

**Centre State Relations :**  
**A Case Study of Manipur**

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Dissertation Submitted to the University of Delhi for  
the Award of the Degree of Master of  
Philosophy in Political Science.



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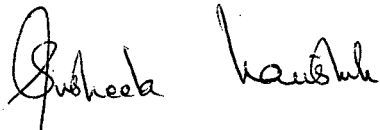
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CERTIFICATE

I have the pleasure to certify that Chiangakham Shachi, an M.Phil student of the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi, has pursued her research work and prepared the present dissertation entitled, "Centre State Relations: A Case Study of Manipur" under my supervision and guidance.

The present dissertation is a result of her own research and, to the best of my knowledge, no part earlier comprised any other monograph, dissertation or book. This is being submitted to the University of Delhi for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy in Political Science.



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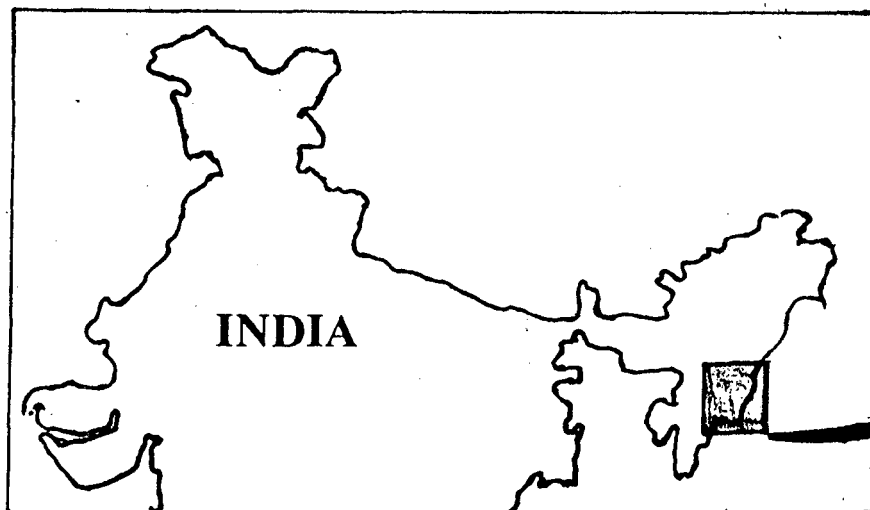
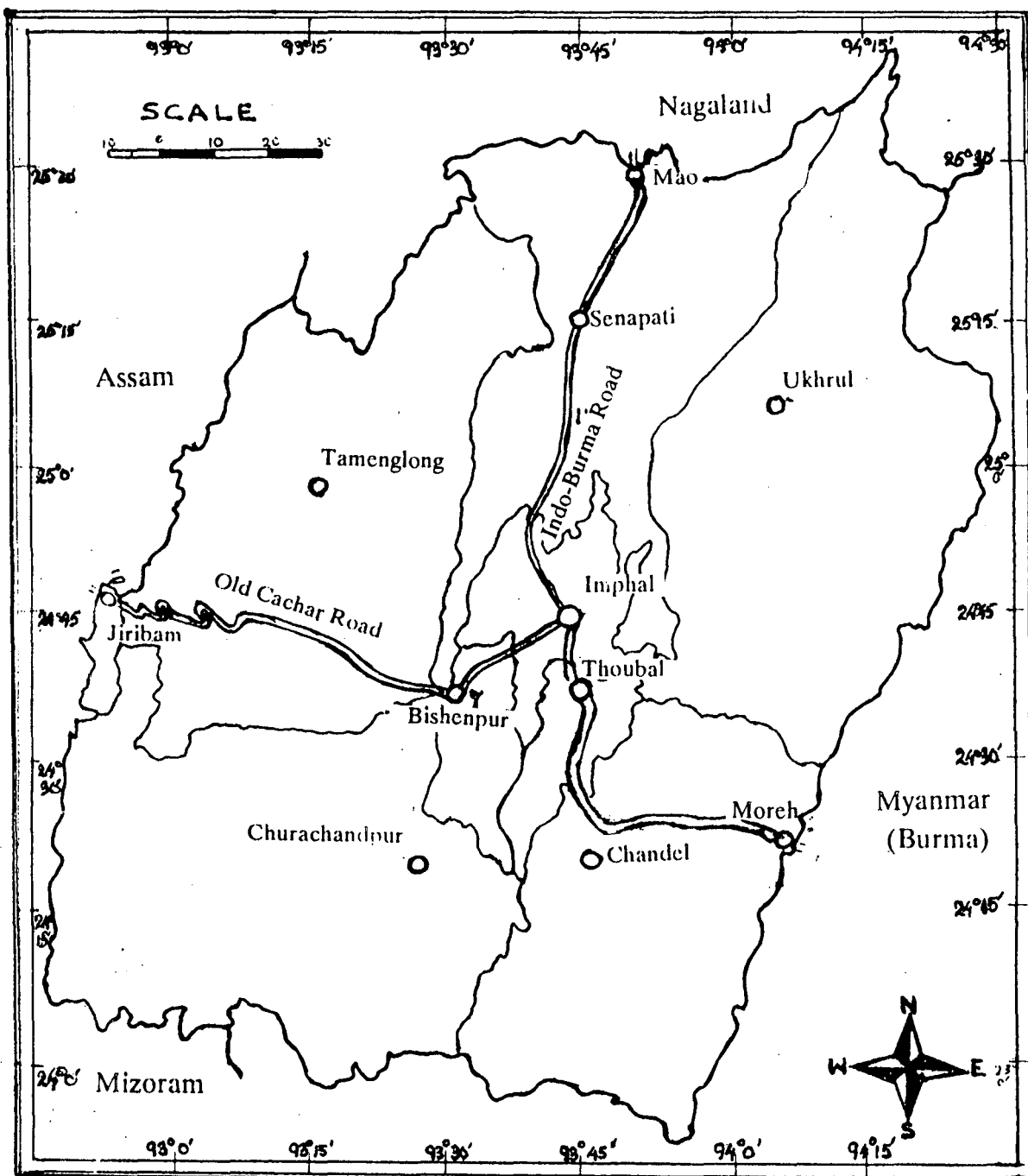
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# MAP OF MANIPUR



## ABBREVIATIONS USED

ADC	Autonomous District Council.
AGP	Assam Ganasangram Parishad.
AIADMK	All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam.
ARC	Administrative Reforms Commission.
Art	Article.
CKRF	Chin Kuki Revolutionary Force.
CM	Chief Minister.
CPI	Communist Party of India.
CrPC	Criminal Procedure Code.
CRPF	Central Reserve Police Force.
Govt.	Government.
ISI	Inter Service Intelligence.
KFC	Kuki Federal Council.
KLF	Kuki Liberation Front.
KNA	Kuki National Army.
MPP	Manipur Peoples Party.
NNC	Naga National Council.
NNO	Naga National Organisation.
NPMHR	Naga Peoples Movement for Human Rights.
NSF	Naga Students Federation.
NDC	National Development Council.

NSA	National Security Act.
NSCN	National Socialist Council of Nagaland.
NEC	North Eastern Council.
FCC	Pradesh Congress Committee.
FLA	Peoples Liberation Army.
PM	Prime Minister.
PR	President's Rule.
SDP	State Domestic Product.
TAC	Tribes Advisory Council.
TNV	Tripura National Volunteers.
ULFA	United Liberation Front of Assam.
UNLF	United National Liberation Front.
UNPO	Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation.

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## INTRODUCTION

Indian Federalism, of late has been passing through deep stress and strains in its working. In view of these not too happy developments, the subject of Centre-State relationship has become a matter of utmost importance. A break-down here means a breakdown of the nation.

The study of Centre-State relations has assumed widespread proportions. Since the inception of the Federal Political System in India with an objective to fulfil and cater to the needs of the diverse lot of the people; the growing awareness among the people about their rights and the growing demand for more autonomy and rights here and there have brought to a focus the very question of the validity of the Indian Federal System. There has been an ongoing research in this field to look into the loopholes of the working of the system and the possibility of finding an alternative to the system or a modification in some degree.

The term 'Federalism' is used broadly to describe the mode of political organisation which unites separate polities within an overarching political system so as to allow each to maintain its fundamental



political integrity, by distributing power between the central and constituent governments in a manner designed to protect the existence and authority of all the governments and by enabling all to share in the system's decision making and decision executing process. As a political device, it can be viewed as a kind of political order animated by political principles that emphasise the primacy of bargaining and negotiated coordination among several power centres as a prelude to the exercise of power within a single political system and stress the value of dispersed power centres as a means for safeguarding individual and local liberties.<sup>1</sup>

The essence of federalism is that, it is a political system which creates in a society broadly two levels of government with assigned powers and functions originating from a variety of factors and political bargain and displaying a tendency to persist through active response to the challenges of the changing environment by the process of adaptation through creative modes of institutional as well as functional relationships.<sup>2</sup> It is a method in which powers are divided constitutionally and legally so that the central and regional governments are each within a sphere coordinate and independent. As Karl J. Friedrich

points out, it is the process of federalizing political community, that is to say, the process in which a number of separate political communities enter into arrangements for working out solutions adopting just policies and making joint decisions on joint problems and conversely also the process by which a unitary political community becomes differentiated into a federally organised whole.

India is a mosaic of diverse racial strains and cultural traditions and one finds here the coexistence of different politico-economic formations. Pluralism is not only social and cultural but also historical and political. She is a polyethnic, multilingual and multicultural state and a federal system is perhaps the most convenient means of nation building here. This view of having a federal system of government was appreciated before and at the time of framing of the Indian Constitution. However, the Partition of the country immediately after India's Independence changed the tides and the political elite started thinking in different terms.

India's plurality in terms of class, culture, language and ethnic groups is best manifested in the North Eastern States of India described beautifully as

the Seven Sisters. There is a marked distinctiveness about each state in the North East in terms of its history, culture, tradition and customs. The North East is one of the melting pots of India where there have been continued migrations over the centuries<sup>2</sup> which resulted in the creation of a shifting mosaic of various ethnic types and value systems. Over the years, the region had been used to influx from outside. At the present, there is a shifting Kaleidoscopic pattern which differs in a significant degree from earlier patterns. In the present, it is accompanied by rapidly spreading participatory democracy, galloping technological change and the international consumer-demonstration effect<sup>4</sup> leading to not only rapidly rising mass expectations but also accompanying frustrations at the inability of the system to meet the rising expectations of both the elite and the masses. And this has resulted in a series of recurrent crises in the North East ranging from outright insurgency to movements aimed at getting a larger share of the cake for different groups, viz the ULFA and Bodos in Assam; UNLF, PLA, PREPAK, KCP & NSCN in Manipur, NSCN in Nagaland and TNV in Tripura.<sup>5</sup>

The work will try to discuss generally the nature and working of Indian Federalism and the Centre-State

relations, and particularly the relations between the Centre and the State of Manipur. The basic idea is to trace out the reasons for continuing backwardness and the growing tensions and conflicts in a tiny state like Manipur.

Due emphasis is given to the historical background and the circumstances of the introduction of Federalism in India. The distribution of powers on various heads and the working of Indian Federal System gets due mention. Along with it is presented a brief political history of Manipur and the constitutional changes that have taken place in regard to her status. It then proceeds to stating the reasons for the states continuing backwardness despite developmental plans and projects.

The basic question is: Why do conflicts and tensions become part of the system in Manipur? Is it inherent with the system itself or is it the result of some forces indirectly related to the features and implementation of the policy of federation itself.

The economic backwardness and growing tensions are some visual symptoms through which we can see the strains. There is an inter linkages among these

processes. Some of these forces could be

- Geography, History, Culture and tradition being distinctly different.
- Partial division of powers.
- Arbitrariness of the Centre in view of the allocation and implementation of powers included in the three lists.
- Centre's special powers [Articles 356, 357 and 360 of the Indian Constitution], and
- Weakening of the National Parties and rise in importance of the local and regional political parties.

The Centre's perception towards a state of such historical and strategic significance is questioned.

The lack of developmental infrastructure, the low standard of living, the growing frustrations among youths, led to the ongoing insurgency and secessionist movements and are inter-related and may be traced to the Centre's unimaginative unsympathetic approach and policies about the North East. Basically the Centre's lack of political will and commitment to the upliftment of the region in general and Manipur in particular, its heavy involvement with the so-called 'more important' issues of the Kashmir and the Punjab problems

forgetting the sensitive border states of the North East has led to the present situation. The local leaders of the national parties siding with the leaders in the centre and their apparent commitment to the centre rather than to the state aggravated the situation.

The emerging tensions, the insurgent movements, secessionist tendencies in the North East, particularly in Manipur is the crux of the whole matter. The objective behind this research is to see whether the tensions that erupted in Manipur during the 70's and 80's and the conflictual situation that emerged in the 90's particularly the Meitei-Pangal and the ongoing Kuki-Naga clash is due to the Centre's lack of political will and commitment to solve the problems of the region.

Is the centre to be blamed for this ?

The methodology to be used would be descriptive and then analytical. It would also try to make the whole discussion as empirical as possible and would leave room for further advanced research work in the field.

The focus is therefore made on the Centre-State relations during the period 1977-1994 encompassing the four major elections of 1977, 1980, 1984 and 1989. Due attention is given to the statehood demands and the continuous demand for the development of the state. Did the change of Governments in the Centre and the States lead to improvements in the situation or to the worsening of the situation? Why do the insurgency problems continue unabatedly? Is the centre actually running out of options to solve the problem? Is it due to inherent ailments or the centre's half-heartedness? Aren't the local people making worth of the Centre's investments? Whatever the situation is, we trace the problem behind it and the various options that have been provided by the centre in solving the problem in the coming chapters.

## Notes and References

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2. Sharda Rath, "Federalism, A Conceptual Analysis", *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, October-December 1978; p. 586.
3. K. Saigal, "Federal Democracy and Pluralism in the North East" in Nirmal Mukarji and Balveer Arora (ed), *Federalism in India: Origins and Development*; Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1992; p. 23.
4. Ibid.
5. ULFA, UNLF, PLA, NSCN, TNV et al are militant outfits festering in the states of North East India.



## CHAPTER — I

### INDIAN FEDERALISM — AN OVERVIEW

Two major factors, the Hindu-Muslim question and the problem of Indian States according to K R Bombwall contributed to the development of a consensus in favor of a federal polity based on a minimal centre and maximum autonomy for constituent states.<sup>1</sup>

However, the events which accompanied the tragic experience of partition caused a shift from the commitment to a federation with a weak centre to one with a centre possessing paramount powers. But apart from the communal problem another factor baffled the Indian nationalists which led themselves to reconcile themselves to the idea of a limited federation. This was the problem of bringing the five hundred and odd Princely states into an organic association with the rest of the country. The creation of Pakistan and the integration of Princely states in the new body politic cleared the decks for the inauguration of a centre - oriented federal union which was always the aim of the Indian National Congress.<sup>2</sup> And thus the historic Objectives Resolution in the Constituent Assembly on 13th December 1946, envisaged a federal union of India in which, the territories shall possess and retain the

status of autonomous units together with residuary powers and exercise all powers and functions of government and administration, save and except such power and functions as are vested in or assigned to the Union or as are inherent or implied in the Union or resulting therefrom.<sup>3</sup>

Three subjects, Defence, External Affairs and Communication were to be assigned to the Centre as the core of its power. The India Federal System was not purely a federal one as the Center enjoys overwhelming powers and to use K. M. Panikkar's words, "The Indian Constitution is federal but it is heavily weighted in favor of the Centre".<sup>4</sup> Circumstances conditioned the Centre to be overbearing in its relations vis-a-vis the states. The founding fathers tried to evolve an Indian variation of Federalism to suit the country's needs. And thus, a federal system with unitary features emerged. But since the adoption of the Constitution in January 1950, the working of the federal democratic polity of India has faced a lot of ups and downs and along with it brought to the fore a host of issues and problems. These issues and problems have grown into wide proportions.

One cannot however blame the system for the

upcoming problems and tensions since no single institution necessarily operates in strict conformity with the terms of the constitution which created them.

The actual working of this system has since its inception aroused fears and provoked criticism in certain quarters.

Firstly, despite its federal character, there is a trend towards centralisation. At the same time, there is a growing awareness among people that excessive centralisation and concentration of powers in governmental structures and political parties have distorted the democratic process leading to marginalisation and alienation of substantial segments of the people. And there are demands for recognition of territorial and group identities in a highly pluralistic society. Pressures are also generated for increased participation in the structures of governance.

#### **Historical Roots:**

The roots of India's present federal system are found in the Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935. With the passing of the Government of India Act 1919, there was a considerable amount of devolution of

authority to the Provinces. It had provided for the division of legislative powers between the Centre and the provinces. It had made no provision for a concurrent power. But although this Act gave a certain measure of autonomy to the provincial authorities, the Government of India remained in essence a unitary Government. The Government of India Act, 1935 envisaged a federal polity of India with a Central Government and the provinces deriving their jurisdiction and powers by direct devolution from the Crown. Under this Act, the federation could give direction to the provinces whenever there was a conflict of any kind between the Federal Government and the Government of the Provinces. Besides the defined fields of federal and provincial subjects, a field of concurrent jurisdiction was also added. The Act thus made a three-fold distribution of powers. List I and List II enumerated matters over which the Federal and the State legislatures respectively had exclusive right of legislation. List III specifies matters over which both federal and provincial legislatures had concurrent jurisdiction but it reserved power to the federal legislature to legislate on any matter in the concurrent list. It also provided that if any provision of a provincial law on any matter in the concurrent list was repugnant to any provision of a federal law or of an existing law, the

federal or existing law would prevail. 5

When the Constituent Assembly was set up under the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946, the organisation of the Central Government in British India was run on the lines of the Government of India Act 1935.

As per the Cabinet Mission Plan, a Union of India was to be constituted which would comprise of British India and the Indian States where subjects like Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications were to be with the Union subjects and all residuary powers were to be with the Provinces. The Objectives Resolution envisaged a Republic of India with a federal form of Government.

But with the Partition of the Country the centrist ideology of the Congress once again came to the forefront. It was argued that rapid and balanced development to satisfy the socio-economic aspirations can be achieved only through centralised planning. Since there was no compulsion of any organised political force like the Muslim League to make them strictly adhere to the federal principle, the leadership started departing from the framework laid down earlier. The idea of linguistic reorganisation of states was deferred and provisions for autonomy of

states were dropped in favor of a strong centre. Jawaharlal Nehru referring to the momentous changes that occurred since the partition of the country emphatically stated, "the soundest framework for our constitution is a federation with a strong centre".<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the aftermath of Partition, the need to integrate the Princely States and to control the disruptive forces under a strong union ... all these in some ways was not only justifiable but also necessary for the successful working of our constitution. And so the federal framework created by the Constituent Assembly provided for a strong centre even while providing a certain measure of autonomy.

#### **I - Division of Powers in general:**

Division of Powers in a federation in simpler terms would mean a division of powers between the centre and the constituent Units (legislative, administrative and financial). In India like in all federal constitutions, there is a formal division of powers between the Centre and the Constituent units. But the scheme in which the powers are distributed has a very strong central bias. The distribution has generally been made on the principle that, matters of national importance should be reserved to the national

legislature and matters of regional importance to the state legislatures.

### **Centre- State relations in India**

**A - Legislative Relations:** To begin with, Article 246 of the Indian Constitution provides for a three-fold distribution of powers. There are three legislative lists in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. The Union List with 97 items gives the Centre exclusive authority to act in matters of national importance while the state list with 66 items includes matters like law and order, local government, public health, education and agriculture. The concurrent list has 47 items among which, the legal system, trade and industry, economics and social planning are included. With such a three-fold distribution wherein all vital matters are being put either in List I or in List III, the Centre has a pivotal role to play in the legislative affairs. Thus the Parliament has exclusive power of legislation with respect to Union List matters while states have such exclusive power with respect to State matters. Both legislatures exercised concurrent jurisdiction with respect to matters in the Concurrent List.

Even though the legislative competence of

Parliament and State legislatures are to be found with reference to the three list, there are various other articles scattered throughout the Constitution empowering Parliament to make laws. In case of overlapping of a matter as between the three lists, predominance has been given to the Union Legislature. Besides, the power of the state legislature with respect to matters enumerated in the state list has been made subject to the Power of Parliament to legislate in respect of matters enumerated in the Union and the Concurrent lists [Article 246 (3)].<sup>7</sup> In case of repugnancy between a law of a state and a law of a Union in the Concurrent sphere, the latter will prevail. The Constitution also vests the Residuary Powers, that is, the power to legislate in respect of any matter not enumerated in anyone of the three lists in the Union (Article 248). And under Article 249, the Union Parliament is empowered to make laws overriding the normally exclusive powers of the state legislatures relating to matters enumerated in the state list if by a special majority of the 2/3rd of the members present and voting, the Council of States declares that this is expedient in the national interest.<sup>8</sup> Under Article 250, the Parliament has the power to legislate with respect to any matter in the state list if a Proclamation of Emergency is in operation.<sup>9</sup> Thus



Parliamentary laws prevails over the laws of the state legislature when it comes to national interest [(Article 251) similar to Article 247]. In matters enumerated in concurrent list, Union law prevails when it is in conflict with the state law and Parliament has power to legislate for two or more states by consent of and adoption by those states (Article 252).

The above discussion has thus given a clear picture of the arbitrariness in which the powers were distributed and the Constitution framer's desire to distribute the powers in favor of the Centre. As it is clear from what R.C.S. Sarkar has written, "the overall tenor of the scheme of distribution is not only to provide a strong centre but also to give parliamentary laws supremacy over State Legislature".<sup>10</sup>

**B - Administrative Relations:** The Constitution of India enumerated a number of Articles showing the Administrative relations between the Centre and the Constituent Units. It has been pointed out that in emergencies, the Government under the Indian Constitution will work as if it were a unitary Government. But even in normal times, the constitution has devised techniques of control over the states by the Union to ensure that the state Governments do not

interfere with the legislative and executive policies of the Union.

The Centre, apart from emergencies, has the power to give direction to the States in the following matters:

- i - to ensure due compliance with the laws made by the Parliament through directions under Article 256 of the Constitution,
- to ensure that the exercise of the executive power of the State does not interfere with the exercise of executive power of the Union (Article 257(1)),
- to ensure construction and maintenance of means of communication of military importance by the State [Article 257 (2)],
- to ensure protection of railways within the state [Article 257 (3)],
- Article 365 says that in case of non-compliance, the President shall be competent to make a Proclamation under Article 356 whereupon the coercive provisions of that Article will come into operation. Accordingly, the Centre can supersede and take over the administration of the state.<sup>11</sup>

- ii Under Article 258 (1) the President with the consent of the Government of a State may entrust to that Government executive functions of the Union relating to any matter.
  
