Lai" (Reid 2008: 6).

Grierson also describes the term "Kuki as an Assamese or Bengali word applied to such hill tribes as Lushais, Rangkhols, Thadous, and so on, who were residing in India". In 1893, Reid also described as "although originally applied to the tribe or tribes occupying the tract immediately to the south of Cachar, is now employed, in a comprehensive sense, to indicate all those living to the west of the Kaladyne River, while those to the east are designated as

Shendus would be known as Chiang, synonymous with Kyen, and pronounced as 'Chin".
(Reid 2008: 5).

### 2.4.3 Chin-Kuki as One

Vumson, a KCZ (Kuki-Chin-Zomi-Mizo) scholar who prefer to call Kuki-Chin-Mizo as 'ZO' nation rather than either Kuki or Chin. Vumson mentions that "Father Sangermo, who wrote in 1783, the petty nation called 'JO', the name not used by the tribes such as ZO or YO or SHO and British officer Tom Lewin's record, indicating. The generic name of the whole nation is DZO." (Gangte, 2011). It can be said that chin –Kuki and Mizo are one nation with different names spread into three different countries in modern days. This is further substantiated by the work of B.S Carey and H.N Tuck which proves their same origin which read as

> "Without pretending to speak with authority on the subject, we think we may reasonably accept the theory that the Kukis of Manipur, the Lushais of Bengal and Assam, and the Chins originally lived in what we now know as Thibet, are of one and the same stock; their form of Government, method of cultivation, manners and customs, belief and traditions all point to one origin." (Carey and Tuck, The Chin Hills 2)

To quote further one of the most decisive records demonstrating the truth of this unification, Messers B.S. Carey and H.N. Tuck wrote:

> "This nation had been united and strong, living in their own lands until the British came to divide and subdue them. The British split this nation into two, annexing one half to the then British India, and the other to British Burma. They gave different names to the divided lands – Chin Hills (in Burma) and Lushai Hills (in India). This is existing undeniable evidence of wicked rule, which perpetuated division within the nation. Carey and Tuck record that the British gave separate names to these people with the intent to divide them. They wrote, Those Kuki tribes which we designate as 'Chin' do not recognize that name. Though the nation was divided by the British, these people still belong to one origin and one nation." (Carey and Tuck, the Chin Hills 3)

## 2.5 The Kuki Socio and Political Life

In every tribal society, socio-political life played a pivotal role in the life of every individuals starting from village. The situation is more or less same with the Kuki society and the following are some of the unique features. The Kukis are an ethnic group found in all the northeastern states of India except Arunachal Pradesh, China and Sagaing division of Myanmar and Chittagong hill tract of Bangladesh. According to Guite (2016) the Kukis were and still are scattered over a vast region in India as well as in the neighbouring countries. A sizeable number of Kukis are found in the Sylhet region of Bangladesh and along the West Upper Chindwin Valley n Burma (Myanmar). Among the Indian States a large number of Kukis are found in Manipur, South West region of Nagaland, North Cachar Hills, Karbi Anglong in Assam and in the States of Tripura. The British policy of divide and rule is responsible for the scattering of the kukis in three international borders.

Ray states that "the Thadou-Kuki society is now at serious socio-political crossroads. The three sets of authority the colonial, traditional and the modern have interacted with each other in different ways at different junctures of the history of the tribe" (Ray 1990: 13).

### 2.5.1 Kuki Village System.

To understand the traditional Kuki society, village occupies primacy on par with other forms of institutions. A "village forms a social, political and cultural unit and functions as a compact and well-knit society where traditional customs and disciplines are observed" (Fernandes and Barbora 2008). Guite (2016) observed that

> the traditional Kuki villages have the following components of (i) a population of various clans (ii) a village territory (land and forests) and (iii) sovereignty. They have an indigenous administration and a self-sustaining economy. Customary laws are feared and respected in the village. Each village has a well-defined boundary formed by natural topographic features such as ridges, streams, hillocks and stone markers.

Guite (2016) noted that the Kukis have a tradition of taking their village name wherever they migrate and give the same name to the villages they establish in most cases. For instances, the great Kuki Chiefs of Aisan Chengjapao Doungel, Lhukhomang Haokip alias Pache of Chahsat the head of Haokip clan and Khotinthang Chief of Jampi, the head of Sitlhou clan,

etc., can be mentioned. Recently, Pu. Ngulkhup Haokip, Chief of Lonpi Memorial Statue has been erected at Lonpi village 12th March 2010 under the theme of "Esperit de Corps".

## 2.5.2 Family

In Kuki society, family occupies the most important and prominent place in the history. According to Doungel (2006) "father exercise all supreme authority over matters pertaining to the family and the women folk have no significance roles in decision making. Most of the family is a nuclear which ultimately becomes a joint family".

## 2.5.3 Economic Life

In the early period, traditional shifting cultivation (jhumming) is the main economic activities. Shakespeare (1912: 33) vividly mentions that "jhumming is certainly a very wasteful method of cultivation, as seldom more than two crops are taken off the same piece of land, which is then allowed to lie fallow till it has again become covered with jungle, which will take three or four years in the case of bamboo, and seven to ten if the jungle be trees".

## 2.5.4 The Institution of 'Chieftainship'

The institution of 'Chieftainship' supreme and land ownership is the exclusive right and prerogative with absolutism. The chief performed judiciary (to settle and dispense justices), executive and legislature functions (day to day administration of the village affairs) in consultation with his council of ministers called *Semang Pachong*. Haokip (2008: 73) insists "that the actual day-to-day conduct of administration, the chief and his council of ministers are entirely guided by customs and conventions. The customary laws govern all criminal and civil cases"

According to Guite (2016) the Kukis were under self-rule and sovereign, the Chief (Haosa) also was the fountain of honour. The villagers utilized the land during their good relationship with the Chief; otherwise the common villager had to migrate elsewhere. In Manipur before the coming of the British, the Maharaja never tried to interfere in the internal affairs of the Kukis. Whatever they did for the Maharaja was voluntary and not compulsion. But when the Britishers consolidated their position in the valley, they began to do whatever the Raja did not dare and finally began to introduce their laws which the Kukis could not accept.

The Chief is responsible for the administration of the entire village; the well being of each household is the concern of the Chief. The Chief took care of the entire village administration. In dispensation of his duties as the head of the village he is assisted by his council of ministers known as "*Semang – Pachong*" According to Gangte (2010) "kinship structure for the purpose of village administration is the highest and independent political unit". Merits of Chieftainship as given by Priyadrshini M. Gangte (2010)  which states that "the institution of chieftainship protected the land of Kukis from invasion by other communities, social institutions of chieftainship enable Kuki community to settle and solves many cases including murder case arising  between individuals and groups within the community in accordance with the customary laws, institutions of chieftainship so far palay a vital role in leading the Kukis towards unity and a common platform". She further states that individuals' rights are limited under chieftainship system because no individual is allowed to act freely without the consent of the Chief.

## 2.5.5 Before Colonial Rule

The social and political life of most of the tribal society in Northeast India is not easy to differentiate rather interlinked and interdependent. The Kuki groups before the colonial invasion were independent of each other. They lived in clan-based small communities. Clan fued was common. Reid description of the Kukis and Chin people in his famous book "Chin-Lushai Land" written in 1983 is as under

> people this region with dusky tribes, almost as numerous in dialect and designation as the villages in which they live, owning no central authority, possessing no written language, obeying but the verbal mandates of their Chiefs, hospitable and affectionate in their homes, unsparing of  age and sex while on the warpath, untutored as the remotest races in Central Africa, and yet endowed with an intelligence which has enabled them to discover for themselves the manufacture of gun-powder (Reid 2008: 2)

Sakhong in his study on the Chin society of Myanmar in the book titled "*In Search of Chin Identity: A Study in Religion, Politics and Ethnic Identity in Burma*" mentioned that "it is

even harder to distinguish between the political realm, social structure and economic system. They are all inseparably intertwined and deeply rooted in religious concepts" (Sakhong 2003: 35).

The chief in traditional chin society wields power and political authority. He owns land but "also the forests, the woods, the rivers and and all the living being residing in his territory" (Sakhong 2003: 37). Moreover, the "chief control and manage every aspect of the social, political, religious and economic affairs within his domain". This led the hereditary Chief sometimes to behave like a despot. So chieftainship in both the Kuki and Chin society plays a crucial role in the society. Before the advent of the British,

> "The Chin people were divided into different tribal groups and spoke different dialects ever since they first settled in what is now Chinram. These tribal and linguistic differences were strengthened by their traditional religion of *Khua-hrtum* worship, and although they all followed the same conceptual pattern of belief systems, the ritual practices of Khua-hrum were mutually exclusive and could not serve to unite the entire race under a single religious institution. Moreover, they never had a chance to re-unite under the single political leadership of a national kingdom, as they once had done in Khampat, the ancient Chin capital. Tribally and locally they were independent. None of the surrounding powers, such as the Bengali Indian or Burman, ever conquered the Chinram. As a result, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam had not reached the Chin when they eventually encountered Christianity" (Sakhong 2003:85).

**2.5.6 During Colonial Rule**

During the British rule, the policy of non-interference was followed in dealing with the hill communities. "But the paradox of colonial policy was expressed in several ways. The policy of non-interference was followed by area expeditions that were resorted to in order to quell the opposition of the hill communities to the colonial extension of commercial activities in and through their land. Eventually, the hill communities were brought under different territorial administrative authorities and hence the concept of territorial politics was thus introduced, hitherto unknown to the hill communities" (U.A Shimray 2001: 3674). This division on the basis of 'administrative convenience' segregate the people and made ethnic group fall under one or more political unit.

In the case of the Kukis and Chins, the clan based fued which dominates the society was addressed by the colonial administration in their quest for a better administration. In order to control them the colonial rulers conducted a study of the clans including their culture and language and adopted certain names by which groups were catagorized into clans and tribes, including marking their territories and finding a common name for them.(Jangkholam Haokip 2010). He further argues that the colonial rulers invented names of the people which later on became as a ground for perpetuating different names for the same people.

> the colonial rulers invented names for the people and accordingly used ‗Chin‘ for the Kuki groups in Burma and ‗Kuki‘ for those in the Assam, Manipur and in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. We shall show that while the contribution of the colonial administration helped preserve the history of the people and provided written sources for their later identity assertion movements, it also served as a stumbling block to their unification by perpetuating different names for the same people.

Considerable confusion arises from the various names under which the inhabitants of the Chin- Lushai Hills have been described (Reid 2008: 5). "Different clan names emerged through the traditional practice by which people named themselves after their respective progenitors as clans, for instance, Haokip, Kipgen, Hangsing, and Chongloi. There were also groups given names in relation to others such as the *Hmar* or *Kholhang*, which means village of the south, in relation to those settled in the north. Besides traditional practices, it was possible that there were clan names which have originated from outside the community." (Jangkholam Haokip 2010)

At the end of the war, all the leading chiefs were put into jail. In the meantime, in preventing the possible future recurrence of such resistance movements, the Colonial administration for the first time divided the hill areas into three subdivisions, each headed by an officer from the neighbouring government of Assam149 so as to suppress the Kuki influence. Regarding the impact of that arrangement on the Kukis, William Shaw wrote, ―by the establishment of three subdivisions in the hills of Manipur State, their prestige among other hill tribes has been much shaken. For the Kukis, it was a total and sudden change and disruption of their normal life and practice that was never to be restored.

## 2.5.7 Post colonial Rule

The British rule had a big repercussion on the history and politics of Northeast India. Northeast is extremely diverse ethnically and culturally. The Britishers division of the areas on the basis of administrative convenience had created chaos and unfulfilled desire of the ethnic group to have their own aspirations for homeland. Shimray (2001) said that 'such whimsical administrative divisions and introduction of territorial politics shattered all ethnic aspirations' (p. 3674). After India got independence from the British yoke, Northeast states were integrated to India. There are many disgruntled groups voicing for sovereignty and some aspiring for a separate homeland within Indian Union. As a result of all these, the aftermath of India's independence was characterised by insurgency, ethnic clash etc. Some even regarded North-east as a disturbed region. This eventually hinders development of the region as well.

In the post-colonial period in North-East India, as in many former colonies in the Two-Thirds World, search for indigenous identity and self-governance marked the freedom of the people from colonial rule. In the context of the Kuki people, a search for identity includes the search for a common name. In that process, new names have been developed with an argument that the old names such as Kuki or Chin were foreign and derogatory terms and as the result, the generic term 'Kuki', and for that matter 'Chin', gradually lost its power to unite the people. Unfortunately the development of the new names did not involve a corporate effort. While some retain the generic names, Chin and Kuki, others promote the new terms such as Mizo, Zomi or Zo and as the result the people are further segmented. At times, it looks as though the people have a plethora of names and at other times, they seem to lack any unifying identity"(p.93).

### 2.5.7.1 Insurgency/ Rise of Ethnonationalist Consciousness

The aspirations for autonomy and secessionist movement dominated the political scene of the entire northeast region after India got independence from the colonial power. Northeast being the cultural and ethnic mosaic is filled with confusion to go ahead with their own administrative set up. Ethnic strife for power and dominance and disgruntlement has taken its roots. It was at this juncture that ethnic consciousness in the form of identity formation has taken its shape in the region. Many ethnic based organisations were formed. Some ethnic

based organisations were the Kabui Naga Association (1946), the Kuki National Assembly (1946), and so forth.

The Kuki Rebellion of 1917-1919 has once again restored the faith of Kukis as a conglomeration of tribes and strife for Kuki nationalism in the post independent India. The politics of the Kukis centred on assertions of its pre-independence identity as a free nation. As a result the demand for independence or secession dominated the political demand of the Kukis in the post independent India.

**2.5.7.1.1 Kuki National Assembly (KNA)**

The post-independence period witnessed the rise of various ethnic assertions in Northeast India. Some scholars have contended that the formation of Kuki Chiefs Association, 1935-36 had paved the way for the formation of a new and dynamic platform for the Kukis, called the Kuki National Assembly on the 24th October 1946 with zavum Misao and T. Kipgen as the founder president and Secretary respectively. The constituent of Kuki National Assembly includes tribes like Thadous, Paites, Vaipheis (Suontak and the Baites), Gangtes, Simtes, Zous, Anals, Koms, Hmar, Guites, Chirus,Monsangs, Koireng.

After independence the Kuki National Assembly ( K.N.A) demanded a separate state for the Kukis within India. In this regard the Kuki National Assembly submitted several memoranda to the Central Government but it yielded no response. In pursuance of their demand for a Kuki State, the Kuki National Assembly send a Memorandum to the First Prime Minister of Free India. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, on 24/03/1960, that states; "The only solution for the Kuki problem is the Kuki state, where the Kukis will have their own government to take care of their needs within the Union o f India. A separate state for the Kukis with Manipur as the bastion will also give them the full opportunity to attain full growth. The Kuki state, as demanded, will enable collection of the Kuki minorities elsewhere together in a place where their lives and properties can be secure and their due share of development ensured".

According to Gangte (2010) after "independence the Indian constitution provided special provisions for growth and development of the weaker section of hill people. these groups no longer feel the necessity of being called -Kuki'. They feel that they should avail to the fullest extent possible of the privilege being accorded to them by the constitution of India". Chaube

(1975) mentions that as a result of this the landscape became marked by the mushrooming of many "political organizations based on narrow ethnic lines, which were splinter groups from the Kuki National Assembly (KNA) viz. the Hmar Congress (1954) and the Hmar National Union (1962), the Paite National Council (1956), the Gangte Tribe Union (1958)etc. Initially the Kuki National Assembly was the political platform or organisation of the Kuki Chiefs but later on it became an active political party. On 17th October 1969, it adopted its constitution. It was recognized as a "State Party" by the Election Commission of India and allotted " Two Leaves " as its symbol in 1975. The Kuki National Assembly is a party which stands for the Kukis in India.

In 1949, when Manipur was on the verge of signing the Merger Agreement to be a part of the Indian Union, the Kuki chiefs opposed the Manipur Merger Agreement as they considered the preservation of Maharaja's kingdom was integral to the preservation of Kuki territory. In opposition to the Merger Agreement, over 250 Kuki warriors with muzzle-loading guns were deployed by the Kuki chiefs at the Palace Gate, so as to prevent the Maharaja from going to Shillong to sign the Merger Agreement. However, the Maharaja of Manipur yielded and signed the Merger Agreement at Shillong under the pressure of Akhil Manipur Hindu Mahasabha. Thus, the efforts of the Kuki chiefs to dissuade the Meitei Maharaja from signing the Merger Agreement with the Indian Union failed. In protest against the Merger Agreement, the Kukis under the banner of Kuki National Assembly (K.N.A )stated; "The hills (Manipur) had never been a part of India prior to the British annexation o f these frontier hills" . In 1960, the Kuki National Assembly reiterated by stating that, "The unchallenging fact is that, if the British government left the country, then naturally the Kukis should be free" .

 Taking into consideration the various aspects of the vexing problems o f the hills and the valley, it is the desire o f the Kuki National Assembly to announce that the Kukis should come under the Durbar provided the conditions are satisfactory, but failing to obtain satisfactory conditions, the Kukis regretfully, will have to follow the footsteps of their hill brethren in demanding for full secession. Even before India's independence, the Kuki National Assembly started putting strong pressure tor a satisfactory solution concerning land alienation problem of the Kukis. abolition of the forced labour system and the grant of equal rights with the plainsmen the hill representatives in the Assembly (Manipur) be nominated by

the hill people etc. Though the Kuki National Assembly was not in a position to realize the dreams of the Kukis in creating a homeland, it became a forerunner of the Kuki Movement for an amicable solution to the Kuki problems.

Even before India's independence, the Kuki National Assembly started putting strong pressure for a satisfactory solution concerning land alienation problem of the Kukis, abolition of the forced labour system and the grant of equal rights with the plainsmen, the hill representatives in the Assembly (Manipur) be nominated by the hill people etc(Resolution of the KNA, Working Committee, 1947) Though the KNA was not in a position to materialise the dream of the Kukis for a homeland, it became a forerunner of the future Kuki Movements for an amicable solution to the Kuki problems. The party also won seats in the state's election for Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA) until the 1990s. Shri. J.F.Routhangliana (Churachandpur Costituency), Shri. T.N. Haokip (Saikot Constituency), Shri, Thangkhanlal (Saikot), etc, were elected through Kuki National Assembly Party ticket in Manipur.

The Kuki national leaders have firm belief in the sincerity of the Government of Free India and sent memorandums, petitions and other peaceful mechanisms so that their plights are taken into account. As a result of ignorance in spite of utilizing peaceful methods, the year from 1980 onwards marked the coming up of the Kuki insurgency movements fighting for bringing an amicable solution to the Kuki problems which have long been ignored.

Singh (2016) observed about the fragmentation of Kuki polity started with the formation of Khulmi National Union (KNU) by a breakaway faction of the Kuki National Assembly in 1947 because of Thadou arrogance. Thus another generic group 'Khulmi' constituted by the Vaiphei, Gangte, Paite Simte, Zou and other Non Thadou tribes from the Kuki-Chin who claimed to have originated from a 'Khul' meaning a 'cave' came into existence.

### 2.5.7.1.2 Mizo National Front (MNF)

The Mizo National Front (MNF) was formed on October 22, 1961 and was later supported by other cognate groups including those in Manipur and Burma. In the year 1964, KNA and the erstwhile Manipur Mizo Integration Council in Manipur passed a resolution to achieve a single administrative unit for the whole Kuki-Chin-Mizo groups. Another convention was

held at Kawnpui, Churachandpur, Manipur in 1965 which was represented by all the groups within Kuki: Paite National Council, Vaiphei National Organization, Simte National Organization, Zoumi National Organization, Mizo Union, Mizo National Front, Chin National Union, Mizo National Union, Hmar National Union, Kuki National Assembly, Gangte Tribal Union, Kom National Union, and Biete Convention Council. The joint armed movement began in 1966 under the banner of the Mizo National Front (MNF) which was spearheaded by Laldenga from Mizoram. Laldenga was assisted by other leaders including Col. Demkhoseh Gangte, a well-known Kuki leader from Manipur. The movement persisted for two decades of long struggles with heavy loss of lives and property. However, with lasting consequences for those outside the region, the peace accord between MNF and the Government of India was signed on the 30 June 1986, and the state of Mizoram was created as the result. The state covers only what was known as ‗the Lushai Hills‘and left the dream of the above-mentioned signatories for greater unification unfulfilled.

The later part of the twentieth century saw another resurgence of Kuki socio-political movements for the protection of cultures, land and identity. The Kuki Inpi, the traditional administration or government, was revived in 1993 by way of re-establishing and claiming their cultural and political rights as a people. As armed movements, the Kuki National Front (KNF) was formed in 1988 to be followed by the Kuki National Organization (KNO), possibly more influential than the former, with their armed wing called the Kuki National Army (KNA), promoting an ideology of *Zalengam*, in the Kuki Land, which includes part of Burma and India. Their aim is to protect the Kuki people‘s ethnic identity and culture by way of recognizing their ancestor‘s land (Haokip Jangkholam). They also claimed their right to enjoy the fruits of their national commitment during the struggle for Indian Independence.153 Like the NSCN (I-M), mentioned earlier, the KNA also draw their sources from religion, namely, Christianity. In both the KNA and NSCN (I-M), the Bible and gun are held together at the same time.

### 2.5.7.2 Consciousness in the Valley

The Valley movement can be considered as a movement for Meitei identity just as the Naga, and for that matter, the Kuki movement, but in each case what is sought concerns only a particular ethnic group. This makes the integrity of the state, which is home to three main ethnic groups, fragile as it is impacted by the disintegrative ethnic-based movements. This also brings inter-ethnic clashes in the state leaving the minority hill people vulnerable at the

hands of the Meitei majority group. In the process, Kukis became the most vulnerable under the hands of both the majority Meiteis and the Naga movement since the early 1990s.

As the result of these competing identities, the state of Manipur has been known for conflict and violence for the last few decades. Writing in 1997, Professor B. Pakem, the Vice-Chancellor of North-Eastern Hill University, comments: ― [the] Ethnic situation in Manipur is undoubtedly the worst of its kind in the present decade. According to The Outlook, it has been recorded that ―

> With 4,383 militancy-related fatalities between 1992 and 2006, Manipur remains the third most violent theatre of conflict in the country, behind Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) and Assam, over this extended period. With all these insurgency activities, ― Manipur now has one of the most comprehensive networks of terrorist extortion in the country, affecting almost every earning citizen in the state, even as the state and its agencies remain virtually paralysed – with the exception of the Army and Central Paramilitary Forces" (The Outlook Dec 2010).

This makes the integrity of the state, which is home to three main ethnic groups, fragile as it is impacted by the disintegrative ethnic-based movements. This also brings inter-ethnic clashes in the state leaving the minority hill people vulnerable at the hands of the Meitei majority group. In the process, Kukis became the most vulnerable under the hands of both the majority Meiteis and the Naga movement since the early 1990s.

**2.5.8 Impact of Colonial Administration on Kuki-Chin Groups**

According to Prof. Lal Dena (2012) in his article titled 'Emergence of tribal middle class in Manipur: Colonial and post- colonial period' the British colonial rule has led to the prevalence of four generations of tribal elite with respect to the Kuki-Chin–Mizo group. These tribal elite represent the newly emergent educated group as a middle class, who are responsible for redefining traditional values. The first generation of elite comprise of petty clerks, interpreters/translators, vaccinators, lam subedars or lambus who were recruited to serve the needs of colonial establishment. The colonizers and the Christian missionaries taught the newly emergent leaders that they were 'backward' and should accept the colonial rule as beneficial. This is the argument which was carefully used for justifying colonial occupation. The missionaries thus taught the people that they were 'savages' and should accept new concepts of Christian ethics and western values without even examining whether

there was anything of permanent value in the culture and traditions of the tribal society".
Later on this class question the very basis of colonial domination. "With the acceptance of
democracy as a form of government and consequently, adult franchise, they began to negate
colonial administration and question the rights and privileges of the traditional leaders who
were dubbed as 'lackeys of the colonial government" (Dena 2012)

In the post-colonial India during 1950s a second generation of tribal elite known as Modern
tribal middle class emerged in the Hills of Manipur. It was this new political leadership
within this second generation tribal elite the demand for right to self determination and in
some cases even secession from India resonates (Dena 2012). The third generation comprises
of the children of tribal leaders who received education from outside the state and are placed
in All- India Services. Moreover, the fourth generation groups can even compete with non-
tribals in all India competitive examination. They identify themselves with the state and its
government yet as an when occasions demands, they promote their own communal interests.
For this reason, they are unable to separate themselves from the wishes of their kin and the
demands of belonging to their tribe". (Dena, 2012).

## 2.6 The Chins Socio- Political Life

According to Hay (2014) Chin are made up of many different ethnic groups, they lived in the
mountains along the Myanmar-India borders and neighbouring areas. In every tribal society,
social life played a pivotal role in the life of every individuals starts from village. The
situation is more or less same with the Chin society and the following are some of the unique
The Chin are of "Sino-Tibetan origin and inhabit a mountain chain which roughly covers
western Burma through to Mizoram in north-east India (where they are related to the Mizos,
Kuki and others) and small parts of Bangladesh. They are not a single group, but are in fact
composed of a number of ethnic groups such as the Asho, Cho, Khumi, Kuki, Laimi, Lushai
and Zomi, each with their language belonging to the Tibeto-Burman language branch"
(Minority Rights Group International 2017: Para. 1).

However, the term Chin is used by the Burman and today it is a recognised ethnic group in
Myanmar. The British adopted the name Chin from the Burmans. H. Kamkhenthang states
that the Chin first settled in the Chinwin valley. He also referred to the Chins as 'Zo' people.

The Chinwin River was known by different names-the Lusei as *Run* meaning river, the Paihte as *Tuikang* meaning white water (p.105). Sakhong substantiated this evidence by stating that "the chins were the first to settle in the Chinwin Valley. The Chins were in between the eastern bank of the Chinwin and the western bank of Irrawady. They lived in the upper Chinwin river valley peacefully for at least one hundred years" (Kamkhenthang p.106). "The Chin country comprises the mountainous region lying along Burma's western border with india and Pakistan and extending almost the whole length of Burma from north to south. Within it lie the Chin Hills proper, which has since 1949 constituted the Chin Special Division, a semiautonomous governmental unit of the Union of Burma" (Lehman 1980: 6).

