

**Understanding Human Security in the Melanesian Region of
South Pacific: The Role of Melanesian Spearhead Group,
1986-2016**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled, “**Understanding Human Security in the Melanesian Region of South Pacific: The Role of Melanesian Spearhead Group, 1986-2016**” submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted, in part or in full, for the award of any other degree of this university or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

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

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*Dedicated to loving my parents
to whom more is owe than can be said in words*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
ADS	Approved Destination Status
AusAid	Australian Aid
BCL	Bougainville Copper Limited
BRA	Bougainville Revolutionary Army
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERD	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination
CRC	Convention on Right of the Child
CRP	Comprehensive Reform Program
CRPD	Convention on Right of Person with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DPKO	Department of Peace Keeping Organization
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
ECC	Environment and Climate Change
EDF	European Development Fund
EU	European Union
FFA	Forum Fisheries Agency
FLNKS	Front de Liberation National Kanaks et Socialiste

FPU	Formed Police Unit
FSC	Family Support Centre
FSVU	Family Sexual Violence Unit
GATT	General Agreement on Trade and Tariff
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GRA	Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army
HDI	Human Development Index
HERCC	Humanitarian Emergency Response Coordinating Centre
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HS	Human Security
IFM	Istabu Freedom Movement
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KNPB	Komite Nasional Papua Barat
MCES	Micronesian Chief Executive Summit
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEF	Malaitan Eagle Force
MGCF	Melanesia Green Climate Fund
MGGF	Melanesia's Green Growth MP Member of Parliament
MSGTA	Melanesian Spearhead Group Trade Agreement
MSG	Melanesian Spearhead Group
MTC	Melanesia Terrestrial Commitment
NDS	National Development Strategy

NEP	National Investment Policy
NFACD	National Fraud and Anti Corruption Directorate
NGO	Non Governmental NIIP National Infrastructure Investment Plan
NIP	National Indicative Program Organization
NZAID	New Zealand Aid
OBOR	One Belt One Road
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
PITAP	Pacific Integration Technical Assistance Project
PIDF	Pacific Islands Development Forum
PLG	Polynesian Leader's Group
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PPF	Participating Police Force
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PSIDS	Pacific Small Islands Developing States
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission on Solomon Islands
RCPR	Rassemblement Pour La Caledinia Dans La Republic
RPA	Regional Police Academy
RSIP	Royal Solomon Islands Police
SALW	Small Arms Light Weapon
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SHIRBRIG	Standby High Readiness Brigade

SMEP	Small Medium Enterprise Policy
SMS	Skilled Movement Scheme
SPC	South Pacific Commission
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
SPTO	South Pacific Tourism Organization
TKEC	Traditional Knowledge and Expression of Culture
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
ULMWP	United Liberation Movement of West Papua
UN	United Nations
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCC	United Nations Framework for Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
US	United States
USD	United State Dollar
VP	Vanua'aku Party
WASH	Water Supply Sanitation and Hygiene
WCPFC	Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

Chapter I

Introduction

Human Security (HS here after) is debated from 60s by United Nations (UN) and also by the international regime in many ways than one. HS is a major concern in the Melanesian region of South Pacific due to its geographical remoteness and also due to political instability in the region. The impact left by the colonial rule will be studied thoroughly in the context of HS. HS is an emerging paradigm which seeks to understand global vulnerabilities by challenging the traditional notion of security which is state centric. HS is a people centered multi-disciplinary fields involving a number of research scope such as development studies, international relations, strategic studies and human rights. The Westphalian order which is state centric is in transition reflecting both the length and breadth of contemporary security debates. HS is no longer simply a foreign policy lexicon as common understanding of the concept was agreed upon in UN Resolution in 2012 which enables people to live in dignity and without fear and wants. This concept today has been applied domestically as well, though in varying degrees, since security and threats' are no longer limited to traditional interstate warfare affecting innocent third party i.e., Oceania. Global security has diversified to 7 different areas such as economic security, health security, environmental security, food security, personal security, community security and political security. The study will focus on the five elements of HS in the Pacific context i.e., political security, economic security, community, family and personal security, environmental security and social fulfillment.

Oceania or South Pacific (see Map 1.1) is made up of Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia consisting of 14 countries, 5 freely associated islands, 21 external dependencies and 4 internal dependencies. The study will focus on Melanesia (see Map 1.2) as it is geographically closer to the rising powers like Indonesia and Australia in the west and Japan and China on the north. The region is faced with the problems of ethnicity which is further complicated by lack of political stability and good governance. The Melanesian region of Oceania is the most powerful both in terms of its military and economic might in comparison to the other two regions. The

region is also rich in minerals like gold, copper, nickel, cobalt, phosphate, silver, iron, oil and gas and forestry. The region in recent years has become a hub of world affairs (from hub of instability) with international actors and superpower nations shifting its interest in the region like United States (US), China, Japan, European Union (EU) and India making their mark in the region. The focus of the study will be Melanesia which consists of four countries i.e. Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and Papua New Guinea (PNG). Besides these independent countries, Melanesia also includes New Caledonia which is a special collectivity of France and West Papua¹.

The Melanesian countries are politically unstable with constitutional blockade, coup and post coup crisis as in Fiji while ethnicity is a major concern in almost all the Melanesian countries. New Caledonia, PNG, Solomon Island and Fiji have ethnic disparity leading to loss of lives with governments under severe pressure due to political instability. Vanuatu faces serious threat from rising sea level in the Pacific Ocean. In 2005, Lataw village in Torres Island was referred as possibly the first climate refugees in history by the United Nation (IRD 2011). As Melanesian states are within the Pacific "Ring of Fire", leaving the region vulnerable to earthquakes and volcanic and other natural disasters. And due to the emerging challenges posed by climate change, South Pacific have been described as a "global front line" (CCD 2009). Internally displaced people are also on the rise due to natural disasters and domestic conflicts, in PNG for instance, at least 22,500 (as on November 2014) were displaced (Kok 2014).

Health related issues are also emerging as one of the most significant HS threats in these countries. The region also faced shortage of trained health workers, hospitals and other infrastructures. United Nations Development Programme UNDP (1994) state that –

“for too long the concept of security has been interpreted narrowly as security of territory from internal aggression, or as protection of national interests in foreign policy on a global security from the threats of nuclear holocaust forgotten were the legitimate concern of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives”.

The Human Development Index (HDI) of most of the countries in Melanesia are ranked very low, for example: PNG is at 158th position out of 188 countries, Solomon

¹ West Papua is included in this study as the peoples are ethnically Melanesian.

Islands is at 156th in the bottom and Vanuatu at 134th but only Fiji has a high development index of 90. The concept of HS emerged as distinctive scope of study after the publication of Human Development Report 1994 by the UNDP created and shaped by Mahbub ul Haq. The components of HS as laid down in UNDP, 1994 are: i) Economic security ii) Food security iii) Health security iv) Environmental security v) Personal security vi) Community security vii) Political security. In order to address the long term issue of HS, several related policy also emerged such as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and measures such as HDI and Human Security Index (HDI).

The study will focus on the role of Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) which is a sub-regional organization in the South Pacific founded in 1986. The MSG has raised the issue of New Caledonia's Kanak independence movement at the international level. The Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) is trying to nullify other regional organization like Pacific Island Forum (PIF) and has criticized subdued international response in the region. The MSG has adorned the role of regional organization giving identity to regionalism. The MSG was recognized as an international organization by the UN in 2008 and the establishment of the Secretariat in 2008 (Cain 2015). The success of MSG has led to the emergence of two sub-regional groupings; Polynesian Leaders' Group (PLG) in 2012 and Micronesian Chief Executive's Summit (MCES).

Understanding Human Security

Great powers interest and their quest for power risks major regional and international crisis today (Kay 2012:1). The traditional security focused on protecting the sovereign territory of the state which emerged post Westphalia Treaty (1648) which gives primacy to state and not its population. It was concerned with the ability of the state to defend threat emanating from outside its territory. The scope of traditional security was to defend states from external aggression whereas HS includes both defends of external aggression as well as protection of range of threats including environment, health issues, economic deprivation, etc. State is the sole actor in the traditional security whereas in HS, the actors include government, NGOs and local bodies. According to the notion of traditional security, the state should emphasize on national power by enhancing its defense through armaments, alliances and strategic boundaries whereas human security aims to empower the people and societies. The ideals of HS

were largely drawn from Franklin D. Roosevelt address to the Congress in 1941 where spoke of put forward four freedoms; freedom of speech and expression, freedom to worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear. The central elements of HS are the freedom from fear and the freedom from want (Malik 1951, see also Johnson 1987). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, International Convention on Civil Law and Political Rights (1966), and International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) were instrumental in the birth of human security as a new paradigm. Before the United Nations define human security similar concepts has been laid down in report of global commission in - the Brandt Commission (1980), Brundtland Commission on environment and the 1992 Commission on Global Governance (1995) and Commission on Human Security 2001, And under the initiative of Canada, the HS network was created for advancing the HS issues globally. The international system has questioned the realist concept of giving centrality to national security. Globalization has brought about limitless interaction of goods, technology and human resources and it can turn local problems like ethnic clash, human rights and religious issues into major international challenge. So far, there is no concrete definition on HS and HS remained a contested concept. Much more than protecting territory, defending border and enhancing military capability aim at external threat security has departed from conflict arising ‘between states towards inner state and ethnic dispute’ (De Lerrinaga and Doucet 2008). And thus, ‘prioritizing the security of the people rather than state (Duffield 2007:3).

Lloyd Axworthy (1999) defines HS as

“essence, an effort to construct a global society where the safety of the individual is at the centre of the international priorities and a motivating force for international action; where international human rights standards and the rule of law are advanced and woven into a coherent web protecting the individual; where those who violate these standards are held fully accountable; and where our global, regional and bilateral institutions – present and future – are built and equipped to enhance and enforce these standards”.

HS has began to influence international polices by with its intrusion in international organizations giving birth to new international laws and agreements (Oberleitner 2002). HS identify elements of safety and security perpetuated by states domestic and foreign policies (Kay 2012:241). Weaver (1989) states that security is not just about the absence of threats of political violence and war but includes the politics of securitization and desecuritization. According to Thomas and Tow (2002), the most

fundamental application of HS is giving centrality to the physical security and economic welfare of the people irrespective of their sovereign state or individual identity. From a HS perspective, states are more often parts of the problem than the source of solution. The theory that democracies do not fight each other became prominent after the end of the Cold War (Doyle 1986, Macmillan 2004). And rightly so, question on whether the democracy eventually brings peace to regional order became a focal point of argument and debate in academics. But this act of liberalist idea is countered on the ground that democracy is being used to further the neo-imperialist agenda in the third world countries. This is evident in the US war on terror which has evoked a debate between explicit defenders and critics of new imperialism (Harvey 2005). Patomaki (2008: 124) argued that decades after the Cold War major interstate and civil war have been absent from the heartland of the global political economy but most wars during and after the Cold War have taken place within states and in the global south.