- iii If the Council of States has declared by a resolution supported by not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting that it is necessary or expedient in the national interest to do so, Parliament may by law provide for the creation of one or more all-India services common to the Union and the State (Article 312).
  
- iv By Article 275, parliament is given power to give such grants as it may deem necessary to give financial assistance to any state which is in need of such assistance. Article 282 empowers the Union to make grants for any public purpose including purposes included in the state list. And by the exercise of these powers, the Union can ensure an indirect control over the different social and political organisations throughout the country.
  
- v Article 293 (2) gives the Union the power to grant loans to State Governments.

vi The President is empowered to establish an Inter-State Council if at any time it appears to him that the public interest would be served thereby (Article 263).

vii There are extra-constitutional agencies which are advisory in nature and which held conferences at the Union level to further the coordination of State policy and also in eliminating differences between the states. [eg. The Planning Commission].

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#### C - Financial Relations :

The distribution of powers necessitates the simultaneous distribution of the resources for an adequate and efficient performance of the functions assigned to each government.

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With regard to the distribution of revenues between the Union and the States, there are:

- Certain duties levied by the Union but collected and appropriated by the States (Article 268);
- Certain taxes levied and collected by the Union but assigned to the states (Article 269),
- Certain taxes are levied and collected by the Union and distributed between the Union and the



States (Article 270).

- Under Article 271, the Parliament may at any time increase any of the duties or taxes referred to in those articles by a surcharge for purpose of the Union and the whole proceeds of any such surcharge shall form part of the consolidated fund of India.
- Under Article 272, taxes which are levied and collected by the Union but may be distributed between the Union and the States.
- Under Article 275, the Union can provide grants to certain states.
- And under Article 282, the Union or a State may make any grant for any public purpose even if it is not within its legislative competence.

Besides the above, the constitution provides for extraordinary powers to the President under a period of emergency. Under Article 352 of the Indian Constitution, emergency may be proclaimed at any time if he feels that the security of India or any part thereof has been threatened by war, external aggression or internal disturbance. Under Article 356, the President is empowered to make such proclamation whenever he is satisfied that the government of a state cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions

of the constitution either on the report of the Government of the State or otherwise. And as per Article 360, the President is empowered to make a declaration of financial emergency whenever he is satisfied that the financial stability or credit of India or any part thereof is threatened. And during such a proclamation, the executive authority of the Union shall extend to giving direction to any state with regard to observance of financial propriety.

## **II - Working of the Federal System**

The Indian Constitution is federal in form with a strong unitary basis. Along with the distribution of powers provided in a federal form of government, an independent judiciary is also provided to define and interpret the Constitution and resolve disputes arising between the Center and the States. Ironically, the states do not have an equal constitutional status with the Center as the Center occupies a dominant position not only in terms of war or emergency but also during normal times. The Indian Constitution arms the Center with adequate powers to direct all the important activities according to a uniformly executed plan. It empowers the Union Parliament to legislate on grounds of national interest with respect to matters in the State list.<sup>12</sup> All these make the Indian Federation

less federal and more unitary in character. The Indian State continued to be a centralising state since independence and such centralising tendency was increasingly felt during Mrs Gandhi's struggle for power at the center.

Mr K.R. Bombwall very insightful observed that political institutions do not necessarily operate in complete and strict conformity with the terms of the constitution which create them and that the Indian Federal System is no exception to this general rule. Its actual working of has aroused fears and provoked criticism in many quarters.<sup>13</sup>

The issue of Centre - State relations was relatively dormant during the first two decades of independence. The initial period (1950 to 1967) which Selig Harrison calls the "most Dangerous Decades" saw the contradictions and impracticabilities of the concept of Federation that was introduced. There was indeed nothing to speak of it. Such a situation that arose can be justifiably attributed to the Congress Dominance which Raini Kothari calls it the "Congress System" and also to the various social and economic forces which influenced the political process in the country.

The nature of the working of Indian Federalism suits at its best to two categories which W.H.Riker observed regarding the actual working of any Federation. They are as follows :

1. in which the Central Government can completely overawe the constituent governments and
2. in which the Central Government cannot completely overawe the constituents but it can keep them from overruling its own decisions.<sup>14</sup>

M. Venkatarangaia and M. Shiviah points out that the states in the Indian Union have not shown either the will or the capacity to change in the significant way the behaviour of the government at any center or to overawe it completely. On the other hand, the center has displayed both the will and the capacity not only to keep the state governments from overruling its own decisions but also to completely overawe them except on a few occasions. And this was especially so between 1967 and 1971.<sup>15</sup>

Most of the observers and commentators of the working of the Indian Constitution voiced the same view and pointed out the centralising nature of the Indian Constitution. The trend has been towards an increasing control of the center over the states. Besides, there



is an increasing dependence of the states on the center instead of a co-operative federalism.

Over the years, it is the center that has been dictating to the states the policies they should adopt on various subjects which according to the constitution are in their exclusive control. Of course, there were instances where some state leaders had their own way putting forth their regional sentiments and in which these gradually led to the creation of states on linguistic basis. However, these were but a few exceptions to the general trend.

The actual functioning of India's federation during the first 17 years since the time the Indian Constitution came into force was very much determined by the Congress Party. This was simply because the Congress Party happened to be the only mass based and dominant political party throughout the country and all the governments owed their allegiance to it. The strong center concept was also favoured after the occurrence of the three Border Wars in 1948-49, 1962 and 1965 with Pakistan and China. There is not much to say about the working of Indian Federalism during the initial years. And to look for its proper working, one has to wait for the 1967 fourth General Elections which heralded the

birth of state level mobilizations.

A number of factors contributed to the establishment of a strong center. M. Venkatarangaiya and M. Shiviah puts a long list of reasons which gave birth to a strong center at the cost of the autonomy of the states viz.,

- the tradition of a strong center inherited from the past,
- the uniparty rule of the Congress both at the Center and in the states,
- the charismatic leadership first of Pt. Nehru and later of Indira Gandhi.
- the inadequacy of the financial resources available for states,
- the system of planning which came into operation, and
- the role ascribed to the Governor as the agent of the Center.<sup>14</sup>

Of these, the second factor was given the greatest weight. It would be relevant to elaborate how the above factors contributed to the structuring of its working.

The Congress was the ruling party in the Center and the States during the period 1947-67. The party

won an absolute majority in the first two General Elections (1952 and 1957) and managed to get a comfortable majority in the third General Election of 1962. As with most of the political parties, the Congress party was unitary and highly centralised<sup>17</sup> and the central party leadership took a decisive role in the selection of party candidates for elections to Parliament and the State legislatures. The leadership of the Party at the State level was made subordinate to the Central leadership of the Party and this culminated in Nehru centralising the Party leadership and the leadership of the government in his own hands in August 1963 and asking six Chief Ministers to resign under the Kamaraj Plan. Conflicts were solved through the party level rather than through established agencies. Because of its highly centralised nature, the Units had little freedom to take decision on their own. Thus this uniparty rule resulted in the growth of the predominance of the Center up to 1967. And as Santhanam puts, "the Democratic Centralism of the Congress Party during these years were responsible for the strengthening of the central government and the relative subordination of State Governments".<sup>18</sup> This had an adverse effect on the healthy growth of Center-State Relations.

Another reason for the domination of the center is undoubtedly the fact that the Congress leaders right from Pt. Nehru to Rajiv Gandhi were in favor of a strong center.<sup>19</sup> As Minoo Masani puts it '.... Nehru was made of the stuff of a Soviet type planner who would not brook any real federation. He wanted to transfer Russia's Central Planning concept to New Delhi and therefore the idea of giving a large measure of autonomy to the states did not suit him.<sup>20</sup> Mrs Gandhi emphasised the need to have a strong center and maintain national unity to effectively tackle the problems facing the country.<sup>21</sup>

Exceptions to the general trend were always there and one such striking case was the relationship between Prime Minister Mr Nehru and West Bengal Mr Bidhan Chandra Roy. There was a closeness between the state and central leaders and this was due to the working relationship between the two leaders.<sup>22</sup> Most of the inter governmental negotiations that took place in the state was made possible because of the Congress organisation. In fact, the leadership of the state party made it possible to secure support for the final solution that was decided upon in each of the cases. Referring to the closeness, one observer noted, "..... apart from Maulana Azad, Dr. Roy is perhaps the only

active politician in India whose relations with the Prime Minister are conducted on a basis of comradely equality."<sup>23</sup> This particular case is important for an understanding of the ways in which the Indian federal constitution was interpreted. It was not just a case of personal relationship was paralleled at other levels of the party and governmental hierarchy as well.<sup>24</sup>

Inadequacy of the financial resources of the States making them financially dependent on the Center and consequently politically dependent also contributed to the Paramountcy of the center. Knowing fully well the financial inadequacy of the States, the Constitution makers incorporated certain devices by which the states will get additional resources. The Administrative Reforms Commission Report (ARC Report) says that financial dependence of the States is desirable to some extent as it represent a centripetal force ... the degree of financial dependence of the state on the center should be reduced to the minimum because that minimum would be adequate from the point of view of giving the center controlling powers in the context of national integration.<sup>25</sup>

The Planning Commission with its erratic system of

Planning is another sphere from which the Center drew its powers. It was originally aimed to be a joint enterprise of both the center and the states but its functioning made it clear that the center had more powers in its formulation and execution while the states role became subsidiary. With the Prime Minister as its chairman and the Central Ministers comprising almost half of its members, it is very centralised giving the Central Government enormous control over the operations of the State Government which militates against their autonomy.<sup>26</sup>

The country's economy has come to be virtually regulated by the Planning Commission with the result that the State Governments have little say in managing their own affairs as they would wish. The Role of the National Development Council (N.D.C) with its representatives from each state is only formal and does not even have anything to say about its performance.

The Governor of the states is also another medium. Because of its dubious role as the constitutional head of the state and also as the agent of the center, along with its discretionary powers, he tilts towards the center in normal times and upsets the whole political scenario during the declaration of emergency. Certain

discretionary powers has been misused many a times because of the conflict between the roles of the Governor and also because of partisan reasons.

The pattern of the working of Indian federalism has been gradually modifying itself to meet the changing needs and circumstances. In the initial period till around 1967, the Center had more powers which is basically the result of the Congress dominance, national planning and finance. The Indian political experience in the initial decades indicates how in most cases, the govt. leaders both at the Center and the states were inclined to use the governmental process to further the interest of their respective parties. For example, the Central governments' attitude towards the non-Congress governments was influenced by the demands within the Congress party to use the governmental process to rehabilitate the Congress party in the state where it had lost ground in 1967. The state governments especially those ruled by the parties other than the party in power at the Center began to complain that the Center had been usurping more and more power and trying to minimise their autonomy. This long continued hold of power by a single party had unexpected adverse effects on the healthy growth of Center-State relations.

In 1967, when Congress party was replaced, the question of Center State relation acquired a new edge as the governments at both units were not of the same political persuasion. The problem became acute with non-congress ministries forming governments in several states. The politics of consensus tended to be replaced by the politics of confrontation.<sup>27</sup> In the 1971 Lok Sabha election the Congress party came back to power and formed the government in all the states except in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

In 1977 Janata Party came to power but the Center State relations remained unchanged as the party like the Congress was in favor of a strong Center it was only after 1980 when the non-Congress (I) party captured power that efforts for re-defining Center-State relation to make the Constitution truly federal took shape. The Congress party due to its continuous dominance was able to destroy constitutional proprieties.

Even though at the present, the Congress party is the ruling party of the Center, it does not possess much power at the state level as it used to. There is an increasing tolerance on the part of the Center and the non-Congress state governments are heard more respectfully. In 1967, in states like West Bengal,



Kerala, and other having non Congress governments demanded more autonomy. Such demands were made on the basis of the states being turned into the Center's colony. At the present, the nature of demands has shifted because of the softening of the Center's attitude and such allegations are being made in fringe areas like Kashmir Assam and Manipur. The nature of Center State relationship is in actuality two pronged. This is because technically and legally, there is increasing centralisation and practically and in reality there is more tolerance and gives more room to other parties other than the party at the center. The party at the center has softened their stand to a large extent and this on the other hand has muted the militancy and state autonomy demands. Despite the above changes and modifications, the Center continues to be more powerful, armed already as it is with various constitutional proprieties.

A brief glance on how the powers are distributed between the Center and the States gives one a clear picture depicting the Center's overbearing powers. At each level of functioning, the Center has been provided with more powers. There is an element of arbitrariness in the way in which the powers are distributed and there is a strong tendency towards centralisation. This

biasedness towards the Center and the working of the Indian Federalism has brought into light the number of loopholes in the manner in which powers are distributed and had evoked stiff response from various quarters. The outright demand for reorganisation of states on linguistic basis and for more autonomy of a number of ethnic groups gave the posterity a certain state of lawlessness and disorder which on the other hand hampered the all round development of the country.

Thus, at the time of the framing of the constitution, the framers worked out a constitution which though federal in general character had the strength of a unitary government. The main object was to arm the center with special powers to make it strong in order to be able to resist disruptive forces by way of threat of disruption either external or internal. But to prove its point as the true federal system and to meet the diverse needs of a diverse section of people, the strong center concept should have to be reversed.

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**CHAPTER - II**  
**CENTRE'S RELATION WITH NORTH EAST**  
**AND MANIPUR IN PARTICULAR**

India is one country which is vast and diverse in many ways and so the same set of roles cannot be followed in each and every state. The North Eastern states of India occupy a strategic position because of their being a frontier region. The region is not a homogeneous one and each of the seven states is not only a constitutional entity but it has its own distinctive political texture and cultural individuality.

History recounts that the North East came under the British control gradually. The British believed in the policy of keeping these people in isolation so long as they did not seriously disturb the people in the plains. The British imposed the Inner Line Regulation framed in 1872-73 and thereby the hill territories remained isolated from the rest of the country in very sphere. The Princely states of Tripura and Manipur had relations with the British. Their relations with the British had not been cordial as is exemplified by the rebellion of 1891 in Manipur. This led to a temporary forfeiture of the state to the British Government.

Later, as part of the general scheme of merger of Princely States, Manipur and Tripura were merged with India in 1948-49 and became Chief Commissioner's Provinces.

Keeping the country's vastness and diversity in mind and the problems associated with fulfilling the different needs of states and regions and also in integrating the whole landmass into one nation; the Constitution makers made ardent efforts and laid down certain special provisions for certain strategically located and socio-economically backward states. Thus, Article 370, gives special provisions to the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Likewise, Article 371 of the Indian Constitution, which is amended several times gives special provisions with respect to the states of Assam, Nagaland and Manipur.

#### **Constitutional Values of Manipur:**

Article 371C of the Indian Constitution makes special provisions with respect to the state of Manipur. It states that:

1. Notwithstanding anything in this constitution, the President may by order made with respect to the State of Manipur provide for the Constitution and

function of a committee of the Legislative Assembly of the State consisting of member of that Assembly elected from the Hill Areas of that state for the modification to be made in the rules of procedures of the Legislative Assembly of the state and for any special responsibility of the Governor in order to secure the proper functioning of such committee.

2. The Governor shall annually or whenever so required by the President, make a report to the President regarding the administration of the Hill Areas in the State of Manipur and the executive power of the union shall extend to the giving of directions to the State as to the administration of the said areas.<sup>1</sup>

This clause (Article 371 C) was a later addition and has strong affinity with Article 244 and Schedules V and VI. Therefore, it would be pertinent here to mention the contents and working of the V and VI Schedules of the Indian Constitution.

The Schedules V and VI deal with the administration of Scheduled areas and Tribal areas. The framework of administration of the states are so

structured as to meet the needs of the distinctly inhomogeneous Indian society. The aforesaid concept of Indian Federalism along with its separation of powers does not in many ways pertain to the administration of certain states of India viz. Jammu and Kashmir and the North Eastern States of India. This is also true of the backward, Scheduled and Tribal Areas of various states in India besides the North East which has a large percentage of tribal population. The constitution framers had been wise enough and had the foresight to imagine the problem that might in all probability crop up if a uniform kind of administration is followed throughout the length and breadth of the country. Their foresightedness gave birth to certain special provisions [which may be temporary and transitional in nature.]

**Schedule V [Article 244 (1)]:**

The Administration and control of Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes are provided by the V Schedule. This however excludes the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.

In the Scheduled areas, subject to the provisions of this schedule, the executive power of a state



extends to the schedule areas therein. And since the executive power of the state shall be vested in the Governor and shall be exercised by him either directly or through offices subordinate to him in accordance with this constitution [Article 151 (1)]; the executive head of the Scheduled Areas are vested in the executive power which rest with the Governor. The Governor of each State having Scheduled Areas therein shall annually or whenever so required by the President make a report to the President regarding the administration of the Scheduled Areas in that state and the executive power of the Union shall extend to the giving of directions to the state as to the administration of the said areas.

According to Clause 4, Section 1 of Article 244 (1), in each state having Scheduled Areas and in any State having Scheduled Tribes but not Scheduled Areas therein, a Tribes Advisory Council consisting of not more than twenty members shall be established. Three-fourth of the members shall be representatives of the state in each State having Scheduled Areas. It is the duty of the TAC to advice the State Govt. on matters pertaining to the welfare and advancement of the Scheduled Tribes in the State as may be referred to them by the Governor. The rules and regulations

prescribing the number of members, their appointment, the code of conduct and other incidental matters are set down by the Governor [Para 4, sub para 3(a), (b) & (c) of Article 244 (1)]. The Governor has the power to say that any particular Act of Parliament or of the Legislature of the State shall not apply to the Scheduled Area or any part thereof in the state as he may specify through a public notification.

**The Sixth Schedule [Articles 244 (2)]:**

The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution makes special provisions for the administration of tribal areas in <sup>2</sup> [the states of Assam<sup>3</sup> &<sup>4</sup> (Tripura, Meghalaya) and Mizoram] allowing a large degree of autonomy to certain districts and regions. Subject to the provisions of this paragraph, each of the tribal areas shall be an autonomous district - the word autonomous indicating a right of self-government.<sup>5</sup> If there are different Scheduled Tribes in an Autonomous District, the Government may by notification divide the area or areas inhabited by them into Autonomous regions.

Clause 2 mentions that there shall be a District Council for each Autonomous District consisting of not more than thirty (30) members of whom not more than

four persons shall be nominated by the Governor and the rest shall be elected on the basis of adult suffrage. There shall also be a separate Regional Council for each area constituted as an Autonomous Region. Each District Council and each Regional Council shall be a body corporate by the name respectively of "the District Council of (name of the district)" and the "Regional Council of (name of the region)". In an autonomous District with Regional Councils, the District Council shall have only such powers with respect to the areas under the authority of the Regional Council as may be delegated to it by the Regional Council in addition to the power conferred on it by this schedule with respect to such areas. The Governor shall make rules for the constitution of District Councils and Regional Councils in consultation with the existing tribal councils or other representative tribal organisations within the autonomous districts or regions concerned. They will hold office for a period of five years.

The scheme of Schedule VI in short shows that the Districts and Regional Councils are both administrative and legislative bodies with a fair measure of autonomy.

The difference between V and VI Schedule lies in the fact that the Governor is accountable <sup>for</sup> to the administration of the V Scheduled areas whereas in the VI Scheduled areas, the administration is more decentralised in the form of Autonomous District Councils and Regional Councils.

In Manipur, in the areas settled by the tribals, the VI Schedule of the Indian Constitution which governs the tribal areas of the North East do not apply. But at the same time, there are the ADCs run on the lines of Schedule VI. Schedule VI do not apply to Manipur simply because Manipur being a Native State and a Part 'C' State under the rule of the Chief Commissioner then did not fall under the jurisdiction of either the Tribal and excluded areas of North East Frontier (Assam) or the excluded and Partially excluded areas (other than Assam).

In 1971, when the North Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act granted Statehood to the Union Territory of Manipur, the Manipur Hills Autonomous District Councils Act (MHADC) 1971 was also passed. The Act was to give autonomy to the Manipur hills and it was passed under much opposition from the Manipur Government. The act became a law by the ordinary act of

the Parliament and thus five (5) ADCs initially and later six (6) ADCs were created in the hills of Manipur on the pattern of the VI Schedule.

As far as the relation of the Centre with the States of North-East India are concerned, the Centre-State link needs to be referred under different contexts. This is not only because of its strategic location, general political backwardness and geographical and ethnic differences which constitute the North Eastern States but also because of the difference in the manner in which the States are grouped politically.

In the beginning when the Indian Union was formed, the Constitution of India classified the various states into four categories according to the stage of their political development. They were Part 'A' States who were former British Indian Provinces; Part 'B' States who were mostly big Princely States; Part 'C' States who were petty states and which were incredibly backward and far behind the other states and Part 'D' States which was comprised of the islands of Andaman and Nicobar.

**Manipur's Political Status:-**

Manipur along with Tripura were given the status of Part 'C' States and were under the direct control of the Central Government. Before Manipur got integrated into the Indian dominion, there was the demand for the establishment of a responsible government in the state of Manipur. The two sub-committees, the Manipur State Constitution Act 1947 and the Manipur State Hill People's (Administration) Regulation 1947\* gave an idea on how the state was to be governed on constitutional lines. The Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 laid down the constitutions, powers and functions of the three organs of Government - Legislature, Executive and Judiciary. It also laid down the Fundamental Rights and Duties of the citizens. The Manipur State Hill People's Regulation 1947 gave responsibility for administration in the Hills to the Maharajah in council and exercised in accordance with the Constitution Act of the State and the Provisions of this Regulations. But the responsible government established when the Manipur State Constitution Act 1947 came into force did not operate long and the government was dissolved after the Merger Agreement was signed at Shillong on 21 September 1949. The signing of the Merger Agreement endorsed the formal merger of Manipur to the Dominion of India on 15 October 1949.

In 1950, when the constitution of India came into force, Manipur was made a Part 'C' state. Her Part 'C' state status continued till 1956 when the States Reorganisation Act was passed in 1956 and thereby she attained the status of a Union Territory. The Union Territories Act 1963 was passed and she continued the Union Territory status till January 21 1972, when she finally became a state in the Indian Union under the provisions of the North Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act 1971. The Governor who was to be aided and advised by the Council of Ministers was to be the Head of the State.