**2.6.1 The Chins**

The institution of chieftainship plays an important role in the social and political life in Chin society. "Some Chin groups have hereditary headmen that belong to chiefly clans; others have headmen selected by village councils made up of aristocratic leaders, who usually have their own support bases. In the old days headmen and councils often demanded services such as farming and house building from villagers but that is no longer the case"(Facts and Details.com)

According Bawi (2015) the "Chin society has been categorized into three social classes as so-called Noble class Bawi Phun, so-called Ordinary Class Mi-Chia phun, and Slaves called Sal Phun." In comparing the administration structures of Chin traditional and colonial administration, chin hill had been separately administrated in Myanmar, basically independent structure. The Chin is an independent people, strongly opposes any national and international interference not only because of political sovereignty but also for maintaining traditional religious beliefs and culture practices.

**2.6.2 Chin Contact with the British**

Before the advent of the British the term chin was not in common rather it was the term Kookie (Kuki) which the British used to refer to a group of tribes inhabiting a vast track of land which today came to be in present India, Bangladesh and Myanmar. In the word of Sakhong (2003), "The first direct recorded encounter between the Chin and British subjects occurred in 1824 when enterprising traders from the British occupied the Tipperah Plains, penetrating Chinram along the Dhalleswari River to collect bamboo and timber. They were killed by the Chin for refusing to pay tribute according to the Chin custom of levying taxes

upon those who passed through Chin territory" (Sakhong 2003: 86). Before the Chin came in contact with the British, it was an independent country with the Chieftainship system of administration with the Chief as its head was prevalent.

During the 19th century British assumed control over a large part of Chin territory and divided the area into "three separate districts: the Chin Hills District (East Chinram, present Chin State in Burma); the Lushai Hills District (West Chinram, present Mizoram State in India); and a portion of southern Chinram which was attached to the Chittagong Hill Tracks of Bengal" (Sakhong 2003, p.102). Each unit or district was put under their respective occupying military command until 1989. As such, "the south-western territory governed by the British Governor of Bengal; a north-western territory controlled by the British Governor of Assam; and an eastern portion governed by British-controlled Burma. Effectively, these separate governance structures divided the Chin into three populations and set the Chin people of Burma, India, and Bangladesh on different courses" (Human Rights Watch, 2009).

### 2.6.3 The 1886 Chin Hills Regulation

It was the basic constitution for the administration of Chins during the colonial period. "Under this Act, the British agreed to govern the Chin as a separate and independent country. The Chin traditional chiefs would maintain their positions of authority with only indirect governance by the British. The British government had no choice but to rule Chinram separately and to apply an administrative system different from that of Assam, Bengal and Burma of british India. Chinram means Chinland, or the land of Chin. (Human Rights Watch 2009, January and Sakhong 2003). Sakhong used the term "Chinram" which was then called "Chin-Lushai Country."

Therefore, the "Chin Hills Regulation was drafted with reference to the common historical and cultural heritage of customary law, the political system and traditional ways of life, aiming to cover the whole territory of Chinram. The officer appointed should have great personal knowledge of Hillmen and great experience in dealing with them. Thus, intended to integrate the whole Chin race under a single legal system. Under the protection of the new constitution provided by the Chin Hills Regulation, all the Chin tribes could now share their collective name 'Chin' legally, which in turn was strongly associated with the myth of their common descent and original homeland" (Sakhong 2003).

In the late 1930's under the prominent student leader Aung San and other Burman nationalist effort has been taken to free Burma from the colonial clutch. As the Burmans negotiated for independence from Britain, Aung San reached out to the Chin and other ethnic nationalities included under the administration of British-occupied Burma. Aung San organised Panglong conference. Ethnic nationalities were invited. The Chin, along with the Kachin and Shan ethnic groups, participated and agreed to sign the Panglong Agreement of February 12, 1947, an essential document for Burma's independence. The agreement guaranteed the establishment of a federal union and autonomy for the ethnic states. But The Panglong Agreement was short lived.

Rather, it set the stage for lasting civil conflict.

> Independence further solidified the division of the Chin people through the demarcation of international boundaries. With Burma's independence from Britain on January 4, 1948, the eastern Chin Hills were incorporated into the federal union of Burma. Similarly, with India's independence a year earlier, the western Chin Hills became India's northeastern state of Mizoram. Since this time, Burma's Chin State has encompassed nine townships, including Tonzang, Tiddim, Falam, Thantlang, Hakha, Paletwa, Matupi, Mindat, and Kanpalet borders of Chin State are demarcated by Bangladesh to the southwest, India to the west and northwest, Burma's Arakan State to the south, and Magwe and Sagaing Divisions to the east. Today, the largest populations of Chin continue to be divided between Chin State in Burma and Mizoram State in India. (Human Rights Watch 2009)

Although, Burma was a democratic country from 1948 till 1962, it was replaced by military junta rule since 1962. Under the military rule all ethnic minorities were assimilated into the mainstream Burman nationalism. The rights of minorities were suppressed and harsh punishment meted out to the people who opposed military aggressiveness. Finally the harsh military rule exploded in 1988 and since then Myanmar got international attention on its human rights violation.

**2.6.4 '8888 Uprising' and the Chins**

The year 1988 was an important landmark in the history of Myanmar, in which thousands of pro-democracy demonstrators were killed by the Burmese military junta government. In this incident many ethnic Chins lost their lives and even the Chin state was heavily militarized along with other states where ethnic groups reside. Like other ethnic communities in Myanmar, the Chin people bore the brunt of severe poverty and military rule, prompting many to flee the country. This led to rise in Chins migration as refugees in neighbouring states and also across the globe. A considerable number of Chin refugees presence could be seen in United States and in Europe. The United Nations lists "Chin as Myanmar's poorest state, with at least 73 percent of the estimated 500,000 population living below the poverty line, compared to a national average of 25". Food insecurity is a chronic problem and affects all nine townships in Chin.

Since the quadruple 8-8-88 incident many ethnic armed insurgent groups also sprout up in many pockets of the states in Myanmar. There exist a constant mistrust between the ruling military junta and insurgent groups making life miserable for the common masses. It isolated Burma to the core of making it as the most underdeveloped state in the world. Rampant corruption persists and infrastructure development was nullified. This frustrated the students and community leaders taking up nationwide protest against the military rule. The military crackdown and imprisoned many demonstrators and estimated 3000 people killed during this period. This is known in the history of Burma as '8888 Uprising'. The Indian government was sympathetic to the problem faced by the Pro-democracy supporters of Myanmar and extended support

> "The Indian Embassy in Rangoon was active in helping pro-democracy activists. Embassy officials were in touch with opposition groups like the All Burma Federation of Students' Unions (ABFSU), Aung San Suu Kyi and U Nu during the uprising. When the Burmese student activists fled to the Indo-Burmese border, the Indian Embassy in Rangoon provided them financial assistance to go to India. The Government of India opened refugee camps for these students in the north-eastern states of Mizoram and Manipur, the entry points from Myanmar. A parliamentary panel in India was informed in 1989 by the then External Affairs Minister Narasimha Rao that no genuine Burmese refugees seeking shelter in India would be turned back.

India in fact assumed the role of much more than a warm host to the fleeing Burmese tribes" (Routray 2011: 303).

### 2.6.5 Ethnic Issues and the 2008 Constitution

The Myanmar constitution of 2008 is regarded by many of the ethnic communities not friendly to the ethnic communities though it tries to raise concern for the ethnic minorities group. It has been regarded by many as an attempt to wipe off their diverse culture. Burma Campaign UK has said that the "Constitution is likely to lead to the continued Burmanisation of ethnic minorities ... [and] to increased militarisation of ethnic areas, with the subsequent increase of human rights abuses which always follows the presence of the Burmese Army". According to Myanmar Peace Centre, "At the National Convention which drafted the Constitutional principles, every single one of the proposals by ethnic representatives that would give more power, autonomy and protection of ethnic cultures was rejected by the dictatorship".

### 2.6.6 Chin National Front (CNF)/ Chin National Army (CNA)

CNA is an armed wing of the Chin National Front. It was founded on 20 March, 1988. It was established as a resistance against the military government. So far it has signed two ceasefire agreement – 2012 and in 2015. In Myanmar most of the ethnic resistance groups aims "to build a genuine Federal Union based on self-determination, ethnic equality, and democracy". The Chin National Front (CNF) was "dedicated to securing the self-determination of the Chin people, to restore democracy, and to establish a federal Union of Burma. They are based along the Indo-Myanmar border and other locations inside Chin state" (A reference Guide 2015). The 8-8-88 Rising has given an opportunity for many Chin students who fled the atrocities of the military to join the CNF. CNF opposed the constitution of 2008. The CNF is also not without internal feud. The CNF/CNA dominates the politics of Chins today.

### 2.7 Conclusion

In this survey of ethno nationalism in the frontier region of North-East India and Myanmar the socio-economic, cultural and political changes brought into the region by agencies including the colonial administration and Independent India was highlighted. In that process, it was observed, political actions were ineffective in the context of North-East India, because of the lack of understanding on the part of policy makers concerning the grass root situation of the people. The issue of lack of understanding has a direct link to the question of attitude,

acceptance and treatment of the people as equal citizens with other Indians and this still seems to be the case. It is for this reason that Yasmin Saikia emphasises the need for New Delhi to build trust in the North-East and recognize the multiple pasts of Indian peoples. In other words, the search for identity in the North-East region of India will continue so long as there is lack of understanding, trust and acceptance between the centre and the region.

The chapter examined the process of identity formation among the Kuki-Chin groups in India and Myanmar, their historical dynamics and contingency. Group consciousness leading to identity formation is a product of a particular history, place and practices. In the final analysis, ethno-nationalism, can be good as well as bad, it can be good as it ensures ethnic loyalty and provides a sense of identity. It is bad because it provides a ground for separatist movement. As self-determination and sovereignty became the organizing principles, boundaries delineated modern states.

# CHAPTER THREE

## *Dimensions of Kuki and Chin Ethno-Nationalism and its Impact on India-Myanmar Relations*

# Chapter Three

## Dimensions of Kuki and Chin Ethno-Nationalism and its Impact on India-Myanmar Relations

### 3.1 Introduction

India and Myanmar relations are deeply rooted in shared historical, ethnic, cultural and religious ties since British rule. Both were under colonial rule and were a part of British India. Burma was under British India rule until it got separated from India in 1937 as per the recommendation of the Simon Commission. Gradually, India and Myanmar got independence one after another. India became independent in 1947 while Myanmar then known as Burma got independence in 1948. India established diplomatic relations with Burma from 1948. "On 12 February 1947 Shans, Kachins and Chins signed the Panglong agreement to join Burma proper in seeking early independence; Frontier areas are to be subject to full autonomy in internal administration" (Tucker 2001: 221). As a result they had long political history and contacts. Even the borders were porous and no clear cut demarcation prevailed until recently. "India and Myanmar relations are reflective of our common desire to cooperate with each other in order to promote peace and tranquillity along our border; achieve sustained economic development and foster people-to-people interaction" (India 2016- A reference manual: 483). Recently India- Myanmar relations focus on "development cooperation in infrastructure, connectivity, human resource and capacity building".

This chapter would glance into the changing dimensions of India- Myanmar Relations in general and the dimensions of Kuki-Chin ethno-nationalism in particular and how such factors impacted on India and Myanmar relations further. Additionally, it will also study the various dimensions of Kuki and Chin nationalist movement and demands. Moreover, it will also look into the implementation of Border Development Programme of the Myanmar government and its ramification. It would analyse the boundary demarcation and its impact on the ethnic Chins and the Kukis. The ethno-nationalist movement operating in northeast India in relation to India-Myanmar relation would be analysed. In this chapter the term Burma, Burmese and Myanmar

would be used interchangeably depending on the era. "Burman would mean an ethnic term identifying a particular group in Burma, Burmese is a political term including all the inhabitants of the country-Burmans, Mons, Karens, Shans, Kachins, Chins and so on" as given by Josef Silverstein (Tucker 2001: 11).

## 3.2 India's Foreign Policy towards Myanmar

India's foreign policy towards Myanmar could be understood from two perspectives depending on the time and era. Since independence till 1990 India's foreign policy was based on idealism. During this period India supported Burma/Myanmar based on ideology. India, the largest parliamentary democracy in Southeast Asia, supported the pro-democracy supporters of Burma. This led to strain relations between India and Myanmar. From 1990 India in dealing with Myanmar followed pragmatism or realist policy keeping into view its national interest. Realist school of thought in international politics considered national interest as paramount. Since 1990's onwards India realised the importance of having friendly ties with the military junta of Myanmar. India reshaped its foreign policy of Myanmar from phase of idealism to realism keeping in view of its national interest.

## 3.3 India-Myanmar Bilateral Relations: 1948 to 1962

India and Myanmar adopted parliamentary democracy since independence and shared cordial relations during the period from 1948-1962. The prime ministers of India Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and Myanmar P.M U Nu signed the "The Treaty of Friendship" in 1951. This strengthened the political and diplomatic ties between the two countries. However, the honeymoon period of India Myanmar relation was short lived. The military coup of Burma in 1962 led to change of leadership under Ne Win military junta. It can be said that since 1962 there has been no institutions of parliamentary democracy. Tharoor opines that "even today there are six million people significantly in India expelled by Burmese authority, the military government since 1962" (Tharoor 2011: 9). This led to the beginning of sour relation between the two countries.

After the colonial rule the ethnic minority problem become the most important issue in Burma. Burma witnessed a turbulent period; there were many discontentments on

the part of the ethnic communities over the outcome of the Panglong Agreement where all ethnic groups are not represented well. "Throughout the late 1940s and 1950s various other ethnic groups including the Karenni, Mon, Pao, Rakhine and Muslim Mujahids, took up arms in the country side. In 1958, General Ne Win briefly took control of the government during the short-lived Military caretaker administration before restoring to U Nu in 1960 in democratic elections" (Smith 1994: 25).

## 3.4 Period of Isolationism: 1962-1988

India-Myanmar had strain ties after the overthrow of democratic government in the infamous military coup of 1962. In march1962 the military junta under the leadership of Ne Win took hold of Burma's administration. It controlled economy of the country and pushed to the brink of the least developed country in the world during this time. The people faced hardship and all form of rights were abused and carried on in accordance with the wish of the ruling junta. "Under General Ne Win's Burma Socialist Programme Party Government (1962-1988), ethnic minority languages were openly downgraded and a tacit policy of ethnic, cultural and religious assimilation was instituted by the state" (Smith 1994: 18). The minorities were affected and many form of resistance in the form of armed insurgency flourished in all the nook and corner of the state. The military under State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) further tries to burmanise all the ethnic minorities by spreading the "theory of Burmese family of races- a family sharing one blood and historic origin" (Smith 1994: 18). The chairman of SLORC, General Than Shwe has also taken a big initiative in this regard.

Unfortunately, the ethnic minorities were sceptical of the Junta policy and rejected the theory of same blood and common origin by most of the minority political parties. The demand for complete secession of their territories from Burma echoed in most of the ethnic minority inhabited area. "For the inhabitants of the Shan and Karenni states this meant that they were asserting a right to accession legally granted to both the territories in Burma's first independence constitution in 1947" (Smith 2003: 19). In the politics of Burma, the ethnic groups and the government are not in tandem with

one another. Both are always at loggerhead against one another. The Burman centric-view that Burma is a homogeneous country was rejected by the ethnic minorities.

India's condemnation of military "suppression of democracy in Burma led to expulsion of the Burmese Indian community, increasing its own isolation from the world. Throughout the 1960's and 1970's, a large number of ethnic Indians were expelled from Burma" (Kamboj 2013:3). The neutral stand of Myanmar during Chinese aggression of 1962 was seen by New Delhi as pro-Chinese tilt. India's commitment to democratic values during Indira Gandhi's tenure further aggravated the already strain relations. Kamboja states that "a commitment to democratic values was prioritized ahead of security concerns in the foreign policy toward Myanmar" (Kamboja 2013:3). India continued its policy of idealism even during Rajiv Gandhi's tenure. He visited Myanmar in the year 1987, the first ever visit by an Indian Prime Minister in almost 19 year even after SLORC

### 3.4.1 The quadruple 8 (8888) Uprising

In 1988, SLORC became the sole holder of power in Myanmar. India, the largest democratic nation in the entire Asia, which is considered as the torch bearer of democracy lend support to the pro-democracy movement happening in its neighbouring country in Burma. A small incident led to a democracy uprising which is known as 8888 or quadruple 8 uprising. "The reason why it is called 8888 is that the gruesome massacre began on 8 August 1988, in which an unknown number of demonstrators, estimated to be in thousands, were killed" (Kipgen 2016:20). The military atrocities towards its own citizen was reflected, there were chaos and confusion, gruesome torture and massacre which led many pro-democracy supporter especially the ethnic minorities fled the country to the neighbouring such as India, Thailand and Bangladesh.

> "The Indian Embassy in Rangoon was active in helping pro-democracy activists. Embassy officials were in touch with opposition groups like the All Burma Federation of Student's Unions (ABFSU), Aung San Suu Kyi and U Nu during the uprising. Several reports indicate that India provided financial and material support to the Kachin Independence Army and the Karen National Union (KNU) that had joined the opposition to the military regime".(Kamboja 2013:4).

This incident is significant in the history of Burma's fight for democracy and also in the history of India-Myanmar Relations. Kumar (2013) stated that "New Delhi was the sponsor of a United Nations (UN) resolution condemning the military junta of Myanmar for its violation of human rights in 1992" (p.41). India became the first Asian government to publicly criticise SLORC. This incident resulted in strain relation between India and Myanmar as Indian government support towards pro-democracy movement in Burma. India, the largest parliamentary democracy in Asia, felt obliged to support the pro-democracy movement in its neighbour. During this time Military junta and Chinese government strengthened their relations. Many insurgent groups of India took haven in Myanmar side of Indian border. This created domestic problems in India's North eastern region. Taking all these into consideration, on the advice of the military staff the government change its stance and followed a more realistic approach in its foreign policy. However, this strained relations continued till 1993.

The rising of SLORC in 1988 has done any good than harm. It was just a name change. The military continues its atrocities towards the people and the battle for control of Burma's history and tradition has intensified leading to name change of many existing names. For example, the change of country name from Burma to Myanmar etc. "The military also reinterpreted 'Burma's history too literally in racial or nationalistic terms" (Smith 1994: 22).

## 3.5 Relations since 1990's

The British colonised India and Burma one after another during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Till 1937 Burma (Myanmar) was a part of British India. India got independence from colonial rule in 1947 while Burma got independence in 1948. This shows that India and Burma share a long political history and person to person contact in terms of economy, culture etc. The two countries signed Treaty of Friendship under the leadership of U Nu and Jawaharlal Nehru in 1951, which is believed to be the cementing force between India and Myanmar in due course of time (Burma centre Delhi 2011: 5). India and Burma shared a cordial relation till 1962, both has a parliamentary form of government.

The year 1962 has created a twist in their relationship with the change of government. In 1962 there was a military coup in Burma under General Ne Win regime. This regime suspended the existing constitution and abolished all democratic rights. It formed Revolutionary Council to look into the affairs of the state which is highly centralised and all freedom of the people curbed. It has been pointed out that "there has been virtually no democracy in Burma since 1962 and no institutions of parliamentary democracy" (Burma centre Delhi 2011: 5). The atrocities of the military continue uninterrupted until 1988. The challenge to the iron handed attitude of the regime came from the students in Rangoon and received support from the minorities and the general populace who were at the receiving end of the junta centralisation policy. In order to portray their rule in a good light, the military just change their name. In 1974 they transformed to Burma Socialist Programme Party. From 1967 to 1988, Burma was ruled by one party system called "Burmese way to Socialism". But each time it failed to please the general population. With an upper hand the junta regime crushed the 8888 uprising and installed State Law and Order Restoration Council.

The early 1990s brought a new turn in India's foreign policy especially at dealing with the Myanmar government. The result of National League for Democracy (NLD) landslide victory in 1990 general election under the leadership of Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi was crushed by the military junta and intensified its crackdown upon democratic activists. Many fled to India as a refugee and were given room by the Indian government. This aggravates the already strained relations. Ethnic minority groups had taken a great role in supporting democracy movement along with the NLD. But till 1992 India's relation with Myanmar continue to strain. "It was only in 1991, however, that a decision was taken to discontinue criticism of the Myanmar regime in All India Radio's (AIR) Burmese broadcasts. The visit to Yangon (then Rangoon) by the Indian Foreign Secretary in 1993 started the process of improving relations between the two countries" (Singh 2012: 4). India changes its foreign policy in dealing with Myanmar gradually. "Burma is the world's third largest source of refugees after Afghanistan and Iraq. Between 1995 and 2005, the flow of refugees has increased up to 800% in Burma's neighboring countries as a result of the military regime's widespread and systematic human rights abuses, military offensives,

religious and ethnic persecution" ( ALTSEAN-Myanmar (2008), Burma 20 Years On: Hungry As Ever For Democracy).

From 1993-2010, New Delhi initiated a policy of engagement with Myanmar. It adopted a more pro-active foreign policy which is realism. With a more pragmatic approach towards dealing with Myanmar coupled with the adoption of Look East Policy India and Myanmar enter a new phase of relations which focussed on closer engagement with Myanmar. The end of cold world and the era of globalisation also made New Delhi to rethink its foreign policy in general and with Myanmar in particular. New Delhi also has started to rethink its borders in the northeastern region which has become a haven for ethnic insurgent movement. To enhance its bilateral relations with the Southeast Asian countries, India initiated its ambitious Look East Policy. Both the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led National Democratic alliance and Congress party led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) maintained the policy of constructive engagement with Myanmar (Kumar 2013: 42). The shift in its foreign policy enhanced economic cooperation between the two countries during 1994-1996. However, in 1995 India- Myanmar relations deteriorated when New Delhi  conferred the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for promoting International Understanding to the noble peace laureate and pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi (Burma centre Delhi 2011: 6).

### 3.5.1 The Myanmar 2010 General Election

The 2010 General Election was one of the 'Seven Step Roadmaps to democracy' proposed by State Peace and Development Council. "The SPDC's elections aim to legitimize and perpetuate military rule under the guise of democratic reform. In essence, the regime is just repackaging itself to make its rule more internationally acceptable without enacting much needed reforms" (ALTSEAN-Burma, Election and Democratic Reform 2017).

Some believed that Myanmar ended the decades old military government. The NLD boycotted the election. However, the Chin Progressive Party formed on March 24, 2010 won 12 seats and became the 6th largest party. The CPP won 2 seats in the Pithuh Hlutdaw, 4 in the Amyotha Hlutdaw, 5 in the Chin State Hlutdaw and 1 in Sagaing Region Hlutdaw. The mission of CCP is to promote democracy and to fight

for the right to have self-determination in Chin state (ALTSEAN-BURMA, Chin Progressive Party-CCP) 2015. "The democratisation of Myanmar encouraged New Delhi to pursue its Myanmar's policy more proactively. India anticipates that if Naypidaw continues with democracy, it may redefine their bilateral relations" (Kumar 2013: 42).

In 2011, the newly elected president of Myanmar, Thein Sein paid a visit to India from October 12th- 15th, 2011. This led to a new level of India-Myanmar relations. India congratulated Myanmar on their transition towards more democratic form of government and offered necessary assistance in further strengthening this transition. The Indian government under the leadership of Dr. Manmohan Singh visited Myanmar from May 27th -29th, 2012 which took bilateral cooperation to the higher level. This was the first ever visit of an Indian Prime Minister since military took over power in Burma. During the visit, 12 memorandums of Understanding were signed where, connectivity, development of the region, Border Haats along the border region was on top priority.

Improvement in infrastructure development in the form of road construction and better connectivity would lead to greater access between the two countries. India's Northeastern region and Myanmar's peripheral region required infrastructure development. Moreover, the need for cooperation in fields such as agriculture, trade, education, and information technology were reiterated. This would address Myanmar's developmental needs too in the realm of development.

. Stability along the Indo-Myanmar border depends in large measure on economic stability that comes through planned development. For instance, Myanmar has many missing road and rail links and over 70 bridges requiring construction before the connectivity deficit can be overcome. It has been decided to initiate steps to upgrade road sections in order to make the trilateral Asian Highway (connecting Moreh in Manipur to Mae Sot in Thailand) a reality. Besides initiating improvements in road connectivity, a direct air service between India and Myanmar has also received through Myanmar from India's North East.the green signal. Similarly, hope has been generated for

eventual freight transport by rail network extending to other South East Asian countries (Singh 2012: 3).

Border Liason Office (BLO) is in operation in the Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Mizoram sectors. BLOs have served as a mechanism to promote cooperation between the law enforcement agencies of both the countries. It helps to counter the smuggling of migrants and some environmental crimes. The UNODC-United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime mentioned that " Police Brigadier General Thein Oo, Deputy Chief of Myanmar Police and Chairman of the committee, Myanmar's national advisory committee overseeing its Border Liaison Offices (BLOs) emphasized his support for the UNODC-supported BLO network, by stating that BLOs, not only provide technical and instrumental assistance but also enhance the good cooperation and correlation within neighbouring countries" (UNODC-United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2015). As such the more BLOs are provided in future.

The year 2014 was marked with so many changes in India and Myanmar. Since 2014 civilian government under the leadership of Aung San Suu Kyi is restored in Myanmar. In India United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government under Prime Minister Singh from 1994- 2014 came to an end and the BJP-led NDA Government under Narendra Modi begin its rule from 2014 onwards. The present government under the leadership of Narendra Modi also tries to enhance the already existing relations with Myanmar and modify Look East Policy to Act East Policy to give a more pro-active stand. India and Myanmar at present shared a cordial and pleasant relation. Both realised the importance of being a neighbouring states and took up various measures to help each other.

### 3.6 Kuki Nationalist Movements

Kuki and Chin nationalist movement are socially and ethnically grounded movements. Initially their movements aim at creation of a separate sovereign land known by different name as Kukiland or Zalengam or Khulmigam in India spearheaded by the KNO (Kuki National Organisation) and UPF (United Progressive Front) till today. On the other hand, the Chins wanted to establish an independent and federal Chin state in Myanmar. The purpose of signing the Panglong agreement in

1947 by an ethnic Chins along with other ethnic groups has been to find a place on their own and not to be under any military control. However, the chins aspirations for an independent Chinram or Chinland was short lived and shattered by the military coup of 1962. The military control of administration in 1962 affected the aspirations of most of the ethnic minorities group in Burma.