The post Cold War world has been subject to deepening globalization where there is growth of international linkages and an erosion of the autonomy of sovereign state. According to the hyper globalists, globalization has paved the way for the demise of sovereign state (Held and McGrew 1999:4). Today, the notion of security has shifted from military capability of the state towards co-operative security. Humanitarian intervention and Responsibility to Protect are seen as steps in this direction. HS has been adopted in domestic foreign policy of countries like Canada, referred to as 'new foreign policy paradigm' (Axworthy 2001, see also Bajpai 2000). In Britain, domestic policy has extended to international community as outlined by Tony Blair of Britain in the Global Ethics Foundation² in 2000 where he stated that the domestic policy of Britain was based on the ethical value of 'community'. HS serves as a platform for states, international organization and Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) to come together and discuss and deliberate on issues affecting humanity at large (Behringer 2012: 174).

² Tony Blair speech at the Global Ethics Foundation, Tübingen, Germany, 20 June.

Human Rights and Human Security

HS and human rights approaches use individual as the main referent giving centrality to people rather than state or institution. Art. 3 of UDHR³ states that “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person” refer to security which focuses on individual being rather than state. According to Oberleitner (2002), human rights are all civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. Human rights are the core of HS (Alkire 2002) providing conceptual and normative framework foundation to HS (Ramacharan 2001). In this direction, the declaration adopted by the Workshop on Relationship between Human Rights and HS, San Jose, Costa Rica⁴, 2 December 2001 reaffirmed that HS is about basic needs of the people such as health, education, shelter, as well as a “fruitful milieu for the accomplishment of everyone’s human potential”⁵. HS has been included in the domestic policies of countries like Canada⁶ which put emphasis on the “freedom from fear”, whereas Japan relies on the “freedom from want” (Clausen 2009). This is reaffirmed by Article 2 of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights where “each state party to the present Covenant undertakes to take steps, individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Covenant by all appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measures” is a central element. Yohan Galtung expanded the notion of human rights to include “structural” (Galtung 1969) or “cultural” violence (Galtung 1990). HS is about ‘ensuring that states protect their people, when they do not, it is about ensuring that there are international mechanism that can fill the gap and interim and redesign states so that they will fulfill their purpose in the future’(Farlane and Khong 2006). Kay (2012:243) states that HS focuses its policy attention on the safety and wellbeing of the citizen and more importantly the search

³ See Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) URL:

<http://www.udhr.un.org/eng/udhrbook/pdf/udhr-booklet-en-web.pdf>

⁴ See the declaration adopted by the Workshop on Relationship between Human Rights and Human Security, San Jose, Costa Rica, 2 December 2001, <http://humansecurity-chs.org/doc/sanjosedec.html>

⁵ Nikolova, Minna: Human Security in South-East Europe: Just a Vanguard Rhetoric or a Genuine Ride for Security for All, Accessed on 3 June 2017, URL: <http://www.bundeer.at/pdf.../niko01.pdf>

⁶ Freedom from Fear: Canada’s Foreign policy for Human Security. Canada Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. 2002. Ottawa

for peace is focuses on the conditions of those people who themselves do not have power or are victims of international conditions outside their control.

Today, HS has become part of the foreign policy of security dilemma emanating from within the state and no country is immune from such threats due to the growing interconnection and interdependence brought about by globalization. HS is often used a policy veiled by the powerful in the pursuit of their national interest rather than the main essence of protecting and securing the people. This neo imperialist attitude is visible in West Asia, Africa and other third world nations. “Humanitarianism is not a timeless truth but an ideology that has had particular functions and taken different forms at different times in the contemporary world” (Edkins 2013:453). In past decades “(m)orality, values, ethics, universal principles-the whole panoply of ideals in international affairs have taken roots in foreign policies communities” (Geld and Rosenthal 2003). This has been captured by Dan Bully (2010) saying “the moral dilemma is eternal, acting responsibly always means acting irresponsibly; rules, no matter how good and knowledge, no matter how comprehensive, cannot change this.”

Role of Middle Power in the Growth of Human Security

The middle power nations like Canada and other Scandinavian nations have played significant roles in the emergence of HS in the international system. Few initiatives are mentioned here: The Standby High Readiness Brigade For United Nations Operations (SHIRBRIG) multinational peacekeeping initiative which constitutes of seven middle powers formed in 1996 headquartered in Denmark has successfully employed their troops in Ethiopia and Eritrea in 2000-2001 (SHIRBRIG 2003). ii) The Ottawa Process to ban antipersonnel landmines in which 121 states signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines in 1997. iii) The International Criminal Court (ICC) was established after the signing of the Rome Statute in 1998 and came into effect on July 1, 2002 (Pace and Schence 2001). iv) The initiative of the UN in controlling Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). v) Responsibility to Protect.

Critical Assessment of Human Security

In the post Cold War era, scholars argue that individual's security approach was more appropriate than the state security approach. HS makes sovereignty conditional on

protecting individuals according to standards set by the HS agenda. It is not about limiting the state but HS redefine the responsibility of the state (Volkner 2010:138). HS has expanded its scope and its definition due to the changing global environment to include various issues. Uner Kirdar (1999) put forward the three issues which concern human kind: human rights, human development and HS. But critics argued that HS is too universalistic stating that there are conceptual flaws whereby 'securitizing' does not serve the victims instead creates false priorities and hopes (Khong 2001). According to Acharya (2001) HS has been considered a concept which cannot be carried out in practice. Taylor Owen (2008) opined that the term "HS" is often used interchangeably with the terms "Human Development" and "Human Rights" in the UN discourse, thereby creating confusion as to whether or not human security is actually making unique theoretical and practical contributions. HS in as seen in the context of US intervention in the Middle East has been institutionalize to suit the interest of global capitalist and neo-liberal government (Turner et al. 2011). According to Acharya (2001) Asian governments are skeptics to such broad agenda of HS and "have been warm towards the notion of human security as freedom from want, because it is compatible with the popular Asian conceptualizations of comprehensive security, which recognizes both military and non military threats to the state" as they considered HS as cover up to impose western values and institutions in the region. Though states have adopted HS in principle they are yet to implement it in many cases. Hataley and Nossal (2004) argued that the national governments have been reluctant to adopt policies that are geared towards ensuring HS. Bosold and Von Bredow (2006) found that despite its HS rhetoric Canadian foreign policy has become more idealistic over tone, and its agenda has not broadened significantly. According to Jackson (1992:93), international security has undermined the domestic security. Though the proponents of HS tend to alienate state in its agenda, HS has never been outside a statist framework. It is instead deeply rooted in state. The use of power dynamics in the guise of trade has been practiced by US, China and Russia the big powers in international relation. Report of the Commission on Human Security (2003: 2) argues that while "attention must now shift from the security of the state to the security of the people", ultimately the state remains the fundamental purveyor of security". HS has brought together middle power states, development agencies and NGOs seeking to give importance to the welfare and development of the people (Paris 2001).

Emergence of Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG)

The emergence of MSG can be traced to the informal meeting of Heads of Government of Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and a representative of the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front also known as Front de Liberation Nationale Kanak et Socialiste (FLNKS) in Goroka on July 17, 1986. Fiji was not part of the founding group due to its affiliation to the Polynesian sub-region (Lawson 2016). And Fiji was instrumental in the formation of South Pacific Commission (SPC) in 1947. The MSG members comprise of four sovereign states PNG, Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and a non state entity FLNKS, a pro independence movement group in New Caledonia. Currently, Indonesia has become an associate member whereas the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP) as an observer. The MSG was set up “reflecting the historical and political roots” of the region and also, “in a spirit of ethnic and cultural solidarity” with a commitment to pursue the case of self-determination for Kanaks in New Caledonia (Lowy Institute 2017a). The Agreed Principles of Cooperation Among Independent States of Melanesia, was signed in Port Vila, Vanuatu, in 1988 with an aim to assert independent states support for the Kanak’s independence as the former colonial powers including the metropolitan powers like Australia and New Zealand and most importantly the Pacific Islands Forum had failed to take up the issue of Kanaks independence both at the regional and international level (May 2011). The FLNKS which is a Kanaks’s independence group in New Caledonia formally joined in 1989 (and not New Caledonia) while Fiji joined in 1996. The Agreement Establishing the MSG as a formal organization was signed on March 23, 2007 with its office located in Vanuatu and was officially inaugurated during the 17th Leaders Summit on May 30, 2008. With the presence of a permanent secretariat the MSG became a more structured and institutionalized regional groupings. In the emergence of MSG as a regional player, the MSG Trade Agreement of 1993 which became a guiding force in charting the economic relations between these nations played a pivotal role. This gave the Melanesian states to look for a conducive trade and economic relations between them which in turn will propel their economy into a robust and developed one. The Melanesian Spearhead Group Trade Agreement (MSGTA) was revised in 2005 and Solomon Islands signed the Agreement in 2016. This trade agreement is consistent with General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and has the approval and

recognition by the World Trade Organization Committee on Regional Arrangements. The signing of the MSG Trade Agreement is considered a milestone in the history of MSG as it indicates its growth and progress and thereby getting status of regional player.

Purpose of Melanesian Spearhead Group

Though there are very little books or articles on the birth of the MSG. The website of MSG throws a clear light for establishing and institutionalizing of a regional grouping. The MSG was established with the aim of giving the region an identity and to pursue economic growth among the Melanesian countries. The purposes as outline by the MSG include promotion and strengthening of inter-trade, exchange of cultures, traditions and values, fostering economic and technical cooperation between the members, bringing policies coherency among members in order to achieve regional growth, sustainable development, good governance and security. In order to achieve the above objectives the MSG also sets certain goals which are: facilitation of mutual cooperation and dialogue, encourage members to promote a stable and peaceful region. MSG gives importance to Melanesian values and culture which can be seen even at the organizational level.

Growth and Expansion of Melanesian Spearhead Group

The initial members consisted of PNG, Vanuatu and Solon Islands with FLNKS while Fiji was made an observer in 1993 and became a member in 1996. In 2011, Indonesia- a controversial state in relation to MSG was accorded a observer status and in 2015 was recognized as associate member while the West Papua National Council for Liberation (WPNCL) which has seek recognition as a members since 2013 is yet be given a membership in the MSG. The MSG also has an FLNKS Unit that study and suggest direction to FLNKS under the Noumea Accords in 1998. The MSG Secretariat became fully functional in May 2008. The Secretariat comprises of the Office of the Director General and three divisions, each headed by a Director in charge of Trade, Investment and Economic Development Division, Governance and Sustainable Development and Operations. The Secretariat is headed by a director general appointed by the Leaders' Summit. It is responsible for administering and managing the day today affairs of the Group and also makes policy advice and assist in coordinating and implementation of policies and programmes of MSG.