For Manipur, the attainment of Statehood in 1972 from a mere Part 'C' State status was no joy-ride to success. She had her own share of bitter experience and it was after much struggle that the way was cleared. As per the Part 'C' States Act of 1951, the Part 'C' states were to enjoy only restricted autonomy as compared to Part 'A' and 'B' states. The state of Manipur was wholly under the Chief Commissioner during 1949-69. The Legislative Assembly, founded by the Maharajah in 1947 was dissolved and the Part 'C' States Act made new provisions for legislatures and council of Ministers for the State of Manipur. Demands for statehood were however brewing up in the meantime.

During her Part 'C' state status, in 1952, the first general election on the basis of adult franchise was held for the election of two members of the Lok Sabha (one each from the hills and the valley) and 30 members of the electoral college. These members recommended the names of 5 (five) advisors who eventually formed the Advisory Council of the Chief Commissioner. They had no executive powers except giving advice to the Chief Commissioner in matters of administration. However, the people of Manipur were dissatisfied and discontented with the rule of the bureaucrats and they started agitations demanding the restoration of responsible government. The 7th Amendment Act of 1956 of the Constitution of India converted the Part 'C' State of Manipur into a Union Territory from November 1956 and this was to be governed by the President of India through an administrator appointed by him. Provision for a Territorial Council for Manipur was made by the Territorial Council Act, 1956 (No. 103 of 1956). The council was to have thirty members elected through adult suffrage from the territorial constituencies. Besides two members were also to be nominated by the Central Government.

#### **Towards Statehood**



The Territorial Council started functioning soon after coming into existence after the 1957 General Election. However, even though it paved the way for the establishment of responsible government it had very limited powers over the administration of Manipur. Satyagraha movements were organised. The Assembly Demand Coordinating Committee launched a mass Satyagraha on April 11, 1960 for restoration of responsible government in Manipur under the leadership of a member of the Communist Party of Manipur, Thiyam Meghachandra, who was then the acting secretary of the Committee.<sup>7</sup> Normal life came to a halt and it resulted in the death and sufferings of a large number of people. Civil Resistance Day was observed on 16 May 1960<sup>8</sup> and Anti-Repression Day on the 1st of June 1960.<sup>9</sup> Even with police atrocities and imposition of Section 144 of the CrPC, the government failed to disperse the crowd. The movement continued. The demand for a popular Assembly and responsible government was irresistible and ten years of Chief Commissioner's rule failed to improve the condition of Manipur.

The Government reviewed the situation and recommended the transfer of more subjects from the Union Parliament to the Territorial Councils. By the fourteenth Amendment Act of the Constitution 1962,

Article 239 A was introduced to the Constitution enabling the Parliament to create in some of the Territories, including Manipur:

- i. a body whether elected or partly nominated to function as a Legislature for the Union Territories, or
- ii a Council of Ministers or both with such constitution, powers and function in each case, as may be specified in the law.<sup>10</sup>

And thus, following the amendment, the Union Territories Act 1963 created legislatures and ministers in Manipur abolishing the Territorial Council. The Act provided for a Legislative Assembly for the Territory with a maximum strength of 32 (30 elected, 2 nominated) with reservation of seats for the Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes. Manipur continued to be administered by the President of India through the Lt. Governor.

The Chief Minister was to be appointed by the President acting through his agent, the Lt. Governor and on his advice the other ministers would be appointed. They were collectively responsible to the Legislative Assembly. However the Ministry was not empowered to have the functions and powers of a Council of Ministers of a full-fledged state of the Indian

Union. Besides, the Legislative Assembly did not enjoy the same status as that of full fledged state. In the Legislative Assembly, Mr M Koirang of the Congress Party commanded the majority and was there by chosen the Chief Minister. He continued with the Post till the 1967 General Election.

✓ Thus, the political history of Manipur right from 1947 to 1967 was one of a gradual metamorphosis from one type of state to another. At first it was the so-called Princely State with a responsible cabinet, then a Part 'C' state and then a Union Territory with a Territorial Council and finally a full-fledged state. The National Parties like the Congress and the Socialists along with the Regional Parties played an active role in the Socio-political life of the state.

The gradual attainment of statehood in 1972 was not a joyride for the people of Manipur. To the people who had experience the taste of a responsible government on their own, could not remain satisfied with whatever proposals the Centre made for this tiny little state of Manipur. The Centre delayed the grant of statehood on grounds that Manipur was still not capable of having a responsible government. The Sino-Indian war (1962) turned the centre's attention

towards what is described as the most immediate needs and the question of giving representative and responsible government to Manipur remained unanswered for pretty long. It was only after a series of demands in the form of Hartal, Satyagraha etc (which affected the normal life) which actually changed the centre's attitude towards Manipur. Manipur earned numerous beautiful names and epithets. However, no practical and feasible steps were taken up to bring about social and economic development. As part of the Five Year Plans, Manipur too got a total outlay of Rs 155 lakh for the first five year plan out of which about 73% went for the development of transport and communication. In the 2nd Five Year Plan, she received a total outlay of Rs 625 lakh out of which 36.7% went for social and community services. During the third Plan she got Rs 1,287.56 lakh<sup>11</sup> and priority was again given to transport and communications. In the fourth Plan it was increased to Rs 3,025 lakh. It is true, the amount of money increased at each plan outlay but Manipur had to manage plan programmes with only an annual average of Rs 1,315 lakhs<sup>12</sup> during the first four Five Year Plans. The allocation was too meagre to meet the rising requirements for creating capital assets. For an economically and industrially backward state, more sums of money needed to be

allocated. However, the allocations as mentioned were meagre. Perhaps, the Centre knew that the outcome would be very small from a remote and backward state and so it did not want to invest. And otherwise also, the money that was allotted for the development of industrial infrastructure in all the first three plans was negligible. Therefore, Manipur continued to remain stagnant and backward. The only good point that can be noted about Manipur during this period was the growth of political awareness and the active participation of the people in the political life of the region.

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### Chapter III

#### EMERGING STRESS AND STRAINS : OUTCOME OF PARTIAL DIVISION OF POWERS AND LACK OF INITIATIVE

The experiment of Indian Federalism has shown that it has passed through serious stress and strains caused by narrower sub-loyalties arising out of regionalism, linguism, separatism and secessionism. The difficulties, tensions, and problems has arisen largely in respect of operations and functioning of the system. In the early years, the established system suffered defacement due to political malfunctioning, absence of federalising process, election abuses, resort to unpopular measure of emergency in the mid-seventies, internal disturbances and eruption of violent trends all over the country<sup>1</sup> because of near civil war conditions and secessionist movements in certain parts, of the country.

The relationship between the Centre and the North-Eastern states has not always been a happy one. This is not to mean that it has been smooth sailing elsewhere. The reorganisation of States in 1956 and again in 1972 has very well exemplified it. States viz Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal all had their share

of political bickerings with the Centre.

The strains which arose in the Center-State relationship has almost become a common phenomena partly because of the inherent drawbacks associated with the distribution of powers and partly due to the lack of will and initiative on the part of the local leaders. Many political parties maintained that the crisis in the North East is due to overcentralised federal system of India.<sup>2</sup> Generally speaking, the cause of the strains which developed between the centre and the North-East is almost similar to that of others. It may be due to:-

- the manner in which powers are distributed,
- the special powers of the Centre,
- the working of Planning Commission etc.

In short, it may be due to the overbearingness of the Centre. However, certain other factors like Geography and History of the particular region, emergence of regional parties etc. which increased the tensions.

The States in the North-East have been bogged down by ethnic conflicts and underdevelopment. Each state is not only a constitutional entity but has its own distinctive political texture and cultural



individuality. Each state has its own differentiated problems requiring a different solution. B.K.Roy Burman agrees with the general view that the region has very peculiar and distinct features. He cites certain features which is summarized below.

The region came under effective political control of the colonial rulers only during the British Period and prior to this, had only tenuous economic ties with eastern India. In the hills of North Eastern region there is communal ownership of land and land based resources which at the present, an effort is made to diffuse the system through judicial and executive measures. B K Roy Burman points out that non - recognition of community rights in the hills has been one of the main causes of dispossession and marginalisation of the communities and consequent political turmoil which has damaged the moral and political basis of federalism. Besides, non-recognition of the custodial rights of the communities facilitated large scale migrations disrupting the demographic pattern and the political and socio-cultural processes in the region. The fact that the region is linked only by a narrow strip with the rest of the country and the presence of counterpart of the same ethnic formations beyond India has posed a number of geo-political

problems. There is inadequate communication and production infrastructure and iniquitous resource mobilisation pattern which has accentuated regional disparity of the Region in a negative manner vis-a-vis the rest of the country and this has triggered the demand for sustainable development of the region.<sup>3</sup>

The above points out the peculiar and characteristic features of the North East, some of the inherent drawbacks and the resultant fallout of the imposition of some developmental model over the existing primitive and primordial society.

It is very clear that the region has a plethora of problems. But there are some common problems viz slow pace of economic development, more frequency of violence and greater loss of life and these require a broad common spirit, a common spirit through which the region's problems has to be approached.

The Centre-State relation in the case of Manipur has been chequered by strains right from the day she joined India. This is seen in the form of demand for restoration of responsible government, statehood demand agitations and outright insurgency movements. The following were the factors that led to the strains and

which have posed a hindrance to the smooth functioning of the working of Indian Federalism.

#### **I. Geography and Historical Tradition :**

Geography and history are irreconcilable facts which dominate the nature of relationships between the people and the territory on the one hand and policy alternatives, accommodation and implementation on the other.<sup>4</sup> Going by the state's geography, Manipur is a small strategically located state in the North Eastern Frontiers of India. Lying between latitude 23°83'N and 25°68'N and longitude 93°03'E and 94°74'E, the total geographical area of the State is 22,356 sq. kms<sup>2</sup> with two distinct areas- the hills and the plains and her population according to the 1991 Census is 1,826,714.<sup>4</sup>

Basically, only ten percent of the area is plain (valley). This geographical division is a determining factor in the socio - political and historical development of the land.

The Meities inhabit only the plains and the hills are made the exclusive abode of the Nagas and the Kukis. In the heart of the central plain, the Meiteis since the dawn of history began to evolve from a petty principality to a powerful kingdom with vast areas comprising not only the valley and the surrounding

hills but also other territories that lie beyond its present frontiers. The valley's dense population, highly fertile land and advanced technology and also better social and economic organisation were conducive to the growth of the Kingdom. However, in the hills, the political system could not develop beyond the village society or republics.

Manipur is a polyglot state. While the Meiteis [mostly Vaishnavites] concentrate in the valley, the hills are populated by a variety of colourful ethnic groups. Besides the Meiteis, there are in the valley the Pangals (Manipuri Muslims), the Bishnupriyas and a very small percent of tribal population. In addition, there are Nepalis, Biharis and Bengalis. Venkata Rao points out that the existence of different races and ethnic groups each trying to protect its own interest and identity rendered political development difficult if not possible.<sup>7</sup>

History records Manipur as an independent Princely State from 33 A.D. to 1949 having a rich and chequered tradition and culture. Once described as a "flower on lofty heights" by R. Constantine, it is now a most violent state only next to Kashmir.<sup>8</sup> This place is now torn by conflicts and ethnic fights. But still it

does not even strike to most Indians the existence of this state. There is an abysmal ignorance about this state and it would be too much to expect from the rest of the Indian people any awareness of Manipur's distinct personality she inherited from her geographical location and consequent isolation.

As mentioned above, Manipur was a princely state with the King as the head. The political history of Manipur right from the early times down to the reign of Garib Niwaz (1714-1748) was the history of the hegemony of the Meitei Kings. Anglo-Manipuri relations started during Shri Jai Singh's reign as he realised that the only effective measure to check Burmese inroads into Manipur was by taking the Britisher's help. The Burmese occupation of Manipur ended in 1826 by the Treaty of Yandaboo signed between East India Company and the Manipuri Raia and this treaty left him as a semi-independent ruler of Manipur. This was the beginning of the end of the sovereignty of the Manipuri Monarchs and the post Yandaboo period inaugurated the phase of Pax Britannica in North Eastern India. The region was thus incorporated to British India only after 1826.

Right from 33 A.D. the administration of this

small monarchy has been carried out under a system of representative form of government. The fateful Khongiom War of 1891 and the complete defeat of the Meiteis brought them under the British Paramountcy.

By a proclamation issued by Queen Victoria, 'Native Rule' was established with Churachand as the Raiah. And thus, from 1891, Manipur entered a new phase where the administration of the State was run under the close control of the British Government. On the eve of the implementation of the Independence Act, the British Government made special preparations for the native states for the transitional period between the Transfer of Power and finalisation of the Constitution of free India. A Standstill Agreement was brought out which most states, with exceptions of a few signed. The Manipuri Maharajah Bodhachandra Singh also entered into such an agreement on the 2nd July 1947. On 11th August 1947, he signed the Instrument of Accession and accordingly, Manipur acceded to the Indian Dominion in three subjects, namely Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communication and in all other subjects, she enjoyed full autonomy and was in no way under the Indian Government. Analogous to the interim Government at the centre an interim government was also constituted on the 14th August 1947. This put an end to the long

history of monarchy and with this the first step towards democracy and egalitarian society was taken.

During the period between 14th August 1947 and 14th October 1949, Manipur enjoyed full autonomy in the administration except in the three subjects. However, New Delhi evolved a plan to integrate all the native states to counter a move for Balkanisation of the country. Under this scheme, the Merger Agreement drive was brought out which was to be entered into with the rulers including the Manipuri Raia. The Manipuri King was one of the few rulers who refused to sign the agreement but later he was reportedly coaxed and compelled to sign on 21st September 1949 following which, he ceded to the Dominion Government all his administrative powers. These powers were vested with the Dominion Government and would be exercised by an administrator who was to be appointed by the Government of India.

The Manipur Merger Agreement came into effect on the 15th October 1949 and as a result, Manipur came under the rule of a Chief Commissioner. The powers of the constitutional Monarch were divested and the popularly elected Assembly and Council of Minister also stood abolished. It also caused the lapse of the

Manipur Constitution Act. In general it lowered the political and constitutional status of Manipur and became a Part 'C' state. All key post enjoyed by the sons of the soil even during the rule of the Britishers were given to Non-Manipuris. All the democratic institutions stood abolished and suppressed resulting in a popular discontentment and suspicion of the Non-Manipuris. Gradually, the Princely state metamorphosised from a Part 'C' State in 1949 to a Union Territory in 1956 and finally to a full-fledged state in 1972. The administration also changed hands from a Chief Commissioner to a Lt. Governor and finally to the Governor. This slow and gradual process and the centre's reluctance in granting statehood is particularly due to the Centre's notion that Manipur was still not ready to become one. On the other hand, this could be an appeasement policy of the Centre after taking into consideration the various popular demands raised for bringing about a responsible government in the state.

At the present, the Constitutional status is the same as enjoyed by any full-fledged state of the Indian Union. However, the levels of development in terms of economy, literacy, technology et al remains comparatively very low and this has indirectly



triggered off insurgent and secessionists.

Even though it is strategically located, its significance and importance as a border state came to the realisation of the Central leaders only after the Chinese aggression. Finding the state economically unproductive & coupled with the difficult terrain settled by different ethnic groups; the Centre remained contented to leave it as it is till the state boiled with violence and brought to the Centre's attention that the State is very much a part of the Indian mainland and that immediate attention for its overall development is called for. The Historical fact that Manipuris were never a part of the mainland till the Britisher's came, the Centre's unkindly treatment, their own pride and ego in asserting their identity - all these made it hard for most people to reconcile to the fact that they are also Indians. Also the fact that the state was kept as Chief Commissioner's Province for long and then under the Lt. Governors provides the obvious centralised nature.

## **II Allocation of Powers:**

The manner in which the powers are allocated in a federal form of government (Indian Federalism) determines to a certain aspect the nature of the Indian

Union. Strains which arise in the Centre-state relationship may be somewhat directly or indirectly related to the manner in which the powers are allocated, the Centre's special powers and the role played by the Governor.

The distribution of powers has been widely discussed earlier. For matters of convenience, it would be pertinent to mention some of the Articles which would bring to light the Centre's overwhelming powers. Beginning with Article 246 providing the three fold distribution of powers, the Centre-State relations in terms of **Legislation** empowers the Parliament and the State, exclusive powers of legislation with respect to the Union List and State list respectively. Though the legislative competence of Parliament and State legislatures are to be found with reference to the three lists, various other articles empowers the Parliament to make laws. For instance, in the case of overlapping of a matter as between the three lists, predominance has been given to the Union List. Article 246(3) provides that the power of the state to legislate with respect to matters enumerated in the State list has been made subject to the Power of Parliament to legislate in matters enumerated in the Union and the Concurrent List.<sup>10</sup> In case of

repugnancy between a law of a state and a law of the Union in the Concurrent sphere, the latter will prevail. The Residuary Powers are also vested in the Union Lists. Under Article 249, the Union Parliament can make temporary laws overriding the normally exclusive powers of the state legislature relating to matters enumerated in the state list, if by a special majority, the council of states declares that this is expedient in the National Interest.<sup>11</sup> Article 250, empowers the Parliament to legislate in the State list if a Proclamation of Emergency is in operation.<sup>12</sup> Parliamentary laws prevails over the law of the State Legislature when it comes to national interest (Article 251). And in matters enumerated in Concurrent List, Union Law prevails when it is in conflict with the State law and Parliament has power to legislate for two or more states by consent of and adoption by those states (Article 252). Relating to the **Administrative Relations**, the Centre has been given power to give directions to the other States through various articles viz. Article 256, Articles 257 (1), (2) and (3), Article 258 (1), Articles 275, 282, 293 and 312. Besides, Article 365 states that where any state has failed to comply with or to give effect to, any direction given in the exercise of the executive power of the Union under any of the provisions of this

Constitution, it shall be lawful for the President to hold that a situation has arisen in which the government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. This was somewhat in the manner of the Emergency Provisions.

The **Emergency Provisions** or the Centre's special powers has been a very powerful instrument in furthering the powers of the Centre and making the Indian Government more unitary than federal. It is some kind of a contingency measure whereby the Union Parliament can legislate on the State list in matters relating to the national interest. These Provisions fall into three categories which are as follows:

- National Emergency (Article 352).
- Emergency due to failure of the Constitutional machinery in a state (Article 356) &
- Financial Emergency (Article 360).

(a) Pertaining to the first Emergency Provision is **Article 352**. Under clause (1) of this Article if the President of India is satisfied that a grave emergency exists, whereby the security of India or of any part of its territory is threatened, whether by war or external aggression or internal disturbance, he may by

Proclamation make a declaration to that effect. Such proclamation of Emergency may be made before the actual occurrence of war or of any such aggression or disturbance if the President is satisfied that there is an imminent danger thereof. National Emergency has been declared three times - in 1962 following Chinese aggression, in 1971 following the Indo-Pak Conflict and in 1975 when Mrs Indira Gandhi imposed it on the ground of "internal disturbance".

(b) Failure of the constitutional machinery of the state and the imposition of President's Rule thereof under Article 356 is one of the most controversial issues in the Centre-State relations. There has been claims that this power has been misused often for partisan gains and it has the tendency to overpower the centre. Under Clause (1) of this Article, if the President of India, on receipt of a report from the Governor of a state or otherwise is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the state Government cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, then he may by Proclamation:

- assume to himself all or any of the functions of the Government of the State and all or any of the powers vested in or exercisable by Governor or any body or authority in the state other than the

Legislature thereof.

- declare that the powers of the Legislature of the state shall be exercisable by or under the authority of the Parliament of India.
- make incidental and consequential provisions as appear to him to be necessary or desirable for giving effect to the objects of the Proclamation, including provisions for suspending in whole or in part the operation of any provision of the constitution relating to any body or authority in the state.<sup>13</sup>

The wide powers vested in the Union to supersede a constitutional government in a state has far reaching implications and are opposed to the basic principles of federal democracy. These provisions has been continuously and thoroughly misused for:

- dismissing the State Government having majority in the Assembly,
- suspending and dissolving the Assemblies on partisan considerations,
- not giving a chance to the opposition to form government when electoral verdict was indecisive,
- denying opportunity to the opposition to form Government when ministry resigned in anticipation of its defeat on the floor of the House, and

- not allowing the opposition to form government even after the defeat of the ministry on the floor of the House.

The Sarkaria Commission Report has also drawn a very confirmed and clear conclusion that in a number of occasions when President's Rule was imposed under Article 356, PR was brought in not due to the failure of the Constitutional machinery or the Governors were not conducting the affairs of the state, (that is in consonance with the provisions of the constitution) but because for partisan purposes and intent of the ruling party at the Centre.<sup>14</sup> And this provision if it is loose can be misused by any party in power in the Centre.

However, retention of such powers is justified on the ground that it enables the Centre to prevent factional strife in a state from paralysing the government machinery and to give time to the political parties to settle their difference and maintain the democratic form of government.<sup>15</sup> Madhu Dandavate is of the view that the very federal character of the Constitution, along with the aim to avoid tensions between the centre and the states urgently requires that the states must be allowed to rule under their own

elected representatives.<sup>14</sup>

This Article has become the most abused and criticised one. In spite of safeguards provided by the 44th Amendment of the Constitution, it continues to be so and has become a sore and most serious tension area in the Centre-State relations. It is thus generally felt that this power has not always been used for legitimate purposes.

There is an enormous material and information on the instances where this power has been misused. In a number of cases, this provision has been used at times due to the failure of the Constitutional machinery of the State and at times to satisfy the powers at the centre. This causes a serious tension in India's Constitutional framework particularly in the working of Federalism.

A small spectrum of the instances is provided here by taking into consideration the various instances when P.R. was clamped in Manipur. In Manipur, President's rule as such was imposed not only to serve the Centre's partisan purposes but also to save the constitutional crises that had come up due to the prevalence of the practice of political defections.



- PR was for the first time clamped in Manipur in 1967 when there was breakdown of the Constitutional machinery of the State. This was when in October 1967, when the 32 member House in Manipur was equally grouped in two groups of 16 members each; one - the Congress and the other - the United Front which was the Ruling Party. Both parties were equally balanced and none of the parties were prepared to put up a candidate for the Speakership. This resulted in the Administrator proroguing the House and the State's administration was taken over by the President with effect from 25th October 1967. This lasted for about four months.
  