The colonial administration paves the way for the ethnic Kukis of Northeast India to exert their strong ethnic consciousness in fighting the colonial power. This eventually, in the long run contributed to mushrooming of insurgent groups in Manipur.

The Anglo-kuki war of 1917-1919 led to the defeat of the Kukis. This had a long impact on the history of the Kukis, which today led them scattered in three different countries .i.e. India, Bangladesh and Myanmar. With the end of colonial rule, power was transferred to the Indians and India became an independent and sovereign country. The repercussion of India's independence led to changes in the politics of India and especially in Northeast India. States were created on ethnic or community lines while some communities were left out for example, the Kukis etc. This led to Kuki insurgency movement fighting for an independent Kukiland.

The hardship faced by the Kukis in India due to ethnic cleansing of the innocent lives by the Naga insurgent group headed by Muivah NSCN (IM) once again revived the insurgency movement among Kukis.  In the early 1990's a wave of Kuki armed insurgent movement took place in re-defining the kuki nationalist movement. Many armed insurgent group came up. The state government apathy in handling the ethnic conflict between the Kukis and Nagas exacerbated the armed ethnic groups. Thereby the number of Kuki insurgent group rouse to a multiple increased. Insurgency movement not only of the Kukis but also of the other ethnic groups in Manipur like the Nagas, Meiteis and Meitei Pangal became a way of life. This led to huge impact on the overall development of the state. The poor civilian become at the receiving end of all those ethnic fall out. Each group asserting their rights and hardly stand together as being from the same state. Each group stood for their own agenda, for their own group. So, ethnic consciousness and identity formation of group become embroiled in the politics of Manipur.

### 3.6.1 Insurgency movement

According to Bhaumik (2007) "since the British withdrawal from South Asia in 1947, India's northeast has been scarred by sustained separatist insurgencies, mass agitations, ethnic riots and heavy handed state response resulting in continuous blood-letting. Since the 1950's, large scale insurgent violence directed against Indian security forces and communities from mainland Indian states, but it has also witnessed frequent fighting between different ethnic militias. As a result, the Indian federal government and those governing the states in the Northeast have deployed large formations of regular army, federal para-military forces and state armed police for counter- insurgency operations". (p.1). In recent years, India has changed its strategy in counter-insurgency measures by roping in neighbouring countries across the border. Most of the Northeast India's porous border provides a safe haven for insurgent groups to operate cross border. The Kukis and Chin ethnic groups are the trans-border nation with a long history of nationalist movement in the region in which fight for autonomy and larger representation in region is paramount.

### 3.6.2 Suspension of Operation

The year 2005, made some significant changes in the long struggle for Kuki nationalist movement. The state interference could be seen in the form of tripartite agreement under the name SoO (Suspension of Operation) between the government of India, the Kuki insurgent groups clubbed under two umbrellas KNO and UPF and the state government on 1 august 2005. According to Haokip (2010) this was one of the significant political steps taken up by the government for the Kukis aspirations for statehood or political dialogue. Looking at the Kukis great history and contribution on India's struggle for freedom by joining INA army the government has neglected their social and political contribution for a very long time.

### 3.7 Chin Nationalist Movement

Before the British rule in the 19th century there was prevalence of inter-ethnic harmony. After its annexation, the British implements divide and rule tactics and created ethnic tension in the regions.

"The British built a two-tier system of administration. Ministerial Burma dominated by the Burmans majority and the Frontier Areas, where most ethnic minorities lived. This strict division set the different ethnic groups on very separate roads towards political and economic development. As a result, the new Union of Burma which eventually gained independence in 1948 was very different from any nation or state in history" (Smith 1994: 22-23).

The colonial separation of the two-tier administration into frontier areas and ministerial Burma led to separation of ethnic group even after it got independence. The ethnic minority Frontier Areas was left under the control of traditional rulers and chiefs. Smith (1994) further said Burman majority felt that the "Karen, Kachin and Chin were also preferred for recruitment into the colonial armed forces, and ethnic regiments were formed. However, although Burman historians have voiced the accusation that Burma's minorities were favoured by the British, colonial rule had equally damaging implications for ethnic minority aspirations. Many "ethnic minorities lands were divided into different political districts and none were administered on the basis of nationality" (Smith 1994: 22-23). Smith further said that most minorities had to suffer the additional burden of economic neglect. As a matter of fact they remain underdeveloped even today which Smith called it as 'territorial disadvantaged'.

The Chin nationalist movement is not of recent origin.  The Chin once an independent nation and inhabited their own land which is known by different names 'Chinland or Chinram'.  Later on Chins fall under the colonial rule. The Chins wanted to live in their own land after the British left Burma. Sakhong in his book titled 'In Search Of Chin Identity' discussed that

"Sir Robert Reid, the Governor of Assam, strongly protested against the policy of the Supreme British India government, which had adopted the administrative boundaries within Chinram as the boundary between Burma and India, and later between India and Bangladesh as well. He thus wrote to the government in London that the separation of Burma from India on lines of the present frontiers will permanently divorce portions of tribes, which naturally should comprise a single unit" (R. Reid 1942: 6).

From the very beginning, Sir Robert Reid, like B. S. Carey, was in favour of forming a "united Chinram and strongly opposed to the idea of a Chinram divided into three administrative units and thereby three countries" (Sakhong 2003:186-187).

With boundary demarcation based on colonial administration the chin groups came under the Burmese fold, which today is known as Myanmar. Initially the Chin wanted their set up of administration as it was before the colonial administration. However the parliamentary system of government formed in 1948 under Bogyok Aung San and U Nu prompted all the once independent ethnic minorities to sign the historic Panglong Agreement. This agreement promised the ethnic minorities to follow their own course of administration independently or to join the federal Burma, where minority rights are promoted and protected. The official reluctance to grant autonomy to the chins prompted the re-organisation of various chin nationalist organisation the Chin National Front with its armed wing Chin National Army. However, this only led to disappointment among the ethnic groups. This acts as a reference point for ethnic discontentment in the state even today.

### 3.7.1 Chin National Movement for Federalism

According to Lian (2008), the British intruded into the Chin territories from the southern side and then conquer the entire Chinland in Chin-Lushai land Expedition (1888-90). The Chins and Kukis resisted the British intrusion during 1917-1919, which came to be known as 'Anglo-Kuki War' or "Kuki Rebellion" or "Zo Gal" which led to mass arrest and burning of villages. In 1939 a mass arrest occurred in "southern Chinland when leaders of the first Chin political party, the Chin National Unity Organization, led by Pu. Vomthu Maung arrested by the British for demanding independence for Chinland." (Lian, 2008).

It is no exaggeration to conclude that the chin politics of the 60's and 70's according to Lian, "have in one way or the other influenced the political developments far beyond the realm of chin politics but also have significant political impacts on that of other ethnic peoples' struggle for freedom, democracy and federalism for decades thereafter" (Chin Forum, 2008:97-98)

### 3.7.1.1 Chin Armed Resistance Movement Since 1962

On 2nd march 1962 military General Ne Win overthrow the democratically elected government of Burma and established the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) on 4th July 1962. By 1964, the military junta nationalised banks and shops in the

country. As a result, many ethnic groups fled to their neighbouring states for fear of the military onslaught. In regards to the Chins, Lian mentioned in the Chin forum (2008)

> Anticiapating a communist style totalitarianism falling upon the country, many Chin leaders like Ex. Col. Pu Son Kho Pau, Pu Thual Zen (a former army sergent) and former parliamentarians and politicians like Pu Hrang Nawl, Pu Dam Kho Hau, Pu Pa Cung Nung, Pu Mang Kho Pau, Pu Son Cin Lian, Pu Ral Hmung, Pu Hmun Hre, and Pu Ro Thang went underground. They all fled to India and established their bases along the Indo-Burma border to fight against the Burmese military regime. The Indian government offered them a refuge and financial allowances but on the condition that they refrain from political activities and stay within a 25 miles border zone. Undeterred by India's offer of political asylum, they planned to form an armed organization to restore democracy in Burma. Colonel Son Kho Pau and Pu Tun Kho Pum, a young prominent politician from Manipur state, joined hands in early 1965 and went to the then east Pakistan (now Bangladesh) with a contingent of 150 recruits who got their military training and weapons from there, this armed organization aimed to establish an independent Chinland encompassing all Chins in Burma and India (Chin Forum 2008: 98-99).

However, in 1963 the younger generation of Chin nationalists began to establish contacts with various armed revolutionary movements in other parts of Burma example the Kachin Independence organization. Zomi (Chin) National Front was formed subsequently as "exclusive underground political movement rather than transforming itself into a mass or armed movement until it was dissolved in the mid 1970s" (p.100).

The Mizo National Front (MNF) movement also has a wide impact on the Chin nationalist movement. The Chins, Kukis and Mizos are more or less one or the same separated by colonial demarcation. Initially "MNF aimed to reunite all the Chins in Burma, India and Bangladesh and to establish a nation and a sovereign state to govern itself" was supported by the Chins. However, the MNF and Indian government reached an agreement; thus, Mizoram was, thus inaugurated as a federated state of India on February 20 1986.

Dissatisfaction with the military regime of Ne Win Revolutionary Council, Chin Democracy party was formed in 1971, in alliance with U Nu's Parliamentary Democracy Party. Moreover, Chin Liberation Army was formed under the leadership

of Pu Sa Lian Zam which planned to launch an armed uprising in the Chin territory.(p.100). At the Tuanggyi Federal Conference in early 1960s reiterated to amend the country's constitution into a federal form.

The Chins were determined to fight the military junta, the rationale behind is that

> The root cause of poverty in the Chin territory since the Union of Burma came into existence in 1948 was that, in the first place, because the Chins did not have their own State legislative assembly and their own government. So, it is now in our hands to take the chance and act to restore our national self-determination enshrined in the Panglong Agreement (p.104)

In 1969, the interim report submitted by U Nu which recommended Ne Win to hand over power back to him and the parliament abolished in 1962 be reconvened.

### 3.7.1.2 Chin Federal Movement Second Phase

The Revolutionary Council of the military junta invited suggestions for a future Union Constitution. The proposal of the Chin youth was given to the government for the second time. The chins are determined to establish a genuine federal union. (p.114).

This shows Chin people political awareness and the success of Chin federal movement campaign. However, the there was mass arrest of leader who advocated federalism under "operation white elephant" by the Ne Win regime. Under the constitution of the Socialist Republic of Union o f Burma 1974, 3 states were created-Mon State, Rakhine State, and Chin state. Thus, Chin special division became a state.

### 3.7.1.3 The Chin National Front (CNF)

According to Myanmar Peace Monitor the CNF was formed in 1988 which is "dedicated to securing the self-determination of the Chin people, to restore democracy, and to establish a federal Union of Burma".

### 3.7.1.4 Chin National Council

It is an umbrella organisation of the entire Chin organisation formed in 2006. It represents all the Chin political organizations in Ethnic Nationalities Council (ENC). The ENC represents all the ethnic nationalities in the drafting of the constitution of

the 2008 Federal Republic of the Union. The First Chin Seminar in Ottawa, Canada organised by the CNF on April 29 to May 2 1988 led to the birth of Chin Forum which aimed at promoting unity among all the Chin democratic forces. In this seminar the chin forum was assigned "to come up with a draft constitution of Chinland. Thus, igniting the first wave of the chin federal movement in the exile to unify all Chin democratic forces" (Chin forum, 2008: 136).

### 3.7.1.5 Chin Ceasefire Agreements

In 2011, President Thein Sein took a bold step by organising an informal ceasefire or preliminary discussion with ethnic armed groups. As a result of which State level: 9-point ceasefire agreement was signed at Hakha, Chin state in 2012. Subsequently another Union level: 15-point peace agreement signed again on 6th January, 2012 in which travel restriction imposed on CNF leaders lifted. This improves the condition of Chins to a certain extent. However, 2nd Union level meeting: 28-point agreement signed in December 2012. In this meeting an agreement to form an independent commission on human rights abuses in Chin state was decided. Observation of Chin National Day was also part of the terms of the chin ceasefire agreement among genuine federalism.

### 3.8 Ethnic Resistance under State Law and Order Restoration Council( SLORC)

In September 18, 1988, the tatmadaw or the armed forces under the leadership of General Saw Maung, Commander-in-Chief took over after Gen. Ne Win retired and formed the SLORC. The second military regime begins in 1990 under the name SLORC. Following the 1990 elections new military regime known as SLORC brokered ceasefire agreement with several powerful ethnic militia groups.

### 3.8.1 The 4 cuts Policy and the Ethnic Population
Under the regime the ethnic population were at the receiving end and suffered the military brutality pushing them to be isolated from the Centre leading to poverty. This policy targeted the ethnic resistance groups from 1996-98.

> "The 4 cuts policy included:
> - cutting and blockading communications between rebel armed groups
> - embargo of people and consumer goods entering rebel territories

- search and destruction of core members responsible for supply, information, funds and recruits
- embargo on trade to reduce rebel revenue" (Myanmar Peace Monitor, Ethnic Grievances)

Lack of "communication and understanding is also a major reason that deep ethnic cleavages and distrust still exist between the different nationalities and the majority Burman population" (AReference Guide, 2013). Some projects undertaken by the government in Chin State (Myanmar Peace Monitor)-

Tamu Economic Zone (proposed), development project (such as Tamu-kalay road) and tea leaf plantation 6 dam projects: Zalui, Tongva, Ngasitvar, Paletwa, Namhlaung Creek, Laiva, Htweehsaung and Chichaung plant.

### 3.8.2 Constitution (2008) and the Ethnic Nationalities

The constitution "came into force on January 31, 2011 shows optimistic signs of progress towards the ethnic nationalities' goal for self-determination. There are provisions for ethnic nationality rights and equality, and more importantly, it takes the form of federalism with decentralization and democratization of power. At the same time there are important issues that have not been addressed, namely revenue sharing and division of power. Both of these are defined in general terms in the constitution" (A Reference Guide, 2013).

By 2011, President Thein Sein has took more seriously about the ethnic issues in the state and gave national priority and offered dialogue with all armed groups and dropping key preconditions for talks. Under President Thein Sein's new peace initiative, most ethnic militia groups have signed new ceasefire agreements. Protecting the rights of minorities was reiterated by Suu Kyi in her first speech in parliament. And emphasised on cease fire agreements

### 3.9 Border Development Programme of Myanmar Government

Myanmar comprises of seven division and seven states. Most of the states of Myanmar are occupied by the ethnic minorities which are named after the respective ethnic group. Examples chin, kachin, kayin, mon, shan, kayah and Rakhine.

Comparatively, the seven divisions are more developed than the seven states. While states are inhabited mainly by the ethnic groups, the divisions are inhabited by the Burmans, the higher echelon group in the society of Myanmar. This created a huge disparity in the development of Myanmar. In order to improve the conditions of the peripheral region, the government has initiated a committee called "Development of Border Areas and National Races" as well as "Work Committee" in May 1989 to develop the regions. The committee was headed by Chairman of SLORC, 'Senior General Than Shwe and the Work Committee by Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt' (Embassy of Myanmar Brasilia-Df (2017), Country basic facts para.1). The objectives laid down for the development of the border region are as under-

> 1.to carry out development work for the nation races in border areas who have suffered throughout successive eras the atrocities of local terrorists who emerged with the independence of the Union of Myanmar,
>
> 2.to carry out development works for the national races in border areas who lagged behind in development activities  by keeping in mind "Our Three Main National Causes,
>
> 3.to gain fruitful results of the development works, aiming at the elimination of narcotic drugs production and cultivation of opium substitute crops by former poppy growers in border areas that have been once opium production areas under the influence of BCP terrorists" (Embassy of Myanmar Brasilia-DF 2017, para.2).

The Progress of Border Areas and National Races Department of the The Ministry for the Progress of the Border Areas and National Races Development Affairs, which is responsible for the development of border areas and national races, carried out developmental work in the western regions of Myanmar, in Rakhine State and Chin States and the Naga Hills. At present this ministry is known as Ministry of Border Affairs, still taking the responsibility of development of border areas and national races.

### 3.9.1 Border Guard Force Scheme of Myanmar Government

The 2008 constitution, stipulated "to transform ceasefire groups into state-controlled Border Guard Forces (BGF) subordinate to the military's regional commanders". The government announced accordingly in 2009. These required all militia groups to come under the partial command of the Myanmar military. This is an indication of militia

groups to give up most of their autonomy without the promised of political discussion taking place. None of the major ceasefire groups – with the exception of the Democratic Kayin Buddhist Army (DKBA) – agreed. This was an attempt to transform the ceasefire group into the military, but the ethnic militia ignored which led to an attack on them and were declared as "Insurgents" by the state media. "Such contradictions in the government's peace strategy continue to fuel ethnic skepticism and doubt over the government's true motives in the peace talk" (Myanmar Peace Monitor, BGF and Resumption of Conflict).

Figure 1: Structure of the BGF
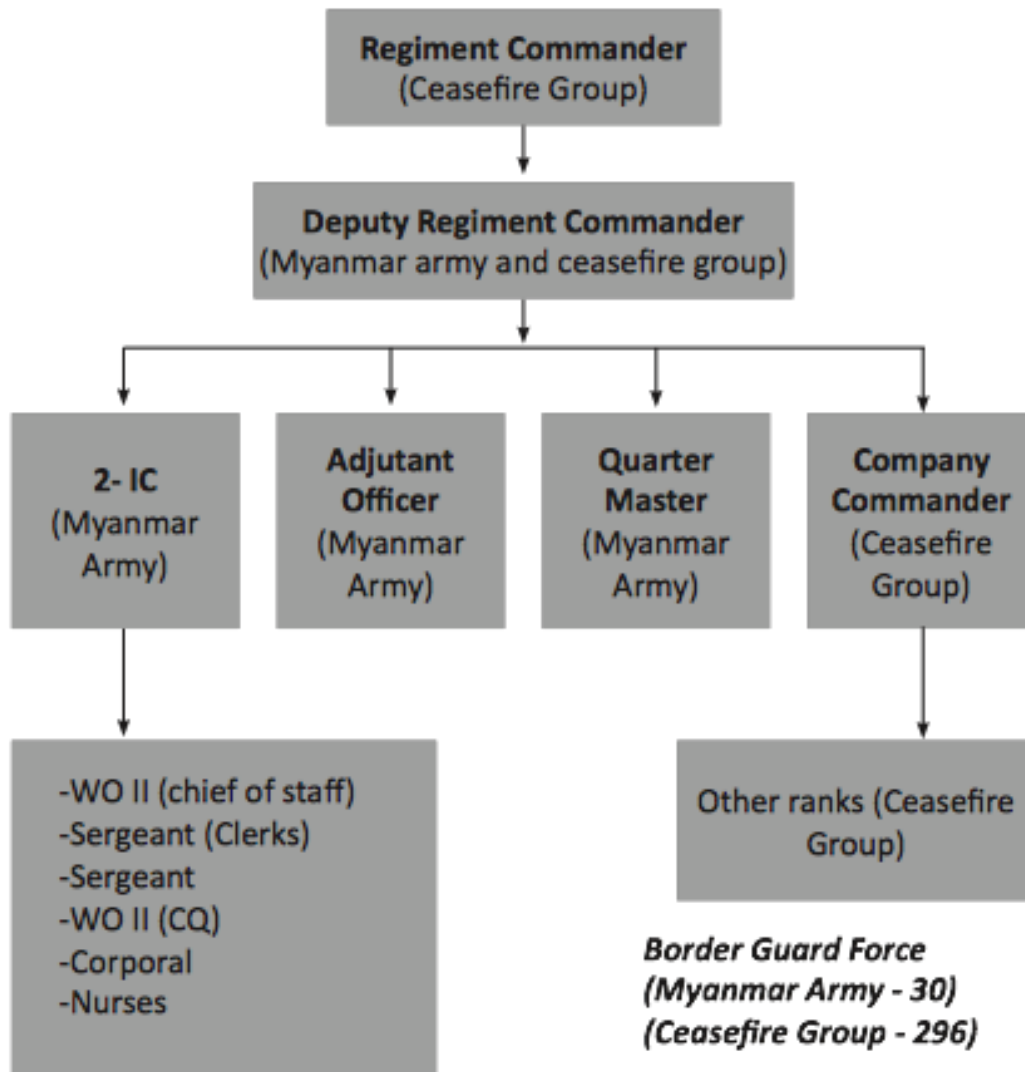
## 3.10 Boundary Demarcation and Impact on Kuki and Chins

Border management between India and Myanmar has always been one of the most important challenges for the two countries. It is connected with a wide range of issues like security threat from insurgent groups since there are many insurgent groups in the northeast region, in the economic front it is a fertile ground for economic activity from the transborder people. It provides an opportunity for unlocking the opportunities of cross-border connectivity and infrastructure development while

managing the challenges it poses. India also has porous international border with Bangladesh, which is marked by the issue of infiltration in the region.

Parameswaran (2018) was critical of the recent development in border management between India and Myanmar. He argued that it is a "far more complex process than is often appreciated, particularly given the volume of traffic, the presence of dozens of (formal and informal) border crossings, and the fact that Indian tribal communities along the border have free movement".

For the first time a meeting was organised by the central government with the chief ministers of northeastern states which share a porous border with Myanmar and discussed issues concerning Myanmar border with active participation of state governments.

> "The meeting was attended by Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju, besides Pema Khandu, N Biren Singh and Lal Thanhawla, the chief ministers of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Mizoram, respectively and Nagaland Home Minister Yanthungo Patton. The government emphasise on setting up better infrastructure, connectivity and providing basic facilities along the long neglected Indo-Myanmar porous border in a phased manner- short-term (3 years), Medium term (3 to 6 years) and Long-term (6 to 10 years). There are more than 240 villages with over 2.5 lakh people within 10 km of the Indo-Myanmar border, Singh urged these bordering states to bring these areas under active policing. In a move to make Act East Policy more proactive, the government has taken various steps to enhance the development of the border region. The government has increased the budget allocation under Border Area Development Programme (BADP) to 17 Border States which was Rs 990 crore in 2016-2017, has been raised to Rs 1,100 crore in 2017-2018. "Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh were released Rs 567.39 crore during the last three years. For integrated development of 41 model villages Rs 92.39 crore were released in the last financial year, which included three villages in Manipur and one village in Nagaland" (Financial Express, June 12, 2017).

From the above, it can be concluded that a lot has been done by the government in furthering its look east policy which aimed at enhancing economic and strategic development of the region. However, still need to be done to establish a lasting solution to the long neglected region

**3.11 India and Myanmar Agreement on Land Border Crossing**

On 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2018, the Shri Narendra Modi government approved the Agreement between India and Myanmar on Land Border Crossing for enhancing economic and social interaction between the India and Myanmar. According to the report of the leading national daily the Hindustan Times (3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2018) and (PIB 3<sup>rd</sup> January,2018), "The Agreement will facilitate regulation and harmonization of already existing free movement rights for people ordinarily residing in the border areas of both countries. It will also facilitate movement of people on the basis of valid passports and visas which will enhance economic and social interaction between the two countries. It is expected to provide connectivity and enhance interaction of the people of North Eastern States of India with the people of Myanmar. The Agreement would give a boost to the economy of the North East and allow us to leverage our geographical connections with Myanmar to boost trade and people to people ties. The Agreement will safeguard the traditional rights of the largely tribal communities residing along the border which are accustomed to free movement across the land border" (PIB 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2018). The four states of northeast India Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram which shared unfenced border with Myanmar are directed by the central government to distribute "border pass" to all the residents living within 16 km from the border. These states share the unfenced border with Myanmar. This will provide free movement of people in across the border. However, details were not provided about the actual terms of the agreement. Under visa-free movement 72 hours is permitted to stay in the area with effective and valid permits issued by the designated authorities on either side.

## 3.12 Conclusion

India should maintain friendly relations with Myanmar so as to bring economic growth and opportunity for the people on both sides of India and Myanmar especially the Kuki and Chin groups. India- Myanmar border trade should be encouraged. There should be proper co-ordination between the states and the centres, infrastructure in northeast be given a priority.

On the Myanmar front all attempt should be maintained to follow the policy of inclusivity, whereby ethnic minorities be given an opportunity to grow in tandem with the mainstream policies. Their culture, values and traditions need to be protected.

Even today the ethnic minority crisis is one of the most central issues facing Burma and its neighbour India's northeast. Moreover, the inter-ethnic ties between Kukis and Chins on both side of the border in particular and all ethnic groups in general should not be underestimated.

Indian government on the other hand supported the pro-democracy movement in Burma. This created a rift in the relation between India and Burma at that juncture when India's foreign policy was based on Idealism. The period witnessed low ebb in India-Myanmar relations in the history of India. On the other hand Chinese took advantage of the situation and build closer ties with the military rule of Myanmar.

India's policy towards Myanmar is no longer guided by any ideology rather it is based on giving importance to national interest with dealing with neighbouring states. In international politics there is no permanent foe and ally. National interest comes above other in realist understanding of power. Despite all odds India is trying its best to mend the relationship in any possible way by helping Myanmar whether infrastructure development or enhancing bilateral ties. India also needs Myanmar to check anti- national elements operating in its north-eastern region from the Myanmar side of the border. Nevertheless, Indian Diasporas also can play a crucial role in enhancing ties between the two nations. The government should focus on the real need of the people at the border, like basic proper infrastructure for health and schools. This will in the long run help the countless number of peoples suffering in the region. For a healthy relation between India and Myanmar ethnic dimension cannot be neglected. Due importance should be given to address the long standing issue of insurgent movements.

# CHAPTER FOUR

*Role of Look East Policy in Addressing Ethno-Nationalism*

# Chapter four
## Role of Look East Policy in Addressing Ethno-Nationalism

**4.1 Introduction**

This chapter would outline the historical background of Look east policy and its evolvement to Act East Policy under successive government. The changes taken place under the UPA and NDA government w.r.t Look East Policy vis-a-vis India-Myanmar relations. It would also examine the trend of ethno-nationalist movement with the onset of Look East Policy initiative and policy implementation of Border Development Programme of the Myanmar government.