In the past decades, the Melanesian states diplomacy has become matured, as MSG⁷ has build relationships with countries within the sub-region and the region. The increased trade and economic integration is the testament to its growth. This prominence is also partly due to the expulsion of Fiji from PIF (2006-2014) (Cain 2015). The membership of MSG is based on geographical proximity and ethnic affinity. The memberships of these groups comprise sovereign and non-sovereign entities. The degree of diplomatic innovation offers MSG an opportunity for its engagement with the wider pacific region.

Structure of Melanesian Spearhead Group

The Leaders Summit is the highest decision making body represented by the head of governments and representative of the FLNKS. The Leaders Summit is held biennially, on a rotational basis. Whereas the Foreign Ministers' Meeting is conducted annually with provision for calling a special sessions. The Foreign Ministers' Meeting is responsible for policy framework and the approval of MSG annual budget. The Foreign Ministers' Meeting in turn gives their reports to the Leaders' Summit. Along with the Foreign Minister Meeting, a Senior Officials' meeting is also conducted annually. The Trade and Economic Official Meet is also conducted concurrently in order to provide technical advice and assistance in relations to the implementation of MSGTA.

The MSG Preferential Trade Agreement and Economic Cooperation

The Melanesian Spearhead Group Trade Agreement (MSGTA) came into effect in 1993. Fiji joined the MSGTA in 1998. The MSGTA played an important role in regional integration by establishing a reciprocal free trade agreement which was confined in goods trade. The underlying purpose for the birth of MSG was aimed to speed up the independence process of the Kanaks in New Caledonia but the Melanesian states slowly shifted its interest from political to economic cooperation which is visible in Agreed Principles of Cooperation Among Independent States in Melanesia, signed in Kiriwina, Papua New Guinea, in 1996 (May 2011). In 2004, the free trade agreement was revised and adopted negative list approach thereby leaving

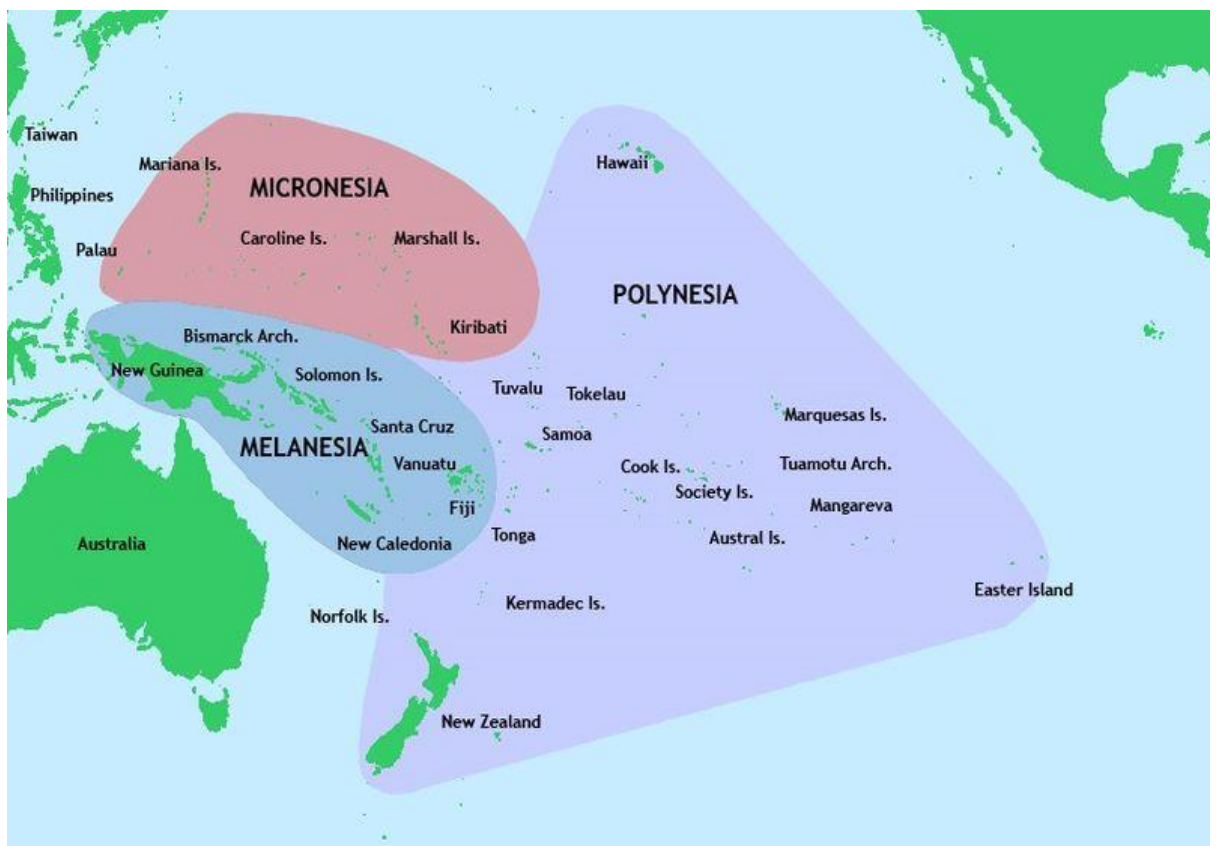
⁷ See Pacific Institute of Public Policy, MSG: trading on political capital and Melanesian solidarity www.pacificpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/D02-PiPP.pdf

the earlier mode of trading on a positive list. These principles were reiterated in a revised MSG Trade Agreement in 2005 and embodied in the Agreement Establishing the Melanesian Spearhead Group, which was signed by the five parties in 2007. The central element of MSGTA is to deepened economic cooperation and promotion of sustainable economic trade and development in the region. However, bilateral trade and investment within the Group is still limited due to lack of infrastructures, market, and road and transports etc. The region economic weakness is also due to lack of foreign investment and limited private sector presence which is due to self reliant nature of the society based on subsistence agriculture an attachment to land. And major impediment to trade is also due to the production of similar exports products limiting favorable exchange. In addition, relations have been marred in the past by restrictions on trade. The lack of space for major economics interaction has led to frequent disagreement and banned between the Melanesian states. The MSG⁸ has also held several conferences on international shipping in the region and has established a subcommittee on mining. In 2012, the group's leaders also signed the Skilled Movement Scheme; aim at facilitating free movement of skilled labors between members states. The MSG celebrated its silver anniversary in 2013 and in the same year, an Eminent Persons Group reviewed the working of the MSG and its secretariat with an aim to formulate strategy for the next 25 years. MSG has opened up new opportunities for its member to engage meaningfully with the wider Pacific region. The United Nations has denoted Fiji and PNG as 'developing countries' while Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are classified under 'least developed countries' (LDCs). The formation of MSG has had a cascading effect for regionalism in the Pacific region i.e. Micronesia and Polynesia. This even causes friction among the Pacific nations during meetings and summits of the Pacific Islands Forum. According to the Prime Minister of Samoa, Tuila'epa Malielegaoi, the emergence of sub-regional grouping like MSG posed a "risk to the cohesiveness" of the broader Pacific organization, with some fearing that sub-regional groupings could give birth to destructive factionalism. However, the success and relevance of MSG and other sub-regional groupings suggest that merging of sub-regional identity is necessary in collectively addressing issues common to the region. The Micronesian Chief

⁸ See Melanesian Spearhead Group website. Brief about the Secretariat-MSG
www.msgsec.info/index.php/about-u

Executives Summit which was first convened in 2003 consisting of Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the Territory of Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. Whereas the Polynesian Leaders Group comprises American Samoa, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Niue, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Tokelau with a focus on establishing and maintaining cultural ties rather than pursuing political and economic interests. In recent times, the MSG has come under sharp criticism for its stand on political issues. The MSG has raised its concern during Fiji expulsion from Pacific Islands Forum and the MSG continues to support the Kanaks movement in the New Caledonia and even offer supports though succinctly to the West Papua movement. Though there are critics to the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) due to its political orientation and its policies. It cannot be argued that the MSG is the most prominent and effective sub-regional grouping in the Pacific. The members constitute over three quarters of the Pacific population with vast geographical area and natural resources at their disposal.

Map 1.1 Pacific Region



Source: Kahuroa, Worldhires filled Mercators svg. 9 November 2010.

Map 1.2 Melanesia marked in blue



Source: Tintazel, Oceanai_ISO_3166-1, svg.

Chapter Two

Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism in Melanesia

Melanesian countries were colonized by the Europeans till the late 20th century. The major question is why and how colonialism and neo-colonialism have impacted on the livelihood of the people in general and the politics and economy of the countries. One interesting aspect of colonialism is that one country is colonized by two or more colonizers like in PNG (Germany, Britain and Netherland) and Vanuatu (France and British) This impacted not only the life style of the people but also political and developmental ethics, which is similar to that of Africa. This chapter throws light on the colonial histories and the neocolonial practices in Melanesian states.

Colonial History and Development Policies in Post-Colonial Melanesian States

Papua New Guinea (PNG)

“The achievement of independence had been acclaimed as a great, defining national experience. The rhetoric of freedom fighters, of a war of liberation, of leaders who overcame discrimination to become fathers of nations, of stubborn colonial powers that had long derived profit and prestige from distant areas giving way reluctantly before a people united by the vision of a new nation were still current in memory, dominant at moments of celebration and lingering in practice” Hank (Nelson 2000).

PNG is the largest country in Melanesia in terms of geography, population and the availability of natural resources. The country has a land border with Indonesia (West Papua). PNG has a population of 7.321 million with annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) 2,088.35 USD (US Dollar) (World Bank 2013a). The first European to reach New Guinea was Antonio D'Abreu, a Portuguese sailor, who visited the island of Ceram in 1512. Though some claim that the first European to reach New Guinea was Dom Jorge de Meneses in 1526, a Portuguese sailor and Inigo Ortiz (1546), a Spanish in the 16th century (Collingridge 1895). The country was divided into two in the 19th century with Germany ruling the north United Kingdom ruling the southern half of the country. In 1904, with the passage of the Papua Act of 1905, the territory was transferred to the newly formed Commonwealth of Australia, which took on its

administration and the British New Guinea was renamed the Territory of Papua (Federal Register of Legislation 1905). In 1914, British administered the German New Guinea but it was later occupied by Australia in the First World War which was later handed as the League of Nations Mandate to administer it in 1921. In 1942, civil administration was suspended and the Japanese force occupied parts of both territories (Fact Sheet 148). In 1949, Australia established a joint administration over both the territories in 1949 and established a 28 member's Legislative Council in 1951 which sets for the territory first election involving the indigenous people in 1961. In 1973, the territory was granted self-government⁹ where Michael Somare became the Chief Minister. In 1964, the House of Assembly replaces Legislative Council with indigenous representation in the legislative council. The entire territory was renamed as Papua New Guinea in 1971. And in 1975, the territory was granted independence by Australia with Michael Somare as its first Prime Minister and eventually admitted to the United Nations in 1975 itself.