- In October 1969, PR was again imposed resulting mainly from the conflict among the Congress Legislature party members. On 30 September 1969, eleven members resigned from the ruling party and joined the opposition. The opposition moved no-confidence motion which was supported by 19 members. PR was imposed on 16th October 1969 and was lifted only in March 1972 when the MPP led United Legislature Party (ULP) ministry was formed. This was a case of dissolving the Assembly on partisan grounds<sup>17</sup> when the ruling

party at the Centre felt that it would be in a position to form alternative Ministry either by manoeuvring defections or otherwise, that is suspension or dissolution of the Assembly. The Assembly was dissolved to prevent the opposition from forming the Government when the Congress ministers or the Ministry supported by it went out of office. The opposition was not allowed to form government after the defeat of the Ministry on the floor of the House. When the Koireng Singh (Congress) ministry was defeated on the floor, the United Front opposition leader staked his claim to form the government but was not allowed to do so on the plea that a State Government is not possible.<sup>10</sup>

- In March 1973, PR was imposed on the recommendation of the Governor when the ULP ministry failed in the no-confidence motion and its members defected to the newly formed opposition. It was lifted when after the mid-term poll the MPP ULP Ministry was installed on 4th March 1974.

- In March 1977, when the Janata Party formed the ministry at the Centre; in Manipur there was

mounting defection of members from Congress to Janata Party reducing the Congress to a minority. The President suspended the Assembly indefinitely and PR was imposed on 16 May 1977 and lifted when the Janata Ministry was formed on 29 June 1977. Here, PR was clamped mainly on partisan grounds but was in actuality caused by the politics of defections in the state.

In 1979, the Shri Yangmaisho Shaiza led Janata Ministry was dismissed on the basis of maladministration.<sup>19</sup> and the state was brought under Central rule in November 1979. The Governor in his report said that the administration had been rendered increasingly ineffective in dealing with the activities of the extremist because of gross maladministration, favoritism and nepotism.<sup>20</sup> The Government was dismissed when they not only had majority but were also prepared to prove the majority on the floor of the House. Central Rule was lifted after 2 months when the Congress (I) led coalition ministry was formed on 14 January 1980.

The Congress led coalition ministry fell in February 1981 because of the defection by 11

members to the opposition resulting in the falling of the Ministry on 27 February 1981 and PR was imposed immediately. Here, when the Ministry resigned in anticipation of its defeat, the opposition was not given a chance. The state continued under PR until June 1981 when the Congress (I) formed a ministry under Shri Rishang Keishing.

- In 1993 December again PR was imposed when the Congress Ministry headed by Shri R K Dorendra Singh was dismissed on the ground that the ministry has not been able to solve the ongoing ethnic clashes between the Nagas and the Kukis. The Governor in his report also stated that Mr Rishang Keishing had links with the Naga militants. Mr V K Nayyar may have kept the August office with dignity by resigning from the post but the revival of the assembly and the hurried installation of Mr Rishang Keishing as CM brings to the point that the Congress Party, the Party in power at the Centre tried to bulldoze its way into power so as to preside the February elections at a time when the Congress lost its base in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

**(c) Article 360 Financial emergency:**

Under Clause (1) of this Article, if the President is satisfied that a situation has arisen whereby the financial stability or credit of India or of any part of the territory thereof is threatened, he may by a proclamation make a declaration to that effect.<sup>21</sup> When such a thing is in operation under clause (3), the union has got the executive authority to extend to the constituent state, any direction to observe such canons of financial propriety as may be specified in the directions and if the President may deem it necessary.

Declaration of emergency has a number of consequences because while emergency is proclaimed, the executive power of the Union extends to the giving of direction of any state. The parliament can make laws on any subject included in the state list. The President is empowered to modify by order the provisions of Articles 268-279 and the State can restrict the fundamental freedoms guaranteed by Article 19. Thus Emergency takes away not only the democratic rights but it also obliterates the federal character of the state. Madhu Dandavate feels that there has been complete destruction of the federal structure of our Constitution with the proclamation of emergencies.<sup>22</sup>

These provisions are a very serious matter as and this is one sphere where the federal System of Government can be converted into a unitary one. Its proclamation disturbs the normal fabric of the constitution and adversely affects the rights of the people.

Thus, from the main provisions of the Indian Constitution, it is evident that there is a tremendous concentration of powers at the Centre, especially during emergencies. Also clear is the fact that the Indian Constitution has both federal and unitary characteristics which is neither truly federal nor truly unitary. It is federal in normal times and unitary during abnormal times.

However, this quasi-federal character may in effect lead to erosion of state autonomy when PR was imposed. One trend which is experienced now in all true federations is the increase of the power at the centre at the expense of regional governments. During an emergency, the character of the Indian Constitution gets transformed and the federal traits are almost overshadowed. Such provisions provided a near unitary structure by suspension of the normal pattern of Centre-State relations in the event of an

emergency.<sup>23</sup>

### III. The Governor or the Centre's Representative:

The Governor is the Constitutional Head of a State Government in a formal sense and in a real sense, he is an 'agent' or representative of the Centre. According to Article 154 (1), the executive power of the state shall be vested in the Governor and shall be exercised by him either directly or through officers subordinate to him in accordance with the constitution.<sup>24</sup>

His role can be seen as follows:

- the *de jure* head of a state operating normally under the system of parliamentary democracy,
- vital link between the Union and the state Government,
- the agent of the Union in a few specific areas under normal times (Art. 239.2) and in a whole array of cases in abnormal situations (PR under Art. 356).<sup>25</sup>

The above three facets have their perversions based primarily on the priorities and interests of the Union Government and the ruling party at the Centre and

as such is classified as its discretionary power.

The Governor therefore has an important role to play especially in relation to the smooth-functioning of the Centre State relations. And since he provides the link between the Centre and the constituent units, it is his moral responsibility to see that his role is performed well. However, there has been unfortunate experiences in this regard and this high office has been misused a number of times causing friction resulting in severe strains in the Centre-State relation.

The August office has been subjected to such happenings because in most cases, the Governor could not shed off his political inclinations. A general impression has been created over the years that the centre irrespective of the parties in power had misused the office of the Governor in its attempt at exercising its control over the State Governments, more particularly in times and situations arising out of political differences between the Centre and the State. For instance, in states particularly ruled by non-Congress (I) Governments, they interfere in the administration and make the office a highly politicised one. They indulge in the State Politics, manipulate



things to the advantage of the Central Government, openly criticise the policies of the state Governments headed by non-Congress (I) parties and thus foment tensions in the Centre-State relation and at the same time impair the system of parliamentary democracy.

Conceived as a majestic constitutional link this office has now been attacked for being misused to further the interest of the political bosses in Delhi. The Governor is supposed to keep the unity and integrity of the nation intact. But as past experiences show, in most cases, it could not function without the strings attached.

✓ The Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State relations also pointed out that the Governors in general are unable to shed their political inclinations, predilections and prejudices while dealing with different political parties within the state. And the result is that whatever decision they take in their discretion appear partisan and intended to promote the interest of the ruling party in the Centre.

Much of the talked about gubernatorial aberrations of the Governor fall in the realm of such discretion viz appointment and dismissal of the CM, summoning,

proroguing and dissolving the Assemblies, recommending PR and giving or withholding assent to the bills.

During the 50's and the 60's, there was hardly any issue on the Governor misusing his powers. This is because till 1967, the Congress had monopoly in the centre and the states and the Governor was thus left with a limited role. In states where the Congress did not have majority, the Union government did not allow the non-Congress Ministry to continue. However in 1967, the Congress hegemony broke and from 1980 onwards most states were ruled by parties other than the Congress and thereby the Governors assumed great significance.

Manipur too was not missed out in this politicking of the Centre through the Governor. The State Governor has been used by the centre a couple of times to further the Centre's ideals and he thereby failed to ignore the partisan politics and run the state with some kind of neutrality and unbiasedness. More often, this high office has been misused to subserve the interests of the ruling party at the Centre in total disregard for the constituent units. Besides, their appointments are often made in a partisan way without any well defined norms and guidelines, without consultation with and the consent of the concerned

CM. 24

This particular aspect of the Governor functioning more as agents and even lackeys of the ruling party at the centre rather than as guardians of the federal democracy caused tensions. How he acts as a mere agent follows from the following:-

The Governor has the constitutional power to invite the leader of the largest single party or group. However where no single party or group commands absolute majority, the Governor has to exercise his discretion in the invitation of the party or front to form the government.

When it comes to the dissolution or suspension of the Legislative Assembly, the Governor's fundamental term of reference is the inability of the democratic government to function according to the provisions of the constitution. When an assembly is kept under animated suspension ability or otherwise possibility or otherwise of the local leaders is taken into consideration. In most cases, whenever the ruling party a that Centre felt that it would be in a position to form alternative ministry with some promise of stability the Assemblies were either suspended or dissolved. A similar case happened in Manipur in 1969,

when the Assembly was dissolved on grounds of frequent defections among the local Congress Party leaders and at the same time prevented the opposition from forming the ministry. This was made on the grounds made by the Chief Commissioner that there was too much of horse trading and that stability would not be ensured.

It was again a similar story when it came to the recommendation of PR. The Sarkaria Commission Report says, "In a number of situations of political instability in the states, the Government recommended PR under Article 356 without exhausting all possible steps to induct or maintain a stable government. The Government concerned neither gave a fair chance to the contending parties to form a Ministry, nor allowed a fresh appeal to the electorate after dissolving the Legislative Assembly." This was exactly what happened with Manipur in 1973, 1979 and 1981. In 1973 PR was imposed denying duly elected government the right to governance because they were alleged that they were not able to cope with the law and order, corruption and because budgets could not be passed. In 1979, the Centre imposed PR, because of breakdown of law and order as a result of too much of horse-trading among the local politicians. And in 1981, it was done so that the opposition parties were not allowed to form

government even when they had a right to do so or continue in office.<sup>27</sup>

Another sphere is when the Governor obstructs the administration by creating delays and withholding assent of bills. In most cases, the above manifestations is highly influenced by the prevailing opinion of the government and the ruling party in Delhi.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, the Centre's intolerance to the recalcitrant regional parties is also reflected in his actions. Besides the above, there is a strong contention that the Governor is partisan and highly influenced by the party in power in the Centre. This is true not only with the Congress Party but also of other National Parties. In the same wavelength, the party in Power in the centre tries to influence the same party in the state by way of having certain similar political objectives. In 1977, the centre tried to influence the state politics when Janata Party leader and PM, Shri Morarji Desai made the Congress MP Shri Yangmaisho Shaiza defect from the Congress and brought him into the fold of the Janata Party and also made him the C.M. Again during Shri V P Singh's tenure as PM, the Congress which was the largest majority party with 26 seats was not asked to form the ministry and instead gave power to the MPP led coalition. It would be worth

mentioning that the then Governor Shri Chintamani Panigrahi who is a Congressman asked the MPP led coalition front to form the ministry much against the constitutional rules. As is reported in most local dailies, "... Nobody desires to express their feeling that the governor acted according to the will of the central observers of the National Front Government ... that he was given virile pressure which became unbearable and later unavoidable resulting himself to be operated upon and mechanised to the different stream which is unconstitutional ...".<sup>29</sup> As a matter of strong convention and constitutional norms the governor should have formally invited the single largest political party to form the government. It is very unfortunate that the Congress with 26 newly elected members was denied the constitutional right by the governor. This charge is supported by the former CM late Shri RK Jaichandra who said that the governor was pressurised apparently by the Centre to invite the United Front to form government in Manipur. He said the presence of two Union Ministers at the selection of the United Front's Leader and subsequent installation of the UF government is indicative of the above charge.<sup>30</sup> In Manipur as such, the Governor exercising wide powers and acting without the consultation of the council of ministers came to light during his period.

He is alleged to have been involved in the politics and administration and also influenced the ministry and used his capacity much beyond his powers even when the ministry was a functioning body. This case strengthens the belief that in practice, he exercise much powers than he is provided.

But at times, if the Governor happens to be strong, there are often clashes like when the Governor Shri V.K. Nayyar was constrained to resign from the post reportedly due to serious difference of opinion between the Governors and the Union Govt. on certain technical difficulties created by the then speaker in the Manipur State Legislative Assembly. This happened when the Shri Rishang Keishing led Congress ministry was installed in December 1994. The Governor however had many critics in favour. Meanwhile the Centre accepted Mr V.K. Nayyar's resignation and his place was filled up by the Nagaland Governor Mr O.N. Srivastava who ungrudgingly, complied with the wishes of the centre.

There is thus a perversion in the working of Indian Federalism in this sphere. The Governor's active and assertive role in state politics has very often posed a serious threat to the smooth functioning of

democracy. They have eroded the confidence of the administration, tarnished their own image and became men of suspicion and distrust, dancing to the Centre's tunes to manipulate and manoeuvre things.

The Centre-state relation with reference to Manipur has never been free from controversy. This is because until 1972, Manipur was directly under the Centre and could not be considered as a functioning federal unit. Until this period, the administration was in the hands of the Chief Commissioner and then the Lt Governor. It was only in 1972 that the administration came under the charge of the Governor and thus it is from 1972 that the federal functioning could be said to have taken place. However, the past experiences show that the Governors had been active and in most cases acted on the whims and fancies of the Centre.

A close scrutiny of the exercise of the Governor's powers reveals that the discretionary power is inextricably wound up with the overall political thinking and attitude of the ruling party at the centre. A strong and healthy relation between the two units depends largely on the actions of the Governor. He should use his discretionary powers sparingly,



judiciously and impartially to lessen the tensions.

#### **IV Political Party System: Effects of Congress dominance and birth of regional parties**

The Indian Political Party system and the methods of its functioning is also vital for understanding the Centre-State relation. The Party System with the Congress Party ruling in both the Centre and the States for the initial two decades has undoubtedly led to the domination of the Centre and because of this an erosion of federalism has taken place. The Congress developed considerable skills in electoral politicking through its ability to aggregate the interest of diverse sections of the electorate and to accommodate new entrants.

The Congress dominance was an uninterrupted one till 1967 but this was continued after the 1972 elections when the 1972 General Elections restored Congress rule in both the Centre and the states. The party's dominance eroded State Autonomy, weakened the will of State Government for autonomy and was one crucial factor in the growth of the predominance of the Centre till 1967. The significance of it was negatively shown when the party was overthrown in 1967 and which

led to the formation of Non-Congress Governments in several states.<sup>31</sup> These Non-Congress Governments emphasised the need for maintaining intact the principle of state autonomy as guaranteed by the constitution. Such developments were necessary for maintaining a federal balance.

The strains and imbalances that had cropped up could be attributed to the Congress Party's dominant position in the polity, particularly the Gandhi family, whose political need it was presumed to be contrary to those of the Regional Parties and their aspirations, and also which discouraged such local initiatives and participation.<sup>32</sup> It was also presumed that once this monopoly is eroded, the political system would return to a balanced relationship. When such an environment prevails the regional parties would be able to demand an appropriate distribution of federal powers. However, the non-existence of federalising political party system and the existence of one single party system for a fairly long time have unified the system.<sup>33</sup>

Nevertheless, the country witnessed the rise and success of a number of regional parties viz the AIADMK, the Akali Dal, the Telegu Desam, the A.G.P. etc. etc.<sup>34</sup> Besides, there are others which are confined

to one particular state like the Peasant and Worker's Party in Maharashtra. In the North Eastern region, there has been a number of similar political formations, for instance the Naga National Council (NNC) in Nagaland, the Manipur People's Party (MPP) in Manipur which are content to play at best a marginal role in the state level politics.

Such proliferation of regional parties echoes the demand of traditional federalism, State's rights and call for reformulations of the Centre-State Relations. They measure up regional images, resort to measures which will help accomplish regional identities and in a measure weaken national institutions. During the 50's and 60's, many regional parties sprouted up but most of it had very brief life spans. The rise of these Regional Parties coincided with the growing dissatisfaction with the Congress Rule in many regions and which lowered the ability of the Congress party to absorb and assimilate various small groups. It may also be due to the uneven or lopsided pattern of economic development in India since Independence, in which some regions have experienced faster economic development.<sup>35</sup>

These parties are rooted in regional grievances and aspirations. In almost all cases, while cultural,

linguistic or ethnic differences are emphasised, real or perceived economic problems viz. unemployment underlies all such parties. They have been inspired not merely by primordial sentiments but also the existing economic conditions of the various regional and ethnic groups. They are a result of a complex interaction between regional consciousness and political and economic development in India.

Because of the inevitable situations that has occurred in terms of their growth, there has been a gradual uneven but nonetheless perceptible modification of the federal balance of power and a shift of authority from the centre to the periphery.<sup>36</sup> The Congress has had come to terms with regional sentiments and in this process there has been a change in the pattern of federal relations as well as loosening of India's tight federalism.

The Manipur People's Party (MPP) the strongest regional party is like any regional party, which is interested with certain group or group's welfare than with the general welfare, who's scope of operation is restricted to the articulation of a limited set of interest; who's area of influence is confined to a certain particular area and which depend on the

political support of people who live in a relatively compact geographical area. The Party came into being in 1969. The Party however was not very strong but still in the 1972 elections it had gained some popularity and managed to get votes and was placed just next to the Congress Party. It was very much regional party and it sort of represented only the valley areas and failed to reach the hill areas. Despite being popular in the valley, its inability to penetrate the hill areas kept the party out of power. In addition to the MPP, in April 1976, a new political party was formed. It was formed at a convention of hills and plains people and was named as the Manipur Hills Plains Union.<sup>37</sup> Besides, there also existed a number of regional parties viz. the Praja Santi Sabha and Krishak Sabha in the valley and Kuki National Assembly (KNA), Mizo Union, Naga National League and Naga People's League in the Hill areas.

In Manipur, the electoral politics are affected by the demographic pattern and the religious and primordial ties of a particular community. The issues before elections are sometimes national issues and at times local issues and these govern the exercise of franchise. However, an interesting phenomena that prevails is that national issues do not obscure local

ones and the elections witnessed struggles between the same elites; that is, the same prominent political personages.<sup>38</sup> In fact any analysis of elections in Manipur must acknowledge the important role played by political personalities who often seem to be of greater importance than their parties. Another characteristic and common component is defection though it is a feature common to all the States irrespective of party affiliations.<sup>39</sup> Politics in Manipur as such is defection ridden and so the strength of the contending parties often hinges upon the continuance within the organisation of some of its members.

Taking a cue from the election manifestoes of several parties during elections, one can conclude which party concentrates on national issues and which party on regional issues. In Manipur, Parties of national standing concentrated on national issues while the MPP fastened on some highly emotive local issues like the return of the Kabaw valley and Somra Tracts from Burma to Manipur. The party's campaign stressed on its being the real alternative to the Congress in the state. The party emphasised its own regional character claiming that it alone could bring happiness to the Manipuris. It demanded greater autonomy for the state so as to enable it to struggle for safeguarding the

national identity and culture of the Manipuris.<sup>o</sup> Demands included revocation of internal emergency and the abrogation of the 42nd Constitutional Amendment, decentralisation of powers at the Centre and increased state autonomy, inclusion of Manipuri in the VIIIth Schedule, revocation of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act etc.

The MFP strictly remained a regional party which did not have any comprehensive ideology but had certain specific interest which are sought to be promoted or certain grievances which are to be redressed. It was not a mass based party and even in the hills its influence was very limited.

In the beginning, it was the Congress dominance which damaged the centre-state relations but later when the Congress hegemony was broken, the regional parties which sprouted up were too parochial in its approach. Such regional parties were concerned about the region's needs and overlooked the national cause. On the one hand, the Congress Party continued to hold the reigns and on the other hand, regional parties came to power in various states. However, the Non-Congress Parties are handicapped vis a vis the Congress in respect of a wide cross-sectional mobilisation of the

electorate.<sup>40</sup> And the party except for certain fits could not stay in power for long. It is but natural that the disparity of resources, human abilities and resultant levels of economic and cultural attainments among the several geographical regions of the vast subcontinent will necessarily produce strains in the political system. The MPP like any regional party can be expected to accentuate cleavages with a view to mobilise a relatively restricted set of interest.

In Centre State relations, the issues at the root of any conflict is purely based on demands for a larger share in the economic assets. There is a lot of political bickerings in such fields viz. border disputes, sharing river water or policies to be adopted etc. and it is in such matters that political parties bring out the differences. Observing how the Congress dominance affected centre state relations and considering that the Congress Party performed its tasks fairly well, the Party however neglected certain issues which required urgent attention until they reached crises proportions whether it be a question of giving a fair deal economically and politically to sensitive border regions like the North East or meeting linguistic agitations or of solving border disputes among the states or of granting statehood to a



particular area or of allocating greater economic aid to certain regions or state.<sup>41</sup> The MFP or any other regional party for that matter have highlighted certain problems in the society and the polity by championing various issues from time to time and voicing the real grievances. The party though could not bring any consistent and logical approach towards the State's problems. In the absence of any substantive issue, the Party performs like any small party, confining itself to a particular sub-region because of its topographical and cultural legacies. Even though it has been trying to maintain its authority by trying to absorb dominant political groups, the party itself is not free from the process of fission and fusion.<sup>42</sup> Besides, the party's efforts begin and end with negotiations at higher levels. On the other hand, while playing the role of opposition, the regional party would often contribute to worsen the prevailing situation by spreading discontent against the Congress Party and at the same time backing out from their main objective. And at times, the local Congressman would also play similar roles and when there is leadership crises, undesirable elements like PR takes shape.

Regional Parties that are shooting up should not be taken otherwise but should be conceived as part of

the political development. They should not be done away with but coopted as partners or a combination of a few national parties. This could help regional problems and issues which need immediate attention and simultaneously not confine itself to local issues. It can help the national leaders work out a possible solution to the nation's problems. If there is cooperation in place of conflict between the party in power in the Centre and the regional party, there could be a tangible relationship between the centre and the states and such an environment is immensely needed for a successful working of the political system in general.

#### **V The working of the Planning Commission:**

The system of planning is another important factor for the Centre's growing paramountcy and the resultant strains. In the beginning the subject of Economic and Social Planning was included in the Concurrent List and this was to be a joint enterprise.