**4.1.1 The Prevailing Condition of the World**

Since the end of the Second World War in 1945, the world is divided into two hostile camps on the basis of ideologies. They are communist bloc headed by Soviet Union and the Capitalist bloc under United States of America. Most of the emerging states of Asia and Africa were also aligned either of these two blocs. It was at this juncture India introduced its Non-aligned Movement whereby, it is not a party to any of the two super-power blocs. India maintained its neutrality in world affairs. Until the collapse of Soviet Union which led to end of cold war, India's non-alignment movement (NAM) was the guiding principle of India's foreign policy. India maintained its dignity and sail through the most difficult period of the history. Many of the Asian countries look up to India as an example during those decades. Naidu stated that "India's neutralist/non-aligned policy had considerable appeal in Southeast Asia even as the Cold War rivalry began having an impact on the region" (Pp.333).

**4.1.2 India and Southeast Asia Relations before Look East Policy**

India and Southeast Asia shared deep historical roots of colonialism. India's relationship with Southeast Asia has numerous components. According to Singh (2014) the "trade between India's coastal kingdoms of Orissa and Southern India and others countries of Southeast Asia such as Thailand, Malaysia and Cambodia are well documented in history. The Indic religion like the Buddhism and Hinduism had

retained a strong influence in Southeast Asia, with epics like the Mahabharata and Ramayana being part of the ethos of Southeast Asia".

Aditya (2016) insists that the Indian influence on South-East Asia can be traced back since ancient times. India established trade relations with the kingdoms present in Cambodia, Malay Peninsula, Thailand and Burma. The spread of Hinduism and Buddhism to these areas can be directly attributed to the soft power status of India. In ancient Indian literature, the land was known as 'Suvarnabhumi' and trade routes were established from several Indian ports the prominent ones being Gopalpur, Masulipatnam. In Cambodia, the now world famous Angkor Wat was established by Khmer regime king Jeyavarman II and the development peaked under the patronage of Jeyavarman VI. In Thailand, the religion of Buddhism was propogated by monks sent by the Indian emperor Asoka the Great and the religion was adopted as the State religion of Thailand with suitable local modifications added to the religion. The warm trade and cultural relations that existed between the Sailendra Dynasty of Indonesia and Chola Dynasty are well documented. Hence, it can be concluded that the relations between South East Asian nations and India is not a relatively new development but had existed and in fact flourished since ancient times.

India and most of the Southeast Asian countries except Thailand were colonised by the European powers. After Second World War, these colonised nations got independence and formed new nation states one after another. For instance, "British India in 1947, which was later partitioned into India and Pakistan; British Mandate of Palestine, Burma, and Ceylon in 1948; Netherland East Indies in 1949 (which became Indonesia); and the creating of the Republic of Egypt in 1952 that ended British occupation" (UTMUN General Assemblies 2014: 1).

India and Southeast Asian countries during the colonial period had contacts in the form of well established trade relations.

> "For centuries, trade and human migration traversed the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean connected maritime Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent in complex networks that were sustained by commerce, culture, and community. As a consequence, large parts of Southeast Asia came under profound Indian influences. British imperialism strengthened these networks

by bringing the subcontinent and the territories to its east under the colonial sphere of influence, underpinned largely by trade and commerce" (Yong et al 2009: 20).

This shows that India played a pivotal role even during the colonial period in Asia in general Southeast Asian region in particular. "The Asian Relations Conference was perhaps emblematic of that special relationship which India enjoyed with Southeast Asian states in the first decade following the end of the Second World War. One could perhaps see this as an early expression of an Indian 'Look East' policy, with Nehru laying the foundation of an Asian community in which India would exercise an important influence" (Yong et al 2009: 21).

In 1955 at Bandung which is in the Indonesia, five countries have called for a conference of Asian and African nations—the first of its kind. It was known as The Bandung Conference also known as The Afro-Asian Conference. The conference was organised by Indonesia, Burma, Pakistan, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and India. It was attended by 29 Asian and African States many of them being newly decolonized states. It aims were to promote Afro-Asian economic and cultural cooperation and to oppose colonialism or neo-colonialism by any nation. India played a crucial role in this conference and was a major turning point most of the newly independent countries of Asian and African states. The Asian Relations Conference and Bandung conference were instrumental in asserting rights of self-determination for most of the states during the cold war era. Yong described that "The Asian Relations Conference and the Bandung Conference were high points in the early attempts by the newly emerging Asian states to create a free and neutral pan-Asian identity and presence in the international order" (Yong et al 2009: 2-22).

India's non- aligned movement of not aligning with any of the super-power bloc has a deep impact on its foreign policy. Most of the Southeast Asian countries look up to India as an inspiration. "But due to its own domestic problems India's interest in Southeast Asia dwindled with the wars that India had to fight with China in 1962 and with Pakistan in 1965 and 1971.4 The war with China diluted Nehru's vision of an alternative framework of reference in world politics—the non-aligned movement. That policy, with minor changes now and then, continued for the next two decades till

the end of the Cold War. Security concerns over-rode foreign policy" (Naidu 2004: 334). This is aggravated by India signing of the Treaty of Friendship with Soviet Union in 1971. India's credibility was at question. "In the aftermath of the oil shocks in the early 1970s, India's main concern was to secure uninterrupted oil supplies. Flush with petrodollars, the economic opportunities in the West-Asian region also drew India away from Southeast Asia". By the 1990's India underwent a dramatic shift in its approach towards its neighbouring states. It focuses Look east policy as its important foreign policy initiative. To have greater economic alignment and political role in Asia-pacific region in general and Southeast Asia in particular was the aim of the Look East Policy. Finally India's relation with Southeast Asian nations is revived once again. "A combination of economic, strategic, and domestic considerations has led India to pay greater attention to its eastern neighbours since the 1990s" (Sikri 2009: 131).

It was in the opening of the 1990s that India's engagement with the South-East Asia accelerated after the announcement of the Look East Policy (LEP) which is visible from the increase in bilateral trade, cross-border capital flow, people to people contact, etc.

### 4.1.3 Why India is not a member of ASEAN?

Akmal (2016) notes that India is one of ASEAN's Dialogue Partners, but it has never applied to be a member of ASEAN. Under Article 6 of the ASEAN Charter, states can apply, in accordance with certain procedures, to be admitted into the association.

India unfortunately would not pass criteria 1- that, it is located in the recognized geographical region of Southeast Asia. As the word ASEAN stands for Association of South East Asian Nations, which includes Myanmar and Philippines. India is in geographically located in the region South Asia, and is ineligible to be a member of ASEAN. India falls under the category of South Asia, for all political purposes. Therefore, India is not a member of ASEAN. It already has SAARC as a regional association group.

Before 1990s, India had not been paying sufficient attention to this region. "In the post-colonial era, India and the nations of East Asia (despite some of them being

fellow members of the Non-Aligned Movement) found themselves opposite sides of the Cold War divide. The natural development of India's links with its eastern neighbours was blocked by the state of India's relations with Bangladesh and Myanmar. Bangladesh did not give adequate transit facilities to India. Myanmar was a closed society and its ties with India were quite minimal until the early 1990s. Finally, because of India's colonial links, the Indian elite tended to look towards the West rather than to its then relatively less developed eastern neighbours. While this historical legacy has ensured that there is no baggage to act as a drag on India–East Asia relations in the twenty-first century, it has also led to a situation where neither region has impinged very much on the other's consciousness and foreign policy priorities" (Sikri 2009: 132).

### 4.1.4 Importance of Southeast Asia

The importance of Southeast Asia was realised not recently with the implementation of look east policy. It was realised way back before India got independence. India's influence on the culture and religion in Southeast Asian region begin since then. The first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, also offered an opportunity for India to forge close political links with the South-East Asian countries. India was a staunch supporter of anti-colonialism in the region. On many platforms like Afro-Asian Conference and india joined hands with the newly decolonized states with its foreign policy of Non-aligned movement. Sikri mentioned that "India's steadily growing ties with East and Southeast Asian countries have become an increasingly important element of India's foreign policy. India is working with these countries bilaterally as well as through regional frameworks like the EAS, ASEM, and ASEAN, and sub-regional organizations like BIMSTEC and Mekong-Ganga Cooperation" (Sikri 2009: 131).

According to Bonura (2018) it was in the early 1990s economic development in Southeast Asia has been remarkable. The region's is relatively with young population that will ensure strong labor force growth into the future. Dutt (1984) insists that all over Southeast Asia one finds numerous symbols of these ancient ties. Indian philosophy, culture, religion, Buddhism, art and architecture, languages, all these left an abiding impact on many countries of South East Asia. Indeed Indian and Chinese cultural influences met in the outer reaches of South East Asia and you have the interesting phenomenon of Vietnam falling under the sway of Chinese cultural

influence in its political institutions, code of ethics and language, but Cambodia coming wholly under India's cultural influence. This influence was also evident in Thailand, Malaya and parts of Indonesia. These ancient bonds became alive and were reinforced by the emergence of these countries as modern nations.

### 4.1.5 LEP and ASEAN

The collapse of Soviet Union and the change of world economic order and focus on globalisation has brought the world closer. In short the world has become like a global village. This necessetiates countries of the world to have a closer ties irrespective of the different nature of the government. India change its outlook towards the world and foray into a new foreign policy toward the southeast Asian Nations. Bhattacharjee opines that "Changing economic frontiers, India's fast economic growth and international and regional economic challenges, brought the Indian leadership to forge a policy which stressed on bringing the South East Asian nations closer." (Bhattacharjee 2016: 2).

"India initiated a Sectoral Dialogue with ASEAN in 1992 and became a full Dialogue Partner in 1995 and a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1996. The government under Atal Bihari Vajpayee also intended to speed up India'look east policy. Since 2002 India has become a Summit-level Dialogue Partner of ASEAN. In 2003, India acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia. The heart of the India–ASEAN engagement is the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement signed in 2003, which envisages the establishment of an FTA in goods, services, and investment over the next decade or so". (Sikri 2009:133).

India and the 10-member countries of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) signed the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in services and investments on September 8, 2014. "India's 'Act East Policy' will get significant momentum with FTA's like RCEP and possibly Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) when India gets inducted as a member which would remain advantageous to the Indian economy, will further strengthen economic interdependence with India and the ASEAN members." (Bhattacharjee 2016: 5)

### 4.1.6 What is Look East Policy (LEP)?

I.K. Gujral had stated that "What look east really means is that an outward looking India, is gathering all forces of dynamism, domestic and regional and is directly focusing on establishing synergies with a fast consolidating and progressive neighbourhood to its East in Mother Continent of Asia" (Bhattacharjee 2016: 2, Gujral 1996). It was in 1991, Look East Policy was officially launched by the Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, although the term was first mentioned in the Annual Report of the Ministry of External Affairs, 1995-96" (Haokip 2011:1). According to Naidu (2013: 53) "India's Look East Policy includes not only ASEAN but also North-East Asia, apart from Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan and South Korea" (Jyoti 2013:1).

Srikant (2016) mentioned that

>The Indian government has been giving an impression that once these projects become operational, the North East would be able to break the shackles of its landlocked status and move on to the path of development. It is held that the increased connectivity would link the landlocked regions with neighbouring countries, and develop business and trade between the countries and the regions by reducing time, distance, and travel costs. It is also assumed that these initiatives would help the people of the region overcome the problems of poverty, unemployment, and underdevelopment.

According to Haokip, "The Look East policy is also a means of reducing India's internal development disparity. The North-eastern states lag behind in economic development and this gap has widened since independence. The sense of neglect has resulted in various forms of unrest in the region. With the launch of the Look East policy, India sees the region not as *cul-de-sac* but as a gateway to the East, thereby attempting to link the North-eastern region with Southeast Asia through a network of pipelines, road, rail and air connectivity. This is expected to initiate economic development and help the eight North-eastern states to develop infrastructure, communication, trade, investment, logistics, agro-business and other commercial activities. Knowing fully well the potential, the North-eastern states strongly support the Look East policy. Indeed, the Look East policy is believed to be the new *mantra* for development of the North-eastern region" (Haokip 2011: 252-253)

### 4.1.7 Evolution of Look East Policy

Haokip traces the evolution of Look East Policy as "The changed international system in the aftermath of the end of Cold War, the success stories of the East Asian Tiger economies and the radical shift in India's economic and strategic circumstances caused New Delhi to pay more attention to the rapidly growing economies of East and Southeast Asia" ( Haokip 2011: 1).

According to Haokip (2011) the end of cold war brought about a fundamental change in the international system and led to the burgeoning of the formation of regional economic organisations. Gordon (1995) observed that it was during the later half of 1990s India emerges as a South Asian winner rather than a loser. Nayar (1990) noted that the political scenario of India during those periods was marked by wavering, where three successive governments were formed within two years. The later period of 1980s coincided with the electoral cycle in 1989, which witnessed the political limitation and volatility at the centre with no party in majority.

It was during those periods, Indian National Congress (INC) party, which had the largest elected number but not willing to form government at the centre. At this particular critical juncture Janta Dal formed government which led to economic crisis instead of taking steps to redress the grave situation. According to Bajpal (1992) the Congress emerged as the single largest party with 232 seats in 1991 general election. Subsequently, a Congress government under Prime ministership of P.V. Narasimha Rao supported by some regional parties. The newly elected government faced severe economic problems and to overcome these problems economic liberalisation programme was undertaken in June 1991 to attract foreign investments and to boost exports. Harshe (1999) equally cited that the early 1990s brought drastic changes and resulting in an era of globalisation; integration of economies and also thrown open opportunities, problems and challenges in the world. Moreover, it greatly intensified international competition and pave way to a new wave of regionalism which has proved as an useful mechanism to serve both commercial and economic objectives.

Tajena (2001) noted that in South Asian region, India and its neighbouring countries have made several attempts for regional cooperation. According to the Annual Report of Ministry of External Affairs (MEA: 1995-96) Look East policy a by product of

various compulsions, changed perceptions and expectations of India in the changed international environment. Haokip (2014) observed that it is part of the new real politics that can be seen in India's foreign economic policy and improved interest for regional cooperation with ASEAN is importance of South-East Asia to India's national interests. In 2003, LEP was extended to include the East Asian nations, China, Japan and Korea. "Initially focused on the ASEAN countries, India's opening towards its eastern neighbours gradually encompassed China, Japan, and South Korea and, lately, Australia and New Zealand too" (Sikri 2009: 131). Moreover, "In addition, since becoming Prime Minister, Modi has advocated a 'Look East, Link West Policy' pointing to a broader Indo-Pacific conceptualisation of India's region" (Rajendram 2014:3).

### 4.1.8 Look East Policy under successive government

Congress and BJP are the two main political parties with divergent ideologies that have been ruling the country one after another since independence in 1947. There are many other national and regional political parties too.

> a). 1991-1996  Indian National Congress under Prime Minister P.V Narasimha Rao
>
> b). 1988- 2004 Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)- led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee
>
> c).2004-2014 Congress Party led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh
>
> d). 2014-present BJP led NDA government under Narendra Modi

### 4.1.9  Look East Policy and Northeast India

Goswami argued that the look east policy was conceptualised in the 1990s "primarily as a response to the vacuum created in Indian foreign policy with the sudden demise of the Soviet Union. The policy was originally crafted more as a response by India to the systemic changes in international politics rather than a policy aimed primarily at uplifting its rather backward North eastern region" (Goswami 2015: 76). The importance of Northeast was realised around 2000 and the commonalities between the North Eastern region of India and South East Asian countries are multi-dimensional in

socio-cultural patterns, anthropological-ethnic background, and religious practices, etc.

Domestic dimension is another important prong of Look east policy apart from economic and strategic dimension. The northeast region has been neglected for the past several years due to its geographical location. "Not fully integrated—both economically and emotionally—with the rest of India, the Northeast Region lags behind the rest of India in development and suffers from widespread insurgency movements. In order to help the Northeast Region get over these inbuilt constraints, India's strategy envisages an intensification of the Northeast Region's communication and economic links with Myanmar and other Southeast Asian countries, thereby reducing the Northeast Region's current overwhelming dependence on an unhelpful and uncooperative Bangladesh" ( Sikri 2009: 136) . Mr. Bezbaruah also pointed out that the "North Eastern region of India bears many similarities with South East Asian countries and that this can go a long way in the realization of opportunities for partnerships"

The speaker also talked about the lack of connectivity in the North Eastern region. Similarly, some old links must be restored for the purposes of tourism and trade, such as Brahmaputra waterways.

Bhattacharjee has observed that "Prime Minister Modi in a whirlwind tour covering Assam, Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura, coined a new acronym for the region: NEZ, or Natural Economic Zone, and called for the region to be developed through economic corridors to Southeast Asia. The Prime Minister on this visit also announced a slew of much needed projects, including scholarships for students, a national sports university, agricultural colleges, upgraded power and digital connectivity and new railway lines" (Bhattachajee 2016: 7).

## 4.2  Insurgency crisis in Northeast India and LEP

According to Cline (2006) the "northeast states of India have faced a series of insurgencies almost since independence". Goswami (2015) also mentioned that "almost all the states in this geographical area, barring Sikkim, Mizoram, and, to a large extent, Meghalaya and Tripura, suffer from militant violence".

Cline (2006) observed that there has been a "virtual kaleidoscope of insurgent movements in the northeast, with some counts of up to 40 to 50 groups". Kolas (2015) also highlight the "view of Northeast India as a site of 'ethnic conflict' has become the standard frame employed by researchers, commonly used also among local analysts".

The situation is more or less same even in Manipur hill areas which cause several untoward incidents that led to lots of many lives among the Kukis by the Nagas who encroached their land by claiming as their ancestral land through making false claims by serving quit notice to the innocent Kukis settler in the region. This also necessitated the Kukis to protect their unquestionably rights and authority which they had enjoyed before the penetration of British in the region. The Kukis also resorted to defend the Nagas insurgent at the cost of their lives where many rendered homeless, orphan, and forcibly abandon their villages as the invader Nagas followed ethnic cleansing to fulfil their false accusation towards the innocent Kukis which still have an indelible mark on them.

After India's became independent, many tribal communities especially from the North-East gained separate statehood in due course while the Kuki communities were left out. There was a systematic genocidal violence perpetrated towards the Kuki settlements which led to various insurgency movements.

According to Haokip (2015) the

> "attainment of Mizoram statehood on 27 February 1987, mainly spearheaded by the Mizo National Front (MNF), still left many Kukis deeply dissatisfied with India's handling of 'unity in diversity'. On the Burmese side, too, official reluctance to grant more autonomy prompted the re-organisation of various Chin insurgent groups. On the Indian side, when genocidal aggression against local Kuki populations increased during the 1990s, this led to a renewal of insurgency movements among Kukis, who felt betrayed particularly by the excessive atrocities inflicted upon innocent Kuki people by the Nagas. He also further mentions that in response to this incident some Kuki leaders formed the Kuki National Front (KNF) to carve out a Kuki Homeland or Kuki state within the framework of the Indian Constitution in India. Another group raised the Kuki National Army (KNA) to fight for the creation of Kuki states, one in India and another in Burma/Myanmar. However, since amalgamation of the Kuki-Chin territories of India, Burma/Myanmar and Bangladesh is clearly not possible across the various international boundaries, at present the

CNF/CNA are India-based Myanmar movements and the KNA/KNO is an India-based movement operating partly in Myanmar and mainly in India. After few years, some progress was achieved when, on 1 August 2005, various ethnic Kuki revolutionary outfits under the umbrellas of the Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and United People's Front (UPF) signed an agreement about 'Suspension of Operation' (SoO) with the Indian Army, with immediate effect. Altogether 19 Kuki revolutionary organisations, operating in the state of Manipur, thereby signalled readiness to engage in political dialogue. The signing of this Agreement between the Indian Army and the KNO/UPF strengthened Kuki-Chin connections with India. It also signified unification of various ethnic Kuki Chin revolutionary outfits into two main streams, KNO and UPF. The negotiating table of the Indian Army became the first platform for all major rival ethnic Kuki insurgent groups to enter a political dialogue, prompting these groups to shed their internal differences, at least for the moment.It was after various annual extensions, the latest state of play is now that on 22 August 2014 in New Delhi, a formal one year extension of this Agreement was signed by the new BJP Government of India and the KNO/UPF, still with no concrete solution" (Haokip 2015:22-23).

Kolas (2012) observed that NSCN (IM) in 1997 had signed a ceasefires agreement in 1997 with GOI with NSCN (K) since 2001, and which was followed by numerous smaller armed groups. When an armed group enters into a ceasefire agreement with the government, the group is allowed to build 'designated camps', like the Indian military. In these camps, annual 'Raising Day' ceremonies are also performed as commemorative events, just as the various Commands of 13 the Indian Army also celebrate their 'Raising Day'. Rules in the camps can be strict, and cadres may be punished for even minor 'offenses' such as smoking or taking 'paan' (areca nut wrapped in betel leaves). This is seen as a normal feature of 'military discipline'. Although the government views its ceasefire strategy as a success, militant violence has continued, due largely to ineffective monitoring of compliance with ceasefire ground rules. While groups in ceasefire receive government funds for their cadres to live in designated camps, they continue to demand routine payments of 'taxes', mainly from entrepreneurs, villagers ('house tax') and civil servants.

Cline (2006) noted that

"beyond security operations and the peace negotiation process, New Delhi has tried a number of political measures where the Indian government has devised several plans for inducing guerrillas to surrender, to include rehabilitation camps where combatants can be trained in new skills and can receive bounties

for weapons. Also, as already noted, various economic incentives have been offered. The economic measures may, however, have been limited in effectiveness due to overall corruption within the states. The government has implemented varying degrees of autonomy for particular tribal groups, but this certainly has been a double edged sword politically. As particular groups have been singled out for more autonomy, other groups have increased their demands in response. There have been some positive developments in the northeast. Several of the states have in fact seen significant declines in insurgent operations and the Insurgency Environment in Northeast India 143 various negotiations and ceasefire agreements have made considerable progress. The era of the large insurgent groups in northeast India that could present a major strategic threat independently appears to have passed. Almost all the larger movements have fractured, some to the point of losing their existence. This fracturing is far from unalloyed good news for Indian counter insurgency efforts (Pp 143).

## 4.3 Projects under LEP

Sundaram (2013) mentions that

> "the economy of South East Asia is a virtually untapped market which is up for grabs by major regional economic entities such as India, China, Europe or the USA. India's compatibility with the South East Asian countries with regard to better regional cooperation lies in the fact of its abstinence from exhibiting hegemonistic ambitions, making it more benign towards South East Asia. The camaraderie between India and South-East Asia is clearly visible through the dynamic persuasion of India's Look-East Policy" (Pp.1).

Some of the key projects that are being undertaken as part of the Vision 2020 plan are Kaladan Multimodal project, India-Myanmar rail linkages, and the trilateral highway project between India, Thailand, and Myanmar, etc.

## 4.3.1 Kaladan Multi-modal Transit Transport Project

According to Singh (2015) Kaladan Multi Modal Transit Transport Project was jointly identified by the India and Myanmar to create a multi-modal mode of transport for shipment which will connect Sittwe Port in Myanmar to the India-Myanmar border. This project not only serves the economic, commercial and strategic interests of India, but also contributes to the development of Myanmar, and its economic integration with India. The project presents a huge opportunity to both India and ASEAN to significantly upgrade their ties.

The Kaladan Multimodal Transport Project, for instance, seeks to connect Kolkata with Sittwe port in Myanmar, going farther to Lashio via Kaladan river and to Mizoram in India by road. Originally, the project, which started in 2008, was scheduled for completion in 2014. It is likely to be completed and become operational in 2016.

### 4.3.2 The Trilateral Highway

The Trilateral highway which will link India with Myanmar, and then further with parts of South East Asia. "India has concluded a number of bilateral and multilateral projects, aimed at enhancing connectivity between Northeast India and Southeast Asia. India and Myanmar recently agreed on the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Facility, which envisages connectivity between Indian ports on the eastern seaboard and Sittwe Port in Myanmar and then through riverine transport and by road to Mizoram, thereby providing an alternate route for transport of goods to Northeast India. Efforts are also underway to improve infrastructure, particularly road links, at the second India-Myanmar border trade point at Rih-Zowkhathar in Mizoram sector by upgrading the Rih-Tidim and Rih-Falam road segments in Myanmar. Apart from developing road links, efforts are underway to have a rail link from Jiribam in Manipur passing through the border town Moreh to Hanoi in Vietnam via Myanmar. However, infrastructure development in India's Northeast and Myanmar will be a daunting task and has to face the geographical, technical and security challenges. Through these efforts the government of India is showing its keenness in developing the Northeast." (Haokip 2011: 4)

### 4.4 LEP to Act East Policy

The focus of present government under Modiji's leadership is prioritisation of friendly relation with its neighbourhood. At this note, Look east policy has assumed more pro-active role in dealing with Southeast Asian nations. Therefore, in order to give new momentum to the already existing policy, the name look east policy has been change to Act East Policy. In order to give "India's Look East policy even greater momentum, unveiling an upgraded 'Act East Policy'(AEP) during the India-ASEAN Summit in Myanmar in November 2014. The foundation, objective remains the same but to provide impetus and increase its importance and focus on it, the policy was upgraded" (Bhattacharjee 2016: 4 "the Modi Government has since demonstrated

its intention to pursue a more ambitious foreign policy agenda, including carving out a greater global role for India" (Rajendram 2014: 2).

Rajiv Bhatia in a keynote address in India-Myanmar Relations: Looking from the Borders explained that "India's Act East Policy is not a replacement of the Look East Policy but it is the consolidation, extension, expansion and diversification of India's policy to accord a high degree of importance to South East Asia and East Asia" (Burma Centre Delhi 2015: 6).

"In the early 1990s, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao unveiled the Look East Policy to reconnect with Asia as part of India's economic globalisation. Nearly quarter of a century later, Mr. Modi has again turned to Asia to improve India's economic fortunes. The policy of 'Acting East' is about injecting new vigour and purpose into India's Asia policy." (Mohan 2015: para 3).