The PNG became sovereign state opting for a constitutional monarchy with Queen Elizabeth II as head of the state represented by the Governor General, Sir John Guise. The newborn country was not properly united politically as there was divide between different provinces in PNG. A secessionist revolt erupted in Bougainville in 1975, an Island separated from the PNG landmass. An attempt to secede from PNG was taken up by the provincial government in Bougainville but Somare government suspended the provincial government in retaliation and withholding funds to the province. This led to an eleventh-hour modification of the draft constitution of PNG creating quasi-federal status for Bougainville and the other eighteen districts as provinces. In 1988-1989, a renewed uprising originated in Bougainville with Francis Ona proclaiming a republic of Bougainville under Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) leading to a prolonged armed struggle against government until it was resolved in 1997. The BRA was anxious about environmental destruction caused by mindless extraction of natural resources and drain of profits to other island eventually forcing the closure of the Australian owned Panguna Copper Mine. On 30 August, 2001 Bougainville Peace Agreement was signed in Arawa with an agreement for a referendum in 10 to 15 years on Bougainville political future (United States Institute of Peace 2001).

⁹ Self-government refers to the government which is under the control and direction of the inhabitants themselves and not by outsiders.

Majority of the Melanesian states did not pursue a long term vision or policies as government were unstable and embroiled in crisis. In 1980s, PNG was concerned with employment, urban development, agriculture and mining sector with government concentrating more on establishing policies to promote economic viability as prerequisite to investment and growth. An important step taken since independence was the establishment of Development Planning, National Public Expenditure Plan (NPEP) and decentralization of administrative, financial and legal powers (World Bank 1982). The PNG also has policies such as National Investment Policy (NIP), Small Medium Enterprise Policy (SMEP), Medium Term Plan (2011-2015) and Vision 2050 which deals with human development, gender, youth, people empowerment, leadership, legislation, finance, infrastructure and citizen participation. PNG most recent and most ambitious long term plan is the National Strategy Plan 2010-2030 or PNG Development Strategic Plan 2010-2030 dubbed as PNG guide to success with emphasis on the overall growth of the country. The plan includes economy, micro-economic management, financial sector, lands, services, transport facilities, development strategy, law and order, health, education, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, minerals tourism, manufacturing, population, youth, gender, HIV/AIDS, climate change, environment, national disaster management, international relations and security (PNG Development Strategic Plan 2010).

Fiji

Fiji is an archipelagic country consisting of 300 islands with a population of 881,065 and annual GDP of 3.855 billion USD (World Bank 2013b). The Dutch explorer Abel Tasman was the first European to visit Fiji in 1643 and the English navigator Captain James Cook came in 1774. In 1840, Wikes signs a Port Regulations Treaty with Tanoa and his fellow chiefs in Bau to provide protection to foreign ships and to better regulate social intercourse (Lal 2015). In June 1871, a national government led by European settlers at Levuka Island under John Bates Thurston was organized persuading the Fijian chiefs to accept a constitutional monarchy with Cakobau as king. Ratu Seru Epensa Cakobau, European settlers began to establish plantations like cotton and sugarcane which led to conflict with the indigenous Fijians over political control and land ownership. Fiji became a British crown colony in October 10, 1874 by the Treaty of Cession (Lal 2015: xxxii). From 1879-1916, Indians were brought as indentured laborers to work in sugar plantations. In 1904, a legislative council was

constituted to advise the British Governor. And by 1920 all indenture labor agreements in Fiji ends. Fiji became a sovereign country in 1970 with Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara as its first Prime Minister.

Fiji domestic politics was also embroiled with crisis after crisis facing three coups and a constitutional crisis in 2009. But the government has attempted several policies in recent years. Prominent government plans are National Agriculture Development Plan 2007-2016, Sustainable Economic and Empowerment Development Strategy (2008-2010), Strategic Framework for Change 2009, Fiji Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development (2010-2014), Fiji Offshore Management Decree (2012), National Strategy Human Resource Plan (2011-2015), Strategic Development Plan (2003-2005 & 2007-2011) and National Development Plan (2017). These plans are aimed at inclusive socio-economic development, a development strategy providing frameworks vision for transforming Fiji and give the country a more progressive vibrant and inclusive society. Fiji's 5 year Development Plan outlines strategy for water, sanitation, energy, food security, housing development, education, youth and sports, cultural heritage, economic development, social and climate change.

Vanuatu

Vanuatu (our land forever) is situated in the south western Pacific Ocean which consists of a chain of 13 principal and many smaller islands. Vanuatu has a population of 252, 763 with a GDP of 3,26.73 USD (World Bank 2013c). There are sizeable population consisting of Polynesian, Micronesians, Chinese, Europeans and Vietnamese. There are more than 100 languages are spoken with Bislama as the national language along with English and French in Vanuatu (Adams & Foster 2017). The first Europeans¹⁰ to visit Vanuatu were Spaniard, the crews of the *Capitana*, *Almiranta* and *Los Tres Reyes* under Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, who called the islands "Tierra Australia del Espiritu Santo" – Southern Land of the Holy Spirit in May, 1606. With the colonization of the islanders, in 1800, around thousands of Vanuatu people were kidnapped and forced to work on sugar and cotton plantations in

¹⁰ In 1768, French navigator Louis Antoine de Bougainville named the Island Les Grandes Cyclades. Captain James Cook renamed the islands "the New Hebrides" in 1774. (U.S. Department of State, 2008)

Fiji and Queensland, Australia known as "black birding", continued till the early 20th century. The islands became a condominium of both Britain and France by 1906. Vanuatu was ruled by British and French administrations separately, sowing the seed of communal conflicts post independence between the Anglophones and the francophones due to polarities and division in the society. Significant cultural change was visible after the returned of indentured workers from Fiji, New Caledonia and Australia in the 1860s. The demands for independence increased through the 1970s as neighboring countries began to seek independence from the colonial rulers, and the first step towards granting independence was the 1975 municipal council's election in Port Vila and Luganville. Soon after, elections were held for a Representative Assembly, but there was conflict between European authorities and local political parties (Vanuatu Parliamentary Handbook 1999). The Americans who arrived during World War II also invoked sense nationalism in the hearts of the islanders. The NaGriamel political movement emerged on Espiritu Santo in 1963 which advocated the return of land to the ni-Vanuatu people and a return to traditional ways. And in 1971, the NaGriamel anxious that more than 36 percent of the New Hebrides being owned by foreign missionaries, planters and traders, petitioned the UN to prevent further land sales to non-indigenous people. The first national election was held November 1975 (Commonwealth 2017a). In 1978, a government of national unity was formed with help from France and United Kingdom thereby adopting a constitution providing for independence in 1979. The 1979 election was won by VP (Vanuatu Party) with Walter Lini becoming the first Prime Minister. Vanuatu achieved her independence on July 30, 1980.

In order to bring development and progress, Vanuatu parliament, for instance has passed a number of Acts and regulations in order to pursue specific goals like Decentralization Acts, Discriminations in Employment and Occupation Convention (Ratification) Act 2005, Employment Acts, Environmental Management Conservation (Amendment) Acts, Family Protection (Amendment) Act 2011, Fisheries Acts, Forestry Amendment Acts, Maritimes (Amendment) Acts, National Council of Chief (Organization) Acts, Water Resource Management Acts, Health Sector Strategy (2010-2016), Vanuatu Infrastructure Strategic Investment Plan (2015-24). And prominent plans include; Vanuatu-the People's Plan as National Sustainable Development Plan (2016-2030), Priorities and Action Agenda (2006-2015) with

emphasis on education, health, welfare of people which is carried out under Comprehensive Reform Program (CRP) of 1997 as a long term framework to achieve the goal of raising welfare of the people.

Solomon Islands

The Solomon Islands is made up of volcanic islands and coral atolls with majority of the people living in small rural villages depending on subsistence farming. The population of Solomon Islands is 561, 231 (2013) with a GDP of 1,953 USD (World Bank 2013d) with a life expectancy of 67.51 (2012). The rural population comprised of about 78.3 percent and urban population consists of 21.8 percent. The ethnic composition in the islands comprises of 95.3 percent Melanesian, 3.1 percent Polynesian, 1.2 percent Micronesian and others 0.4 percent (Britannica.Inc 2017). The first European to have contact with Solomon Island¹¹ was the Spanish navigator Alvaro de Mendana de Neira. Solomon Islands was also exploited for laborers commonly known as ‘black birding’¹² in late 19th century. The German protectorate was established in 1886 over the northern Solomon Islands following the Anglo-German Treaty of 1890. By 1893, United Kingdom declared a protectorate over the southern Solomon’s. The northern Solomon Islands was transferred to Britain under the 1899 Samoan Tripartite Convention in exchange for western Samoan. Germany transferred the northern islands except Buka and Bougainville to Britain. In 1896, the colonial rule began with administration more concerned with the interest of the European traders and planters rather than the islanders. In the early 20th century, large scale coconut plantation owned by British and Australian firms began with the little or no benefit for the islanders. In 1908, Copra industry was established (Commonwealth 2017b). During the II WW, the Japanese occupied protectorate in 1942 but were not able to their advanced towards the south due to the presence of US forces. The Second World War brought about political consciousness and inspired a nationalist movement known as Maasina Rule (1944-52)¹³. ‘The war was not ours’ was the common refrain among the islanders which shared the same experiences during the Second

¹¹ Solomon Island was coined by Alvaro de Mendana de Neira, after he found gold in the Island after the Biblical king Solomon who was known for its wealth. The rumor was that King Solomon imported gold from this island to make his temple in Jerusalem.

¹² Black birding is recruitment or kidnapping of laborers common in the Pacific.

¹³ The Maasinian rule is a brotherhood movement seeking local control spread from Malaitan to other islands.

World War. In 1974, a constitution was approved providing for a governor and a legislative assembly of 24 elected members. On July 7, 1978 Solomon Islands became independent with Peter Kenilorea as its first Prime Minister (Commonwealth 2017).