However, over the years, the role of the Centre in the formulation and execution of the Five Year Plans became paramount and that of the States subsidiary. Though the subject of planning figures in the Concurrent List, the Govt. in India set up the Planning

Commission (PC) and made it a body subservient to the Union Government. The Commission is entirely under the control of the Centre as its members comprised of the PM as Chairman and Union Minister for Planning as Vice Chairman. Its composition and working has become subject to criticisms.

The National Development Council (NDC) was constituted in August 1952 on the suggestion of the PC. It was to be the highest reviewing and advisory body in the field of planning. Its members comprised of the PM, CMs of states and members of the PC. It was not only expected to promote common economic policies in vital spheres and ensure balanced and rapid development of all parts of the country but also to review the working of the national plans from time to time and recommend measures for the achievement of the aims and targets set out in them. It was conceived as a federal body to give the states a greater sense of participation in formulation of national plans and in bringing about a national consensus regarding plan policies.

However, even though the NDC is consulted and its approval taken in shaping the plan and giving it a final form, many observers feel that the role has been a formal one. This is because in practice, before a

Five Year Plan is given its shape, each state is asked to prepare its own plan. But no state plan comes into operation unless approved by the Commission. Besides, there is a large amount of disparity between the plan outlays as proposed by the states and those approved by the commission. The commission also at times rejects schemes which the states proposed as important and on the other hand retains those which the states do not attach much importance.

Because of the above, the State's autonomy is eroded and the commission has thus defeated the primary purpose of federalism.

Moreover the 'centrally sponsored schemes' sponsored by the Centre but which are executed by the State governments are under the technical guidance and supervision of central ministries. This results in the Central ministries gaining a large amount of control over such subjects. The grants made by the centre planning under Article 288 is also discretionary as the PC takes up the charge of determining what grants should be made and under what conditions they are to be made thereby giving the centre the power and opportunity to have its sway.

The main points of dispute between the Centre and the States regarding planning are:

- overcentralisation and central domination in this field
- not only had the size of the plan outlay at the centre had been increasing more rapidly than that of all the states taken together, but the manner in which the states should undertake development efforts had also been attempted to be dictated by Central authorities,
- the states are starved of financial resources,
- even in state subjects, the Centre was in a position to impose its own policies and programmes and
- central projects not being evenly distributed.<sup>43</sup>

The above points out that the autonomy of the States visualised in the Constitution has been reduced by the operation of the Five Year Plans and the federal System has been functioning almost in a unitary manner. V Bhaskara Rao feels that, the autonomy of the States cannot be protected as long as the state look to the financial assistance of the Centre.<sup>44</sup> And if Indian Federalism is to survive the states should mobilise their own resources and plan with their own initiative.

All in all, the essence of federalism was not only subverted but genuine development could not take place. And this was the major cause for the continuing imbalance as well as the ever increasing strains.

#### **VI Lack of will and initiative:**

There is an obvious lack of will and initiative among the local political leaders and also from the middle class rung of the social strata.

It is common knowledge that politicians of all hues have cultivated insurgent groups to put pressure on their political adversaries. They tried to strengthen their bargaining position vis a vis the centre. Political assassinations on the eve of elections and poll related violence has become the order of the day. Political leaders have made Manipur a breeding ground of insurgency related violence and ethnic clashes. Besides, one common feature that exists in Manipur is the shifting of party loyalties. Such defections for want of power is so commonly practiced that for instance in the 1980 General Elections, the congress won only 13 seats but it formed the Government eventually increasing its strength to 44 in the 60 member house. In the 1984 elections, the strength of the Congress rose to 49 although it had only half the

seats. This could perhaps be the reason why neither the<sup>6</sup> Congress nor the MPP failed to complete a full term so far. The political leaders instead of trying to solve the immediate problems like economic underdevelopment or insurgency are on the other hand festering militant outfits to strengthen their position. And they in the process of amassing power are acting deaf and blind to the problems. What could be expected from them when the so called representatives turn their backs on when elected.

The administrators are no less better than the politicians. There is rampant corruption in the state. Corruptions, scandals, scams are common starting from the high command and down right to the lowest rung of any administrative structure. There is too much of red-tapism and things gets done at a snail's pace. Corruption, scandals, eating up the money allotted for certain developmental purpose are common. One can mention here the case of the Food and Civil Supplies Department when a situation of artificial famine was created ironically by those who are supposed to serve the people. The case in point involves some high officials of the said department who spirited away vast quantities of rice taken to Manipur from godowns in Guwahati in connivance with some transport operators.

Fortunately, this issue was soon brought to the notice of the concerned people and the person involved was suspended from his job for misusing the Government money. The PLA listed the names of the transport operators in the local papers who were allegedly involved in the task. Each offender was ordered to return a specified quantity of rice or cash in lieu of this by November 1992 or face consequences. The total quantity of rice that was thus sought to be recovered is 4,250 tones and the cash involved is Rs 3 crore. By November, 25,600 tones of rice (perhaps also an unspecified sum of money) had been returned.<sup>10</sup>

In another case, a developmental project for the hill people was planned to be carried out in the hills. This was to be conducted through the Tribal Development Society, a government undertaking, and proposed to plant groundnuts. Huge amounts of money was allotted for implementing this proposed project but even after a couple of years, not even a sapling of the proposed groundnut field could be seen. Here it needs to be questioned as to where had the huge sum of money allotted for the developmental purpose and serving the hill people gone. It is assumed that the money had gone straight into the pockets of the powers that be. The persons involved need to be punished for such



indisciplinary and corrupt actions. These are but a few instances. Corruption has become so rampant that it is accepted as part of the system.

When such political leaders and those in the higher authority cannot do their work judiciously, who will come up to fill the vacuum. Unless, they are committed towards their endeavour, this is going to stay for long. One cannot squarely put the blame on the Centre for the problematic situation that is existing now. To a certain extent, they might have helped the local politicians. As for instance, Mr George Fernandes said that the Congress (I) leaders of Manipur have been co-conspirators of the corruption and that they had all the time blackmailed by their central leaders.<sup>46</sup> But if the local leaders had the will to work sincerely and with commitments, they cannot be used as puppets for long.

If Manipur's cumbersome problem is to be solved, initially one should see that the money allocations made during the Plan periods have been used meticulously and not to fill the official's personal coffers. Besides, the state Governments serious weakness have resulted in the present crises of economy. The leaders are political lightweights and in

most of the situations, the agenda of economic developments gets overshadowed by the agenda of the political survival of the leader himself. The problem in Manipur therefore is the lack of a good leader and corruption. This problem is to be corrected very soon.

Another very interesting fact is that, all plan proposals gets done in papers only. There is no single organ to see whether the paper work has been implemented practically. Though auditing is done any problem that arises can be solved by bribery and malpractice.

To conclude, the strains in the centre's relation with Manipur lies in the inherent drawbacks associated with the theoretical formulation of the concept of federalism in a plural society by the central and the near failure and inapplication of plans and policies practically by the state.

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CHAPTER IV  
PLANNING PROCESS  
PROBLEMS AND REASONS FOR  
THE CONTINUING ECONOMIC  
BACKWARDNESS

Before we begin with the process of Planning and the problems that are faced entailing economic development of a small state like Manipur, it would be wise to note that India inherited all the contradictions of a backward colonial economy. Even after almost five decades of independence and years of planning, it is quite apparent that a few states have achieved a higher level of economic development than other states. C.P. Bhambhri attributes this to two factors:-

- that certain states have the politico-administrative capabilities of the political leadership of the State Governments.
- on the contrary in certain other states, faction ridden and incapable political forces and leaders failed to perform the tasks of economic reconstruction.<sup>1</sup>

Manipur and her economic backwardness fits well into the latter category. This major issues of economic

backwardness has spawned insurgency and militant sub-nationalism and should be seen not only in context of her geography but also in the context of her political economy.

The process of planning for Manipur requires a special approach and treatment because of her peculiar physical features. Manipur is an isolated hill grit and geographically distinct entity. The state is split up into the hills and the valley where the former covers 90% of the total land area. However, two thirds of the population is concentrated in the valley while the rest is scattered in the hills. The state's economy is again strongly marked by wide differences in development between the valley and the hills which may be primarily due to the valley being comprised of a large rice growing lowland in an extensive silted lakebed and also due to concentration of all administration works in the valley areas.

The state, rich in tradition and culture, has been declared recently by the Government as an Industrially backward state.<sup>2</sup> According to the indices of economic development prepared by the Centre for monitoring the Indian Economy in May 1982, Manipur stood last with only 20 points.<sup>3</sup> The State's economy is mainly



agrarian and 71% of the total working force belong to agriculture. Agriculture contributed 57% of the State Domestic Product in 1980-81 while Industry contributed only 4.13%.<sup>4</sup> Regarding agriculture there are frequent fluctuations in agricultural production and, as for industries, there is practically no major or medium industrial units except one medium sized spinning mill and a Khandsari Sugar Factory both of which are losing heavily.

Why is it so? How is it that there is an apparent contradiction of richness and poverty? The problem in all probability lies with the planning process and the problems of economic development that go along with a frontier state. One should always bear in mind the strategic importance of a frontier state while dealing with the pattern of development besides the other apparent factors viz history and geography of the region, problem of transport and absence of an entrepreneurial culture.

The Development Planning in India per se has hardly touched the North Eastern States including Manipur. They stand on a footing altogether different from the rest especially in respect of economic development and viability. This was one of the serious obstacles to the

creation of new States in the region. On the other hand, the political upsurge one is witnessing is the result of lopsided and hardly meaningful economic development in these states.<sup>5</sup> Lack of economic opportunities creates discontent and conflicts in the region too.

The state had a very slow pace of economic and social development during the first three decades and the early 80's. This may be due to the concentration of efforts on securing Statehood. The state also does not have her own revenue even to meet her normal administrative expenses. One is therefore clear that the state does not have her own revenue producing sources, that the pace of economic development has been slow and that the state had to depend largely upon the centre for financial assistance required for financing their developmental plans.

The reasons for the above situation lie largely in past history and there are in any case, broad national concerns which are more important than the financial viability of one underdeveloped remote territory.<sup>6</sup>

**The process of planned economic development** was adopted throughout the country with the objective

of raising the standard of living and opening up new opportunities for a richer and more varied life. In Manipur, it was intended to effect economic development both in the valley and in the hills. To solve the more obvious and inherent backwardness of the tribal population and to implement programmes for the welfare of the Schedule Tribes and Schedule Castes, a Directorate for the welfare of Tribal and Backward Classes was set up in 1976. A number of agencies also catered to the development of the tribal areas.

In Manipur too, the Five Year Planing was adopted for bringing faster rate of development. How far the Plans and Policies were implemented or was it made only in paper is yet to be ascertained.

**a. The first three five year plans and adhoc plans:**

Though the first plan (1951-56) started with the objective to rehabilitate the economy from the ravages of war, famine and partition; each succeeding plan took into consideration the special needs of the hour and problems of each particular region. Thus, while agricultural development was given top priority for other parts of India, for Manipur, the emphasis was on the development of roads.

A brief review of the first three five year plans, and the subsequent three Adhoc Annual Plans executed by 1969 shows that the plans were beneficial only to a certain extent.

The first plan laid all out emphasis on Transport and Communication getting 72% of the total provision of Rs 102.56 lakhs. Social Service was placed in the second position with 18.6%, followed by Agriculture and Allied Services (4%) and Industries a very negligible 1.68%. In the Second Plan, Social Service got maximum priority with 37%, Transport and Communication 35%, Agriculture and Industries 17.5% and 2.1% respectively. The third plan followed the earlier two plans and out of the total expenditure allotted, 39% went to Transport and Communication, 38% to Social service, 13% to Agriculture & 3% to Industries. This pattern continued in the three Adhoc Annual Plans where Transport and Communication got 44%, Social Service 21%, Agriculture 14% and Industries 3%.

It is thus very clear that the first three five year plans and three adhoc plans laid emphasis mainly on Transport and Communication and the Social Service Sector. The percentage of investment in the agricultural and industrial sphere were very

negligible.

**b. The Fourth and Fifth Five Year Plans:**

The fourth plan reaffirmed the objectives of self reliance enunciated in the earlier plans. The plan covered certain significant stages of the political history of Manipur. It was during this period that certain political developments like grant of Statehood to Manipur (January 1972), creation of the North East Council (1971), creation of the Autonomous District Councils for the hill Districts of Manipur (1973) took place.

1971 Act

While dealing with the patterns of plan allocation and socio-economic development of the state, the investment pattern should not be seen in isolation. The working of the NEC and the ADC in bringing about economic development should be incorporated. The NEC started as an advisory council and its task was to make recommendations regarding any matter of common interest to the seven states in the field of economic and social planning. It would also take up inter-state developmental works for the integrated development of the entire North Eastern region. The ADCs were started with the basic objective of entrusting the local developmental works to the elected representatives of

the people where they would have a sense of participation and say in the all-round development in the hills.

In the fourth plan period, the major thrust was once again in Transport and Communication while the Social Sector was placed in the second position. The percentage of money allotted for Agriculture and Industry continued to be as low at 10% and 4% respectively. One important point to be noted here is that the production and employment oriented sectors like irrigation, industry, cottage and small scale industries in Manipur which can provide employment opportunity to a sizable section of the workers continues to get a very negligible share while it deserves a higher plan outlay.<sup>7</sup>

Special schemes were formulated for the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population for raising their social, educational and economic standards.

The economy inspite of best efforts could not make much headway. Inadequate infrastructure in the field of communications, power, skills and entrepreneurship, inadequately equipped district offices, unstable agrarian and rural economy, low rate of per capita

income, unplanned growth and dependence on other states for articles of daily consumption etc. was the situation of the economy of the state at the end of the fourth plan period.

During the fifth plan period, the priority was given to social services, transport and communication. Agriculture and Industry continued to get low priority with just 14% and 9% respectively of the total outlay given for bringing about socio-economic development.

Despite the objectives for bringing about accelerated growth, stabilised agricultural economy, self reliance, development in the hill areas, increased employment opportunities and establishment of agro-based and forest based industries; there was very slow progress of development.

The rate of economic growth was slower in the hills and the hill leaders attribute this to the proportionately higher plan out lay to the valley areas and the developmental infrastructure in the hills remaining far behind. The planning authority found it imperative to effect and ensure faster development of more backward and neglected areas to minimise the development gap. To meet the circumstantial needs the

Planning Commission favoured diversion of funds by introducing Sub-Plan for Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe areas. A Tribal Development Department was adopted and developmental programmes at the block level were also taken up.

There were also the Centrally sponsored Schemes taken up in the Central Sector Programmes and financed out of funds available with various agencies in the Central Sector like the North East Council and Public Sector Undertakings.

The fifth plan took up various medium irrigation schemes for the benefit of the valley and hills. In the industrial sphere, there were two sectors

- (1) large and medium industries and
- (2) village and small scale industries.

One noticeable fact here is the slow but gradual increase in percentage of money allotted for industrial development in the succeeding plan period.

The absence of industry even in the small-scale sector in the state is according to N.Tombi<sup>e</sup> the eloquent commentary on the past attitude taken by the Centre towards Manipur in the sphere of economic



development. He forcefully says that the financial assistance extended to Manipur so far may be characterised as confining to the sphere of routine expenditure like pays and allowances and similar expenditures which cannot be considered long term investments for future economic developments.

**c. The Sixth Five Year Plan 1980-85:**

The Sixth Plan outlay of Rs 240 crores was considerably enormous and was formulated taking into account the achievements and shortcomings of the earlier plans. The state still had a large chunk of its population living below the poverty line, in economic development it was still lagging behind and there was imbalance in income and consumption levels as well as in development between the hills and the plains.

The agricultural sector saw an increase in the workforce but no proportionate increase of area under cultivation. The percentage of surface roads to total road length continued to remain very low even after maximum funds has been allotted to it. The irrigation projects hardly yielded any immediate benefits. Besides, the setting up of big tea/coffee plantations in the hills faced a big obstacle because of the prevalence of community ownership of land and the

consequent difficulty in acquiring it. The absence of large and medium industries led to the state depending on outside sources for everything. This almost complete dependence on outside supply disturbs the work schedule especially when the roads are blocked by landslides or man-made factors. This was the deplorable situation even after years of planning and the imbalances in the development caused serious socio-economic and socio-political problems.

Accordingly the Sixth Plan intended to accelerate the process of development, raise the per capita income, reduce gaps between the hills and the valley and also between the national average and that of Manipur. For a speedy development in the hills, emphasis was paid on horticulture, sericulture, control of jhuming and undertaking afforestation programmes. The role of the District Council was to be strengthened and 34.86% of the total plan outlay was allotted for the Tribal Sub-Plan.

The plan outlay of Rs 24000.00 lakhs was divided among different sectors parts of which was exclusively set aside for the Tribal Sub-Plan. The pattern of distribution was dissimilar in the hills and the

valleys.

In addition, the state got extra funds from the centre for centrally sponsored schemes like Command Area Development Authority (CADA) and from NEC for NEC sponsored schemes. There were other schemes in the hill area for the development of horticulture, conservation of soil from soil erosion, rural development for uplifting the tribal and various development schemes under the ADCs. The setting up of the Manipur Plantation Crops Corporation Ltd. (MPCC) in 1981 whose main function was to set up tea and coffee estates was an important episode as it was meant to raise the economic conditions of the people, contain unemployment and wear away shifting cultivators from their age old practice. In the industrial sphere, it was to be medium industries viz. agro-based or forest based, or mineral based.

**d. The Seventh Five Year Plan 1985-90:**

The Seventh Plan outlay of Rs 430 crores tried to enlarge the schemes, quicken the rate of development and lessen the gap between the hills and the plains. The priority wise distribution of the outlay were, social and community service 30.06%, Irrigation, Flood Control and Power 26.69%, transport and communication

16.8%, Agriculture and Allied Services 15.90% and Industry with a meagre 5.6%. The Industrial Sector was never given priority because only a few minerals are known to be found here and the scope for developing heavy and large industries is still limited. The successful completion of the Seven Five Year Plan and the near completion of the Eight Plan has changed the economic picture of the state only to a negligible extent. Various efforts has been made to improve the state's economy. One such effort was the passing of the North East Council Act, 1971 according to which cooperation among the seven political units was to be taken up for Regional Development. Apart from sponsoring regional development projects, the Council has played a useful role in presenting the major needs and problems of the region to the Central Ministries. L.P. Singh<sup>10</sup> while talking about the problem says that it is not the denial of statehood of small territories but such arrangements like development projects for regional development which is an appropriate answer to the limitations of small size.<sup>11</sup>

Some characteristic features of Manipur's economy despite years of planning are as follows:-

- it still remains predominantly agricultural,
- there has been relatively no industrial growth &

- in the tertiary sector, there is massive pressure of the unemployed as a result of the fast growing population.

### **Problems in Economic Development**

The problems involved in bringing about economic development of a frontier state like Manipur are many and varied. Some of the problems may be the position of the economy which she inherited, viz

- i the complacency of the people because of the self-sufficient economy which she had in the beginning of the present century because of comparatively favourable land-man-ratio;
- ii crude or primitive techniques of production;
- iii absence of the process of capital formation for the economy as a whole, the ignorance of the people and general lack of basic ideas of economic development and the will of progress,
- iv the non-market type economy.
- v the backward socio-economic system which she possessed when she joined the Indian Union and
- vi the people in general are by and largely deficient in both talent and spirit.<sup>12</sup>

Some other problems may be due to situational and geographical factors viz.

- inadequate transport and communication facilities,
- minerals yet to be explored and exploited,
- non-feasibility of having heavy industries because of the problem of importing raw materials and
- non-availability of markets for finished products,
- disproportionate profit-loss ratio involved while inducting heavy industrial growth,
- absence of markets/consumers for the products and
- the local products not possessing a good share in the market.

Other socio-political factors like instability, factor ridden and incapable political forces, and leaders of the State has impeded the growth of the economy. The absence of technical knowhow and trained manpower in the initial stages when the five year planning was introduced has resulted in the present economic malaise. The absence of an entrepreneurial class along with the massive dearth of power - all these form the basic problems Manipur is facing on its way to attaining economic development.

The socio-economic background she inherited, the fast growth of population in the past few decades, with resultant growth of massive unemployment, the contact with the external economic forces which created

tensions<sup>13</sup> and the scanty dose of investment, administered in the State's economy since the early fifties - all these lead substantially to the present socio-economic and political malaise.

#### **Reasons for the Economic Backwardness:**

A study of the planning process that was introduced and the problems involved in bringing about economic development points out the dismal economic scenario of the present day Manipur. The reasons for the continuing economic backwardness and the resultant conflictual situation in the state can be inferred from the above. In short, the chief reasons for the continuing economic backwardness may be due to the following:-

- i Unstable agrarian economy mainly depending on the arrival of monsoon, frequent floods and droughts and lack of proper irrigation facilities ,
- ii Comparative neglect of industrialisation in planning at the State and regional levels,
- ii The difficult hilly terrain and lack of infrastructural development in the field of transport and communication, power etc.
- iv Inability to utilise whatever infrastructure that has been built up for economic development,

- v Lack of exploration and exploitation of the natural resources.
- vi Rapid growth of population mainly because of influx from outside,
- vii Inadequate opportunities for employment and self-employment and
- viii Defective implementation of plan schemes and shortfalls in plan targets.<sup>14</sup>

Instead of going into the details whether the Planning that was introduced has been successful or not, urgent steps should be taken into those spheres which require immediate attention and which will bear fruits and at the same time those which do not require much technical knowledge and training. To overcome the ever increasing economic problem, various measures may be adopted. For instance, occupations which are the mainstay of the people need prior importance.

Efforts should be made for rapid and systematic industrialisation taking into consideration the type of raw materials available. Steps should be taken to remove the existing transport problems which in a way stands in the way of rapid economic development of the state. Attention should be paid to schemes of employment and self-employment in planning and at the



same time there should be more effective implementation of the plans. Besides, it is important to ensure that whatever limited infrastructure built so far is used systematically for planned economic development. Priorities in planning should be changed in favour of return oriented schemes instead of encouraging idleness through the supply of easy money. Moreover, black money and black marketing should be controlled and the anomalies in the existing distributive system should be removed. The forest which has helped tribals sustain life should be used in a more economic and productive manner by putting an end to Jhooming. The state's rich forest wealth and other mineral products should be explored and systematically exploited for its future programme of economic development in general and industrial development in particular. At the same time, the rapid growth of population must be checked by all means.

If the above said measures are adopted, the twin aspects of Manipur's economy that is unemployment and under-employment can be gradually done away with.