Chand (2014) noted that "Look East Policy is no longer adequate; now we need Act East policy". The present government under the stewardship of Narendra Modi has taken great inititiative on furthering its foreign policy. Since his assumption of office he has visited may foereign soil to enhance ties and act a key player in the world politics. C. Raja mohan stated that "As Prime Minister Narendra Modi surprised the world with his passion for foreign policy, Asia has inevitably taken the centre stage in the conduct of his government's diplomacy" (Mohan 2015: para 1). He futher adds that for Mr Modi diplomacy and economic development are deeply interconnected. Thereby reviving India's economic growth is his main agenda. Modi has also significantly expanded the geographic scope of India's Look East policy. Modiji visited Australia after 28 years and Fiji after 33 years as a means of expanding the Act East Policy.

**4.5 Steps taken by Modi Government, 2014-2016**

According to General V.K. Singh Since 2014 the Modi government took the following steps during the last two years to strengthen India's relations with countries in South East Asia; "Upgraded our relations to strategic partnership with Singapore in November, 2015. Thus we now have strategic partnership with Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Japan, Republic of Korea (ROK), Australia, Singapore and Association of

Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and forged close ties with all countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Further, apart from ASEAN, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and East Asia Summit (EAS), we have also been actively engaged in regional fora such as Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). Two summits of Forum for India-Pacific Island Cooperation (FIPIC) were held in Suva, Fiji (November 2014) and Jaipur, India (August 2015). There were several high level visits from both the sides". Moreover, "various plans at bilateral and regional levels include steady efforts to develop and strengthen connectivity of Northeast with the ASEAN region through trade, culture, people-to-people contacts and physical infrastructure (road, airport, telecommunication, power, etc.). Some of the major projects include Kaladan Multi-moda Transit Transport Project, the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project, Rhi-Tiddim Road Project, Border Haats, etc". (Gen.V. K. Singh (Retd), The Minister of State in the Ministry of ExternalAffairs)

According to Mohan (2015) after Modi came to power special emphasis is put on implementing Indias soft power in the region "through a vigorous engagement with the diaspora and a strong commitment to build on shared civilisational bonds. For the new government renewing cultural and spiritual connectivity with Asia are as important as physical connectivity."(Mohan2015:para8).

In order to foster close relations with the ASEAN countries India has taken various inititative. The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs, Shrimati Preneet Kaur said, "India has been cooperating with the ASEAN countries in political, security, economic, socio-cultural and development pillars to further integration between India and ASEAN at the levels of the Governments, institutions and people-to-people. In this, we are guided by the ASEAN-India Plan of Action (2010-15) to implement the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity" (Lok Sabha 2013: Unstarred Question No.3688) .

### 4.5.1 The Three Ç's
Chand has reiterated the importance of Commerce, Culture and Connectivity. These are the "three pillars of India's robust engagement with ASEAN. In the economic

arena, the India-ASEAN relations are poised to scale new frontiers. The two sides are expected to sign an India-ASEAN FTA in services and investments soon. This will complement the FTA in goods which was signed five years ago in 2009 and has led to a quantum jump in bilateral trade, which is hovering around $80 billion. The two sides are now confident of scaling it up to $100 billion by 2015 and double that volume by 2022. The two-way investments are on an upswing: ASEAN investments in India over the last eight years amounted USD 27.9 billion, and Indian investments inASEANreached$32.4billion"(Chand2014:Para.2),

### 4.5.2Connectivity

"Connectivity, physical, institutional and mental, remains the enduring agenda of the India-ASEAN engagement. India has been in the forefront of pushing a host of trans-national projects that seek to weave the region together in an intricate web of road, rail and maritime links. The completion of the Tamu-Kalewa-Kalemyo sector of the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway is poised to create a new dynamic in India's multi-faceted ties with the region. With the new Indian government focusing with renewed vigour on spurring the economic uplift of India's north-eastern states, the gateway to ASEAN, enhanced connectivity promises to unleash a new prosperity in this region. In the days ahead, enhancing shipping and air connectivity will be majorfocusareas"(Chand2014:Para.6)

### 4.5.3 Enhanced Look East policy

According to Chand (2014) setting up a

> "new benchmarks for this blossoming relationship, India has set up an Indian
> mission to the ASEAN in Jakarta, and has set up an ASEAN-India Centre
> which is housed in New Delhi. Capacity-building, developmental cooperation,
> and the burgeoning knowledge partnership are key facets of what experts are
> calling India's 'Enhanced Look East' policy. This is reflected in India sharing
> its expertise in capacity building projects in Southeast Asian countries through
> the three funds - the $50 million ASEAN-India Cooperation Fund; the $5
> million ASEAN-India Green Fund; and the ASEAN-India Science and
> Technology Fund. India plans to set up four IT Centres in Cambodia, Lao
> PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam. India is also set to launch a Tracking and Data
> Reception Centre in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, which would make remote
> sensing data available from the RESOURCESAT and OCEANSAT for

applications in disaster management and mineral exploration for ASEAN countries"(Para.7).

**4.5.4.CulturalConnect**

It is generally true that Chand (2014) comments

> "Commerce, Connectivity and Capacity-building continue to propel the India-ASEAN relations to new milestones, Culture and Creativity provide mental and spiritual fodder to nurture this growing engagement. Known in ancient times as Suvarnabhumi, the land of gold, Southeast Asia bears deep impress of the Indian culture. Ramayana and Mahabharata are not just Indian epics, but civilizational memories India shares with many Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia, Thailand and Cambodia. Buddhism forms the spiritual nucleus of India-ASEAN relations as Buddhists from all over the region flock for pilgrimage to revered shrines like Bodh Gaya, the place where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree"(Para.8).

The leaders of India and ASEAN have identified forging a knowledge and culture bridge as the enduring way to fructify the full potential of the relationship. "In the next action plan, the focus will be on people-to-people contacts, increasing the civilisational linkages, making sure that there are enough studies which are conducted on the linkages of the ASEAN countries, on issues like language, religion, traditions, dress, and our traditional crafts," says Anil Wadhwa, secretary (east) in India's external affairs ministry." (Chand2014:Para.9)

**4.6 Look East Policy and Its Role in Bridging the Gaps in the Region**.

The Look East Policy of undertaken by the Narasimha Rao government had a considerable manifestation which is immensely resourceful and flourishing in the Indo-Myanmar region. The relations between India and South-East Asia are clearly visible through the dynamic persuasion of India's Look-East Policy to an Act East Policy. India and ASEAN reciprocally have renders ample relevance to the development of its North-Eastern Region because of its geographical proximity to South East Asia.

Haokip (2011) notes that the North-Eastern tip of India consisting of contiguous seven sister states and its favourable geographic location, cradled by the Himalayas in the north , Bay of Bengal in the south and flanked by 5 Asian countries- Nepal, Bhutan, China, Myanmar and Bangladesh, which acts as a gateway to South-East

Asia. It also brings ample possibilities to reap benefits from India's thriving relations with South East Asia. At present, the process of globalisation provides the countries with the diverse opportunities and enabling them with better avenues.

Sundaram (2013) noted that

> "the Look-East Policy is expected to usher in a new era of development for the North East through network of pipelines, connectivity, communication and trade. And, India has undertaken some bilateral and multilateral projects for boosting connectivity between the North-East and South East Asia.
>
> It is worthy to mentions there has been exchange of peoples, goods and services between our North-East and countries of South and South-East Asia throughout centuries. The Chins from Myanmar migrated over the past centuries to Manipur and Meities of Manipur have ties for over 2000 years with the Burmans of Myanmar. Advanced communication and interaction would foster trade, commerce and tourism prospects in the entire North-East region" (p.176).

It is through the better implementation process that it enhanced people to people connectivity easier than before and the region reaped the fruit of development and becoming closer. It was due to the improvement in road connectivity and better implementation of sharing Information Communication Technology (ICT) in the region and proper utilisation of resources in the Indo-Myanmar region it break the barrier of the people to follow the developmental issues like exploiting new avenues of employment generating jobs etc. This in one way or the other ways led the people to a new developmental path and reduces diverse conflicts in the regions to some extent. There is a witness of people to people relationships from the Kuki-Chin communities created through LEP/AEP in the region. The Kuki-Chin communities who had settled in the region since time immemorial to still also improved cementing bond of relationship in diverse field. Increasingly, the two communities also seen engaged in various sector after the introduction of LEP/AEP. The two communities are inhabiting in both the region and their role can't be underestimated or under rated in the region. Moreover, social condition of the region of the Indo-Myanmar is improving gradually and many youngsters and NGOs are also presently working to improve the social condition of the people. When we think critically, about the unexploited natural resources and untapped human potential, insurgencies in the region which hampered the developmental work and disturbing the normal life of the region could check to some extent. It will also enhance people to people connectivity

and prosperity in the region and lead to more confidence building measures to fulfill the goal of development in the region laid out by the Indian government and making Indo-Myanmar relations vibrant.

## 4.7 Conclusion

The look east policy mainly focuses at greater alignment with Southeast Asia particularly. According to "It was against this background that one could see a dramatic transformation in India's approach and policies toward Southeast Asia. Refurbishing India's image as a responsible power and convincing ASEAN that it had greater stake in peace and stability rather than merely extending its influence to fill the so-called power vacuum in Southeast Asia, became important. The emergence of ASEAN as an autonomous regional influence and the phenomenal economic success the member states achieved, further added to the urgency. By then, ASEAN too was responsive to Indian initiatives particularly since the organisation faced the trauma of an uncertain future in the post-Cold War atmosphere of political flux". According to G.V.C Naidu, "The Look East policy was a multi-faceted and multi-pronged approach to establish strategic links with many individual countries, evolve closer political links with ASEAN, and develop strong economic bonds with the region. Second, it was an attempt to carve a place for India in the larger Asia- Pacific. Third, the Look East policy was also meant to showcase India's economic potential for investments and trade" (Naidu 2004: 337).

The various developmental projects undertaken under the Look East Policy if implemented properly can develop the region in a shorter time.

# CHAPTER FIVE

*Economic Development and the Look East Policy*

# Chapter Five
# Economic Development and the look East Policy

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter would analyse the internal aspects of the overall Northeast Development. It would also deal with Look East Policy initiatives in enhancing the frontier ethnic groups especially the Kuki and Chin groups in the realm of development. It would also focus on developing infrastructure and connectivity for an effective cross border trade in addressing their long standing economic deprivation.

## 5.2 Overview of Northeast India

The Northeast region of India which comprises of eight states namely- Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Sikkim, Meghalaya and Tripura. It shared international boundary with five neighbouring countries namely-Bangladesh (1187 km), Bhutan (489 km), China (1126 km), Nepal and Myanmar (1643 km). Only 2 percent of its borders is with the rest of India which known as the "Chicken Neck" or the "Siliguri Corridor". The Northeast region of India is known for its beautiful landscapes and diversity of cultures, languages, religions and beliefs. Because of its diversity it is sometimes called 'mini-India'. The people of Northeast are mainly of mongoloid stock and are more alike or related to ethnic groups of SouthEast Asia. "It would not be out of place to claim that the Northeast in terms of its geographical and demographic characteristics is the point where Southeast Asia begins" (Concept paper for the Task force, P.5). "The Western part of the region is connected to the Eastern part of the country through the Siliguri Land Corridor (Chicken's Neck), which has an approximate width of 33 kilometres on the eastern end and 21 kilometres on the western end. Any transport planning for the region will have to design an optimum use for this land mass" (Planning Commission, GoI 2012: 6).

But due to long and continuous neglect it suffers from underdevelopment. Therefore, proper policy is needed in order to revive the region.
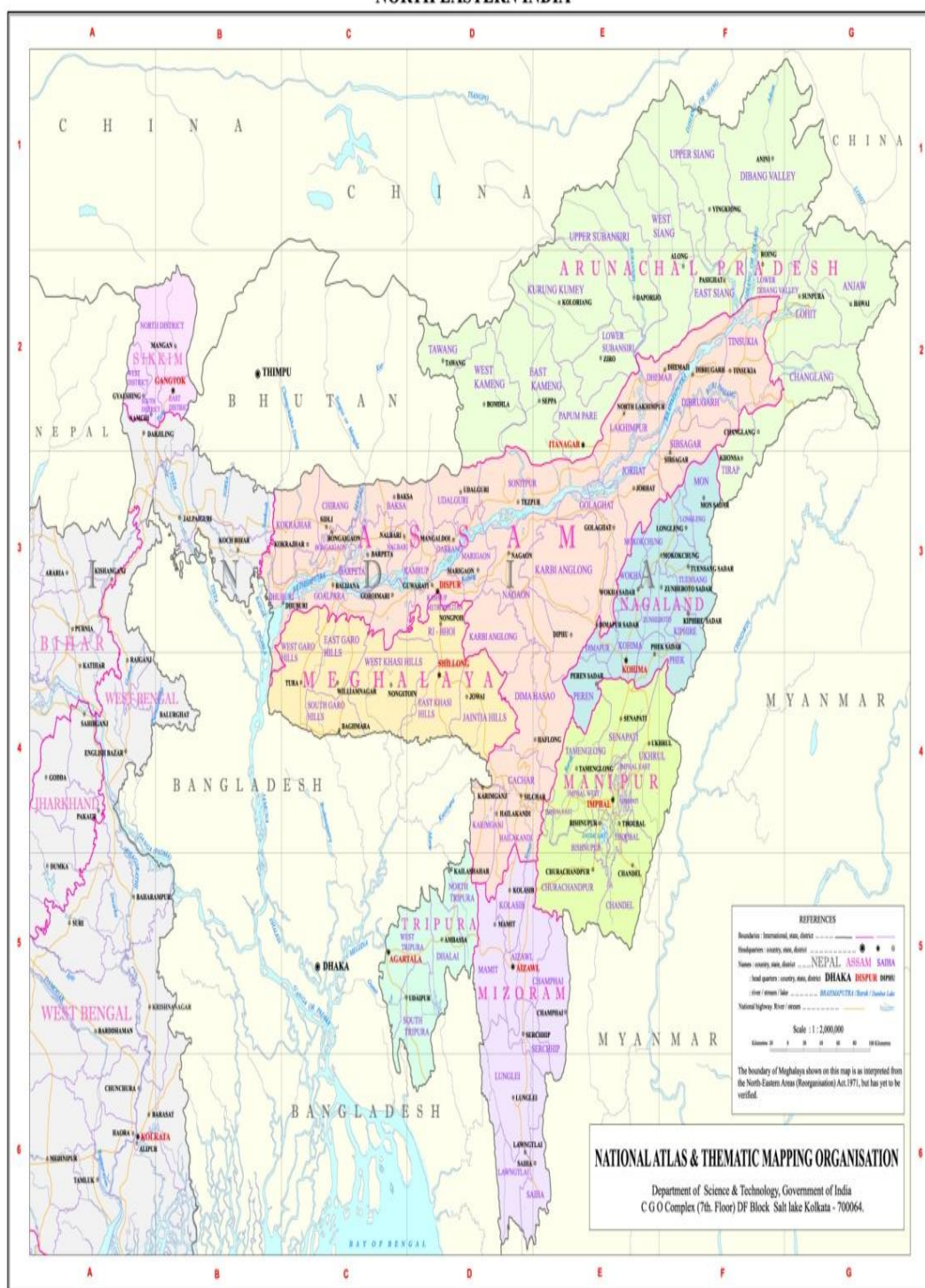
Map 2: Map of Northeastern India (Source: Ministry of Development of Northeastern
Region, Government of India)

## 5.3 Definition of Development

In modern period the word development has various meaning and connotation. There are various meaning that related to this approach which is crucially determine and related to governance which is shape by the goal of development. According to Shah (2017) "improvement in country's economic and social conditions" is known as development. It is more or less refers to improvement in a way of managing natural and human resources in order to create wealth and improve people lives. From the above definition we can mentioned that Development is a characteristic of the system; sustained improvements and individual well-being are one of the yardstick through which it is judged. This measurement has important implications for development policy, both for developing countries themselves which are wishing to put their economy and society onto a path of faster development, and for outsiders who want to help that process."

## 5.4 Institutional Mechanism related to Development of Northeast India

There are various machineries of the Government of India (GIO) through which special focus is given to the development of Northeast India. Some of them worth mentioning are listed and discussed as under

### 5.4.1 Ministry of Development of Northeastern Region (MDoNER)

MDoNER was created in 2001 and accorded full-fledged ministry in 2004. It deals with the socio-economic development of the region. It acts as a facilitator between the Central and the State Governments of the Northeastern region in the economic development. It has given utmost emphasis to matter such as planning, execution and monitoring of development works in the region. This shows it has great role to play in the effort to development of the region and to bring at all the region of Northeast at par with the rest of the country.

### 5.4.2 Northeastern Council (NEC)

The Northeastern Council "is the nodal agency for the economic and social development of the Northeastern Region which consists of the eight States namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura" (About the NEC para.1). The establishment of the Northeastern Council has marked the effort on the part of the government which strive its concern in developing

the Northeastern States. "Over the last thirty five years, NEC has been instrumental in setting in motion a new economic endeavour aimed at removing the basic handicaps that stood in the way of normal development of the region and has ushered in an era of new hope in this backward area full of great potentialities" (About the NEC para.2-3).

Northeastern Council is a statutory, advisory body established in 1972 and constituted in 1971 by an Act of Parliament. In 2002 NEC was made as the Regional Planning Body for Northeastern region to formulate specific projects and schemes. There are three key objectives of NEC. They are-

1. Balanced development of the Northeaster Region;
2. Effecting better inter-state coordination and;
3. Maintaining security and public order in the region

### 5.4.3 Ministry of Home Affairs, Northeast Division

The vision of this (Ministry of Home Affairs) division is to establish peace and harmony in the region. The Mission of the Division is that "The Government is following a multi-pronged policy to deal with insurgent and militant activities in the Northeastern Region which, inter alia, includes (i) a willingness to talk to groups provided they abjure violence, seek resolution of their demands within the frame work of the Indian Constitution and come into the mainstream of national life and (ii) sustained counter-insurgency operations against the elements who continue to indulge in violence and anti-national activities. Towards, this end, the Union Government is also supplementing the efforts of the State Government through various measures such as deployment of Central Security Forces to aid the State authorities in counter insurgency operations and providing security for vulnerable institutions and installations based on threat assessments; vigilance and surveillance on the border, including the construction of border fencing, border roads and flood lighting, sharing of intelligence, financial assistance for strengthening of the local Police Force and intelligence agencies under the Police Modernization Scheme, provision of assistance of various aspects of counter insurgency operations by way of reimbursement of Security Related Expenditure, assistance to the States for raising additional Forces in the form of India Reserve Battalions and providing assistance under surrender-cum-

rehabilitation policy for surrenderees etc" (Citizens' Charter in Respect of NE Division, MHA, Para. 3).

**5.4.3.1 Northeastern Region Vision 2020**

The NER Vision 2020 sets up the goals, and identifies the challenges and suggests implementation strategies for various sectors for peace and prosperity of the region. The vision 2020 has cited some of the reason as to the backwardness of the Northeastern region as a whole

> "Troubled by history and geo-politics, the Northeast has remained one of the most backward regions of the country. The trauma of partition in 1947 not only took the region backwards by at least a quarter of a century, but also placed hurdles on future economic progress. It isolated the region, sealed both land and sea routes for commerce and trade, and severed access to traditional markets and the gateway to the East and South-East Asia – the Chittagong port in East Bengal (now Bangladesh). It distanced the approach to the rest of India by confining connectivity to a narrow 27-km-wide Siliguri corridor, making it a 'remote land' and constraining access for movement of goods and people. The uneasy relationship with most of the neighbouring countries has not helped the cause of development of the region either: with 96 per cent of the boundary of the region forming international borders, private investment has shied away from the region. Poor infrastructure and governance is combined with low productivity and market access. Inability of governments to control floods and river bank erosion causes unmitigated damage to properties and lives of millions of people every year in the region. If the quest for ethnic and cultural identities has sowed the seeds, frustration and dissatisfaction from seclusion, backwardness, remoteness and problems of governance have provided fertile ground for breeding armed insurgencies. There is overwhelming dependence for resources on the Central Government, public investment in the region has sub-optimal productivity due to weak of forward and backward linkages" (Northeastern Region Vision 2020, 2008: 1).

There are many reasons as to why the region is under performing as compared to the other states of India since independence in 1947. The vision 2020 has listed as follows, "Inclusive growth calls for attention to inclusive governance and rural

development. The single biggest constraint to accelerated growth is poor infrastructure affecting:

- road connectivity
- rail connectivity
- air connectivity
- cyber and telecom connectivity
- inland waterways
- power" (Northeastern Region Vision 2020, 2008: V)

The resource rich Northeastern states are an ethnically diverse and have peculiar and unique features as compared to other regions of India. Since India got independence the region has been plagued with insurgency movement, ethnic conflicts, and even secessionist movement. Development has always been out of question in relation to this region. Although, the region holds tremendously importance to India as it shares many international boundaries but least has been done for the development of the region. It is a high time both the Central and concerned state government should start working in tandem to improve the fault that has committed for decades after decades. Apart from economic requirements, Law and order, good governance and diplomatic initiatives in the regions are the three critical non-economic desires that are crucial for economic performance on the ground.

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### 5.4.4 An overview of Insurgency

After India's independence, the Northeast India became a hub of different ethnic insurgencies. One of the many reason is due to the colonial master demarcation of boundary for administrative convenience without considering the ethnic composition in the region. This leads to dissatisfaction of the various ethnic communities who were a victim of such careless bifurcation. One such example is that, the Kukis ethnic community today could be seen in three countries namely- india, Myanmar and Bangladesh. Moreover, they do not have a separate state within India and are found to be scattered in many states of Northeast. Likewise, the Nagas are also found to be present in Myanmar with a separate self-administered zone. In the same way many other ethnic groups are found in all pockets of Northeast states. All these factors contributed chaos, confusion and rift in the region. Since, then the insurgent

movement became a way of life in the region. Obviously, all these further push the status of Northeast as one of the underdeveloped region. However, the insurgent movement demands varied according to the groups. The Centre for Development and Peace Studies based in Guwahati had compiled the insurgent groups' demands as under:

> "The demands of the insurgent groups have been wide-ranging. While groups like the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), NSCN-IM (National Socialist Council of Nagaland: Isak-Muivah group) aim at establishing independent states, outfits such as the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) demanded separate states for their tribal constituency. Fringe outfits, such as the United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) and Dima Halam Daogah (DHD), confining their activities to the geographical limits of separate districts in Assam, have fought for maximum autonomy, within the purview of the Indian constitution. Reasons behind dissent against the Indian state too have been diverse. The National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) insurgencies in Tripura are rooted in the sense of alienation of the indigenous tribals as a result of the unhindered migration from Bangladesh (formerly East Bengal / East Pakistan). The ULFA, too started highlighting among others, Assam's sorry plight as a result of Bangladeshi migration. Several outfits operating in the valley areas of Manipur protest against the forcible accession of the state to the Indian union and subsequent neglect of their language and the delayed statehood conferred on the state. Apathy shown by the central government to the population suffering from a famine triggered the militancy in Mizoram spearheaded by the Mizo National Front (MNF)" (Centre for Development and Peace Studies, Para. 1)

According to Centre for Development and Peace Studies, "Unemployment problem in the region stands as a root cause of high insurgency in the region which in turn contributed to rampant youth unemployment, illiteracy, poverty .Hence, lots of the unemployed youths become easy target for recruitment for the insurgent outfits. Extortion activities are also on a rise in the region, with militants collecting extortion money from almost everywhere, including educational institutions and religious places. The extortion activities have also disrupted the work of many important development projects in the region" (Centre for Development and Peace Studies, Para. 9).

The border area of the neighbouring countries became a hideout for majority of the insurgent group insurgent For example; Manipur based insurgent groups like NSCN-

K place of escape is in Myanmar and China, Bangladesh and Bhutan. In December 2001, 192 UNLF cadres, including the outfit's chairman Sana Yaima, were arrested by the Myanmarese Army, but all of them were set free by February 2002. According to Indian army sources, "UNLF today supplies arms and ammunition to various militant groups in the Northeast with active connivance of Myanmar's security forces. Sana Yaima was again arrested on November 31, 2010 from Motihari in East Champaran district of Bihar" (Centre for Development and Peace Studies, Para. 10).

Added to the woes are the easily availability of arms in border areas like Bangladesh and Myanmar Where Northeast became a road for arm smuggling. Such factors further assist the growth of insurgency in the region. "Arms entered through India's Northeast from the Southeast Asian markets through the region's absorbent borders with these countries. Inter-linkages between the outfits have ensured the smooth transfer of military hardware and the technology to use them. As a result, even the weakest of the outfits, have access to sophisticated arms and explosives. The NSCN has trained armed cadres of several outfits active in different states in the region. ULFA cadres, even today, continue to use the NSCN-K facilities in Myanmar's Sagaing division" (Centre for Development and Peace Studies, Para. 11).

Apart from the cited reason above, historical basis is also one of the most significant causes of conflict in Northeast. "Though cultural and ethnic diversity per say are not causes for conflict, but one of the major problem areas is that the Northeast is territorially organized in such a manner that ethnic and cultural specificities were ignored during the process of delineation of state boundaries in the 1950s, giving rise to discontentment and assertion of one's identity. Whereas, the colonial rulers took nearly a century to annex the entire region, and administered the hills as a loose 'frontier area', with the result, that large parts of the Northeastern hill areas never came in touch with the principle of a central administration before. Hence, their allegiance to the newly formed Indian nation-state was lacking from the beginning draw attention to the creation of East Pakistan (today's Bangladesh) – which meant the loss of a major chunk of the physical connection between mainland India and Northeast India. Interestingly, 99 percent of the Northeast's boundaries are international and only one percent" (Heinrich Boll Stiftung India 2009: pp.1-2).

However, we also witnessed "decline in insurgency in the region after few years ago. For example, in Tripura, effective counter-insurgency measures have condensed the insurgency problem to a great extent. Mizoram, Meghalaya, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh are also quite serene and have witnessed only few insurgency-related incidents. In Assam, the situation has been comparatively peaceful since 2009 after the arrests of top leaders of the ULFA and lying down of arms by DHD-J and KLNLF. Nonetheless, the situation in Manipur is yet challenging and worrisome. In Nagaland, even though there are not much violent incidents, both the NSCN factions (NSCN-IM and NSCN-K) are still carrying on with its unlawful activities. Both these factions are in ceasefire with the Central Government but are still involved in clashes between themselves". (Centre for Development and Peace Studies Para.14).