The social tension in Solomon Islands originated after the shifting of capital to Honiara in Guadalcanal after II World War and due to the setting up of oil palm plantation and mining projects where real profits went to the companies and the national government and not the landowners of Guadalcanal (Moore 2007). Besides the issue of land holding, there was also an underlying resentment against the national government for not allocating treasury resources according to the origin of revenue or population size or cost of service delivery (Scales 2007). The conflict that began in the West part of Solomon Islands in 1998 resonated in Guadalcanal by centering on local resentment of Malaitan province with both forming an armed group; the Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army (GRA) or the Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM) and the Malaita Eagle Force (MEF) emerged at the beginning of 2000. In this conflict about 20,000 people were internally displaced forcing to seek refuge in urban areas like Honiara. The Marau Agreement was signed in July, 1999 but there was no positive outcome, so Panatina Agreement was signed on August 12, 1999. Then finally, the Townsville Peace Agreement on 15 October (Kwa'ioloa and Burt 2007). A ceasefire agreement was signed in August 2000.

The development of politics within Solomon Islands after independence was stagnant due to political and economic instability. Apart from the annual and short term plan like Solomon Islands Mid Term Development Plan 2016-2020, the National Development Strategy (NDS) (2011-2020 & 2016-2035)-A united vibrant Solomon Islands are the most ambitious of all. The NDS put priority on economy by coordinating with all domestic actors in all level of society and government agencies with an emphasis on improving the social and economic livelihood of all Solomon Islanders under Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination, NDS recognizes that the most important criteria to growth and progress of the people is through sustainable economic development with emphasis on good governance and public sector reforms. The Solomon Islands National Infrastructure Investment Plan (NIIP) also set priorities and strategic direction for major initiatives in economic infrastructures.

Colonialism in the 21st Century Melanesia: A Case Study of West Papua (Indonesia) and New Caledonia (France)

The decolonization process began during the League of Nations era but independent countries emerged after the II WW and the eventual establishment of the United Nations. As for the United Nations, it espoused the cause of decolonization in its 1946 Charter, but it also retained the "sacred trust of civilization" theme of its predecessor, the League of Nations. Its founders, many of whom were colonial powers, had to develop "free political institutions" only "according to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and their varying stages of advancement" (Chappell 1999). The General Assembly in its resolution 1514 (XV) on December 14, 1960 adopted the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples¹⁴. In the Pacific context, the Pacific regional seminar conducted in Nouméa from 18-20 May, 2010 had called for a Special Committee for the declaration of new decade for the eradication of colonialism. The UN General Assembly, in its resolution 65/119, declared the period 2011-2020 as the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues New York 2013). The U.N. regarded "decolonization" as the ending of unequal status, but not necessarily full sovereignty. David A. Chappell (1999) argue that "despite this promising trend, half a dozen Pacific Island countries remain quasi colonial territories with varying degrees of self-government today that do not explicitly fit the U.N. guidelines."

Decolonization, the abolishment of colonialism and the enthronement of people power over its own territories or total liberation of imperial neocolonialism (Afisi 2017) in the Oceania is still far from completed. The process of decolonization and political development in the region has seen a number of crises ranging from state failure and collapse, corruption, health issues and emerging threat due to poor

¹⁴ Article 1, of the Declaration states that "the subjection of people to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights, which is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations such denial of human rights are an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-operation". And article 2, states "all peoples had the right to self-determination and by virtue of that right they freely determined their political status and freely pursued their economic, social and cultural development". Article 5, of the Declaration provides that "immediate steps shall be taken, in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories or all other territories which have not yet attained independence, to transfer all powers to the peoples of those territories, without any conditions or reservations, in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire, without any distinction as to race, creed or color, in order to enable them to enjoy complete independence and freedom."

governance. Smith (2007) argues that the essential context for understanding these trends lies in the limits to genuine self-determination imposed by the process of decolonization itself and by the universalized ideas of state and nation it introduced. Gardner and Waters (2013) opined the need to have a fresh re-look into the history of decolonization in the region.

West Papua: A Curious Case of Non-Western Colonialism

West Papua lies in western border of Papua New Guinea. The land comprises of a mountainous interior, forest lowlands, large areas of coastal mangrove swamp, an area rich in biodiversity and natural resources with over 250 indigenous tribes. The majority of the indigenous population still lives in the traditional subsistence farming based on slash and burn cultivation. West Papua has a population of about 3.5 million among which 50 percent are non Papuans. When Indonesia got independence from the Dutch in 1949, West Papua did not join Indonesia instead chose to remain an independent nation even though it was under the colonial Dutch. Since West Papua was geographically, ethnically and culturally different from Indonesian. In December 1, 1961, the West Papuan held a congress where they declared themselves as independent entity with a new flag called the Morning Star. In the continuing saga, the Indonesian seek the support of Soviet Union during the Cold War era, the US feared the spread of communism to Southeast Asia so it invited Netherland and Indonesia and an agreement was signed in New York in 1962 which gave West Papua to United Nations and after one year, it was transferred to Indonesia without the consent of the Papuans on the agreement that they will conduct a plebiscite for the future of West Papua. In 1969, widespread resistance were organized against the Indonesian rule and a plebiscite called “Act of Free Choice” was conducted where the UN oversee the whole process (Saltford 2000). The Papuans were given two choices; to become an independent nation or to remain part of Indonesia. But in the election only a handful Papuans were selected to vote under coercion, intimidation and threat and the UN was accused for being a mute spectator in the whole process. The Papuan dubbed this incident as “Act of No Choice”. Kim Peart (2011) called the Act as Act of Coercion. Netherland New Guinea as it was known was invaded by Indonesia in 1962 and was renamed Irian Jaya (till 2000) by Indonesia. The Free Papua Movement (Organisasi Papua Merdeka) was founded in 1963 advocating autonomy f or West Papua. The indigenous people began an unknown war against the west-backed

Indonesian government (Free West Papua 2017). This resulted in harsh and violent attacks on the Papuans by the Indonesian military (Budiardjo & Liong 1983: 54). The Indonesian policy since its colonization was aimed at integrating West Papua (Irian Jaya after 1973) by coercive means into the national system. Regional autonomy was granted to the province of Irian Jaya in 2001 but the state mechanism and its polices was directed by the President of Indonesia through the governor (Pouwer 1999).

The restructured Department of Manpower and Transmigration (Indonesian: Departemen Tenaga Kerja dan Transmigrasi) (1984-89)¹⁵ which was first initiated by the Dutch colonial government was an inhuman policy which threatened the very existence of the West Papuans. In 1984, the Indonesian army seized traditionally owned land of West Papuan for transmigration sites; thousand were rendered landless (Ananta et al. 2015:115). Even though the government claimed was to depopulate congestion of the hugely populated areas of Indonesia but the real intention was political and economic in nature. The destruction of the environment of the ancestral homeland of the indigenous Papuan continues unabated as international consortiums in connection with Indonesian government plundered the rich resources of the region without any regards for environmental destruction and the indigenous people who regards their mountains, rivers and plain as sacred (TAPOL 1991). Freeport dumps about 200.000 tones of mine waste everyday into the Aikwa delta system (Schulman 2016). Indonesia, Canada, Australia logging companies has joined Malaysian and Japanese companies in extracting the forest resources. Hyndman (1988) term this exploitation of resources as “nothing sort of economic development by invasion’. The Indonesian and multinational companies has eradicated Papuan culture, uprooted the traditional homes and farms (Brundige et al. 2004).

The present demographic condition is such that the West Papuans have been outnumbered by Indonesian, Muslims mostly from Java often leading to communal clash (Fearnside 1997). The Program has been criticized as part of an attempt to wipe out the West Papuans in slow-motion genocide (Elmslie 2010). Fearing the coercive

¹⁵ The goals of this program are i) to move people from the densely populated areas like Java, Bali and Madura to outer less densely populated islands. ii) Aimed to alleviate poverty by providing land and opportunities. iii) And to exploit the rich natural resource of West Papua. (Adhiati & Bobsien, 2001)

policy, more than 10000 Papuans have crossed the border to seek refuge¹⁶ in PNG. The border demarcation was done in 1993 between the Indonesian and the PNG along the West Papua but the porous unclear border has further depreciated the situation along the border. PNG and Australian government has done little for the interest of the Papuan refugees. In 1985, the Australian immigration minister Hurford fearing the influx of refugees, said that Australia “would not become a home for Indonesian dissidents or economic refugees (referring to Papuans and East Timor other activist)”. This was intended to maintain a cordial relationship between Indonesia and Australia. International Commission of Jurist (Australia) has recommended that Australia should share in resettling the refugees. The Transmigration Program was ended in 2015 under President Joko Widodo (Radionz 2015).

Over the past decades, the Indonesian security forces is estimated to have killed around half million Papuans and continues till today with impunity (Harvey 2014). A report by Asian Human Rights Commission stated that helicopters supplied by Australia were used by Indonesian in a crackdown on civilians in West Papua in the 1970’s that killed more than 4000 Papuans (Milman 2013). The Biak Massacre of July 6 1998 where according to the Citizens Tribunal accounted raped and mutilation (Cordell 2013). The fall of Suharto in 1998 created a new space for the Papuans. In 1999, the New Papuan National Congress issued a declaration saying “the Papuan people have been sovereign as a people and as a state since December 1, 1961”. The West Papuan Congress held in 2000 also rejected the 1969 Act of Free Choice, reaffirming West Papuan independence (Free West Papua 2017). The Papuan President Council was formed in order to pursue the demand for self determination but in 2001 the Indonesian army assassinated Theys Eluay, President of the council. Today, the West Papua National Committee (Komite Nasional Papua Barat/KNPB) has become prominent. In 2012, KNPB Chairman Mako Tabuni was murdered by Indonesian police and others were given lengthy jailed term of fifteen years even for raising the West Papuan flag. Atrocities including rape, torture, surveillance, arbitrary arrest, detention, forced cannibalism, forceful disappearance, sexual mutilation and murder which has become the “mode of governance” in the West Irian region of Indonesia (Braithwaite et al, 2010).

¹⁶The refugees fleeing the province attribute their conditions: i) transmigration program ii) loss of traditional land iii) and the violence committed by the Indonesian forces.

The GDP of West Papua per capita is \$3,510 compared to Indonesian average of \$2,452 yet Papuans has the highest poverty rate in the country with highest infant, child and maternal mortality rate in the country. West Papuan has a very low literacy rate. The HIV rate is one of the highest in Indonesia (Schulman 2016). According to Indonesia's Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (Kontras), there has been 1200 incidents of harassment, beatings, torture and killing of Papuans by Indonesian security forces since Widodo election in 2014 (Jones 2015). The Brisbane Commission has called on the Indonesian government to allow Papuans the right to self determination. In this struggle women¹⁷ and children were the hardest hit given their vulnerability leading to sexual violence, rape, threat and mutilations. In order to advance the national interest such resistance has been met with increase militarization of the region along with political oppression for pro-independence West Papuan leaders and activists (Crocombe 2001: 427). West Papua is the most heavily militarized region in Indonesia with an estimated deployment of 45,000 troops (Harvey 2014). The Indonesian military also plays a major role by exerting its influence over Indonesian politics and it operates in West Papua as a "virtually autonomous government entity" (Chauvel 2011:120).