To blame the ill-implemented planning process for the present politico-economic problem would be pointless. Its best to see how the problems are to be

dealt with and to create a congenial atmosphere for a speedier economic development. It is quite true that Manipur's geo-political situation has not been conducive to rapid economic development, this does not mean that a state with lean resources and poor communication facilities should remain backward throughout. The plan assistance has been claimed by many as meagre and low and the planners should do away with the vicious cycle of low productivity - low investment - no increase in productivity. Instead they should increase the degree of investment even though it is not a fool proof measure of bringing economic development.

The state's political economy which is marked by political defections, presence of poor leaders or absence of a clean and dynamic socio-political leadership, the failure of the State Governments in implementing plans and projects and the existence of traditional economy are all responsible for the economic backwardness. Such problems need to be corrected immediately. Manipur badly needs a leadership which is clean, enlightened, resolute, altruistic and farsighted.

One cannot squarely blame the Centre for the situation and even if the Centre is engrossed with

other activities and is contented with keeping the region backward, it is upto the citizens of the state to take up the cudgels for economic progress and speed up development. Development is something which cannot be created or imported. It has to be involved and this can be done by actual and effective urge for greater competition and better performance from within.

The various political units should co-operate fully in all aspects possible for rapid development of the region. For a perceptible change what is required is:

- formulation and implementation of need-based development plans and programmes with the help of NGOs (non-governmental organisations),
- commitment of the Government to the cause of development and will of the people to sacrifice for future development,
- a new work culture,
- political stability,
- atmosphere of peace and stability,
- meticulous planning and of course adequate financial investment from the Centre for bringing rapid economic development of the state and healthy Centre-State financial and resultant creation of more revenue producing sources.

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CHAPTER V  
PROBLEMS OF REGIONALISM  
AND PLURALISM IN  
FEDERAL NATION BUILDING

The Indian federalising process has seen one striking development where group identities (rooted in languages, religions, caste and region) are apparently gaining strength as the basis of federal structure. The differences and diversities have been operating in different degrees accentuating regional loyalties and fostering subnationalism.<sup>1</sup> Over the years, regional consciousness and regional demands have been articulated by regional parties and movements and represented by a number of organisations - the most recent being the demand for a Kuki home land and the Nagas for a greater Nagaland - which resulted in inbetween fights and culminated into bloodshed and carnage.

Demand for Kuki land or greater Nagaland is regionalism too, as the concept itself involves the problems of minorities, administrative decentralisation,<sup>2</sup> local self government, autonomy, the cult of homeland and local patriotism.

In India's federal political structure, conflicts and tensions have become almost a natural phenomenon. It has become so rampant that there are tensions almost everywhere. These tense situations create conflicts.

The Kashmir problem still looms large, in Tamil Nadu, the Constitutional crisis raised by the Governor-Chief Minister relationship is a much talked about issue and last but not the least, the regional and secessionist threats from the North East - all these are clear symptoms of an impending danger. Somewhere there is some sort of a failure in the implementation of the constitutional provisions. The country's political gurus need to treat the symptoms carefully to avert a catastrophe of the Indian constitutional structure .

In the North East and particularly so in Manipur, the twin problem of economic underdevelopment and the problem of insurgency exist. The two are inter-related and exist like a vicious cycle.

The assertion of ethnic identity in the North-East is but a normal product of modernisation and development. This could be in the form for an urge for fulfillment of aspirations of the people in terms of

tribal development. Such assertions should be provided a room and not confronted. However, ethnic clashes in the name of asserting ethnic identity may have a negative effect. On the other hand, communal fights take place and this are at times allegedly incited by those who may have vested interest. This conflicting situation entails the various problems of tension and co-ordination in a plural society, regionalism and demand for smaller states in the process of federal nation building.

The situation in present day Manipur is appalling. There is the fear for the militant outfit and of the security personnel. Ironically, the state has consistently failed to protect the public and thereby the public has lost faith in the state. The legal and illegal custodians of justice commonly clubbed to mean the state and the Army and the militant outfits has kind of instilled fear and terror in the minds of a number of innocent lot.

Manipur's conflict ridden situation is a never ending one. Beginning from the late 40s when Manipur joined the Indian Union, the economic development of the state has been marred by the ever continuing conflicting situation. Manipur's political history recounts the



alleged forced merger of the state to the Indian Union, the statehood demand agitations, the demand for inclusion of the Manipuri language in the Eight Schedule and the ongoing underground movements asserting independence and demanding their right of self determination. In recent times, the insurgents and the secessionist demands have become very vocal and popular.

The no job no employment phenomena has crippled the socio economic and political life of the state. Not knowing whom to blame for the rising unemployment situation, most frustrated youths have taken to arms and the state has to bear the brunt of what it created by itself by way of dilly dally methods in implementing policies. Most of the educated youth seem to be attracted to join the insurgent groups who flourish like a "cottage Industry".<sup>3</sup>

In recent times, the state is shamed by two incidents one, the ongoing Kuki Naga clash and two the Meitei Pangal Clash. Though the former seems to be more of an assertion of the group's identity and demand for a larger homeland of each group, the latter which went on a communal line was related to the overall insurgency situation.

Manipur's present situation, largely due to a spurt in insurgent movement can be seen in the larger context of regionalism. Regionalism is positive so far if it is a quest for self fulfillment on the part of the people of an area. Its negative dimension emerges when it reflects a psyche of relative deprivation on the part of a people not always viable in terms of national economic development and not prone to nationalism.<sup>4</sup> In most cases it is widely believed that this relative deprivation has been inflicted by those in power and the local elites. Beginning with the assertion of the region's identity as a whole, at present each ethnic group is asserting its identity and in the process there are fights between various groups.

Regionalism in India's political culture may be attributed to various conspicuous factors. In Manipur's case it has more to do with centralisation of authority (frequent imposition of PR), the regional political party's propayanda, the lack of a political culture, the extremist revivalism (Meitei Revivalism) and of most significant reason the maldevelopment of the state. It can also emanate from the fringe people's feeling of exclusion from India's predominantly Hindu ethos.<sup>5</sup>

Iqbal Narain like many scholars attribute the rise of various militant groups and resultant violation agitations on grievances relating to the lack of economic opportunities, imbalance in economic development of different regions and inadequacy of employment opportunities. It has deep rooted historical politico-economic and social problems which need top priority on the government agenda.

An introduction to the ethnic problem in Manipur need to be seen in the larger context of the location of the state and the state's composition. Lying in the extremities of the North Eastern corners of India, Manipur has a distinct geographical division, comprising of the valley [where the Vaishnavite Meiteis who are a more homogenous group stay] and the adjoining hills [where as many as twenty nine (29) recognised tribes stay]. The majority of the population (67.5%) live in the valley while the remaining (32.5%) live in the hills. There is a remarkable combination of ethnic diversity in the state as far as its population is concerned.

In the North East, various insurgent groups, regional political parties, youth unions has of late been claiming their right to self determination in

various degrees and modalities. In Manipur, the present situation is the direct and indirect fallout of the general insurgency situation as well as the lack of political will of the leaders to solve this problem.

Relating this insurgency situation to the overall demand for right to self determination, Manipur had enunciated it by adopting armed struggles since 1948-49. In the valley dating back to 1948, Hijam Irobot Singh led a left wing movement to fight the ills of the semi-feudal and semi-colonial social order. Irobot's legacy sowed the seeds for insurgency movements. The valley-based Meitei organisations launched secessionist movements on the plea that the Kangleipak culture and languages were neglected by the state and central government. Such similar ethnic insurgency movements has been articulated by the Nagas, the Mizos and the Tripuris as well. In fact, the hills settled by the Nagas had been exposed to military operation right from the time of Phizo in 1956.

Secondly, the failure of the remedial measures in terms of peace talks, counter insurgency moves etc adopted by the state shows the lack of political will and coordination among the state leaders. The centre's disinterest and half-heartedness in solving the

sensitive problem is exemplified clearly by the continuing clashes.

Two instances of the most recent episodes, the continuing Kuki Naga clash and the Meitei Pangal clash has been cited here. This is done to show the general insurgency situation, regional feeling expressed by the Nagas and the Kukis, general dissatisfaction with the present federal arrangement and the role played by the state and the army to solve the situation.

#### **I The Kuki Naga Clash:**

To begin with, the Kuki-Naga clash is an ethnic clash when taken in view of assertion of ethnic identity, but the clash has a wider connotation and has to be taken in view of assertion of regional identity and in the larger context of Regionalism - the demand for Kuki Homeland and Greater Nagaland. The conflict can also be seen as a small spectrum of the negative dimension of regionalism.

In the ensuing clash, various aspects need to be incorporated. That is:-

- i they trace their origin to two different ethnic groups,
- ii the time period of migration differs and each

group claims to have originated where they have settled as of now,

- iii each group's demand for a larger homeland within or without the Indian Union led to its origin,
- iv the fights began with both group's desire to possess an economically rich region - Moreh,
- v the divide and rule policy of the government and the war of attrition over Moreh and
- vi the increased insurgency in the region due to the failure of the developmental model adopted in the region, political corruption and rise of militant outfits like NSCN and KNA. ←

Till very recently, the Kukis and the Nagas who comprise the tribal groups staying in the hills had a harmonious relationship and had co-existed with the dominant Meitei ethnic group. Though the Meiteis had always tried to show their superiority, since 1950 onwards these ethnic groups have been given their due share in the formation of the state government by reserving 19 seats in the present 60 member State Assembly. Though the ethnic divide had a comparatively old origin, sharp differences between the two groups surfaced only two - three years back. And suddenly all these years of cordiality and harmonious relationship turned into hostility and both groups became enemies

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cite

overnight.

There have been a sudden spurt of clashes between these communities. To understand the reasons behind the sudden escalation of violence, one should know their ethnic history, the origins of the problem and the role of the army and the Indian State.

### **(1) Ethnic Origin**

#### **a. Ethnic Origin of the Nagas:**

Though attempts has been made by the Anthropologists and Historians to trace the origin of the Nagas and how the term was derived, "the derivation of the word is still obscure".<sup>7</sup> According to Elwin, they are an Indo-Mongloid folk living in the North Eastern Hills of India, divided into over a dozen major tribes formerly notorious for head hunting.<sup>8</sup>

Various attempts tracing their origin were made. For instance, S.K. Chatterjee refers them to the Kiratas in Ramayana and Mahabharata, Ptolemy referred them as Nangalagao, British Explorer S.E. Peal propounded them to be coming from the word 'Nok' meaning man in some of the Tibeto-Burman languages, R R Shimray a Naga scholar said the term was derived from the Burmese word Naka' meaning pierced ears etc. etc.

G Kabui writes that though no final word has been said on the derivation of the term, it is certain that the name was given by the outsiders - the inhabitants of the Brahmaputra and Barak valley to mean the Naga and then popularized and enforced by the British Colonial authority.<sup>9</sup>

Whatever be their origin, the Naga tribes are found in the North Eastern states of India and Somra tracts of Upper Burma. They are divided into different tribal and linguistic groups though they themselves feel that they are a homogenous group. Despite differences, there is a strong fundamental unity, a feeling of ethnic and emotional solidarity and belonging.<sup>10</sup> However, the evolution of Naga Nationalism is not a fait accompli but an ongoing search for ethnic identity.

The Naga's proto-history is shrouded in mystery but the Manipur Nagas claim their origin from Makhel in Manipur's Senapati district and migrated to different directions.<sup>11</sup> They occupied different areas of Manipur Hills and their ethnic territory was well maintained till the migration of the Kuki-Chin tribes. Though their origin and migration have not so far been properly settled, it may be accepted that they occupied



the present habitats centuries before the Christian era and that they preceded the Kuki-Chins in the migration to Manipur.

**b. Ethnic origin of the Kukis:**

Kuki is an ethno cultural entity and their evolution is an outcome of the colonial imposition of a common identity and a search on the part of the Kuki-chin Mizo people for a common ethnic identity.

In the 19th Century in Manipur, there was a great Kuki exodus which created ethnic tension and administrative problems. They were settled in Manipur by Maharajah Nara Singh since 1849 with Political Agent William Mc Culloch's help. Since the Lushai Expedition of 1871, they came to be known as Lushais to mean the tribal groups of Lushai Hill Districts.

Even though there was common racial and linguistic affinity among the Chin, Lushai and Kukis; the Kukis of Cachar and Manipur and Lushais of Mizoram did not maintain any political alliance. In Manipur, the settled Kuki migrants were recruited to Manipur's armed forces and the Manipur Maharajahs had close relations with them.

The existence of various tribes other than the Nagas were indicated and conclusions were drawn that the dialects of some older group were similar to the new migrants of the 18 and 19 centuries.

The Kukis are distributed over an area of about 25,000 sq. miles of the transborder region of Burma, India and Bangladesh. In Manipur, the tribal groups which come under the Kuki-Chin group are the Thadous, Paite, Gangte, Simte, Vaiphei, Sahte, Zou, Hmar and Mizo.

There has been different waves of migration of this tribe over an extended period of time. The migration continued throughout the 19th century and early 20th century and their migration had made them develop migratory nature. However, this migration was an aspect of their struggle for survival from more powerful aggressive clans, their search for agricultural land and their need for shelter and peaceful settlement.<sup>12</sup>

## **(2) The Origin of the Problem :**

Over the years starting from mid 1992, Manipur have been on a boil and in a state of turbulence especially in the hills because of ethnic clashes

between the Nagas and the Kukis. There were attacks, counter attacks and retaliation from both sides and such actions have led to the loss of many innocent lives and the displacement of thousands of villagers from both the communities. Initially, the tension revolved around Chandel and Ukhrul districts but later it spread to almost all the hill districts.

The situation continues to be tense with clashes being reported from time to time. However, the undercurrents between the groups were not so provocative as to go to the extent of killing each other if left to themselves. The British colonialist and the Manipur Maharajah had used the Kukis against the Nagas who stoutly resisted against their territory being taken over by the two powers. In the post independence period, there are allegations that the Indian state has made use of the Kukis. Some go to the extent of pointing out that the turbulent situation was created by the state by way of using one ethnic group against the other.<sup>13</sup>

The Kuki-Naga clashes which has been going on for more than three years now had witnessed some of the violent phases. The first serious incident was the killing of Onkholet Haokip, a Kuki in mid 1992.

According to the NSCN (IM) supporters, he was an activist of the KNA who was killed in a shootout, while the Kuki militants maintain that he was only a School teacher.

The beginning of the violent confrontations was preceded by several aggressive and violent actions on both sides in the area of conflict, (Chandel District) where each side is trying to establish its dominance in the area.

The onslaught on Nagas by some Kukis sparked off in Moreh town and in neighbouring villages following the killing of a KNA leader in an encounter between the KNA and the NSCN on June 3, 1992 in Bongjang village (8 kms from Moreh). On 4 and 5 June the Kukis took out a procession in Moreh town protesting the killing brandishing arms despite the presence of security forces and publicly demanded that all Nagas should leave Moreh within 24 hours or face dire consequences.

A sore point for the Kukis has been the regular collection of taxes by the NSCN. After the NSCN split, the Kukis saw some possibility of escaping from such exactions. Meanwhile, a new Kuki militant organisation was formed and this emboldened the Kuki villagers, some

of which not merely refused to pay taxes but instead served notices to some Naga villagers demanding return of taxes evicted from them over the years by the Naga militants. Even before the killing of Onkholet, there had been incidents of harassment of the Nagas by the Kukis. But the Kukis view these to be nothing compared to the systematic expulsion of the Kukis long settled in Ukhrul District.

Subsequent to the June 4 and June 5 episode, many Nagas in and around the town were abducted and severely beaten. The KNA, CKRF and KLF<sup>14</sup> went on a rampage extorting money, abducting, torturing and assaulting leaving some seven Naga villages uprooted and many more affected. The state C.M. who visited the affected area two months after the incident appealed to the Nagas to return and also announced an exgratia payment for a KNA member who was killed in the shootout.<sup>15</sup>

There was also the Ukhrul Problem. The problem here is that some Kuki Baitei tribesmen had come and settled in two Tangkhul Naga villages some fifty (50) years back and lived peacefully for years. Trouble began when four Kuki villagers were killed by suspected NSCN men. Following this, the KNA took revenge but the Kukis moved out. The root of the problem lies when

during the Lok Sabha elections, false promises were reportedly made to innocent Kuki voters by Major S. Pagin and Finance Minister Mr. C. Doungel along with their non-Kuki colleagues that Kukis would be given a homeland by wresting out regional Naga area currently settled by the Kukis.<sup>16</sup> The Nagas feel that the Kukis have been allowed to settle in the Naga territories on the understanding that when they leave, the land should be returned to the Nagas. But it has turned out otherwise.

The outbreak of violence seems to have its roots in the demand for a Kuki homeland. This itself is an expansion for the creation of the Sadar Hills subdivision from the three districts of Manipur (Ukhrul, Chandel and Senapati) which traditionally had been the homeland of the Nagas. Besides, they are also demanding their homeland which will comprise of the areas inhabited by Kukis in Nagaland, Assam and some portions of Myanmar.

Going by the history of migration, the Kukis came latter than the Nagas in Manipur. First heard of between 1830 and 1840, they came from the hills surrounding south of Manipur in Burma. They were requisitioned, armed, supplied with rations and let

loose in the Naga Hills by the Britishers to bring the Nagas under their control. And in time, the Kukis who settled in the Naga territories were accepted as neighbours.

In this ongoing clash, there is some kind of a continuation of the policy adopted by the Governments in Manipur and other North East states in pre-colonial and colonial times. When the Britishers left India in 1947, the Naga occupied territories were divided, out of which one-third went to Myanmar and the two third remained with India. In post independent India, the state's response to the Naga National Movement has been to further bifurcate the Naga territories into several units. The creation of Nagaland in 1963 could not help much as many more Naga tribes still remained with the neighbouring states. Within Manipur itself, the Naga areas are further subdivided and new district boundaries drawn. The recent proposal for the creation of Sadar Hills as part of a new district will, according to many divide them further.

The Nagas feel that the Centre has alienated them further by manipulating a section of militant Kukis to act as vigilant groups against them. They feel it because there are reports that Kuki Commandos and KNA

are being armed and trained by the State Security Forces. There were instances which made the Nagas feel that the Assam Rifles really did things against them in connivance with the Kuki militants. The state's inability to protect the Nagas even after forwarding several petitions and Memorandum speak volumes. Some observers feel that the continuing Kuki-Naga clashes which is perpetuating a lot of violence is the result of the state's "Divide and Rule" Policy. However to see these tactics as merely part of the divide and rule policy of the state is simply to miss the inherent antagonisms and contradictions between the two groups.

There is little doubt that the Kuki militants now engaged in bloody clashes with the NSCN have received some discrete official assistance. The persons actually involved are themselves much less discrete in disclosing the details. The KNO president Mr Henglon claimed that he met the Army Chief Gen S F Rodrigues in Delhi on December 24, 1992<sup>17</sup> and has also been in touch with various authorities and agencies in Manipur and Nagaland. Besides, even in the state's electoral politics, the say of the Kukis increased when the erstwhile Shri R.K. Ranbir led U.D.F. Ministry had seven Kuki ministers against two from the Naga community. It was also during this time that the Kukis





hundred crores of rupees. The town has a mixed population of Kukis, Mizos, Marwaris, Punjabis, Biharis, Tamilians and others. It was home to some Naga families as well, until they were driven out during the current conflict.

Though both sides trace the beginning of the antagonism to colonial and even pre-colonial times and its immediate origins to the wrongs perpetrated on each other in recent times in Ukhrul district, the actual clashes initially remained confined to the South eastern part of Chandel district, the epicenter being Moreh on the international border of Myanmar. It is the fight for the control of the border town Moreh. Initially the trade was under the control of the uniform force but gradually the influence of the NSCN was on the rise.

The trouble originated at Moreh town famous for its smuggling activities. Though the racket is reportedly controlled by about half a dozen people belonging to different communities, the Kukis were the major beneficiaries. For many years, they had lived in harmony with the Naga underground who are active in the surrounding hills, paying light taxes more in the nature of contributions. Things changed when about

five years ago the NSCN (IM) hiked these taxes. The nature of the demand also changed and it became somewhat like 'Pay Nagaland tax' or leave. The Kukis found this difficult to accept. Another reason for their reluctance was the implications of the new command that the area belong to the Nagas as it is part of Southern Nagaland which is independent Greater Nagaland comprising parts of Manipur, North-West Myanmar as demanded by the NSCN.<sup>21</sup>

The Kukis took note of the NSCN development and made counter movements. Following the killing of Onkholet Haokip, the KNA turned their wrath on the Tangkhuls settled in Moreh and let loose a reign of terror forcing all to flee. The NSCN returned equally harshly and indiscriminately and pointed out that the Naga Underground would not allow the Kukis to operate freely anymore in what are considered the Naga areas. The KNA who till then have been talking of Kukiland in Burma came out to what has been termed as the defence of their kits and kins in Manipur. The NSCN effectively sealed Moreh keeping NH No 39 under their control and the KNA in return sealed Ukhrul for a while.

While the Nagas were driven away from Moreh and surrounding areas, the Naga militants actively

supported by Naga villagers continued to control traffic on the NH No 39 which links Imphal and Moreh severely affecting regular traffic. The NSCN (I-M) allegedly set March 27, 1993 as the deadline for all Non-Kukis to quit Moreh. But the Kuki leaders in Moreh appeared least bothered by it. The Naga militants seem to have an upper hand and the Kuki militants were no match to the Naga militants. The most important advantage enjoyed by the Kuki militants is the support they apparently enjoy from official circles. But in this battle of attrition, the mere weakening of the NSCN (I-M) will not necessarily mean restoration of peace as the stated objective of the Kuki militants is the formation of a Kukiland.

The Kuki's demand for Kukiland is not a recent phenomenon. There has already been two trends of political alliance working among the Kukis. The Thadous, a dominant Kuki group have been demanding the creation of an autonomous Kuki Hill district in Manipur on the basis of the Sixth Schedule. At the same time a few others under Paite National Council have been agitating for an independent Chinland by carving out the Kuki-Chin speaking areas of India, Bangladesh and Burma. Of late such demands got entangled with various other activities like trade and insurgency.