Yet again, "State response to insurgency movements in the Northeast has been a complex mix of military operations, developmental packages, surrender schemes, peace overtures and emphasis on harnessing the economic potential of the region. Whiles military operations formed a crucial component of the counter-insurgency campaigns in Mizoram and Nagaland in the period between 1950s and 1970s, New Delhi, starting in the 1990s, was inclined to dole out economic donations for the region in a bid to win away insurgency through developmental schemes. The ability of the state police forces to match the insurgents, with access to sophisticated weapons, has been found wanting. As a consequence, it has been a trend on the part of each of the states to depend on the deployment of the army and para-military forces. Three states, Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh, have set up the unified command structure (UCS) mechanism, to coordinate the activities of the police, para-military and army personnel. While Assam set up the UCS in 1997, Manipur replicated the mechanism in 2004 and Arunachal Pradesh in 2008" (Centre for Development and Peace Studies Para. 16). "Success of such attempts has remained rare. With the exception of the Mizo National Front (MNF) rebellion that ended in 1986 and the BLT uprising that culminated in a peace deal in 2003, insurgency in India's Northeast has continued unabated, with or without transient dips in violence".

## 5.5 Insurgency as a Hindrance to Development

According to Verma (1998) the "concept of insurgency is used to indicate a form of civil strife, which takes place in a country or in a part of a country in which the

masses are involved or at least there is a tacit support of a large majority of them". Singh (2004) also notes that "insurgency can be defined as a discontent of a group, which uses violence to achieve its goal". Koijam (2010) mentions that to "understand the problem of insurgency in Northeast India it would be necessary to first know its genesis and analyze the narrative of each rebel group".

According to the Report of the 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission (7th Report, P.151) the "Northeast represents a state of *stable anarchy* where the rule of law and other institutions of governance are subverted directly or through collusive arrangements to serve personal or partisan ends of the militants".

Maongtoshi and Sinha (2014) observed that

> It was due to the insurgency problem most of the state resources is diverted for maintaining law and order problem. Sometimes due to the nexus between the politicians and the insurgents the government funds are diverted from developmental to insurgent groups and most of the work remains incomplete. It is historical evidence that the insurgency prone countries and states are economically and socially backward and their economic development is very slow. It results in social instability, creates panic among the people, reduces the enthusiasm of the people in the line of entrepreneurship, creative work etc. academic atmosphere has also been deteriorated, the rate of investment in different projects is very low due to this problem. For instances a state like Nagaland, Manipur is still far lagging behind in economic development though with its immense natural resources and with a larger prospect for the tourism industry to flourish (Pp.126).

In order to better understand the problems faced by the Northeast people, the question of insurgency cannot be overlooked because it has impacted life either negatively or positively. A careful examination is necessary taking into account of the sensitivity of the region. "The intricate cultural and ethnic mosaic which the Northeast region represents, with over 200 ethnic groups with their own languages and socio-cultural identity, coupled with factors such as geographical location and connectivity, poses a variety of challenges on the law and order and security fronts. The extensive international borders of various States in the region, while offering opportunities in the context of the 'Look East Policy', also add further complexity to the security situation. This is further compounded by the regional aspirations of the different groups in various States, a number of whom have taken up arms and have been indulging in violence. Keeping all this in view, although law and order is

constitutionally the responsibility of the State Governments, the Ministry of Home Affairs, in close coordination following an integrated and multi-faceted strategy, including supplementing the efforts and resources of the State Governments to strengthen their security related arrangements, dialogue with groups who have shown a willingness to unconditionally renounce violence and come into the mainstream, discussions at the diplomatic level in respect of security related matters, strengthening the arrangements for border management including infrastructural an human resource development in the border areas. Efforts are being made on a continuing basis to fine tune the various elements of the strategy as may be required, from time to time, keeping in view the special needs of different areas and people in region" (Northeastern Region Vision 2020, 2008: VIII-IX).

"Language/ethnicity, tribal rivalry, migration, control over local resources and a widespread feeling of exploitation and alienation have resulted in violence and diverse demands by various Indian Insurgent Groups (IIGs). The demands vary from sovereignty in some cases to independent State or Homeland or simply better conditions for ethnic groups they claim to represent. The underground outfits indulge in violent and terror activities and intimidate people with arms in order to achieve their objectives /demands. They maintain cross-border links, procure arms, recruit and train their cadres, and indulge in unlawful activities such as damaging of public properties, bomb explosions, extortions, killing of innocent civilians, Security Forces Personnel, attacks on/abduction of Government employees, politicians, and businessmen".(Ministry of Home Affairs, GoI, Insurgency in Northeast India.Para.1).

**Table 2: State-wise Security Situation during the years 2012-2017**
**(upto 31.03.2017)**

| Arunachal Pradesh | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Years | Incidents | Extremists arrested | Extremists killed | Extremists surrendered | SFs killed | Civilians killed | Persons kidnapped |
| 2012 | **54** | **66** | **14** | **17** | - | **05** | **17** |
| 2013 | 21 | **49** | **07** | **02** | 01 | 02 | 09 |
| **2014** | 33 | 86 | **09** | **07** | - | 02 | 49 |

| Years | Incidents | Extremists arrested | Extremists killed | Extremists surrendered | SFs killed | Civilians killed | Persons kidnapped |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2015** | **36** | **55** | **05** | **03** | **03** | **01** | **33** |
| **2016** | **50** | **59** | **07** | **04** | **02** | **-** | **25** |
| **2017 (upto 31.03.2017)** | **20** | **12** | **3** | **-** | **-** | **1** | **4** |

### Assam

| Years | Incidents | Extremists arrested | Extremists killed | Extremists surrendered | SFs killed | Civilians killed | Persons kidnapped |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2012 | **169** | **412** | 59 | 757 | **05** | **27** | **79** |
| 2013 | 211 | **348** | **52** | **92** | **05** | **35** | **125** |
| **2014** | **246** | **319** | **102** | **102** | **04** | **168** | **94** |
| **2015** | **81** | **645** | **49** | **30** | **-** | **09** | **27** |
| **2016** | **75** | **366** | **51** | **15** | **04** | **29** | **14** |
| **2017 (upto 31.03.2017)** | **11** | **66** | **3** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **-** |

### Manipur

| Years | Incidents | Extremists arrested | Extremists killed | Extremists surrendered | SFs killed | Civilians killed | Persons kidnapped |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2012 | 518 | 1286 | **65** | **350** | **08** | **21** | **57** |
| 2013 | 225 | 918 | **25** | **513** | **05** | **28** | **22** |
| **2014** | **278** | **1052** | **23** | **80** | **08** | **16** | **29** |
| **2015** | **229** | **805** | **41** | **04** | **24** | **15** | **26** |
| **2016** | **233** | **518** | **09** | **-** | **11** | **11** | **25** |
| **2017 (upto 31.03.2017)** | **56** | **140** | **2** | **-** | **1** | **9** | **4** |

| **Meghalaya** | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Years | Incidents | Extremists arrested | Extremists killed | Extremists surrendered | SFs killed | Civilians killed | Persons kidnapped |
| 2012 | **127** | 92 | 16 | 20 | 01 | 36 | 64 |
| 2013 | 123 | **75** | 21 | 10 | 07 | 30 | 33 |
| **2014** | **179** | 173 | 35 | 733 | 06 | 24 | 110 |
| **2015** | **123** | 121 | 25 | 78 | 07 | 12 | 87 |
| **2016** | 68 | 59 | 15 | 205 | - | 08 | 52 |
| **2017** (upto 31.03.2017) | 11 | 7 | 2 | 19 | - | 1 | 15 |

| **Mizoram** | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Years | Incidents | Extremists arrested | Extremists killed | Extremists surrendered | SFs killed | Civilians killed | Persons kidnapped |
| 2012 | - | 02 | - | - | - | - | 06 |
| 2013 | 01 | 03 | - | - | - | - | 06 |
| **2014** | 03 | - | - | 03 | - | - | 14 |
| **2015** | 02 | 04 | - | - | 03 | - | 13 |
| **2016** | - | 02 | - | - | - | - | 01 |
| **2017** (upto 31.03.2017) | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

| **Nagaland** | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Years | Incidents | Extremists arrested | Extremists killed | Extremists surrendered | SFs killed | Civilians killed | Persons kidnapped |
| 2012 | **151** | 275 | 66 | 04 | - | 08 | 93 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2013 | 145 | **309** | 33 | 01 | - | 11 | 100 |
| **2014** | 77 | 296 | 12 | - | - | 01 | 65 |
| **2015** | 102 | 268 | 29 | 13 | 09 | 09 | 78 |
| **2016** | 58 | 198 | 05 | 16 | - | - | 51 |
| **2017 (upto 31.03.2017)** | 5 | 37 | - | 1 | - | 1 | 5 |

**Tripura**

| Years | Incidents | Extremists arrested | Extremists killed | Extremists surrendered | SFs killed | Civilians killed | Persons kidnapped |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2012 | **06** | **12** | **02** | 13 | - | - | 13 |
| 2013 | 06 | **10** | - | 22 | - | 01 | 12 |
| **2014** | **08** | **08** | - | 40 | 02 | 01 | 08 |
| **2015** | **01** | **02** | - | 15 | - | - | 03 |
| **2016** | - | - | - | 27 | - | - | - |
| **2017 (upto 31.03.2017)** | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

*Source: Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, Insurgency in Northeast, pp.2-3*

**5.5.1 Scheme for Surrender-cum-Rehabilitation of militants in Northeast**

The Ministry of Home Affairs has been implementing a "scheme for Surrender-cum-Rehabilitation of militants in Northeast w.e.f.01.01.1998 (revised on 01.04.2005) to wean away the misguided youth and hardcore militants who stray into the fold of militancy and later find themselves trapped into that net. The Scheme also seeks to ensure that the militants, who have surrendered, do not find it attractive to join militancy again. The scheme provides for:

(i) An immediate grant of Rs. 1.5 lakhs to each surrenderee, which is to be kept in the name of the surrenderee as Fixed Deposit in a bank for a period of 3 years.

This money can be utilized as collateral security/Margin Money against loan to be availed by the surrenderee from the bank for self-employment;

(ii) Payment of stipend of Rs. 3,500/- per month to each surrenderee for a period of one year. State Governments may consult Ministry of Home Affairs, in case support to beneficiaries is required beyond one year;

(iii) Vocational training to the surrenderees for self-employment.

Pursuant to this policy of the Government, a number of insurgent/militant outfits of NE Region have surrendered with their weapons and joined the mainstream of the society" (MHA, Northeast Division, Scheme for Surrender-cum-Rehabilitation of militants in Northeast: 1)

**Table 3: The number of militant who have surrendered during 2012 to 2017 (upto 31.03.2017) is as under:**
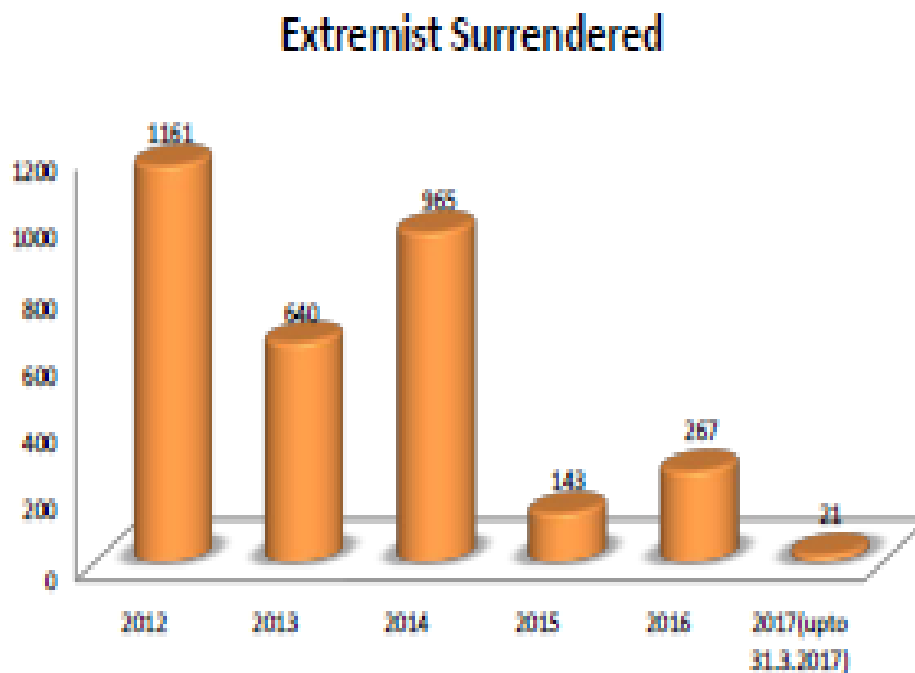


*Source: (MHA, Northeast Division, Scheme for Surrender-cum-Rehabilitation of militants in Northeast: 1)*

**5.6 Government's Initiative in addressing long Standing Deprivation through Look East Policy**

According to Bhattacharjee (2016), the region needs to be developed through economic corridors to Southeast Asia. Goswami (2015) mentions that the Prime Minister visits also announced a slew of much needed projects to establish in the region.

### 5.6.1 Connectivity

Connectivity is the reigning mantra in the region. According to Chand (2014) a host of connectivity projects that will enhance connectivity to Southeast Asia to unlock the economic energies and enterprises. According to Sundaram (2013) India is in the process of building India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway and its extension to its neighbouring countries. Sharma (2008) notes that the Kaladan Multi-modal Transit Transport Project has been slow in the past, but the new government has expressed its intention of providing the necessary resources so that it can be implemented rapidly.

Eric (2013) insists that for the purposes of Burmese gas transfer through the Northeast, India is investing $100 million in improving the old colonial Burmese port of Sittwe on the west Burmese coast. Furthermore, Banerjee (2013) notes that the region could benefit immensely from water sharing. According to Chand (2014)

> the connectivity is not just geographical and physical; what animate India's engagement with the region are cultural and spiritual connections, grounded in history and a shared civilizational space. It is from India Buddhism flowed to Southeast Asian countries, as Buddhists from all over the region flock for pilgrimage to revered shrines Mahabodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya, the sacred place where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. The revival of Nalanda University, the ancient seat of learning, has now become a showpiece project of ASEAN and epitomises age-old cultural and spiritual linkages between India and Southeast Asia region

### 5.6.2 Economy

In the field of economy many initiative step has been taken. According to Kuppuswamy (2014) India has offered a US $150 million package towards the establishment of a Special Economic Zone in Sittwe, the Capital of strife torn Rakhine State. It will be linked to Kolkata via sea. There is Rice Bio Park at Yezin that aims to

serve as Training cum Demonstration Park for conversion or rice biomass into market driven products, helping in job creation and income generation.

According to Singh & Singh (2014) NER is

> looking more to neighbouring countries than to mainland India for economic relations. As such, the NER has a natural advantage for border trade. The same justifies the need for and significance of establishing Regional Cooperation for facilitating growth of business and investment between the NER and the South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). If it happens, then the NER of India could become an economic bridgehead for tapping a market of 500 million people in our extended neighbourhood in South East Asia" (Pp.79).

Indo-Myanmar Cross Border Trade through Moreh-Tamu sector (Manipur), Champhai-Rih sector (Mizoram) and Nathur Pass (Sikkim) cross border between India and China is the continental dimension so far. Further opening up of Stillwell road and more border trade will boost the regional economic cooperation between India and South East Asian countries. Since Kunming is already connected with Hong Kong by Express Highway, the Northeast India or India as a whole could establish direct road link with Hong Kong if the old Stillwell road is developed which was constructed during Second World War (silk route).

The passage through Kibithu in Arunachal Pradesh and Rima in China has the potential to become an alternative corridor to the Stillwell road, for trade between India, China and South East Asian countries. Singh & Singh (2014) noted that the proposed railway link between Delhi to Hanoi (Vietnam) under Greater Mekong Sub Region Cooperation decided by South East Asian countries' foreign ministers at Phnom Penh, Cambodia on the 20th June 2003 will create more job opportunities, uplift the socio-economic condition and mitigate the insurgency problem in general and check illegal cross border trade of the region in particular. The proposed Trans-Asian Highway from Singapore to Istanbul through India, Myanmar and Thailand will further develop the trade relationship between India and Myanmar and other South East Asian countries. It will provide direct and indirect employment generation to large skilled human resources of the countries. Chand (2014) also observed and pointed out that

> Economically, the India-ASEAN relations have acquired an unstoppable momentum. The India-ASEAN trade has crossed $80 billion. The signing of a Free Trade Area in goods in 2009 was a game-changer of sorts, and now the

two sides are looking to sign the India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement on Services and Investment. With the institutional framework in place, the two sides are now confident of scaling the India-ASEAN trade to $100 billion by 2015 and double that volume by 2022.

### 5.6.3 Infrastructure

Bhattacharjee (2016) notes that a

> "number of recent developments in the Northeast region of India are notable related to infrastructural developmental activities in the region. The level of education has certainly risen in the region, as has the demand for professionals from this part of the country. some of these growth patterns are a result of the establishment of the Ministry of Development of Northeastern Region in 2001. The Ministry is entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring security. There is a need to "rebrand" the Northeastern part of India. Many "movements" are on to restore greater integration and prominence to the region. Nagaland and Myanmar have hosted many cultural events that are an evidence of this movement. Shillong is being promoted as the "Education Capital" of the Northeast. Similarly, Sikkim is being hailed as India's "brand ambassador" in terms of zero plastic consumption, organic produce, and ecofriendly industries. A number of laboratories have also been set up to study the innovative methods of entrepreneurial activity in this area. Google has also set up some enterprises in the region" (Pp.9).

According to Bhattacharjee (2016) there are also some notable initiative and task set up for the

> proposals for establishing an Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research center in Nagaland, a research based hospital like All India 10 Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Assam, centre of Film production, Animation and Gaming in Arunachal Pradesh, as well as developing the region for film production, various fiscal packages moulded as per the need of the states in the region, to initiate a 'Make in Northeast' in the model of 'Make in India' project, promote exclusive NE expertise like tea processing, organic farming, food processing, exploitation of wind power, AYUSH , Wellness therapies etc., develop cultural tourism and strengthen the bonds of the region with the rest of India (10).

Kuppuswamy (2014) noted that the microwave link between Moreh- Mandalay was agreed by the GOI under line of credit. New project for Optical fibre line between Monywa to Rhi-Zawkhathar is also agreed to be undertaken with the help of the Indian. The project is now operational. BSNL has been asked to look into commercial

propositions such as internet bandwidth and hubbing. In June 2012, Govt of Myanmar has revised their request and has sought assistance for the following two projects: i. Rih – Mintup microwave link ii. Rural area GSM/UMTS mobile network.  A line of credit (LOC) for three power transmission lines executed by Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd(PDCIL) was signed in June 2008 along with change in scope of work approved for the project in March 2012. The transmission lines and substations propsed are: a) Oakshitpin – Taungup 230 KV, b) Taungup – Maei-Ann-Mann 230 KV c) Maei-Kyaukphyu 230 KV. MoEP and PGCIL signed the contract on March 21, 2012. An amendatory LOC agreement between EXIM Bank and MFTB has been signed on 02nd July 2012. With the aim to develop an Information Technology Projects (IIT) in Myanmar on the lines of IITs of India, the Myanmar Institute of Information Technology (MIT) is being set up at Mandalay. With the aim to develop an Information Technology Projects (IIT) in Myanmar on the lines of IITs of India, the Myanmar Institute of Information Technology (MIIT) is being setup at Mandalay.

According to Kuppuswamy (2014) as per the MoU signed, India is to establish and run the MIIT for 5 years while Myanmar would provide for infrastructure. The International Institute of Information Technology, Bangalore (IIIT-B) India is providing technical and academic support to the project. A Ground Breaking Ceremony, signalling the auspicious beginning to the establishment of the campus was held on 17 June, 2014 at Mandalay, Ambassador Mukopadhya said at this ceremony that India's continued commitment to development cooperation in Myanmar includes a financial commitment of US $ 24 million for IT projects.  A MoU was signed on 31 October, 2013 between Myanmar and India for strengthening "India-Myanmar for Enhancement of IT skills" at Yangon though GOI financial support of Rs. 17.89 Million. The project is being implemented through CDAC (Centre for Development of Advanced Computing).

Fernandes (2014) observed that

> "transport infrastructure depend on the Indian side has to be attributed firstly to the poor    transport infrastructure depend on the Indian side has to be attributed firstly to the poor transport infrastructure. In the Sagaing Region India has built a road to the nearest village on the Myanmar side from some border outposts in Nagaland and Arunachal but there is no road connecting these villages to the rest of Myanmar. The roads are in a bad shape but the

Government of India seems to be planning to improve them in order to start an Imphal-Mandalay bus service".

The coordinators of the study had to travel for 3 days by boat and motor cycle to reach the Thangsha and Tangkhul areas and 5 days to the Konyak area from Mandalay. The link with Mandalay is better from southern Sagaing and Chin State. There is a road from Mandalay to the capital city of Sagaing. Asian Highway I connects Imphal and Moreh with Tamu and onwards with Kalay and Mandalay. A road connects Champai in Mizoram with Kalay, another road connects Hakkah the Chin capital with Mizoram on one side and Kalay on the other. A new link with Mizoram will be established when the Sittwe port is ready. Thus, fairly good transport exists between the Chin State and Mandalay and onwards with Yangon. The roads are in a bad shape but the Government of India seems to be planning to improve them in order to start an Imphal-Mandalay bus service. Also the Champai-Kalay road will be improved.

### 5.6.4 Cross Border Trade

Ghoshal (2014), observed that border trade is the most important when it comes to India's trade with Myanmar. According to Indian Chamber of Commerce (2018)

> "India shares a 1,600 kilometers long border with Myanmar especially through the Northern Eastern states 24 of Manipur and Mizoram and the total border trade stood at around $ 13.73 billion in 2009- 10. While Myanmar recorded a 58 percent hike in its border trade in 2011-12, amounting to $ 3.367 billion, India-Myanmar trade amounted to about $15.049 million only in the same period, reflecting the scope for more engagement in the area. Myanmar has opened two border trade-points with India - Tamu and Reedkhawdhar in the Sagaing region and Chin state of Myanmar respectively. A third border trade point is proposed to be opened at Avakhung- Pansat/ Somrai. With the road being cleared for trade between India and Myanmar via the Pangsau Pass on the Arunachal Pradesh border, the historic Stilwell Road is likely to come alive with commercial activities".

According to Indian Chamber of Commerce (2018)

> "Indo-Myanmar Border Trade Agreement between the governments of the Republic of India and the Union of Myanmar was signed on January 21, 1994

(effective from April, 12, 1995) with the goal of formalization of border trade practices and set such trading activities in a congenial model".

Myanmar being an industrially undeveloped country and the demand for manufactured products in the country are by and large met by imports. Many such products are smuggled to Myanmar from India. Indian traders are demanding to expand the list to include especially manufactured goods which can be traded under the barter system and thereby traders can reap the benefit from border trade. According to Lalremruata (2014) the highway project to link the Northeast to Thailand via Myanmar, A trans-national highway of Kaldan Multi Modal Transport Project that connect Sittwe Port, are all opportunities in the making for the region, which is also rich in natural resources. In return, greater interaction would undoubtedly boost trade, commerce and tourism prospects in the entire region. Trading activities are also carried out on small scale basis and are collecting the goods from mainland India and selling in various markets as there are limited local products available. Some foreign goods are also available in large quantity as a result of opening up of border trade.

Geographically, India and Myanmar are in a good positioned to help in strengthening each others' ties with South and Southeast Asia through regional multilateral initiatives. Yhome (2014) notes that India and Myanmar share membership in several regional and sub-regional groupings - either as founding members or have joined existing groupings including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC); Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC); Bangladesh–China–India–Myanmar Forum for Regional Cooperation (BCIM); South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) – Myanmar is an Observer; Non-Aligned Movement (NAM); Brahmaputra-Salween Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative(BSLCDI); Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS); and the Milan Naval Exercise. The most significant development in the recent past has been Myanmar's transition from military to civilian rule and its re-engagement the international community. The changes in Myanmar have far-reaching consequences internally and in its relations with major powers. An area where the reforms inside Myanmar also have demonstrated positive outcome is in regional and sub-regional forums. The first

positive outcome of course has been Myanmar becoming chairman of ASEAN in 2014. Myanmar had to forgo its turn for chairmanship of ASEAN in the past primarily because of its internal issues and faced with opposition from within ASEAN and also from the Dialogue Partners. Hence, the fact that Myanmar is ASEAN chair gives it the opportunity to play a leadership role in the region and also in accelerating Myanmar's reintegration with the regional and international community.

## 5.7 Development of NE under Modi

Ever since the NDA government under Narendra Modi came into power in 2014, it declared "Northeast as the gateway of southeast Asia". As such emphasis has been given to the area with various initiatives for the overall development of the region. Reiterating its underdevelopment even after many decades since India got independence in 1947, the government is trying to bring balanced development in the region. Connectivity is the utmost requirement to fulfil dream of making it a gateway to Southeast Asia. "While an investment of Rs 40,000 crore is being made to improve the road infrastructure in the entire Northeast, 19 big railway projects have also been started in the region"(PTI, 07, May, 2017).

On 25th May 2017, Modi formally inaugurated India's longest bridge -the 9.15-km bridge connecting Dhola and Sadiya across the Brahmaputra -at Dhola, and named it after the legendary Assamese singer Bhupen Hazarika. "The government of India has adopted five paths to take India's ashtalakshmi (the eight Northeastern states) forward. These projects involves highway, railway, waterway, airway and information way (optic fibre network)" in order to make the region new engine of India's growth. In addition to this the central government announced the launch of a Rs 60,00-crore scheme, 'Sampada', to promote the agro and food processing industry (Kashyap 2017: Para. 1-3). Moreover, it also emphasise on tourism.

Modi's neighbourhood policy seeks to maintain good and friendly relation with its neighbouring countries. Since, Northeast India shared 80 percent of its boundary as international border and connected to the rest of India only with 25 km which is commonly known as Siliguri corridor or chicken neck. In order to developed the region friendly ties with the neighbouring country is a must. To fulfil this dream, the

government introduced border haats so that the people in the border areas could benefit from both the sides and facilitate in development of the region.