The Melanesian Way or the Melanesian Brotherhood as espoused in the MSG is based on ethno-political solidarity across Melanesia sub region with a strong anti-colonial stance. The Papuan nationalists continues to claim that West Papua was a sovereign independent territory since the 1960's and the colonial Indonesian government is responsible for denying their right to self-determination (Webster 2010). Whereas the Indonesian claimed that Papuans exercised its right to self-determination along with the rest of Indonesia in 1945. The legitimate aspiration for independence of a colonized Melanesian people led by ULMWP has not been taken into consideration even after long years of struggle. The Indonesian has shelter in the often misused international law-right to non-interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state which is in direct clash with the right to self-determination of the Melanesian people which is implicit in the moral case for decolonization.

¹⁷ A West Papuan documents "Enough is Enough! Testimonies of Papuan Women Victims of Violence Human Rights Violations 1963-2009" was published highlighting the violation of human rights in the province.

New Caledonia and the Reluctant Colonial Power: France

New Caledonia is a French Overseas Territory in the Pacific. The country has one of the highest average income per capita in the region and is rich in mineral resource particularly nickel which amounts to quarter of the world's nickel deposit (BBC 2016). New Caledonia has a population of about 262, 000 and GDP per capita 12, 579, 60 USD (2000) with life expectancy of 76.25 years (Work Bank 2012). The country has an area of 18.575 sq, Km. French is the official language while Melanesian and Polynesian languages and dialects are also spoken (BBC News 2016). The first European to visit New Caledonia was the British explorer Captain James Cook on 4 September 1774. Like in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, New Caledonian were also subjected to inhuman form of enslaving called "blackbirding", a euphemism for enslaving people to work in sugarcane plantations in Fiji, Queensland, Australia and other foreign colonies. In September, 1853 and January 1854, the chiefs of Balade and the Isle of Pines signed an act recognizing French sovereignty with Rear Admiral Febvrier Despointes. The discovery of nickel on the banks of Diahot River in 1864 led to the establishment of Societe Le Nickel in 1876 and the laborers were imported from neighboring islands, Japan, Dutch East Indies and French Indo-China. Criminal and political prisoners were also sent to New Caledonia between 1860s to 1897. There were number of insurrections¹⁸ based on ethnic conflict like the insurrection of 1856-59 near Noumea and uprising of 1878-79 seriously threatened the French occupation. Beginning in 1868, on Grande Terre, the colonial administration regrouped the clans in restricted areas called reserves, which were inalienable and non-transferable. From 1887 till the end of the Second World War, the Régime de l'Indigénat-the administration for French colonial policy placed the Kanak under the protection of France, and confined the clans in reserves led by chiefs chosen and paid by the administration. The 1945 French constitution made colonies disappear with "New Caledonia and its dependencies" becoming an overseas territory with greater autonomy. In 1946, New Caledonia became an overseas territory and in 1953, French citizenship was granted to all New Caledonians. In 1957, the application of the 1956 Defferre governing law created greater autonomy and saw the appointment of a local

¹⁸ The reasons behind such uprising were due the confiscation of lands. ii) Head tax imposed in 1899 by the colonial government on Melanesian male iii) The grazing of settlers cattle on the Melanesian gardens.

government with Caledonian ministers. In 1970's, Caledonian Union became an increasingly Melanesians party supporting causes of independence eventually forming a coalition with minorities parties called Independence Front. The Independence Front rejected the offer of self-government in territorial affairs under Lemoine Statute of 1984. By the middle of 1980s, the FLNKS became more radical and boycotted the elections in 1984 (Foster 2017). In 1988, the Matignon accord was signed by loyalist Jacques Lafleur of the Rassemblement Pour la Caledonia dans La Republic (RCPR) party, separatist Jean-Marie Tjibaou (FLNKS) and Prime Minister Michel Rocard signed on behalf of the French state. The Matignon Agreement, signed on 26 June 1988, ensured a decade of stability. In order to bring a conducive ending to the long discord the Noumea Accord was signed on 5 May 1998.

Demographic Composition of New Caledonia

The Kanak and Caldoche (people of mixed descent) are the two competing identity in New Caledonia. The Kanak identity is based on clan membership and with its steep attachment to land whereas Caldoche¹⁹ are essentially integrated into cash economy. There are also Polynesian minority in Wallis and Fatuna Islands. The Encyclopedia Britannica give the demographic percentage with 29.2 percent of European descent, 40 percent Kanaks and the rest consists of descendant of Polynesians, Indonesian and Vietnamese migrants workers. Ethnic differences are a major factor in employment as major bureaucratic offices are dominated by French public servants. The imbalance will continue, as the RPCR holds key position in the government including economic affairs, finance, budget, employment, public service, training and education (MacLellan 1999).

The Noumea Accord (1998): The Deferment of Independence

According to Chappel (1999), Noumea Accord raises a familiar constitutional issue in global decolonization: whether a Western-derived "civic" model based on "universal" human rights should shape the nation-state, or indigenous anti colonialism should generate a distinctive ethno cultural identity. The key elements of the Accord are (a) constitutional changes to New Caledonia's status within the French Republic (b) to conduct election in 1999 for new political institutions (c) an 'irreversible' transfer of

¹⁹ Caldoche are European inhabitants in New Caledonia, mostly native-born French settlers.

administrative powers from Paris New Caledonia; (d) recognition of indigenous Kanak culture and identity (e) and a referendum on self-determination after 15-20-year transition period (MacLellan 1999). The Nouméa Accord promises that between 2014 and 2018 a referendum on a move towards full sovereignty will be organized.

The Australian Indigenous Law Reporter (2002) on Noumea Accord²⁰ states that “the relationship of New Caledonia with the distant motherland long remained marked by colonial dependency, a one-sided relationship and a refusal to recognize specific characteristics, from which the new communities, in their aspirations, also suffered”. The colonial society did not treat the dark-skinned, indigenous Melanesians of New Caledonia with the same romantic imagination ascribed to Polynesians but on the contrary, the Canaques (Kanak) were regarded as ignoble monkeys doomed to extinction (Barbancon 1992 quoted in Chappell 1999). Today, the political debate revolved around the right to administer their own affairs without endangering the flow of French financial aid. For instance, the election held in 2014 was fiercely contested on the line of self-determination and the referendum that is due in 2018 (ABC/AFP 2014). There is firm belief among the pro-independence group that the referendum²¹ will be successful. Roch Wamytan deputy of the pro-independence expressed that “the sovereignty of New Caledonia is moving forward” (ABC/AFP 2014). According to reports, in 2016 a New Caledonian anthem has been selected but a new flag remains elusive. Fisher (2016), suggests three major options for the future of New Caledonia which includes i) independence ii) some form of association with France iii) Continued association or slow integration with France. The FLNKS has long argued for affirmative action for indigenous Kanaks who have been made a minority in their own land by generations of foreign immigration into the Island. The RPCR is opposed to the upcoming New Caledonia referendum (Radionz 2016). There is a strong political debate over the future of New Caledonia in the light of the coming referendum to be held somewhere in 2018. But Paris is promoting a gradual regional integration of New Caledonia. New Caledonia has become a member of Pacific Island Forum in September, 2016. The country has also secured associate membership of International Organization of La Francophonie (Soyez 2016). On the 15th New

²⁰ See ‘Noumea Accord-Digest’, Australian Indigenous Law Reporter 88, 7.1 (2002).

²¹ The New Caledonian referendum of 1987 where an overwhelming majority 98.3 percent voted to remain with France with only 1.7 percent voting in favor of independence.

Caledonian Committee in Paris PM Manuel Valls unveiled a series of policies furthering these goals. In October 2016, French Education Minister Najat Valland Belkacern visited New Caledonia and outlined government education plans and inaugurated a new high school named after Michel Rocard (Soyez 2016). And Paris has promised to invest around 380 million euro within five years in the country with a focus on renewable energy and housing construction. Paris will also lend about 200 million Euros to New Caledonian mining companies suffering from the nickel price crisis (Soyez 2016). The media outlets in New Caledonia like radio stations and TV services are operated and owned by private sector function under the French public overseas broadcaster-Reseau France Outre-Mer, with such regulation and control over mass media, there is a tendency to influence the mass which serves the interest of the French government and the Francophone (BBC 2017). France wants New Caledonia to remain under its dominion and is focused on demonstrating how the island benefits from being part of France. Due to this pending referendum there is a resurgence of political tension in the region.

Neo-Colonialism in Melanesia

Neo-colonialism is the broadest of human security issues being dealt both directly and indirectly by the state and the individual. Neocolonialism is a subtle propagation of economic and political influence by the former colonial powers. Neo-colonialism seeks to re-enforce capitalism, neo-liberal values and cultural subjugation in the Third World countries. Such that the newly independent countries remain dependent on neo-colonialist power to meet their economic needs. In politics the neocolonial government policies and agents directly or indirectly serve to grant continuity to furtherance of their interest. It is the continuation of the economic model of colonization even after the impoverished colonized territory has achieved independence (Heaton 2017). According to Sandra Halperin (2017) it is “the control of less-developed countries by developed countries through indirect means”. Prasad (1996) argued that the question of neo-colonialism is by no means exclusively confined to Africa alone but since the mid-20th century, the world witnessed exploitation of global resources by the neo-imperialist nations in which the earlier imperialist mechanism such as active political territorial and military control was not essentially used for pursuing its interest, instead has used economic mechanism to exploit the resources of the developing or the Third World countries. Independence

did guarantee autonomy or complete independence as visualized by the colonized people. Instead, subjugation, domination and exploitation are still employed by the western imperialist powers. The colonial powers in fact handed over only the trappings of authority without an actual transfer of genuine power or authority. As a consequence of this deceit, the independent countries of Melanesia became dependent since they did not possess the requisite jurisdiction and control of the wealth within their own boundaries, remaining susceptible to foreign manipulation and domination. Norman E. Hodges (1972) noted this sad transition which he called as “unhappy reality of contemporary Melanesia”. Ben Reilly (2000) of the National Centre for Development Studies (NCDS) in Canberra has said that the South Pacific region is witnessing the progressive 'Africanisation'. Here, the colonial power and the metropolises in Melanesian context need natural resources for its growth and development hence ideology or economic policy is used as a resort to justify their continued presence both politically and economically (Martin 1982). The Melanesian region became one of the main exporters of raw materials and agricultural products to the metropolitan states, notably groundnuts, sugarcane, palm oil, bananas, timber and fish products. Giles and Gills (1977) noted that “the early pattern of economic development was a plantation-based agricultural sector with little urban economic development.” And the introduction of modern economic system based on trade, currency and other means was new to the Melanesian people and this has not improved the life of the various communities instead the Melanesian face the same problems as in the past is no different from the present (Xie 1997). Like the African states as Nkrumah puts it, the countries have the status of sovereign and independent state but but in reality “its economic system and also its political policy continues to be directed from outside”. Thus, ‘investment under neo-colonialism widens the gap between the rich and the poor in the Third World countries (Rao 2000:315).