The KNF on 12 January 1993 called for a boycott of the Indian Republic Day Celebration in Manipur. This was in view of the fact that despite various memoranda submitted by the KNF to the Centre and the state govt. for the creation of Kukiland, the Govt. has turned a deaf ear to their demands.<sup>22</sup> Another bandh from 20 to 25 April 1993 was called by the KNF to hasten up their demand for separate Kukiland comprising of the Kuki inhabited three districts of Manipur.<sup>23</sup>

The KNA's demand for a separate Kukiland within India and the upgradation of the Kuki dominated Sadar Hills subdivision to a full fledged district and their advice to the people of Moreh not to pay taxes to the NSCN led to violent conflicts between the two groups. The feud between the two underground groups has given a dangerous twist to the whole scenario.

In view of the bandh called by the KNF from 20 to 25 April 1993, the Naga Students Federation (NSF) Kohima, on 15 April 1993 seriously viewed the prevailing social tension in Manipur. It expressed grave concern over the proposed bandh and the untold hardships it may cause to the public. It objected to the creation of any district or state or homeland and said that they will remain firm on the stand that not

an inch of the Naga traditional land should be carved out while creating any district or state etc. The NSCN also challenged the right of the Kukis demanding a separate state within Manipur where they do not own a piece of land. The NSCN's stand that it can never allow creation of Kukiland within Naga territory and that there will be no bandh in all Naga territory is clear. It also made it clear that whoever honoured the so-called bandh will face consequences.<sup>24</sup>

Parallel to the Kuki's demand is the **Naga's demand for Southern Nagaland** which is also equally at the root of the clashes. The Nagas wanted extension of Nagaland within Manipur and thus Nagaland taxes were imposed and demands made in Manipur. The Kuki's refusal to pay the so-called Nagaland tax made them fall prey to the NSCN (I-M)'s genocidal methods. Such imposition and levying of the tax was the screening phase of the implementation of Southern Nagaland. In this proposed Southern Nagaland, the three districts Senapati, Tamenglong, Chandel and parts of Churachandpur district are included and the rest would remain with Manipur.

The **increase in insurgency activities** in recent years in the North Eastern Region is also one major cause. Both the warring groups has been backed by

their respective militant outfits. The hostility came to a flashpoint in 1987 when an underground organisation KNO which demanded an autonomous state in the Chin Hills was formed. The KNO Chief insisted that they are not asking for an inch of Indian Territory. However, another organisation KNF demanded a separate Kukiland which comprised of portions of Manipur and Burma.<sup>29</sup> Yet another organisation, the KNA with a large strength and trained by Burma's tribal insurgents made its existence. It is reported that this organisation is armed with sophisticated Chinese weapons. The Nagas view such large arming to be the result of some kind of generosity shown by the bureaucracy where the Kukis outnumber the Nagas in a bid to annihilate them. The KNA counters such charges saying that the NSCN (I-M) have received support from the Burmese junta which want to uproot the Kukis. Simultaneously, there is an increasing prominence of this organisation. The NSCN (I-M) which was decimated and was on the run in 1988 has emerged as the most powerful insurgent outfit in the region. They are armed with sophisticated weapons, have a friendly environment to operate and when compared to the Kuki militants are bound to secure an upper hand. They have been getting arms through the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh through Assam's Cachar area and the Security Forces

have so far been unable to choke off such arms deliveries. Besides, it is said to have received a huge consignment of arms from Pakistan's ISI and its subsidiary the Joint Intelligence Miscellaneous through Bangladesh Territory.<sup>26</sup>

The NSCN (I-M)'s rise can also be seen from the successful ambushes made on the security forces. One such attack by the NSCN was on August 13, 1993 when 6 Armymen were killed in Ukhrul district. The most serious was the June 29, 1993 incident in Chandel District when as many as 26 soldiers of the 15 Assam Regiment, four civilians accompanying them and two NSCN members were killed. The fact that the Naga rights represented by NSCN has been recognised by the UNPO on 31 January, 1993 also enhanced the NSCN's strength. There were every sign of the NSCN having a free run in the highlands.<sup>27</sup>

Besides, both groups are alleged to have enjoyed powerful political support. There has been a number of evidences to prove that the Kukis did receive financial support from the state. As two Kuki underground outfits claim that they have received a substantial financial donation, it is difficult to accept the state leader's view that all these were mere concoctions made to



defame him. They probably seem to have received a total sum of Rs 3 lakh from the state C.M. Mr. R K Dorendra Singh and State Finance Minister Mr.C.Doungel. Mr. Dorendra denied the claims and said that there was no trace of truth in it pointing out that it would be the handiwork of his political opponents. However, even though those involved in it may have denied such allegations it is difficult to accept that no such thing occurred as the militants are more vociferous about having received it.

If the Kukis have received support from the state, the present State C.M. Mr.Rishang Keishing too have alleged links with the NSCN (I-M) group. The fact that he was dismissed from the post of CM ship during Raiiv Gandhi's time for his alleged links with the underground (though he denies it vehemently) proves beyond doubt that he too had links with such outfits. This was again noted in a report placed before the President by the recently resigned governor of Manipur Lt.Gen.(retd.) V.K. Nayyar.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps the Nagas are far more clever and discrete with their actions.

Another aspect is the allegation of a section of Kuki militants having relations with the Indian Security Forces. However, a section of the Kuki

militants denied such allegations. In a Press Release, issued by the C in C of the K.N.A., the K.N.A. denied having any relationship with the Indian Army and rules out any Joint operation.

What made the Nagas suspicious about the Kuki militants receiving help from the Security forces was the various allegations made about the Kuki Militants. Reports suggests K.N.A. seeking financial assistance arms and military support from the Indian government through the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and also the Indian Army to enable them to fight with the NSCN (I-M). Sources point out that Mr Sohlun, KNO chief was supposed to have gone to Delhi in July 93 to meet RAW officials and other top military intelligence officials. The source however admitted the KNO not having received any financial or weapons assistance. The discussion might have provided a clear picture of the situation particularly the NSCN's activities vis a vis other insurgent outfits. And perhaps the Kuki leader felt that Indian govt. agencies were sympathetic towards groups aligned against the NSCN (I-M) and would consider help to contain the secessionist threat from the Muivah group.

### (3) Role of the Army and the Indian State

True there has been a lack of political will on the part of the state leaders. The reports of the state leaders allegedly siding with their respective tribal groups and providing them with financial backing is too convincing to be doubted. Moreover, there are deep-seated rivalries between top political leaders of the state. The self-serving approach of the ruling party politicians has confounded defections of the ongoing crises. Some facets of the state Politics viz blatant use of money power in swinging elections, the rule by corruption, the economic stagnation etc. has aggravated the situation.

What the state did to quell the clash was the enforcing of more and more Security Forces. Though the state leaders knew that they have failed in restoring law and order; they felt that the only alternative to restore it was by asking for more forces to tackle the situation. They, in fact seem to have patronized a number of insurgent groups in their effort to outdo each other and also to increase their bargaining position. There is also breakdown of communication and confidence between the C.M. and the state Army Chief.

The visit of the Union Home Minister to review the

law and order situation and also of the Home Minister, of State for Internal Security Mr Raiesh Pilot as many as four visits in six months in 1993 encouraging though, failed to heal the deeply cut wounds. Their visits hardly benefitted the masses and despite the formation of a Committee for "restoration of normalcy" in 1993 the clash continued unabatedly. The efficacy of the committee had been nullified by the basic contradictions and the rivalries between top political leaders of the state.

There has been no sign of any improvement and Mr. Pilot pointed out that the state leadership needed some kind of political will. The leaders Mr Dorendra and Mr Keishing both admitted to their failures but Mr Dorendra (who was the state C.M) was more worried about losing the chair. To save it, he called for more forces. He also sought financial assistance from the centre to rehabilitate the displaced tribals.

Mr Keishing on his part admitted to their failure and pointed out their incapability. He wanted the centre to step in and take some drastic initiative to save the grim situation and not to remain a silent spectator. Holding the extremists elements to be behind the criminal activities, he viewed that firm steps should be taken against such elements and to isolate such

elements from the masses. He pointed out the necessity of forces to protect the villagers though he did not consider it to be the final solution. The ethnic fights and the deep seated rivalries between leaders shows that all is not too well and the situation has reached a point of no return.

A major share of the blame lies with the Centre. Apart from sending more battalions and occasional visits of Union Ministers, the Centre has done little to tackle the situation. The Centre have been pointing out that the state leadership needed some kind of a political will. Such judgements of the centre about the state leaders has become more of a ritual because if the centre really feels it this way in curing the ills; the centre has given no sign of trying to instill it too. The Union Government has virtually confined itself to the role of a passive bystander to the gory drama. In fact, there is a strong feeling in Naga circles that the Kukis are being backed by the centre to counter the Naga insurgents.

As for the Army, the Army have been complaining about their losing credibility to the foolhardiness of egocentric political leaders. A number of army forces have been called in. There is the presence of one full

mountain division in the hills to swoop down the Manipur valley. It is fully armed with massive lethal fire power and also Armed Forces Special Powers Act. Despite the presence of a strong army, the continuance of the clashes reminds one of the Army's unsuccessful venture in counter insurgency operations. And despite their losing credibility, more and more forces have been called in the state to boost the strength of the Army and the paramilitary forces, badly required in view of the grossly understaffed, under equipped and completely demoralised Manipur Police.

The Indian Government has misguided the Indian Armed Forces in the Counter Insurgency Operations by blaming the youths for revolting against the legally established governments and for fanning secessionist movements. The Armed Forces are not allowed to think but to obey the politicians without any sense of patriotism and imagination. The Indian Govt. have failed miserably in identifying their sworn enemy so far and it cannot unmask the so-called politicians who breed corruption for their personal gains at the cost of the country and the people. The grand strategy of the Indian Counter Insurgency is conceptually self-defeating as they fight without realising their true enemy. Besides, whenever anti-insurgency

operations are launched, the Security forces end up further alienating an already alienated people. And Manipur Govt. sources admit that despite heavy deployment of forces, none of the top militant leaders had been apprehended or eliminated.

The Security Forces inability to check the growing menace can be attributed to the half-hearted cooperation among various central forces deployed in the area, non-sharing of vital information on the movement of insurgents, non-cooperation from politicians as well as the general public and vested groups out to discredit the government/governors administration.

#### **(4) Impact:**

True, the ethnic animosity stemmed from xenophobic insecurity where the local Nagas resented the encroachment on their land by the Kukis whom they view as foreigners. And on the other hand the Kukis feeling of insecurity has been heightened by the NSCN (I-M)'s call for a greater Nagaland which propose to include areas inhabited by them. The clash has tremendous consequences, the worst being the genocidal attitude of both ethnic groups sides. Another major fallout has been the crippling of normal traffic on the Moreh N.H.

No. 39. There has been attacks on buses and transport vehicles which affected trade activity besides creating panic among the residents of the area. The Border Trade was affected following the Trade Ban that was imposed in March 1993 on Moreh and the adjoining township of Tamu by the outlawed NSCN (I-M). Besides, militancy increased and both the Naga and Kuki militant outfits has been having a sway in the highlands of Manipur. Moreover, the outbreak of the clash gave a new dimension to Kuki militancy and it spread to Karbi Anglong and North Cachar districts of Assam. All in all there have been a major breakdown of law and order in the state.

## **II The Meitei Pangal Clash:**

Manipur continues to be on the boil with the Naga Kuki ethnic clash taking a heavy toll of human lives. A number of insurgent outfits have resurfaced in a big way also. On 3 May 1993, the state witnessed the first ever communal clashes and with this, the state's unblemished record of communal amity has been shattered. The orgy of violence which followed claimed a number of lives.

The state witnessed the first ever communal clash when on third May 1993 clashes between the Meiteis and



the minority Manipuri Muslim community disrupted several years of communal harmony and went to the extent of killing each other. The clash lasted for three days. The incident which occupied front page headlines was a communal violence with a difference. Though it was termed communal, generally speaking it was more related to the general insurgency situation in the state. However, such an incident need to be checked or it might in all probability sow the seeds of discontent among the two communities and lead to frequent communal fights.

The valley has been in the grip of low level insurgency and when this flare up took place, it seemed as if it had become a communal hotbed. This insurgency situation in general and the communal flareup in particular seems to be a blend of planned communal activity of certain organisation and depredation of lumpen elements masquerading as national insurgents.<sup>30</sup>

A general picture of the demographic file of the valley gives six major ethnic groups. All these ethnic groups excepting the dominant Meitei group have a marginal population. In terms of the population, the Muslims constitute 9% of the total population. They

were not the original settlers of the land and the first Muslim to have arrived in the state can be traced to the 17th Century. They are the immigrant population from Tripura, Assam (Cachar) and Sylhet of Bangladesh.<sup>31</sup> Subsequently, they were brought to the State as war prisoners during the reign of Maharajah Khagemba (1579-1651). According to R M Nath, the king's (Khagemba) brother Shalungba who was aggrieved at his brother's treatment fled to Sylhet and with the help of a contingent of Muhammedan soldiers raised there invaded Manipur. His attempt was however foiled and the Muhammedan soldiers were captured. They were then taken to Manipur and made to work as labourers and artisans. They gradually took local wives and gave rise to a new ethnic group of Manipuri Muhammedans with Islam as their religion and Meitei as their mother tongue.<sup>32</sup> Though they were generally ill treated and made to do menial jobs, they were gradually assimilated into the Meitei society. They acquired lands, abandoned menial jobs and took to farming. The muslim population sharply increased as a result of fresh waves of migration and were settled mostly in the Imphal valley. This increase in population and the subsequent pressure on land and economic opportunities sowed the seeds of distrust. Besides while the old settlers were largely assimilated into the Meitei society, the recent ones are not. They

are generally daily wage earners. Many of these new settlers are involved in illegal activities like gun running across the border and are said to enjoy the patronage of Bangladesh. At the same time, the increasing pauperisation on the Meiteis due to lack of economic activities gave birth of a disgruntled class of young people who feel that the limited resources are spread too thin because of the immigrants in urban and semi urban areas and that this has contributed to the simmering hostility.

However the difference between the two communities were still minor till the recent past. This is borne out by the fact that Manipur had a Muslim Chief Minister inspite of their minisculed population. Today, the rift has widened to such an extent that many people in the state are not surprised by the suddenness or the scale of the violence.

#### **(1) Cause and Origin**

The exact cause for the outbreak is difficult to be determined. Yet, there are a couple of hypothesis for the initial sparks and the trouble. One reason is the altercation between some valley based Meitei insurgents and a Muslim gunrunner. The other could be the dispute over a plot of land.

The clashes broke out following the incident of the altercation. On 2 May 1993, the gunrunner was approached by some youths reportedly belonging to the local Heirangoithong Maibam Leikai organisation headed by one Mr Aheibam Prakask asking for the delivery of arms for which the gunrunner have accepted payment earlier.<sup>33</sup> The gunrunner reportedly did not supply the weapons which was promised and refused to return the advance of the money he had taken. There were heated exchange and soon local people of Lilong started beating up the youths. This incident set off the killings that followed over two days.

According to sources, supporters of the group which belong to the self styled Revolutionary Joint Command Group gathered in large numbers as news of the assault on their colleague spread. They marched to Lilong and set most of the houses on fire. The arson spread by noon on 3 May to other villages. Altogether over 150 houses were burnt and in the first phase of the attack some 15 people were killed in Lilong. Later, other areas like Kakwa, Canchipur, Okram Chuthak and others were hit by violent mobs. Imphal and TakonPat too were affected.

## **(2) Incidences of the Clash**

The incident started on 2 May 1993. The National Highway No 39 was badly affected in the unprecedented outbreak of violence and Lilong in Thoubal District was the worst hit area. The violence spread to Imphal district by 3rd May. The miscreants burnt several vehicles plying on National Highway No 39. This included the setting on fire of a bus carrying passengers at Okram Chuthek. In another incident a violent mob attacked the hostel of Manipur University at Canchipur near Lilong, dragged out several inmates, beat them up severely and burnt their belongings. The death toll reached an unprecedented record of 30 in a day (unofficial sources put it some were between 60 & 70). The clash spread and on the second day, fresh incidents of violence were reported in other areas. While Imphal and Lilong remained relatively peaceful, reports of violence in remote areas were reported on the third day. Bishenpur District also reported incidents of violence. According to official reports about 70 houses in 3 villages were set ablaze by unknown persons rendering several hundred people homeless.

The above incidents were unprecedented for the small state of Manipur. Most surprising is that the clashes occurred only in the valley areas and particularly those pockets where Muslims stay.

### (3) Views of people

Different people have different views to say regarding the outbreak of the communal orgy but they at some point or the other point to the general insurgency situation and the lumpen elements among youths who ignited the flame to such a massive scale .

The immediate cause may be attributed to the killing of a Meitei insurgent at Lilong, a predominantly Muslim town. But many feel that the root of the problem lies in the age old visceral distrust between the Meiteis and the Muslims.<sup>34</sup>

Mr H V Goswami , then State Chief Secretary viewed that the insurgents could not be held responsible for the bloodshed. He felt it was the "pseudo Insurgents" who were actually at the root of the violence. He did not want to brand it communal because despite the post Ayodhya riots, Manipur remained quiet. He opined that a few days before the arson, Mr N Bisheswar Singh was booked under National Security Act (NSA) and it was his associates who started the trouble in retaliation of their leader's arrest.<sup>35</sup> Even Mr Rishang Keishing , then Deputy CM, saw the hands of extremist outfits. He agreed that certain degree of animosity did exist between the two

communities but pointed out that the scale and intensity of the violence indicated a well calculated plan hatched by extremist to plunge the state into anarchy.<sup>36</sup> Mr Abdul Halim Choudhury, a retired Government servant and a member of the Minority community himself said that lumpen elements among youths were largely responsible. He pointed out till so far there has been harmony and that nobody seemed to have doubted the Meitei identity of the Muslims in Manipur. He endorsed the fact that they have been living together for generations and maintained that the real insurgent had never adopted any anti Muslim stance and rather charged the administration with apathy following the outbreak of clashes.<sup>37</sup>

However some ethnic Meitei have different reasons to cite. For instance, Mr Khogen Singh, opined that the root of the problem lies in the distrust between the two communities which is related to the issue of land. He wrote that the animus had in the past manifested in minor clashes over petty issues but the undercurrents were not sufficiently provocative to cause great concern.<sup>38</sup> Another fellow Meitei Pradeep Phanioubam wrote that religion is hardly an issue but it is more a violent manifestation of an ongoing fight for a living space.<sup>39</sup>

The views put forward indicated certain bare facts. They pointed out the involvement of young men claiming to be insurgents fomenting the trouble. They also pointed out the sense of insecurity the Meiteis feel due to scarcity of land caused by illegal migrations and concentration of different sections of people in the valley and the resultant fear that they might be displaced in their original homeland.

#### (4) The PLA - PRA Conflict

What occurred as a communal clash was but an indirect outcome of the conflict between the two valley based insurgent outfits and their clash of ideology. It is the intriguing politics of extremists groups where one is said to have instigated the violence and the other its rival group is supposed to have threatened vengeance as it did not want to lose its base in Bangladesh. The role the insurgents played depicts their involvement which is near total.

The violence reportedly broke out when the PRA attempted to extort money from members of the Muslim community at Lilong. In the scuffle that followed, a PRA activist was killed and 3 others were seriously injured.<sup>40</sup> The clashes which broke out following the



incident was not communal but was a fallout of the insurgency situation in the state. This inference is drawn from the fact that the PLA had on 7 May 1993 issued a strong warning to the PRA for instigating violence against the Muslims and stated that the culprit will be dealt with severely.

It began when the PRAs deal fell through and the gunrunner refused to return the money. He and his associates thrashed some PRA youths who forcibly tried to take away a motor cycle. In retaliation, supporters of the group gathered and marched to Lilong where they began their game of arson. The PLA issued a warning to the PRA for its alleged involvement and with this a new phase have begun in the post riot situation. To drive home its sharp warning, the PLA carried out a token killing of a PRA activist. The organisation also imposed a nine hour "night curfew" for five days beginning from 8 May 1993.

Observers in Imphal interpreted such actions of the underground organisation PLA, to mean that the PLA had identified the people responsible. The announcement of a specific time limit for the curfew too was significant in that the organisation hoped to complete its task by then. The PLAs warnings were taken

seriously. The official curfew too remained effective. The PLA which condemned the incident did not have to work hard to teach the PRA leader a lesson. These PRA leaders (only a handful in number) were originally in PLA but they latter drifted. It was then that this outfit began hunting for arms and contacted the gunrunner.

Such interest taken by the PLA in the post violence scenario offers startling evidence of certain basic facets of life and politics in Manipur. At one level, it indicates the extent of the control the organisation (PLA) has over local politics and the people. It demonstrated its ability to formulate its policy in a specific situation, announcing its stand publicly and then carrying out a course of action without any reference to the established government of the region. This contrast strongly with the time worn response of the official agencies concerned with the task of restoring law and order. Against this back drop, the intervention made by the PLA cannot but have a maior impact.

Following from the above, it is obvious that the clash involved two valley based outfits where one tried to extort money and arms in the name of Meitei

revivalism and the other tried to solve the problem with a view that Meiteis and Pangals should co exist in peace and that the Pangals have as much right to the land as the Meiteis.

It may be remembered that the proscribed underground outfit PLA which claims to be more authentic was founded by N Bisheswar Singh after parting ways with the Revolutionary Government of Manipur. The leader remained a controversial and confused person till his death in August 1994. He fought the 1985 election from behind bars and won as an independent candidate. When out of prison, he denounced violence and criticised the valley based insurgent leader. However this controversial man was arrested prior to the Hindu Muslim riot. After lying low for some time, he became active again as the leader of the newly formed organisation "Poramlar Apunba" who stood for the cause of preventing Muslim encroachers from desecrating the two secret hillocks Chingeiching and Leimaching near Lilong.

#### **(5) Revivalistic tendencies among the militant outfits**

Revivalistic tendencies arose among some section of the Meiteis who feel that the distinctiveness of

Manipur was diluted by their forefather's effort to implant a Vaishnava culture amongst them.<sup>41</sup> Such tendencies were strongly expressed by the insurgent groups.