## 5.8 Achievements of NE Division from 2014 to 2017

The Overall security situation in the Northeastern States improved substantially in the last three years. "The incidents of violence have come down since 2014, for example, in 2014-824, 2015-574 and 2016-484. The numbers of insurgency incidents were lowest in 2015 and further came down in 2016. Civilian causalities in Northeast came down drastically being 46(2015) and 48 (2016) compared to 498 (2007) and 466 (2008). The number of kidnapping/abduction incidents has declined in the region in last three years (2014-369, 2015–267 & 2016 - 168)." (p.1)

"A framework agreement was signed with National Socialist Council of Nagaland/IsakMuviah [NSCN/IM] on 03.08.2015. Ceasefire agreements signed with National Socialist Council of Nagaland/Reformation [NSCN/R] and National Socialist Council of Nagaland/ Neopao Koyank - Kitovi [NSCN/NK] have been extended up to 27.04.2018. ANVC [Achik National Volunteers' Council] and ANVC/B, militant outfits of Meghalaya, signed Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) with the Government and dissolved in December, 2014" (p1-2)

"A total of 23 UG outfits of Manipur, fewer than two conglomerates (United Progressive Front [UPF] – 8, Kukis National Organisation [KNO]-15) are under Suspension of Operation with the Government. SoO agreements signed with these groups have been extended upto 08.06.2017 and 21.07.2017 respectively. Political dialogue with these groups commenced in June, 2016" (p.2).

Bilateral security & border management related talks with Myanmar held on :- i) 17th-18th November, 2014 in Myanmar ii) 12th -14th May, 2015 in Mumbai, India iii) 26th – 27th July, 2016 in New Delhi iv) 19th -20th December, 2016 in Myanmar.

**Table 4: Major Initiatives/Achievements of NE Division, MHA**

| Security Situation in Northeast Region since 2012 | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Years | Incidents | Extremist arrested | Extremist killed | Arms recovered/ surrendered | SFs killed | Civilians killed | Extremists surrendered | Persons kidnapped |
| 2012 | 1025 | 2145 | 222 | 1856 | 14 | 97 | 1161 | 329 |
| 2013 | 732 | 1712 | 138 | 1596 | 18 | 107 | 640 | 307 |
| 2014 | 824 | 1934 | 181 | 1255 | 20 | 212 | 965 | 369 |
| 2015 | 574 | 1900 | 149 | 897 | 46 | 46 | 143 | 267 |
| 2016 | 484 | 1202 | 87 | 698 | 17 | 48 | 267 | 168 |
| 2017 (upto 31.3.2017) | 103 | 262 | 10 | 92 | 3 | 14 | 21 | 28 |

Source: (MHA, Northeast Division, Major Initiatives/ Achievements of NE Division, MHA, P.1)

## 5.9 Conclusion

To conclude the overall development of Northeastern region despite rich in natural resources is still underdeveloped even after decades of India's independence. The region lack proper connectivity and no proper governance. The government has focus on special emphasis on economic development in the Five Year Plans with sectoral strategies formulated for infrastructure development. Constitutional provision like Fifth and Sixth Schedule for special safeguards of various ethnic minorities is provided. North Eastern Council (NEC) was the only kind in India mandated as a regional planning advisory body exclusively for development of the region. Look East is the most recent development concerning the infrastructure and economic development of the region apart from the respective state schemes. However, the outcome so far is not satisfactory (Concept Paper for the Task Force: pp. 3-4). It is a high time the government both central and state should work in tandem by involving the local people.

# CHAPTER SIX

*Conclusion*

# Chapter Six: Conclusion

In the concluding chapter, I have summarized the whole chapter (s) of my thesis; derived from the in-depth analysis of the proceeding chapter.

India and Myanmar had a long shared historical, ethnic and cultural links as both were under the colonial rule of the British. The colonial administration for their administrative convenience segregated the people without consideration for the ethnic groups. The Kuki and Chin from India and Myanmar respectively today are victims of such colonial legacy in which they are scattered into different territories. This results in rise of ethno-nationalist movement in their respective country. Such nationalist demand often resulted in a chaotic situation and becomes a burden for the government of India and Myanamr. In this light, India and Myanmar relations need to handle its internal ethnic crisis in order to advance its Foreign Policy successfully.

Many studies on India-Myanmar relations, has been carried out but one of the most important aspects which is the 'Ethnic dimension' has always been neglected in foreign relations studies of India and Myanmar. Therefore, this research work focus on ethnic dimension of their relations between India and Myanamr. The current study, undertakes a period from 1991-2014.

In the above chapters, I have focused on the Look East Policy as a catalyst for the regions development between India and Myanmar; the ethno-nationalist movement of Chins and Kuki in Viz-a-Viz Indian Myanmar relations. I also undertake the various policy initiatives under Look East Policy of the government.

There are various theories or approaches in ethnicity study. But this thesis focuses the debates on the views/approaches of primordialist and the instruementalist interpretation of ethnicity or ethno-nationalism in the light of the Kuki and Chin ethnic groups. Chapter 1 "**Introduction**" has explained the concept of primordialism. Wan and Vanderwerf (2009) highlighted two crucial factors in a primordialist perspective as a) one's ethnicity is ascribed at birth and b) one's ethnicity is more or less fixed and permanent. Primordialist theories, view human society as a conglomeration of distinct social groups. At birth, a person becomes a member of a particular

group. Ethnic identification is based on deep primordial attachment to that group especially by kinship and descent. One's ethnicity is thus fixed and an unchangeable part of one's identity."

While Instrumentalism approach which became popular in the 1970s and 1980s believes that 'ethnic identity is flexible, and variable that both the content and boundaries of an ethnic group change according to circumstances. Some instrumentalists insist that ethnic affiliation is simply on ploy to promote economic interest and that individuals are ready to change group membership if that suits their sense of security or their economic interests."

The Kuki and Chin ethnic groups' identity formation is based on primordial attachment established by kinship. Group solidarity is based on blood ties. This chapter dealt with the debate on primordialist and instrumentalist theoretical perspectives in understanding Kuki and Chin groups identity assertion and its ethno-nationalist movement. It concluded that primordalist approach to ethnicity is reflected well in Kuki and Chin identity assertion than instrumentalist approach. Historical experiences like the origin from "Khul", the institution of Chieftanship etc all points to the primordialist perspective on ethnicity. In such a scenario, my arguments stating that' In the quest for national identity Kuki and Chin ethnic groups use primordial ties as a means of political leverage" has rightly proven in Chapter two.

In the fourth Chapter, I have discussed about "Role of Look East Policy in addressing Ethno-nationalism". Since, 1991 India took a strategic shift in its foreign policy towards its neighbouring states. The collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s change the scenario of the world. Look East Policy was launched in the aftermath of cold war driven by economic imperatives and political expediency. Many projects were taken up under LEP; The Kaladan Multi-Modal-Transport Project, Trilateral Highway, Asian Highway and Railway link, Natural gas Pipeline, The Mekong Ganga cooperation, still well road etc.

Northeast region has been on the focus since the implementation of Look East Policy. In order to advance its projects it firstly need to have the support of the people in the region. In the process of implementing its project, it is required on the part of the Indian government to have talks with the insurgent groups and brought them under legal fold. Since 1990s the government brought Kuki under SoO and and the Nagas under ceasefire agreement. From 1990s India and Myanmar changed its bitter stand on their relations because India's support for pro-democracy movement

and condemnation of military crackdown on pro-democracy movement supporter in 1988 and its subsequent endorsement giving refuge to those who fled the military Junta atrocities further strained the relation. However, India's shift on ideology guided by 'realism" changed India-Myanmar relations to a new light. This changed in India's Foreign policy was boosted by the Look East policy initiative which provided an opportunity to tackle the long neglected region of India's Northeast and its development. The northeastern part of India is ethnically diverse and in Manipur itself there are more than 32 tribal groups clubbed under 3 major ethnic composition-Kuki, Naga, Meetei community. Insurgency, ethnic group dispute plagued the region which resulted into lack of development in the already neglected region. The entire northeastern states of India shared similar fate of ethnic identity flux and demand for separatism or autonomy movement was high. Moreover, there has not been proper policy on the part of the centre government to curb this menace. The Government has realised that insurgency has a considerable extent hampers development in the region

The look East policy provides a fertile ground for enhancing the Northeast region's development vis-a viz its relation to Myanmar. India felt the need to tackle the domestic threat in the region. Kuki insurgency movement too grow rapidly in the 1990's. The formation of Kuki National Front to carve out Kuki Homeland or Kuki state within the framework of India, while Kuki National Army (KNA) initially fight for creation of Kuki states one in Burma and one in India" This resurgence of Kuki nationalist Movement arise out of the genocidal aggression against local population by ethnic Nagas.

The year 2005 made some significant changes in the long struggle for Kuki nationalist movement. The state interference could be seen in the form of tripartite agreement under the name SoO between the GOI and the Kuki insurgent groups clubbed under two umbrellas Kuki National Organisation and United Peoples' Front and the state government on 1st August 2005. There has been many rounds of political talks between GOI and Kuki insurgents since 1st August 2005. Then KNO signed the tripartite SoO alongside the UPF with state government and GOI on 22nd of August 2008 which was seem as a first political step and periodically meeting for political stages has been initiated. The first round of political ideology has started and demands for statehood within the framework of Indian constitution in accordance with Article 3 which was submitted. However, in the 6th round of political talks (Jan10th 2018) demand for territorial

Council was submitted. The government initiative in regards to the kuki UGs has pave way for a more non-voilent and prevalence of peace in the region w.r.t to India Myanmar region.

However, in Myanmar, the Junta under Thein Sein government has realised the importance of ethnic minority groups whereby for the first time ceasefire agreements with the ethnic armed groups has been initiated. In 2011, President Thein Sein took a bold step by organising an informal ceasefire or preliminary discussion with ethnic armed groups. As a result of which, state level 9 points ceasefire agreement was signed at Hakka Chin state in 2012. Subsequently, another Union level 15-Point peace agreement was signed again on 6th January 2012 in which travel restrictions imposed on CNF leaders were lifted. This improved the conditions of Chin to a certain extent. However, second Union level meeting 28- point agreements were signed in December 2012. In this meeting an agreement to form independent commission on Human Rights abuses on Chin state was decided. Observation of Chin National Day was also a part of the Chin's ceasefire agreement among genuine federalism. Therefore, my argument stating that "the Government's concerted effort in bridging gap through the Look East Policy has slowed down the pace of Ethno-nationalist movement in both India's Northeast and Myanmar" has been rightly proven in Chapter 3 "Dimensions of Kuki and Chin Ethno-Nationalism and its impact on India-Myanmar Relations" and in Chapter 4 "Role of Look East Policy in Addressing Ethno-Nationalism"

In chapter 5, "Economic Development and the Look East Policy" the various projects undertaken has been discussed. The ethnicity impact on economic development has been outlined by various Scholar. The Northeast region is ethnically diverse. Ethnic armed movements are deeply rooted in the region. This is attributed to the colonial legacy. The disgruntled ethnic groups took up arms in fighting the government. In both India's Northeast and Myanmar the ethnic strife for autonomy or even to the point of secession has led to low level of investment in the region. The armed groups often extort money in the form of taxes to the local businessman. As a result investor for fear of extortion refrains from investing in the region. This in one way hinders the growth of development. It is also true to mention that ethno-nationalist movement has negative impact on development of the frontier region between India and Myanmar. There is evidence that a countries like the India and Myanmar and within its states like Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, Sagaing division, Chin states are still far lagging behind in economic development though with

its immense natural resources and with a larger prospect for the tourism industry to flourish. Ethnic conflicts are rampant, economic development is very slow and yield not much result.

Therefore, it is appropriate to say that *"Ethno-nationalist movement has negative impact on development of the frontier region between India and Myanmar"*

The following are the suggestion and measures for further research to enhance the relationship between the India-Myanmar by employing ethno-nationalism of Kuki and Chin ethnic group.

**1**. Cultivating a sense of belongingness

It is important for both the Kuki and Chin communities in India and Myanmar and both the Government to cultivate a sense of belongingness in their respective country. As, in the case of isolation or marginalization in the country is deemed to militate against national cohesion and it will also affect integrity for the development of the people in the region. Cultivating a sense of belonging in political, social, economic could help and improve their ties and also enhance Indo-Myanmar relation as the Kuki and Chin ethnic communities settled in strategic location of border crucial for the two country.


2. Enhancement of inclusion.

There are some who feel excluded from the mainstream system of the nation and fail to get many privilege and rights in the society. Before, it is late the Kuki and Chin communities and the government in both respective country should accept it as a wakeup call for building the never ending relationship that had started since time immemorial. Both communities and the two governments should not engage in activities that can hinder the attainment of national cohesion.


3. Promotion of a participatory approach.

The Kuki and Chin communities and both the government in respective countries should see one another in a participatory spirit. Promoting of a participatory approach resulted into people's involvement. And, when people are accorded opportunities to participate in decision making processes, their sense of belonging is boosted and this enhances social cohesion in the society which will further lead to the improvement of  bilateral ties in short term and achieving the goal of Look East Policy/Act East Policy in the long term.

The main thrust of Act East Policy is the present dispensation is to treat India's Northeast as a gateway to Southeast Asia and keep northeast in focus in all matters connected with dialogues with the ASEAN region. However, the period of my research is to analyse developments before 2014, and my findings are that the relations are moving in the positive direction.

Therefore, to conclude I would like to mention that while writing this thesis, I face several limitations; there is lack of materials on the writings of the ethnic groups in the frontier region between India and Myanmar; there is little survey on the frontier region between India and Myanmar ethnic population, their social life. In order to overcome the obstacles and give credibility to the thesis, the research drawn from all the sources those are related to the ethno-nationalist movement of Kuki and Chin.

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# THE PANGLONG AGREEMENT

THE PANGLONG AGREEMENT, 1947.
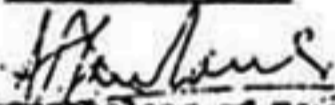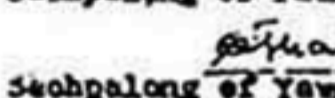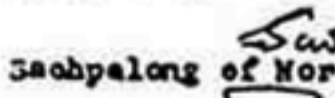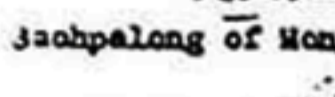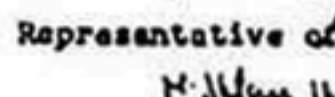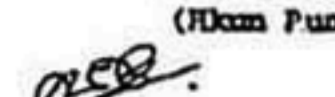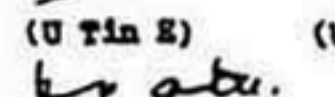
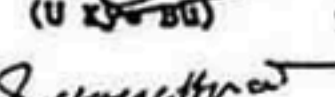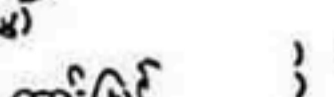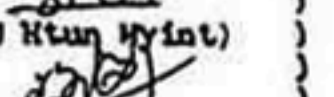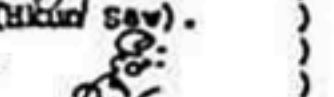A Conference having been held at Panglong, attended by certain Members of the Executive Council of the Governor of Burma, all Saohpas and representatives of the Shan States, the Kachin Hills and the Chin Hills :

The Members of the Conference, believing that freedom will be more speedily achieved by the Shans, the Kachins and the Chins by their immediate co-operation with the Interim Burmese Government :-
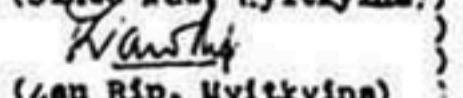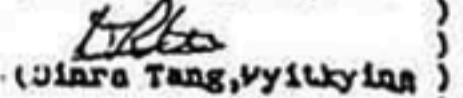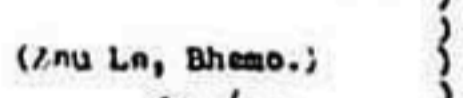
The Members of the Conference have accordingly, and without dissentients, agreed as follows :-
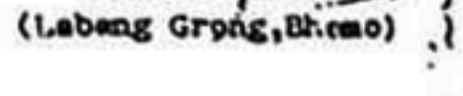
1. A Representative of the Hill Peoples, selected by the Governor on the recommendation of representatives of the Supreme Council of the United Hill Peoples (SCOUHP), shall be appointed a Counsellor to the Governor to deal with the Frontier Areas.

2. The said Counsellor shall also be appointed a Member of the Governor's Executive Council, without portfolio, and the subject of Frontier Areas brought within the purview of the Executive Council by Constitutional Convention as in the case of Defence and External Affairs. The Counsellor for Frontier Areas shall be given executive authority by similar means.

3. The said Counsellor shall be assisted by two Deputy Counsellors representing races of which he is not a member. While the two Deputy Counsellors should deal in the first instance with the affairs of their respective areas and the Counsellor with all the remaining parts of the Frontier Areas, they should by Constitutional Convention act on the principle of joint responsibility.

4. While the Counsellor, in his capacity of Member of the Executive Council, will be the only representative of the Frontier Areas on the Council, the Deputy Counsellors shall be entitled to attend meetings of the Council when subjects pertaining to the Frontier Areas are discussed.

5. Though the Governor's Executive Council will be augmented as agreed above, it will not operate in respect of the Frontier Areas in any manner which would deprive any portion of these Areas of the autonomy which it now enjoys in internal administration. Full autonomy in internal administration for the Frontier Areas is accepted in principle.

6. Though the question of demarcating and establishing a separate Kachin State within a Unified Burma is one which must be relegated for decision by the Constituent Assembly, it is agreed that such a State is desirable. As a first step towards this end, the Counsellor for Frontier Areas and the Deputy Counsellors shall be consulted in the administration of such areas in the Myitkyina and the Bhamo Districts as are Part II Scheduled Areas under the Government of Burma Act of 1935.

7. Citizens of the Frontier Areas shall enjoy rights and privileges which are regarded as fundamental in democratic countries.

8. The arrangements accepted in this Agreement are without prejudice to the financial autonomy now vested in the Federated Shan States.

9. The arrangements accepted in this Agreement are without prejudice to the financial assistance which the Kachin Hills and the Chin Hills are entitled to receive from the revenues of Burma, and the Executive Council will examine with the Frontier Areas Counsellor and Deputy Counsellors the feasibility of adopting for the Kachin Hills and the Chin Hills financial arrangements similar to those between Burma and the Federated Shan States.
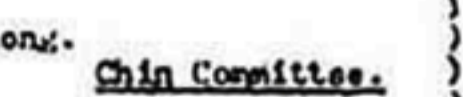
| Shan Committee. | ) | Kachin Committee. | ) | Burmese Government. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Saohpalong of Tawngpeng State. | ) | (Jinwe Naw, Myitkyina) | ) | |
| Saohpalong of Yawnghwe State. | ) | (Zau Rip, Myitkyina) | ) | |
| Saohpalong of North Hsenwi State. | ) | (Dinra Tang, Myitkyina) | ) | |
| Saohpalong of Laihka State. | ) | (Zau La, Bhamo.) | ) | |
| Saohpalong of Mong Pawn State. | ) | (Zau Lawn, Bhamo | ) | |
| Saohpalong of Hsamonghkam State. | ) | (Labang Grong, Bhamo) | ) | |
| Representative of Kaohtung Saohpalong. | ) | | ) | |
| (Hkam Pung) | ) | Chin Committee. | ) | |
| (U Tin E)   (U Htun Myint) | ) | (U Hlur Hmung, ATM, TDM, B.F.M., Falam.) | ) | |
| (U Kya Bu)   (Hkun Saw). | ) | (U Thawng Za Khup, ATM, Tiddim.) | ) | |
| (Sao Yape Hpa)   (Hkun Htee) | ) | (U Kio Mang, ATM, Haka) | ) | |
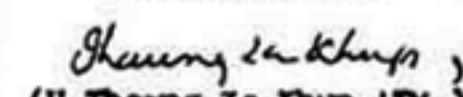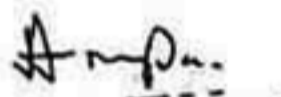
# CNF Government
# 9-point State-level Peace Agreement

6 January 2012
(Unofficial translation by Chinland Guardian)

*In order that a permanent peace may be established ...*

- Drawing its basis from the announcement 1/2011 dated 18th August 2011 of the Government of the Union of Myanmar regarding the implementation of a permanent peace in the Union of Myanmar,

- Considering the need for a step-by-step practical implementation of the plans for a peace process drawn up by the Ethnic Affairs and Internal Peace Committee set up by both Houses of the People's Parliament and the National Parliament on 18 August 2011

- Recalling that following the preliminary discussion between a delegation led by Union Minister U Aung Min, on the authorization of the President of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein, and Pu Zing Cung, Chairman of the fourth-term Conference of the Chin National Front and Joint General Secretary Dr. Sui Khar at a location in Thailand, the Chin National Front's first Emergency Conference endorsed its Central Executive Committee's decision No. 9/2011, and that therefore the decision can be implemented,

- Therefore, the Chin National Front and the Chin State-level peace delegations have signed the following historic points of agreement so that a permanent peace may be established.

(1) The Chin State Government level peace delegation and the Chin National Front have agreed to end mutual hostilities, including armed hostilities, effective from the time of the signing of this agreement.

(2) The Chin State Government level peace delegation and the Chin National Front have agreed to open up a Liaison Office in Thantlang so that the points in this agreement may be vigorously implemented. Matters regarding the possibility of opening up Liaison Offices in Tedim and Matupi will be submitted to the relevant bodies, the result of which will be made known at a later date. The parties have agreed that the Chin National Front/Army can temporarily be based out of the areas around three Village Tracts in Thantlang Township: Tlangpi Village Tract, Dawn Village Tract and Zang Tlang Village Tract. Moreover, matters regarding the possibility of having bases in Tedim Township's Zampi and Bukphir Village Tracts, and Paletwa Township's Kung Pin, Para and Pathiantlang Village Tracts, will be submitted to the relevant bodies and the result made known at a later date.

(3) The Chin State Government level peace delegation and the Chin National Front have agreed that any unarmed members of the Chin National Front and Chin National Army can freely travel to any place within the Union.

(4) The Chin State Government level peace delegation and the Chin National Front have agreed to meet again as soon as possible, so that the parties can arrange a time and date for the Chin National Front and the Union government to hold a discussion. In holding Union level talks, the parties agreed in principle to uphold as basic principles the flourishing of ethnic issues and democracy, in addition to the three national causes.

(5) The Chin State Government level peace delegation and the Chin National Front have agreed to allow the Chin National Front and the Chin National Army to freely hold public consultations, so that the desire of the Chin people can be brought forward as the basis of their discussion at the Union-level talks.

(6) The Chin State Government level peace delegation and the Chin National Front have agreed to allow international Non-Governmental Organizations to operate freely in Chin State and elsewhere in the Union of Myanmar so that they can tackle the issues facing the Chin people, including the food crisis, lack of medicines, lack of access to clean water etc., in accordance with the existing laws.

(7) The Chin State Government level peace delegation and the Chin National Front have agreed that, with financial support from the Union government, the Chin National Front will take a leading role in development work in relation to the Special Economic Zone (hereinafter SEZ) in accordance with laws governing the SEZ, so that the poorest state in the Union of Myanmar can be turned into a modern and developed State.

(8) The Chin State Government level peace delegation and the Chin National Front have agreed that the Chin National Front and the Chin State Government work together as necessary, on development projects in Chin State by reciprocating advice and consulting with one another.

(9) The Chin State Government level peace delegation and the Chin National Front have agreed to closely cooperate in eradicating illegal poppy cultivation, drug business and drug smuggling in northern Chin State.

This agreement was signed between the Chin State Government-level peace delegation and the Chin National Front in the presence of the Union-level peace delegation leader Railway Minister U Aung Min and Union-level delegation member Environment and Forestry Minister U Win Htun, Chin State Chief Minister U Hung Ngai and members of the Peace and Tranquillity Committee on 6 January 2012.

# CNF-Government Ceasefire Agreement

7 May 2012

*Chinland Guardian* is pleased to present the unofficial translation by CG of the 15-point agreement between the Chin National Front and the Myanmar Union-level Peace Team specifying the *Terms of Reference* for the original preliminary 9-point agreement in January.

## Points of Agreement between the Chin National Front and the Union-level Peace Delegation in the Presence of Witnesses from Peace Facilitators

The following agreement having been solemnly reached on the 7th of May 2012 between the Chin National Front and Union-level Peace Team in the presence of witnesses from peace facilitators upon frank and sincere discussion, is aimed at specifying the terms of reference that each party is obligated to observe, implement and materialize on a step-by-step basis, based on the nine-point original preliminary agreement on the 6th of January 2012 at Hakha, Chin State between the CNF and State Govt-level Peace Team, towards realizing eternal peace, justice, equality and socio-economic development through peaceful cooperation.

## Point of Agreement (No 1)
## On Ceasefire

The Union-level Peace Team reaffirms the preliminary agreement between the Chin State Government-level peace team and the Chin National Front Peace Team reached on January 6, 2012 as having valid and effective on the date of entry with the view of putting a stop to military confrontation and other kinds of hostilities between the two parties towards finding solution to a permanent peace. On this basis, the two parties agreed to work together in ensuring that conflicts are put to an end throughout the Union so that there are no longer military and other hostilities.

## Point of Agreement (No 2)
## Agreement Relating to the Establishment of Temporary Bases in Accordance with the Preliminary Agreement

The parties further agreed to enable members of the Chin National Front and the Chin National Army to establish bases and move freely, without limitation, within the areas designated for such temporary bases as outlined in the original preliminary mutual agreement between the Chin National Front and Chin State/Union Government: Tlangpi, Dawn and Zangtlang Village Tracts of Thantlang Township, and Zampi and Bukphir Village Tracts of Tedim Township. With regards to the establishment of CNF bases in Kung Pyin,

Para and Pathiantlang Village Tracts of Paletwa Townships, the parties also agreed to carry on further discussion at the second-round Union-level talks considering that those areas fall within the command responsibility of the Western Command. Furthermore, the parties agree to discuss further at the second-round Union-level talks matter pertaining to additional demand regarding the establishment of CNF bases within Thantlang Township's Belhar, Vanzang, Lungding Village Tracts, as well as Lulpilung village; Tedim Township's Dampi, Tui Dial Village Tracts; Paletwa Township's Ra O and Shweletwa Village Tracts, as well as Ra Kan Village.