Australia and New Zealand form colonial power by default assuming as these countries assumed responsibility for several of the colonial states in the Pacific region as a result of World Wars but the continued interference even after the independence of the Melanesian countries on the ground of political instability and economic disparity is seen as a ploy to further their neo-colonial interest in the region. Though, the assistance was provided in the only name of providing security and restoring law and order. The ambition was otherwise, as it was aimed to assist in extracting natural

resources. In 1990s, the issue of neo-colonialism became more visible after the theory of “failed state” as proposed by UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali in response to the collapse of a third world country Somalia (Thürer 1999). The idea of failed state gained momentum among both policymakers and scholars in the Pacific as the ‘arc of instability’ moniker was applied first to Indonesia as a result of the financial and political instability leading to the fall of Suharto, then to East Timor and shifted the epicenter to Melanesia by Australia due to the Bougainville conflict, the coups in Fiji, and the Solomon Islands (Dobell 2007).

Political Instability and Neo-colonialism

Political instability in Melanesia is also attributed to the presence of neo-colonial powers and their interferences in the domestic affairs directly or indirectly through coercive policy threat and intimidation. This is seen from some prominent cases in the region. Political stability prevailed in Vanuatu from 1980s till 1991 under Vanua’aku Pati (VP) leadership. But in the ensuing years the government leadership changes several times due to unstable coalitions and no confidence motion was often used to bring down the government. For instance, a vote of no confidence was used in November 1999 and Barak Sope became the Prime Minister. The ousting of Vohor in 2004 was the culmination of bitter domestic political infighting and the direct intervention of Australian government in the affairs of Vanuatu which occurred due to Vohor decision to unilaterally establish diplomatic relations with Taiwan for an aid of more than USD 20 million. By using the fragile politics and economy of a country like Vanuatu, Australia exerts its neocolonial influence. For instance, Canberra warned Vanuatu that Australian financial assistance will be stopped if the country does not adhere to the standard imposed by Australian in the name of good governance (Gagliot 2004). With pressure from Australia, a no confidence motion ensued with Hamlini emerging as the Prime Minister in 2004. In this continuing saga of mistrust and political interference, Vanuatu PM Sato Kilmer and his advisors while enroute to Israel from Sydney on April 2, 2012 were stopped by immigration officials and arrested Kilman’s private secretary Clarence Marae charging him with conspiring to defraud the Commonwealth. In return, Sao government ordered the end of all Australian Federal Police (AFP) operations in Vanuatu in which twelve AFP officials and their families left Vanuatu (Cooney 2012).

Fiji is one of the most developed countries in the Pacific partly due to its geographical location and the quality of its infrastructures. It is one of the countries in Pacific which is most vocal of outside interference in the domestic politics especially by Australia and New Zealand. The country plays the role of regional administrative centre hosting the headquarters of several regional organizations like Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and University of South Pacific. In the beginning of 1972, the population was divided into two distinct communities; Indian or Fijian. Fiji saw a series of coups mostly on ethnic²² ground. The first coup after Fiji got her independence was witnessed in 1987 which also led to the emergence of Taukei Movement (Owners of Land) who believes in the Fijian supremacy. Australia exerted consistent but low key influence on the key players in Fiji politics to eliminate discriminatory aspects of Fiji political institutions (Sherlock 1997). Another coup was witnessed in 2000 after Mahendra Chaudhry of the Labour Party was elected as the first Indo-Fijian Prime Minister, conducted under the constitution of 1999. This coup was an expression of ethnic Fijian power and identity and for the soldiers, a legitimate form of communal Fijian action. In 2006, another coup was witnessed as a result of granting amnesty for the leaders of 2000 coup. As political instability continued, Australian army Chief Lt. Gen. Leahy called for the need for Australia to make a 'prudent plans' to counter it which was reacted sharply by the Fijian political leadership. Prime Minister Voreqe Banimarama has criticized both Australia and New Zealand for interfering in the domestic matters, that is against the detention and questioning of Fiji Labour Party leader Mahendra Chaudhury, Sitiveni Rabuka, National Federation Party leader Dr. Biman Prasad, Unionist Attar Singh, academic Dr. Tupeni Baba for attending a meeting without permit as required by the Public Order Act (Valemei 2016). The Chief Justice of Fiji Anthony Gates has also condemned Australia and New Zealand for breaching international conventions (Scoop 2009). The imposition of sanctions on Fiji's judiciary by Australia and New Zealand backfired leading to expulsion of Australian and New Zealand High Commissioners James Batley and Michael Green (Newsweekly 2009). The coups in Fiji have invited international intervention and have led to the expulsion of Fiji from

²²The origin of ethnic division according to Stephen Sherlock (1997) can be trace in the following reasons; i) The British facilitated their rule accommodating and creating a Fijian elite ii) The division between the Eastern and Western parts of the country iii) Economic segregation of races where Fijian were engaged in subsistence agriculture and Indo-Fijian in plantations.

the Commonwealth nations twice. Fiji was also suspended from PIF under the duress from Australia which has been cautioning Fiji for its non-compliance to democratic values in 2009 and was lifted in 2014.

The most prominent intervention in Melanesia happened in Solomon Islands on July 17, 2003, where the parliament authorizes the intervention of Regional Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) under the auspices of 2000 Biketawa Declaration of the Pacific Islands Forum. RAMSI²³ had no model to follow other than UN peace-keeping missions and arrived with very little expertise or knowledge in handling the crisis. The chief goals were to restore law order and assist the state in its governance (Moore 2007). RAMSI was a police-led operation, consisting of Participating Police Force²⁴ (PPF) led by Australia with some paramilitary forces as back up. When the Facilitation Act²⁵ was passed in July 2003, Sogavare was against the surrender of power to RAMSI. This became more visible in the lead-up to the April 2006 elections, where Sogavare clearly stated his discontent over RAMSI open ended presence in the country. And for not involving Solomon Islands government in any regular review of operations. According to Clive Moore (2007) the Australian Government and RAMSI have leverage in directing the domestic policies of the government. RAMSI on positive note has helped create a platform for reform, improved governance and economy but the country remains among the most impoverished countries in the Pacific. It is argued that there is lack of transparency in spending Australia aid money, maybe in health or education while on the other hand the presence of hundreds of highly paid RAMSI personnel has inflated rental rates and other costs of living. The resentment of unemployed youths is seen as social time bomb ticking (Connor 2007).

²³ The purpose of the intervention was three fold: i) Restore law and order ii) Restoring public service. iii) Sustainable long-term development and strengthen earlier infrastructure reforms iv) Withdrawal of RAMSI.

²⁴ The personnel consisted of Australian Federal Police, New Zealand, Fiji, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

²⁵ The Facilitation Act gave Australian personnel immunity from local law and exemption from all immigration and visa controls. It also exempts foreign corporations connected with RAMSI from many business regulations and tax obligations. Section 24 of the Act is controversial as it prevent Solomon Islands parliament from passing subsequent legislation on “amending or repealing or otherwise altering the effect of operation of this Act”.

As RAMSI is still stationed in Solomon Island, interference in the domestic politics continues unabated. In 2006, a free and fair election was conducted but there was dissatisfaction with regards to the election of the Prime Minister. This was further complicated by the uneasy relation with Australia, in which Honiara saw Canberra as interfering in Solomon Islands domestic's affairs (Kabutaulaka and Kabutaulaka 2007). The election for Prime Minister was held on 18 April where 3 candidates were in fray namely Job Dudley Tausinga, Snyder Rini and Manassen Sogavare. Rini emerged as the winner in the election. But many considered the election as unfair and unacceptable, leading to a violent confrontation between the protesters and the police. Sogavare's government proposal to revise aspects of the RAMSI including key areas of financial management was also vigorously opposed by Australia and New Zealand. The Australian foreign minister asserted that the mission was an integrated package and could not be 'cherry picked' (Radio Australia Pacific Beat 2006). But controversy was further complicated due to the inclusion of Charles Dausabea and Nelson Nee in the cabinet, both were considered responsible for inciting violence and organizing riots which was followed by a twist where Sogavare replaced Attorney General with a controversial Australian lawyer, Julian Moti²⁶. In the follow up to this uneasy relation, the Australian Royal Solomon Island Police (RSIP) Commissioner Shane Castle was declared 'an undesirable immigrant' by the Solomon Islands government and subsequently barred from returning while on vacation (The Economist 2012). This further escalated into tense diplomatic standoff with Honiara accusing Australia High Commissioner Patrick Cole as persona non grata, after being accused of interfering in local politics and was eventually expelled from Solomon Islands in September 2006 (Kabutaulaka and Kabutaulaka 2007). In October 1, 2007, Patteson Otte, Solomon Islands foreign minister addressed the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declaring that “the sovereign right of the Solomon Islands to determine the terms on which the government of Solomon Islands will permit continued occupation by the visiting contingent cannot be undermined by any members of the UN” (Connor 2007).

In PNG, social relationship based on community has been inculcated in the modern form of governance. The pre-independence colonial administrative structure was

²⁶ Julian Moti was pursued for rape allegations by the Howard government. Moti was instrumental in Commission of Inquiry into the causes of the April 2006 riots, where there is substantial evidence that RAMSI police and troops facilitated destruction triggered by post election unrest.

dominated and control from Canberra through Port Moresby. The new nation was beset with a number of paradoxes and contradiction. Even though, the country got her independence in 1975, the Australia government continued to influence domestic policies. Australia was critical of the PNG government approach in bringing about peace settlement in Bougainville, and in particular the reopening of Bougainville's mine where Australia has substantial financial interest. Australia relied on PNG and Nauru as part of "Pacific solution"²⁷ for offshore processing of refugee claims which was signed in the year 2003. The Supreme court of PNG has ruled in 2016 has rule the camp as unconstitutional. Australia has a huge economic interest in the country due to its rich untapped natural resources and has been part of the internal bureaucratic structure for long which help Australia to not only influence the domestic policy of PNG but also serve its national interest. In 2016, PNG removed 15 advisors from its public services which were working in key parts of the government like treasury, finance, transport and justice (Kelly 2016).