It is common knowledge that in the valley, a number of ethnic groups - Meitei, Bramhin, Loi, Bishnuprya, Yaithibi and Fangals stay. However all, except for the Meiteis have a marginal position. Among the Meiteis some are adherents of Goudiya Vaishnavism and some follow the Sanamahi cult (Animism). The Sanskritisation process in the Manipur valley was started during King Garibniwaz's reign has been put to a stop. There are attempts to desanskritise and to go back to the pre Vaishnava pristine forms of Meitei culture. Slowly and gradually the Sanamahi cult gained ground.<sup>42</sup>

The clash was also a result of revivalist manifestation of some section of the people particularly the insurgents. Prior to it, the different communities shared an amicable relationship even though they professed different religions. However, tension has been brewing up and things came to a collusion course in May 1992 when some Meiteis attempted to construct a place of worship near the epicenter of the

clash.

The Muslims opposed the move on the view point that the once uninhabited hills has for long served as their burial ground. The Meiteis dismissed the argument saying that the hill was uninhabited as their custom forbids human settlement in such sacred hills forest. They argued that the Pangals who has encroached the land had violated their religion. Around this time, an organization (Poramlan Apunba) took up the cause and campaigned for the ouster of all Muslims from Manipur.

Revivalistic tendencies got intermixed with the insurgency problem. The PLA have been championing the cause of the Muslim migrants saying that nothing should be done against them. At about the same time, a Muslim organization called the Islamic Revolutionary Front, a muslim wing of the PLA was formed.<sup>13</sup> The problem created by the dispute subsided when the powerful insurgent group (PLA) intervened on behalf of the Muslims. The PLAs reason for supporting them were several, one, they professed a communist ideology and two, their training centre was in Bangladesh.<sup>14</sup>

Such and many more frictions added to the pent up passions within the communities and led to the clash.

It might be true that nativistic revival movements viz. Sanamahi and Meitei movements are manifestations of cultural dimension of tribal identity <sup>45</sup>and political process.<sup>46</sup> But revivalistic movements in the name of identity and political process should not indulge itself in bloodshed and impinge on the other group's interest. A communal outbreak of such dimension portends a disturbing trend and to avoid a reoccurrence one should prevent revivalism from getting mixed with insurgency.

#### **(6) The problem of land scarcity**

Another projection of the clash could be the Meitei's feeling of insecurity borne out by certain factors like - influx of illegal migrants, allowing of hill tribes to settle freely in the valley and not vice versa and general mistrust for the non Manipuri Business community.<sup>47</sup> Penetration of the limited area by outsiders viz money landers, contractors, traders, and others<sup>48</sup> has also fomented tension. Coupled with this is the increasing pauperisation of the Meiteis due to lack of economic activities because of the immigrants. The growing insecurity among the Meiteis that they are going to be marginalised in their traditional homeground can lead to similar outbreaks in the future.

### (7) Role of the state

The role played by the state has been the most crucial and much talked about issue. Because of the wide difference shown by the state and the central government in curbing the communal flare up. While the state government kind of blamed the centre for giving inadequate armed forces despite state CM Shri R K Dorendro's request; the centre on the other hand blame the state police force for neglecting a sensitive issue as this one.

The centre's attitude condemning the state government for its slow and unwilling move has been strongly voiced by the statement by Mr Raiesh Pilot, the then Union State Minister for Internal Security. He charged the state government and the police force with being very inactive and failing to act on time.

Mr Pilot on his visit also endorsed the fact that the local leaders lack political will and held the state police responsible for the situation and therefore ordered action against officials guilty of failing to act promptly. While his tough talk on the failure of the police seems to be more of a matter of form, he send out signals that he knew where the problem lay. He showed his lack of confidence in the

opportunistic Congress (I)- MPP coalition Ministry headed by Shri R K Dorendro by publicly calling for a Judicial inquiry.

Besides, the state authorities were just not ready to face the violence when it erupted nor when it spread. The fire was launched by a single minor spark but the authorities did not receive any early report of how fast the rumor spread. Moreover they were slow to react and did not have much idea of the damage that would be done. The crucial shortage of manpower among the state police and other forces which were already stretched thin fighting the insurgents also aggravated the situation.

The state government on its part imposed curfew immediately at 6.00 pm from 3 May 1993 in Thoubal district and greater parts of Imphal. The state CM said that all sensitive areas in the valley identified by the police were placed under indefinite curfew and prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPC had been made in greater Imphal area and minority inhabited areas. The CM and the security forces pointed out the view that some anti social elements spread rumors which resulted in the clash and several of them had already been rounded up.



On the second day, Army troops were deployed but the number of people death and iniured increased considerably. The CM requested the centre for more forces to control the situation. In the police raids conducted, over hundred people were arrested. Senior Police officials held several rounds of meetings attended by senior Ministers to control the situation. The fallout of the violence was felt more at the administrative rather than the political level. There were signs of lack of coordination even during the trouble. While the state CM indicated plans to call in more army in the initial stages, the police officers were confident that this would not be necessary. The DGP Mr Alfred Liddle told The Hindustan times correspondent<sup>17</sup> that the state police, the para military forces and the Assam rifles were adequate. But this turned out to be wrong. There were also allegations from the people that the police had broadly remained inactive.

The decision to post the army all over the state was welcomed though it was late. The police often kept a check to find out if members of a particular community had taken shelter or not. Yet, the Muslims who were the affected lot complained that the army was maintained only as a show. However, the scale of

violence waned with the induction of the Army. The CM pointed out that the first batch of Policemen reached Lilong an hour and a half late after the killings began and they were left outnumbered. Then the Superintendent of Police, Imphal went with inadequate force. The CRPF and other forces were called but they reached only at 6.00 pm and by then the damage was done. He pointed out the centre's failure in sending more forces despite his incessant calls for it adding that it was only after Mr Pilot reached that the Army arrived.

Mr Pilot submitted a detailed report to the PM and expressed resentment over the killings and spurt in extremist activities. He blamed the state government particularly Mr Dorendro's inept handling of the administration and the situation for the outbreak.

Meanwhile some state legislatures strongly opposed the imposition of President's Rule in the State and at the same time expressed their unhappiness with the leadership and sought the removal of the CM.

The Centre's first ever concrete step was the visit by Mr Raiesh Pilot to Manipur. He visited the state only on 6th and blamed both the State Government and the Police force for the neglect of such a

contentious issue. Such delayed acts of the Centre could barely heal the wound that had already been affected. After reviewing the situation and blaming the State Government for its inability, he submitted a detailed report to the PM on the situation and said that some money would be released from the P.M's relief fund for the victims. Though he made very weighty comments on the State's role, his disinterest is shown by the fact that he who reached Imphal at around 12 noon left for Delhi at 3 pm that day itself. This was despite the CPI State Unit leader pressing him to remain in Manipur for some more days and monitor the situation.<sup>50</sup>

There were local questions as to whether the centre should have stepped in earlier. This point was made clear when a state CPI leader pointed out to Mr. Raiesh Pilot and repeatedly asked how the Centre which reacted to the Bombay Bomb explosion quickly took so long to decide about Manipur. Only one wonders what his answer could be.

The only encouraging aspect of the Centre's attitude was when the PM released Rs 25 lakh from the PM's relief fund for the families of those killed in the communal disturbances.

### **(8) Impact**

The impact of the clash was tremendous. It led to the death and displacement of a number of human lives. One most crucial thing is the feeling of insecurity instilled deep into the psyche of the minority muslim population of the state.

The State Government having failed, the violent clashes underlined the inadequate strength of the Security Forces deployed in the state. The incident highlighted the inadequacies of the deployment of law enforcing agencies in the region and Manipur in particular. While insurgency and gunrunning have remained the prime occupation of the land, less attention had perhaps been devoted to anti-socials, drug peddlers, gunrunners and religious fundamentalists.

It also highlighted the alleged lack of Political will on the part of the local leaders in their craze for powers. There is lack of coordination among the local leaders. Taking opportunity of Mr Pilot's view; the former CM R K Jaichandra along with three legislatures and the PCC President met the PM and demanded removal of the CM. They blamed the CM for the

sharp deterioration of the law and order situation, rise in extremist activities, series of ethnic clashes, and increasing communal tensions between the tribals and the Meitei communities. At the same time, they strongly opposed the idea of the imposition of PR in the state.

They also met Mr S B Chavan, Union Home Minister and reiterated their demand. Shri Jaichandra took strong exception to the Centre's attitude and told Shri Chavan that Manipur was treated as second class citizens.

The most serious chapter about the incident and its aftermath is the role played by the insurgents right from the start of the clash till the very end. The interest taken by the PLA in the post violence scenario points out the extent of the control the organization has over local politics.

The only encouraging aspect is that the incident was not premeditated nor communally engineered. Only the outcome was communal.

The shameful incident highlighted certain startling facts about the life and politics of Manipur.

That is

1. there are strong group divides among the valley based insurgents.
2. the acts of the so-called genuine group by way of punishing the pseudo one for misguiding people, extorting money and issuing warnings to the Manipuri Muslims to leave Manipur etc. points out that this group probably did not want to loose its base in Bangladesh and therefore had propagated for the peaceful existence of both communities.
3. that the Government was not able to curb the insurgents and has kind of gave them a free hand to determine the day-to-day life of the people.
4. that in all probability, the state apparatus in the name of curbing insurgency is on the other hand providing a fertile ground to the insurgents to perpetuate. The development of underdevelopment syndrome, the treatment of the peripheral areas - all these goes well to prove the neglect of the tension ridden state.

This clash is a grim reminder of the fact that tension within the State arises from traditional ethnic rivalry, industrial backwardness and growing unemployment. And this can provide the spark to ignite the flame. The local politicians are alleged to have

cultivated one militant group or the other to put pressure on their political adversaries as also to strengthen their own bargaining position vis a vis the centre. Thus, the militants have acquired some kind of legitimacy. It may be possible that the communal clashes is an act of boosting their morale. Anyway, whichever party is in power, it will have to show far greater political will to prevent the recurrence of communal clashes. And the longer the state is allowed to drift, the deeper it will sink into the mire of anti-national sentiments as well as ethnic and communal hatred.<sup>21</sup>

The claims of the existence of a conflictual state in the Centre-State relationship made by various social scientists and political observers is vividly shown by this particular incident. While the centre blames the state leaders for lack of political will, the local leaders blame the centre for giving a second class treatment to the state. And while the Centre and the State continues to remain at loggerheads both claiming that they are right in their own way, the masses whose opportunities are limited thereby become frustrated and take to arms. The outcome is the existence of almost a parallel form of government run by the insurgents along with the State legislatures. In this clash of policies

between the Centre and the state, the masses suffer. It is time the Centre takes up initiative for bringing about rapid development of the state and wean away the frustrated youths from choosing a different path. The Centre only can do it though the task is insurmountable. The Centre will end up paying a heavy sum if such incidents are not taken care of and the insurgents will continue to exist and will correspondingly continue to disrupt the normal day-to-day life.

In both the Meitei-Pangal and the ongoing Kuki-Naga clash, the state has been accused of actively encouraging one ethnic group to fight against the other as part of counter insurgency operations apart from being accused of serving the interest of the powers that be or for having to remain mere spectators when timely intervention was needed.

Considering the fact that tackling insurgency in the North East particularly Manipur is pretty difficult because of lack of political will to take on militant groups; politicians should stop from such actions of cultivating militant groups in their interest to put pressure on their political adversaries. Besides, even though the central forces present in the state can



pressurise the various feuding insurgent groups, it is the responsibility of the State CM to see that his ministerial colleagues do not play partisan roles (and patronise militant groups). Administration should be toned up and developmental activities speeded up. There should be political stability and only when there is political stability, there can be peace and progress.

It is time the people of Manipur rise and fight the reactionaries and the enemy of the people of Manipur who dwell by sucking the blood of the people for their selfish political gains and for whipping up personality cult at the cost of unity, peace and progress of the state.

A political solution can bring peace in this insurgency infested region. The strategy of Counter Insurgency Operation should be shifted from fighting the militants to the real enemy. In the context of Manipur, the operation should be against corruption, corrupt politicians, bureaucrats and unethical businessman. If this is not done, the Armed Forces strategy for Counter Insurgency Operation will be self-defeating and will be the root cause for the rapid disintegration of India.

Assertion of identity should be welcomed to a certain extent but should not be allowed to go beyond where there is involvement of genocidal tendencies and disruption in law and order situation. These groups should be provided their due place in the existing situation and each group should feel that their presence is felt and that they are also important components of India. If the so-called step-motherly treatment meted out to them persists, it is time for the leaders at the centre to realise that all is not too well. If they fail to realise it or if they are purposely avoiding it, it might be too late and the vast democracy which India represents would break up.

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## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

Any analysis of the structure and functions of the Centre-State relationship starting from the basic principles of the distribution of powers, the working of federalism, the reasons for the ever increasing strains, the economic stagnancy and the ever continuing conflictual situation brings forth the fact that the mechanics of Indian Federal Constitutionalism can be understood best if one observes not merely the aesthetics of constitutional machinery but how it operates and where it fails to operate successfully.

The four and half decades of the working of India's federal system has revealed flaws and weaknesses both at the structural and the functional levels. Certain flaws were inherent in the pattern of the federal system India adopted while certain others became apparent in the process. The latter became more apparent when popular demands for greater rights for segments were made and demands for autonomy of states and also redressal of their grievances acquired momentum.<sup>1</sup> The former is general and applies to the pattern of functioning and the latter is true when taken in the context of the peripheral North Eastern

States.

The four-decade long Centre-State relationship between the Centre and the constituent unit of Manipur is far from being happy. Politically, the Centre has overwhelming powers leaving the State as a receiver of sorts and economically, the state benefitted despite various efforts. The all encompassing factors like general backwardness, the complete absence of industrial infrastructure, the pathetic communication facilities, the meagre investment coupled with the local people's near total lack of initiative has left the State in a state of abject poverty despite its rich natural resources. The lack of will, the corruption among politicians and bureaucrats alike, the infighting and defections has attributed in weakening their persona making them fall prey to the Centre and at the same time loose the trust and confidence of the masses.

Resulting from the above, Manipur now represents a state in turmoil. She is of the major tension area. The actual socio-economic and political scenario is political instability, underdevelopment syndrome, the non-job phenomenon, and rise in insurgency related activities. How much does the Centre-State relationship



hold responsible for this?

Firstly, the strains are caused not so much by power issues as due to real apprehension or possibility of Central intervention in the State's affair, the non-satisfaction of the State's demands for larger fiscal devolution and alleged discrimination of funds for developmental projects, locations of public sector industries etc. The deployment and stationing of paramilitary forces on political considerations have made the states to protest against it. The dislodgement of the State ministries through indiscriminate use of the machinery of the President's Rule has also been instrumental for the strains.

Strains developed also because of the Centre's neglect of the state as it (the state) does not hold any good promise to the Centre. Other factors like History and Geography also add to the trouble. But this does not necessarily mean that states like Manipur with such inherent and congenital handicaps should be left to remain backward as ever. Besides, the local leaders has been partially responsible for this. The general belief is that they being power hungry, they could not do anything better than being mere puppets in the hands of the Central leaders.

Undue partisan politics was also played in this tiny state. When the party in power in the state was the same as the one in the centre, such politics were played for the Centre's benefits and most often, the state leaders were made to play puppetry role. One interesting phenomenon is that even if the party in power in the state changes, the same set of politicians come to rule. Thus, party may be different but leaders remain the same.

The State's economy is in a sorry state. The case of an overdraft of some crores of rupees over and above the stagnant economy caused due to the unsuccessful implementation of the Five Year Plans depicts the State's plight and the absence of revenue sources and lack of financial discipline. Another facet is the rampant corruption and the resultant failure of the investments made. All these created the problem that is manifesting today in the state in the form of heightened insurgency activities, increased violence and the tension laden situation. Increase in such forms of violence and its presence in the state of nature depicts clearly the unhappy relationship between the Centre and the state.

The problem is what is to be done as of now to

avert a near total catastrophe of India's federal system and maintain a harmonious balance between the two units of governance. The only feasible thing problem is to bring about an alternative framework advantageous to both the Centre as well as the States. The answer could be a political solution.

The string of unstable governments Manipur had along with its concomitant problems, the leadership crises, the failure in the fulfillment of the promise made during elections, failure to solve the growing menace of insurgency, failure to contain violence and tensions in the state, failure to contain tribal feuds - all these point out certain defects in the constitutional arrangement and the existing nature of Centre-State relations.

It is time some changes are introduced in the constitutional framework relating to Centre-State relations. The Centre's powers should be cut to size and the use of Article 356 and imposition of President's Rule need to be curbed. If the Centre feels that the State leaders are not strong enough, they should realise that mere imposition of PR is not the panacea to the ills of a society laden with weak and poor willed leaders. The Centre should create an

atmosphere wherein the State leaders are made to feel their presence, their importance and their responsibility to the state. In fact frequent acts of such manner only enhances the already overcentralised power structure. This situation creates another situation where the state leaders feel that they are not treated well and thereby increase the feeling of alienation. It is time corrections and modifications are made and make way for real and effective federalism.

If real democracy is to be witnessed, the constitutional provisions for the imposition of President's Rule can be modified to a certain extent. If there was no such provisions it would have been incumbent on the Governor to permit the defeated C.M. to continue as caretaker and to insist on speedy elections. The very availability of this provision has meant that instead of having a democratic way out, PR has been imposed and elections have been postponed to suit the convenience of the Central authorities and the Central ruling party.

The whole Question of the federal structure in India and the Union State relationship need to be looked at afresh. The broad nature of the changes that

can be involved would be as follows:-

- Centre's powers interfering with the state need to be removed [which implies that the institution of Centrally nominated governors have to go] ,
- The Question of restructuring the set up of the federating units need to be considered. The Question is how to enable the common people to effectively participate in their own government and how to involve them in the process to expedite the State's economic development,
- To find out whether it merely involved better and more Panchayati Raj or it would require a large number of smaller states,
- Moreover, if the format of representation of the states in the Rajya Sabha is changed so as to enable states to have equal or almost equal representation, there would be a definite incentive to form more equal federating units.

While dealing with Manipur's problems, one should bear in mind the State's peculiar problems. The ignorance among the political leaders and the senior bureaucrats of the history of this region and the limited number of representatives of the state in the Lok Sabha has resulted in blundering of policies and plans of the state. Corrections are therefore to be

made.

In Manipur, ushering in an era of political stability is an urgent necessity. Effective State Government is essential for economic development of the whole region and thereby of the whole country. The states should not be deprived of powers. But at the same time the centre should not be weakened in the name of more autonomy for the states.

In Manipur the much talked about problem of insurgency years is not so much a military failure as a failure of administration and emotional bonds. The future administration should be based on certain premises wherein insurgency should not be regarded a military problem but primarily should be treated as an administrative social, economic and political problem. Armed Forces should be deployed only when it reaches the hot stage. Developments should never be pushed into the background. Democracy should be very wide based and not depend on a few contractor stooges etc.

It is time for the central and state government to come forward with a fresh package of economic proposals to alleviate poverty, unemployment and other related maladies. The centre should do something to expedite an

integrated plan of action against insurgency along with an integrated socio-economic plan for the upliftment of the region. The relationships in the economic sphere can be redefined. The Centre should give way to distribution of industries. At the same time, the Planning Commission's structure may be modified. The NDC should also be a statutory body with appropriate links between the state Planning organisation and the federal planning commission. An ethical solution to the present socio-economic and socio-political malady appears to be the only permanent alternative and the answer to the present Kuki-Naga tangle in Manipur.

There is also the necessity of having some organisation which will provide a forum for consultation on vital and important matters. This can in a way provide rooms for discussion on vital problems and economic issues and can then provide for an alternative arrangement if not a solution.

The need of the hour is to bring about socio-economic development and to bring the insurgents into the mainstream. At the same time, their right to self determination given in the United Nations Charter should not be forgotten. Whichever policy is to be brought, one has to look into the delicate issues and

matters which go into making an ethnically and racially different stock of Indians. A look into the psychology of the people is a must and one should see the reasons behind their frustration.

Federalism as such is no fixed concept. It should be constantly shaped and reshaped to suit the peculiar political condition in the country.<sup>2</sup> The basis of the scheme of Centre-State relation is laid on the foundation of unity in diversity and the constitutional formulations are so designed to ensure the stability of the established institutions. As the strong centre is the guarantee of the viability of resources for the states; the initiative in planning and mobilisation of resources for development, growth in industrialisation and infrastructure of economic order must remain the prerogative of the Central Government. The state government should co-operate and work along the policy guidelines of the Central Government and this alone must ensure smooth planning and development.

Talking about economic backwardness, the political units in the North East including Manipur are too small with meagre resources and are much underdeveloped. There is not enough money for the development of the meagre material resources which they have with them. The state fails to generate self-sufficient economy. At



present, the financially viable states which were equally backward in the past had been blessed with maximum industrialisation or over represented in all sectors of employment, trade, commerce etc. At the cost of the economically backward states. Such uneven economic growth among the states have induced a profound sense of neglect and exploitation among some of the economically backward states. The criteria of revenue sharing between the centre and the states simply cannot overlook this aspect and steps should be taken to prevent such imbalanced economic growth. The demand for fiscal autonomy calls for a more thorough examination.

The problem of development in the North East lie not in the lack of natural resources but the large investments required for infrastructure development, the inadequacy of labour and necessary skill needing an extensive programme of man power. development and the principle problem lies in the inadequate communication facilities. And since the problems are recognised and identified, it is now up to the Central and the State Governments to come up with appropriate remedial measures.

The economic staticness of the region and the near

failure of the five year plans in the state calls for an immediate inquiry and thus make the necessary changes.

The first step is to break the isolation of the territory and open up the hill. Communication facilities should be enhanced not only to allow a free flow of merchandise but also of ideas. There should be a clear and sound auditing system of the money that has been delivered for the state by the centre; industrial infrastructure should be created and manpower both technical and non-technical necessary for economic development should be meted out.

A sound public policy should be evolved at the national and the regional level. The ethnic nationalities big or small should find expression at every decision making points of the Central and the State Governments. For good Centre-State relationship:-

- removal of regional imbalances should receive top priority in the development planning,
- the backward and economic non-viable states should be made economically viable and self-reliant through comprehensive development programmes,

- there should be co-operative federalism and co-operative spirit among the constituent states.

The State government and for that matter the Centre should now give due attention to the problem of misguided youths and invited them to talks to come to a mutual understanding and solve their problem within the framework of Indian Constitution before it is too late.

Political authority should be decentralised in federal terms. The political method of state terrorism and state violence could be replaced by making popular sovereignty more meaningful and by decentralising political responsibility.

The central issue to use Bhambhri's view is the creation of a new balance of power which satisfies cultural pluralism, economic development and the crucial role of economic integration.

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