Effective from the date of signing this Union-level agreement, if the Myanmar Army and Myanmar Police Force wishes to carry out activities to facilitate the peace process within the temporary base areas designated for the Chin National Front and Chin National Army, they can only do so by pre-informing such a plan to pertinent Liaison Offices, which shall have been agreed to by both sides in advance. In case of emergency situation, both sides may execute troop movements upon informing the pertinent local commanders from the other side. However, the pertinent Liaison Office shall be informed of this at the earliest possible time.

Outside of the designated temporary bases, all members of the Chin National Front and the Chin National Army, barring wearing military uniforms or bearing arms, have the same rights as other citizens of the Union of Burma to freely move legally within all territories of the Union of Myanmar effective upon this Union-level agreement, in accordance with the original preliminary agreement. Where situation arises for the need to make troop movement or other matters in which arms should be carried, prior permission must be sought with the nearest Myanmar Army camps and after obtaining approval from both sides, which shall have granted such permission for travel within designated routes.

**Point of Agreement (No 3)**
**Rights and Responsibilities of Liaison Offices**

The preliminary agreement stipulated that Liaison Offices shall be established in Thanglang, Tedim and Matupi Towns. Such establishment was to carry out upon that agreement. In this context, the parties agreed to ensure that the Liaison Officer will be provided treatment consistent with diplomatic protocols that reflect his position within the CNF if such a person is a member of the Central Committee of the CNF. The Chin State Government shall provide necessary measures to ensure the physical security of the Liaison Officer. The parties agreed to observe the agreed rules of ceasefire within the above-mentioned territorial areas and in accordance with the existing laws of the Chin State Government.

**Point of Agreement (No 4)**
**Basic Principles for Political Dialogu**e


As was agreed upon during the State-level talks, the political talks at the Union-level dialogue will be based on the ideals of the "Three National Causes': Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of national solidarity, and the perpetuation of national sovereignty. The parties agreed that such a dialogue will be held with the view to establish a genuine Union based on the ideals of equality and self-determination rooted in the Spirit of Panglong.


**Point of Agreement (No 5)**
**On Matters Regarding International Agreements**


During the Union-level talks, consideration will be made regarding the international agreements that have been acceded to by the Government of the Union of Mynamar, as well as other international human rights moral obligations.


**Point of Agreement (No 6)**
**On Public Consultation**


The parties agreed that the Chin National Front can freely hold consultations with relevant responsible persons and the larger public towards durable peace in the Union of Myanmar based on its three objectives and the 'Three National Causes'.


**Point of Agreement (No 7)**
**On Matters Regarding Humanitarian Organizations**


The parties agreed on principle that the relevant Union Ministries will issue licenses to both international and local humanitarian organizations desiring to implement humanitarian work inside Chin State when such requests have been made to the CNF. The parties agreed that in carrying out humanitarian work inside Chin State, the CNF shall be consulted when a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be signed between the Chin State Government and a humanitarian organization that has been granted permission by the Union Government.


**Point of Agreement (No 8)**
**Promoting Human Resources and Capitals**

Organizations working for the promotion of socio-economic progress and development of human resources, whether based inside the country or exile, for the benefit of Chin State and Chin people, shall freely operate in Chin State with prior consultation with relevant governments and in accordance with the existing laws.

**Point of Agreement (No 9)**
**Joint Effort to Eradicate Illegal Drugs**

The Chin National Front will cooperate with different levels of drug eradication bodies at the State, District, Township, Wards and Village Tracts, which has been established in accordance with the Government's Order No. 17/2011 towards curbing narcotics and other mind-altering drugs.

**Point of Agreement (No 10)**
**On Visas**

The parties agreed that the Union-level Peace Team will assist in issuing visas and necessary permits for Chin nationals who have made such a request to CNF, who have obtained citizenship from other countries wanting to make a visit to the Union of Myanmar.

**Point of Agreement (No 11)**
**Chin National Day**

The parties shall strive towards official re-recognition of February 20 as the Chin National Day. They will strive towards recognizing February 3 as the Chin State Day.

**Point of Agreement (No 12)**
**Matters Regarding the Chin National Front and Chin National Army**

The Chin National Front and Chin National Army remain unlawful organizations under the existing laws. The parties, therefore, agreed to do away with this designation once sufficient level of confidence has been built towards eternal peace.

The parties agreed that the Union-level Peace Team submit to the President the need to declare amnesty to anyone who have been arrested and

imprisoned on account of CNF and CNA since the establishment of the organization, effective the date of the signing of this agreement.

The parties agreed to provide the immigration department of Chin State each copies of CNF identity card. All individuals who have been issued identity cards by the CNF shall have the right to obtain the National Identity Card from the Immigration Department.

The parties agreed that the Union-level Peace Team shall carry forward with removing such names in accordance with the law that have been blacklisted as members of the CNF.

The parties agreed that there shall be complete immunity for any members of Chin National Front and Chin National Army after the signing of this CNF-Union-level agreement from retrospective criminal prosecution.

## Point of Agreement (No 13)
## On Basic Human Rights

The Constitution of the Union of Myanmar, Article (449), states that 'the Constitution is the basic law of the nation.' As such, freedom from interference, obstruction, restrictions, discrimination and physical abuse against religious practice under articles 34, 348, 362, 363, 354 (e) of the Constitution, cannot be alienated except in situations of "Widespread civil war, foreign invasion and civil uprising in the whole Union". The parties agreed to cooperate in working towards ensuring the non-violation of these constitutional provisions.

The parties agreed to cooperate in ensuring unconditional and due punishment for anyone for violations of basic human rights in accordance with the law, as well as ensuring that no parties violates the constitutional basic human rights of the people in the future during the course of the ceasefire agreement. This is grounded in the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Burma under Chapter 8 "Citizens, Fundamental Rights and Duties of Citizens" – rights that cannot be abrogated except in situation of "Widespread civil war, foreign invasion and civil uprising in the whole Union".

Both parties agreed to not engage in activities that run counter to the constitution, in Chin State such as forced labor, slavery, human trafficking etc. during the term of the ceasefire agreement in accordance with Article 358 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Burma.

## Point of Agreement (No 14)
## Ceasefire Monitoring Body

It is agreed that both parties shall consultatively form a "Ceasefire Monitoring Body", whose role will be to monitor observance of the peace agreements by the two parties with the view of materializing permanent peace out of the initial ceasefire. This group will primarily consist of the Chin Peace and Tranquility Committee with the participation of other legal experts.

The parties agreed that the Ceasefire Monitoring Body shall immediately send notice to the 'Crisis Mediation Group' in the event that the Union Government, the Myanmar Army, Myanmar Police Force, Chin State Government, Chin National Front and Chin National Army failed to observe any of points of the agreements, including the preliminary 9-point ceasefire agreements.

The parties agreed in principle to institute and duly authorize independent and impartial international observer groups when such need arises.

## Point of Agreement (No 15)
## Institution of Peace Mediating Body

While both parties have agreed to strictly avoid accidental confrontation and to strictly observe the mutual agreement, the parties shall accept the final arbitration of the crisis mediating body should there be any such physical violence resulting from the accidental nature.

It is agreed that such a mediating body shall be formed under the leadership of the Chin State Border Areas and Security Affairs Minister that will also involve Liaison Officer of the Chin National Front and the Chin National Army in charge of the areas where such incident took place, or commander or in-charge of the Chin National Army, commander of the Myanmar Army or Police Force, and Chairman of the Chin Peace Monitoring Body or such duly authorized person.

The Minister (Chin State Border Areas and Security Affairs Minister) call a meeting within seven days of receiving a report of allegations about a breach of any of the preliminary or Union-level agreements having been reported by Liaison Officer of the Chin National Front/Chin National Army, responsible person(s) of the Myanmar Army, the Ceasefire Monitoring Body so that such matters can be resolved peacefully. If the two parties agreed on a decision having been reached by the Crisis

Mediation Body, which is based on the preliminary 9-point agreement, such a decision will be considered final.

If such a decision cannot be agreed to by one or both parties, an alternative peaceful solution will be sought with the involvement of leaders of the CNF/CNA, members of the Chin State Government, relevant members of the Western and Northwestern Commands of the Myanmar Army, members of the Union Peace Team and Crisis Mediating Body.

The above 15-point has been solemnly entered into an agreement on 7th May 2012, 2 Kasone 1374 of the Myanmar Calendar, at the Union Guesthouse in Hakha, the capital of Chin State. In signing this agreement, the parties mutually recognize without reservation, the obligation for full observation and, of following through the terms of the agreement, having accepted the non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity, perpetuation of national sovereignty, and the flourishing of the ethnic affairs and democracy as the basic principles of the agreement.

# THE NATIONWIDE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT
## BETWEEN
## THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
## AND
## THE ETHNIC ARMED ORGANIZATIONS

## Preamble

This Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, between the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Ethnic Armed Organizations, recognizes, reinforces, and reaffirms all previous agreements between the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Ethnic Armed Organizations. This agreement also aims to secure an enduring peace based on the principles of dignity and justice, through an inclusive political dialogue process involving all relevant stakeholders.

In order to achieve lasting and sustainable peace in this country, we, the signatories to this Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, pledge to each other to diligently work together to implement all provisions contained in this agreement completely, successfully and without fail in an accountable, responsible and transparent manner.

## Chapter 1
## Basic Principles

1.      In order to achieve lasting and sustainable peace, we agree to implement this Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in accordance with the following basic principles:

   a.   Establish a union based on the principles of democracy and federalism in accordance with the outcomes of political dialogue and in the spirit of Panglong, that fully guarantees democratic rights, national equality and the right to self-determination on the basis of liberty, equality and justice while upholding the principles of non-disintegration of the union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of national sovereignty.

   b.   Reach a negotiated settlement to end protracted armed conflict in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, secure a nationwide ceasefire as a first step to end armed conflict and establish a new political culture of resolving political conflicts through political dialogue instead of force of arms.

   c.   Discuss matters concerning Pyidaungsu Tatmadaw made up of all ethnic nationalities during political dialogue.

   d.   Guarantee equal rights to all citizens who live within the Republic of the Union of Myanmar; no citizen shall be discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity, religion, culture, or gender.

e. Establish a secular state based on the principle of the separation of religion and state in order to avoid abuse of religion for political interests.

f. Collectively establish a common national identity that embraces the diverse ethnicities and languages by recognizing the distinctive history, cultural practices, literature, language and national characteristics of all ethnic nationalities living within the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

g. Hold inclusive political dialogue, attended by all relevant stakeholders, in accordance with the aspirations and desires of all ethnic nationalities in order to achieve lasting and sustainable peace.

h. Negotiate in good faith any issues that may arise between and among the dialogue partners in order to achieve lasting and sustainable peace.

i. Abide by all mutual promises and commitments contained in this Agreement and implement the peace process in a transparent, responsible and accountable manner.

j. Effectively implement the provisions contained in this Agreement without each party taking advantage of positive developments arising from the implementation of this Agreement.

k. Undertake efforts to protect lives and property and improve the livelihoods of all persons living within the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

## Chapter 2
## Aims and Objectives

2. The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Ethnic Armed Organizations agree to the following aims and objectives:

a. Begin an inclusive political dialogue process based on an agreed framework following the signing and implementation of the nationwide ceasefire, with an aim of achieving just and sustainable peace.

b. Form a "Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee" to carry out the following: implementing provisions of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement; monitoring adherence to the Code of Conduct; investigating alleged violations; and undertaking problem solving functions.

c. Reaffirm all promises and previous agreements signed between the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Ethnic Armed Organizations.

d. Include all relevant the Ethnic Armed Organizations in the collective signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement by recognizing the political aspirations behind the resistance movements of the Ethnic Armed Organizations and aim to strengthen the Union spirit.

## Chapter 3
## Ceasefire Related Matters

3. We agree that within fourteen (14) days of signing this Agreement, responsible authorities from the Tatmadaw and the Ethnic Armed Organizations shall meet to define the exact timeframes governing ceasefire related matters and their implementation.

4. We agree to abide by the mutually binding terms and conditions of the ceasefire and military codes of conduct as entered into through this Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, and shall submit to investigation by the different levels of the Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee.

5. The Tatmadaw and the Ethnic Armed Organizations agree to abide by the following troop-related terms and conditions:

a. Cease the following actions in ceasefire areas: troop movements for territorial control, reconnaissance, recruitment, armed attacks, laying of mines, acts of violence, destruction of property, and launching of military offensives.

b. Avoid any direct or indirect action that may be regarded as hostile or contemptuous.

c. Avoid troop reinforcements in the ceasefire areas other than the provision of administrative support, emergency medical support and routine rotation of troops; avoid building new military bases and supplying of ammunition and weaponry, except those already agreed by both parties. In the event of a threat to national security or to defend against external threats, the aforementioned activities may be undertaken in consultation between the parties.

d. Avoid using any religious buildings, schools, hospitals, clinics and their premises as well as culturally important places and public spaces as military outposts or encampments.

e. Undertake de-mining activities to clear mines laid by troops from all sides in accordance with the progress of the peace process and coordinate mine action activities in close consultation with the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

f. Avoid hostile propaganda, defamatory, untruthful or derogatory statements, both within and outside the country.

g.   Collaborate to carry out relief and rescue efforts and provision of medical supplies in the case of a natural disaster causing an emergency situation in a ceasefire area.

h.   Administer rule of law in ceasefire areas and take action against perpetrators in accordance with the law in coordination with each other.

i.   Undertake the administration of military matters in ceasefire areas in consultation with each other.

j.   Notify the signing of this Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement to all levels of the respective command structures within twenty-four (24) hours of the signing and explain the provisions contained in this Agreement within five (5) days of the signing.

k.   Avoid resorting to force to resolve conflicts arising at lower levels and ranks.

6.   We shall negotiate and implement matters regarding troop recruitment by the Ethnic Armed Organizations in accordance with the implementation of this Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement and the security reintegration process.

**Deployment of military forces to avoid confrontations**

7.   In order to avoid military confrontation, the Tatmadaw and forces of the Ethnic Armed Organizations shall abide by the following provisions governing the deployment of troops:

a.   Avoid confrontations in areas where there is direct contact between the troops, by acting immediately using radio, ground or other methods of communication.

b.   Undertake repositioning of troops in consultation with each other to avoid confrontations.

c.   In areas where repositioning of troops is still under discussion or remains difficult to undertake, commanders should regularly contact and consult with each other.

d.   Tatmadaw and the Ethnic Armed Organizations shall confine their troops within the designated areas.

e.   Coordinate in consultation with each other on the number of military bases in areas of direct contact between the troops to avoid confrontation.

f.   Consult with each other based on this Agreement to ensure communication channels are securely maintained between the respective military bases and areas.

**Free movement of troops**

8.  The Tatmadaw and the Ethnic Armed Organizations shall abide by the following provisions governing the free movement of troops:

    a.  Free movement of unarmed troops is allowed in all areas except in security-restricted areas.

    b.  Movement of armed troops in the areas controlled by the other is allowed only after obtaining prior agreement.

**Protection of Civilians**

9.  The Tatmadaw and the Ethnic Armed Organizations shall abide by the following provisions regarding the protection of civilians:

    a.  Provide necessary support in coordination with each other to improve livelihoods, health, education, and regional development for the people.

    b.  Avoid acts violating a person's dignity, violence, extrajudicial detention, kidnapping, torture, inhumane treatment, imprisonment, killing or otherwise causing the disappearance of the individual.

    c.  Avoid forcible displacement or relocation of local populations.

    d.  Avoid forcibly taking money, property, food, labor or services from civilians.

    e.  Avoid unlawful and arbitrary arrest, entrapment, prosecution and pronouncement of judgment against civilians. Any action against civilians shall be undertaken in accordance with the law.

    f.  Avoid forcible confiscation and transfer of land from local populations.

    g.  Avoid the destruction of public property, looting, theft, or the taking of property without permission.

    h.  Avoid restrictions on the right to education in accordance with the law; destruction of schools and educational buildings, including educational tools; and the disturbance and hindrance of students and teachers.

    i.  Avoid impeding an individual's right to health or access to healthcare; or restricting public health resources and the legal transportation of medicines for public use.

    j.  Avoid impeding the small-scale storage, transport, sale and trade of food and supplies.

k. Avoid the destruction or actions that would lead to the destruction of schools, hospitals, clinics, religious buildings and their premises and the use of such places as military bases or outposts.

l. Avoid either directly or indirectly interfering, humiliating or damaging the reputation of public activities to preserve religion, literature, and cultural and traditional practices.

m. Avoid any form of sexual attack on women, including sexual molestation, sexual assault or violence, rape and sex slavery.

n. Avoid killing or maiming, forced conscription, rape or other forms of sexual assault or violence, or abduction of children.

o. Avoid enslavement or forced labor of civilians.

p. Ensure the security and development of civilians living in ceasefire areas.

q. Permit civilians to move freely inside ceasefire areas.

**Provision of humanitarian assistance**

10. The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Ethnic Armed Organizations shall abide by the following provisions regarding the provision of humanitarian assistance:

a. Relevant Government ministries, the Ethnic Armed Organizations and local organizations shall coordinate with each other when implementing delivery of humanitarian assistance by the NGOs and INGOs to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and conflict victims with the approval of the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

b. Ensure the safety and dignity of the IDPs when undertaking a prioritized voluntary return of IDPs to their places of origin or resettlement of IDPs into new villages in suitable areas.

c. Collaborate on the resettlement process including verification of IDPs and refugees.

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**Chapter 4**
**Maintaining and Strengthening Ceasefire**

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**Ceasefire related rules and regulations and military code of conduct**

11. We shall enact, in accordance with the provisions in this agreement, the military code of conduct and ceasefire-related rules and regulations within one (1) month of the signing of this Agreement.

**Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee**

12.     To ensure compliance with this Agreement, the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement Joint Implementation Coordination Meeting shall form the Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee as follows:

    a.     To coordinate the parties' compliance with this Agreement, we shall form a Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee, comprised of members of the Union Peace-Making Work Committee, representatives of the Ethnic Armed Organizations, and trusted and well-respected individuals.

    b.     The Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee shall comprise a nationwide joint ceasefire monitoring committee, state-level joint ceasefire monitoring committee, local-level joint ceasefire monitoring committee, and verification teams.

    c.     We shall jointly decide on the basis of mutual agreement, the role of representatives from foreign governments and international organizations that are involved in the ongoing peace process, either as observers, advisors or to provide necessary technical assistance at different levels of the Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee.

13.     The responsibilities, rights and guiding principles for the respective committees are as follows:

    a.     Determine in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement Joint Implementation Coordination Meeting, the procedures, standards, guidelines and detailed organizational structure of the ceasefire implementation mechanism.

    b.     Accountably carry out ceasefire implementation and monitoring related responsibilities, and when necessary, report to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement Joint Implementation Coordination Meeting.

    c.     Coordinate humanitarian assistance provided for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) of both man-made and natural disasters, and victims of conflict.

    d.     Monitor the implementation of the plan for repositioning of troops as agreed by the parties.

    e.     Assist the peace process by monitoring the condition of nationwide ceasefire, compliance with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, the agreed troop-related provisions, the military code of conduct, ceasefire related rules and regulations,

and resolving disputes in a transparent and unbiased manner.

14. The Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee shall use its best efforts to reach decisions by consensus.

15. To allow the Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee to effectively resolve issues, we agree to provide all information requested by the Committee, except information related to national defense and security matters, in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

**Liaison Offices**

16. To ensure the smooth functioning of the operations of the Ethnic Armed Organizations that are signatories to this agreement, liaison offices shall be established in mutually agreed areas and in areas specified in existing union-level peace agreements.

17. We shall coordinate in determining procedures to enable liaison office staff to achieve prompt and efficient resolution of disputes and difficulties.

18. We shall provide protection to liaison office staff and the Ethnic Armed Organizations as needed.

## Chapter 5
### Guarantees for Political Dialogue

19. After signing the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement to end armed conflict and resolve political issues through peaceful political means, we shall undertake the implementation of all basic principles, terms and conditions as provided in the Agreement.

**The political roadmap**

20. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar Government and the Ethnic Armed Organizations shall abide by the following political roadmap:

    a.    Signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.

    b.    Drafting and adopting the "Framework for Political Dialogue" by representatives of the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Ethnic Armed Organizations.

    c.    Holding national political dialogue based on the adopted Framework for Political Dialogue, and negotiating security reintegration matters and undertaking other necessary tasks that both parties agree can be carried out in advance.

    d.    Holding the Union Peace Conference.

e.   Signing the Pyidaungsu Accord.

f.   Submitting the Pyidaungsu Accord to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw for ratification.

g.   Implementing all provisions contained in the Pyidaungsu Accord, and carrying out security reintegration matters.

**Political dialogue**

21.   The Republic of the Union of Myanmar Government and the Ethnic Armed Organizations agree to the following provisions with regards to political dialogue:

a.   In order to begin political dialogue and jointly undertake the implementation of all provisions contained in this Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, we shall undertake the following as soon as the Agreement is signed:

(1)   Hold a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement Joint Implementation Coordination Meeting.

(2)   Form the nationwide ceasefire Joint Monitoring Committee, Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee and other necessary committees during this meeting, (The Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee is also responsible for drafting a framework for political dialogue).

b.   Jointly draft and adopt a framework for political dialogue—including dialogue process plan, agendas for discussion, and structure of the political dialogue— within sixty (60) days of signing this Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.

c.   We shall begin political dialogue within ninety (90) days of signing this Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.

d.   We shall set the agenda for the framework for political dialogue by including basic principles of this Agreement and other topics but avoiding issues that violate the three main national causes of non-disintegration of the union, non-disintegration of national solidarity, and perpetuation of national sovereignty.

e.   During the decision-making process, we, the organizations participating in political dialogue, commit to engaging constructively so as to find mutually acceptable solutions in order to achieve lasting and sustainable peace.

**Holding of inclusive political dialogue**

22.

a. Representatives from the government, Hluttaws and the Tatmadaw, representatives from the Ethnic Armed Organizations, representatives from registered political parties, ethnic representatives and other relevant representatives shall participate in political dialogue that is based on an all inclusive principle.

b. The participation of ethnic representatives, civil society organizations, scholars, experts, business associations, and other relevant stakeholders at different stages of political dialogue will be discussed and determined during the drafting of the Framework for Political Dialogue.

c. The proportion of representatives participating in political dialogue shall be negotiated during discussions on the Framework for Political Dialogue.

d. We agree that all decisions adopted by the Union Peace Conference shall be the basis for amending, repealing and adding provisions to the Constitution and laws, in line with established procedures.

23. We shall include a reasonable number/ratio of women representatives in the political dialogue process.

## Chapter 6
## Future Tasks

**Confidence building measures:**

24.

a. No person (or) organization shall be subject to arrest or legal repercussion due to their involvement in negotiating this Agreement or in the peace process, except for otherwise violating the law.

b. It is agreed that the removal of all the Ethnic Armed Organizations that are signatories to this Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement from the list of unlawful associations shall be undertaken. Further, no person (or) organization associating with the signatories to this agreement shall be subject to prosecution under the Political Parties Registration Law or Unlawful Associations Act.

c. After the signing of this Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, any person charged or detained for alleged association with the Ethnic Armed Organizations under the Unlawful Associations Act, shall be released in accordance with the law.

**Tasks to be implemented during the interim period**

25.

    a.   The Ethnic Armed Organizations that are signatories to this agreement have been responsible in their relevant capacities, for development and security in their respective areas. During the period of signing ceasefire and political dialogue, we shall carry out the following programs and projects in coordination with each other in said areas.

        (1)   Projects concerning the health, education and socio-economic development of civilians.

        (2)   Environmental conservation.

        (3)   Efforts to preserve and promote ethnic culture, language, and literature.

        (4)   Matters regarding peace and stability, and the maintenance of rule of law in the said areas.

        (5)   Receiving aid from donor agencies both inside and outside the country for regional development and capacity-building projects.

        (6)   Eradication of illicit drugs.

    b.   Planning of projects that may have a major impact on civilians living in ceasefire areas shall be undertaken in consultation with local communities in accordance with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) Standard procedures and coordinated with relevant the Ethnic Armed Organizations for implementation.

    c.   The government and the individual the Ethnic Armed Organizations shall coordinate the implementation of tasks that are specific to the areas of the respective Ethnic Armed Organization.

**Submission to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw for ratification**

26. We shall submit this Agreement to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw for ratification in accordance with established procedures.

## Chapter 7
## Miscellaneous

27.    We shall hold separate negotiations between the signatories to reach an agreement on any issues that are beyond the scope of this agreement and the outcome of such discussions shall not contradict any provisions of this Agreement.

28.     This agreement shall be written in Myanmar and translated into English. Each shall be legally valid, however in the event of any dispute or ambiguity over the wording and essential meaning of the agreement between the two versions, the original meaning and intention of the Myanmar version shall prevail.

29.     We shall undertake jointly to ensure the successful implementation of this Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. Any issues faced during the implementation of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement shall be resolved in the regularly held Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement Joint Implementation Coordination Meetings composed of representatives of the signatories.

30.     We agree that, in consultation with each other, decisions contained in the agreed meeting minutes taken during negotiations for the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement shall be referred to in the implementation of the Agreement.

**Joint dispute resolution**
31.

a.      We shall resolve through peaceful negotiation means any issues that may arise in complying with the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

b.      We shall submit any issue that cannot be resolved in accordance with paragraph 31(a) to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement Joint Implementation Coordination Meeting for resolution.

**Entry into force**

32.     This agreement shall enter into force on the date of the signing by the signatories. If needed, a review of the implementation of this Agreement shall be undertaken by the signatories in consultation with each other.

**Signing of the Agreement**

33.     The Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Ethnic Armed Organizations is signed on this 15th day of October 2015 by the following representatives.

For the Government of the Republic                 For the Ethnic Armed Organizations
of the Union of Myanmar

(Leaders of Executive, Hluttaw and Tatmadaw)

                                                                    (Leaders of the Ethnic Armed
                                                                    Organizations)

Witnesses

    1)  National
    2)  International