Weak Melanesian Economy and Aid Culture as Tool of Neo-colonialism

The Melanesian countries are affected by conflict or internal political turmoil and are largely aid dependent in order to meet the demand in education, health and infrastructure. They are faced with myriad of social and structural barriers to development which are causing aid dependency. Though, the statement of the donor countries emphasis on the need of the recipient countries, the amount of aid received by the aid dependent country is directly correlated to the interest of the donor. Nicholas Van de Walle (2005) argued that often times, resources provided by foreign aid sustained the wrong government in office and undermines adoption of economic as well as political reforms in the state. Like lottery winners, Woods (2005) argued that, 'these countries could suffer a number of ill effects from such a sudden gain, create havoc with their exchange rates, their internal markets and their budgets, increasing the risks of corruption and mismanagement'. There is little coordination among donors despite the fact the government have created institutions to foster cooperation. Aids are used by donors to ensure that their own companies benefit from aid industry sustains private support for development assistance (Woods 2005).

²⁷Pacific Solution refers to the Australian policy of transporting asylum seekers, refugees to detention centers on islands nations in the Pacific Ocean.

The division of labor in Melanesia is still largely based on gender with attachment of kinship (Bensa and Goromido 1997). In Vanuatu, majority of the population lives in rural areas where subsistence farming, fishing and production of cash crops such as kava, coconut and cocoa are the main sources of livelihood. The New Caledonian economy is based on the production of nickel as the territory is the fourth largest producer of nickel in the world which faces the risks the fluctuations of the price of nickel in the international market. The GDP of New Caledonia USD 11.1 billion 2014 estimates whereas in 2011 it stood at 9.90 billion USD. Today, tourism has become an important source of revenue. But despite a sizeable economy the country is also aided financially by France which accounts for 20 percent of the country's GDP and which helps cover health, education and the public service (ABC 2005). Apart from nickel, goods exports are dominated by agricultural products which have very low market values as compared to the industrially finished goods that are imported into the country. In recent years, the economy has been driven by tourism and construction mainly in coastal areas. New investments are visible in sectors such as construction industry and renewable energy but there is significant inequality in the country with much of the wealth going to foreign countries (Andrew 2016). Majority of its tourist, aid and FDI flows in from Australia. Australian government tends to reconstruct the economy, political and other structural framework of the South Pacific region according to the Australian system which in turn will enable Australia to penetrate and control their economies and their political life (Guardian 2004). Threat and intimidation by the Australian politician is a common feature. For instance, the foreign minister of Australia Alexander Downer threatened to cut \$10 million aid package that had been earmarked for agriculture development. In November, 2004, the Australian government sent a delegation to Vanuatu with a list of alleged transgressions by the Vanuatu government. Australia often acts as big brother to the Pacific (Guardian 2004).

Fiji is endowed with forest which is 55.7 percent of the total land area, mineral and fish resources. Fiji has a rapid economic growth in 1960's and 1970's and stagnated in the early 1980's. Though it is one of most influential country in the Melanesian region, it is also dependent on aid with Australia as the largest contributor in health and education sectors. Solomon Islands is also an aid dependent country with major chunk coming in from RAMSI aid which is over 2 billion AUD. The government

rural development is also supported by aid donors and international funding agencies like the World Bank, European Union and Australian Aid. Massive transformation has occurred in PNG from the traditional economies to the present but the country has been turned into a dependent, raw materials based export economy controlled by foreign investors which is also vulnerable to downturns in global commodity markets. It has been estimated that about 68 percent of PNG's gross monetary sector is controlled by foreign individuals and companies mainly Australia (Andrew 2016). The mining and agricultural exports have given PNG a robust economic growth for over a decade. But this growth has not resulted in equitable development and PNG faces growing fiscal challenges. PNG does not have the ability to finance its maintenance and struggle in securing private investment and creating investor confidence. The country is still dependent on aid for providing public services. At the 25th PNG Australia Ministerial Forum in Madang in March 8, 2017, PNG highlighted the government wishes to see Australia aid managed directly through PNG budget by 2020. The main concern was the existing parallel system outside the scope of national budgeting and administrative management and maintenance processes whereby duplication of programs targeting similar outcome exist (Tavurvur 2017).

As seen from the foregoing discussion, the Melanesian states are still influenced and to a very large extent controlled by the metropolises. The political and economic sovereignty is limited by the policies and programme of Australia and New Zealand. Aid dependency is one main reason where the states allow outside interferences in the domestic affairs. The Melanesia states had a steady flow of foreign aid between 1995 and 1999 with average per capita aid to Melanesia at US\$ 73 three times that was given to Sub-Saharan Africa. But the Melanesian countries are among the poorest in the Pacific with considerable inequality of wealth and the failure of the governments to deliver basic services. Political instability often leads to ethnic clash and coups (IISD 2015). According to Helen Hughes (2012), Australia and New Zealand aid programs are chiefly responsible for appalling social outcome and help has not accelerated development. She suggested that “the propping up corrupt elites who swallow up any aid or tourist income or mineral income through good living and educating children abroad etc, should be stopped”. Instead, the state priority should be given to agriculture which is the principal source of livelihood. Countries which cannot perform the core function of government such as efficient public service

delivery are often dependent on aid. Aid has attracted critics as it makes recipients more dependent by reducing growth and tax collection, and thereby creating favorable ground for corruption. The real success of aid can be measured only when a genuine sustainable development progress is visible with empowered citizens holding their governments accountable for their acts and the governments developing their own economies (Action Aid 2011:13).

Conclusion

The Melanesian nation states has a long colonial history and out of the five countries, New Caledonia is still under the colonial rule and the political condition of West Papua offers a contrasting view to the notion of colonialism which is seen as Western dominated concept. All of the Melanesian countries were under the Western rule (here even Australia and New Zealand are included), but West Papua was colonized by Indonesia. The case of West Papua is interesting as the Papuans are of a different racial stokes that have closer affinity with the people of Papua New Guinea than the Indonesian. Even after the Melanesian countries got their independence in the latter half of the 20th century, all of these nations are still caught in the web of colonial design. The bringing together of different communities under one political administration has not solved much of the issues being faced by the people but instead brought about new issues in the region. The Melanesian countries as seen from this chapter suggest that colonialism still exist in the form of neocolonialism whether the metropolises admit or not. It is evidently clear that Australia and New Zealand have its domestic political and economic interest in the region. The ‘Arc of Instability’ has been coined in such a way that these island countries are seen as failed states which can threaten the security of Australia. Politically, one country is still under colonial rule and almost all the countries are unstable with democracy failing in the region. With little exception of New Caledonia and Fiji, the rest are heavily dependent on aid and loans from Australia, New Zealand, European Union, World Bank etc. Increasingly, the Asian countries lead by China and Japan has invested heavily in the Pacific region. Chris Sheahan (2016) pointed out that “many times international efforts seek to apply band aid treatments designed to deliver short term results that leave the donor with a feeling of accomplishment but fails to address broader concerns and allow a more developed society to rectify its own shortcomings.” Aid though controversial in nature has accelerated growth and development, assisting in

the reduction of poverty and inequality. But the Melanesian economies are trapped in a vicious cycle with high dependency on aid and low domestic tax, reducing the ability of the government to generate its revenue in order to fund its own development. Dependency reduce the space to design and implement their own respective policies as donor's often insist, for instance, on recipient countries implement their policy priorities.

Australia and New Zealand are the only two western powers in the region. Both have a long history of involvement with the countries in the region with significant interest ranging from tourism, financial, services, communication, mining and trade. Even the cultural preference has shifted from traditional to modern outlook which is influenced by the metropolises culture. If Australia and New Zealand seeks to continue the relationship both countries should emphasize on equal partnership in words and in policy framing in order to maintain the consistency in the relationship as there are keen players like USA, Japan, Indonesia, Taiwan, Korea, Soviet Union and particularly China. China have not only shown interest but have been investing heavily in the Pacific region. And more importantly, as Margaret M. Taylor (1991) puts it 'Australia and New Zealand should recognize the independence and sovereignty of Melanesian states and therefore be given the opportunity to determine their own destiny and in particular to be left alone to manage their own affairs'.

Chapter Three

Human Security in Melanesia- Issues and Challenges

After independence, the Melanesian countries are facing various HS challenges ranging from political and economic security to food, health and environmental security. None of the countries had a politically stable government and such unstable governance has given birth to cascading problems in the region. And in this security dilemma, the remnants of colonialism are still visible in the form of neocolonialism in the region. Australia and New Zealand are the two metropolises that had huge political and economic influence in the region that continued even in the post-independence era. The international community led by Australia is involved in state-building exercises in fragile or post conflict states in Melanesia with objectives on political and economic security to humanitarian issues. With its maxim 'arc of instability', it has substantially increased its engagement in its immediate region with programmes not only in the Melanesian region but also in the Pacific countries including Timor-Leste, Vanuatu, Samoa and Nauru. The Melanesian states are considered to be inherently weak or unstable and consequently, considered potential security risks to its citizens and regional neighbors. Melanesian states shared a number of issues including weakened traditional values, social tension, weak economy, political insecurity, tension between traditional and introduced structure of governance, outdated and conflict ridden land policies, socio-economic disparities, environmental issues, poor governance and a state disengaged from society (Morgan 2006).

Political Security in Melanesia

The indigenous political system yield considerable amount of power often in clash its jurisdiction and overlapping with the modern political system. The prolonged political and economic manipulation by the alien rulers has destroyed the social and political fabric of the once socially vibrant society infusing new ways of governance and their economic structure foreign to the natives. The political systems that have been handed over to Melanesia region are both parliamentary system and presidential depending on the former colonial powers. The conflict of interest occurs between the traditional chieftains and political structures which led to confusion, delay and corruption. Good

governance, a catchword for political security is lacking in most of the Melanesian countries as there is less accountability and transparency in the functioning of the government and its agencies. Decentralization of powers has not been effectively used as power originates, and circulate within the capital cities and urban areas often failing to infiltrate into the rural areas where progress and development is miniscule. As politics and bureaucratic system including economy of these nations are mostly occupied by the rich elite's, participatory democracy is not so visible. Media performance is also limited to urban areas with policies and programs of the government failing to decimate to majority of the population who live in the rural areas. As Melanesian countries are small both in size of the territory and population there is a general conception that participatory democracy will be complete success but the reality suggests otherwise which as national integration is threaten by ethnic divides, low level of literacy and inefficient corrupt leaders. All the Melanesian countries have democratic government but their functioning and success varies which can be attributed to former colonial powers and the social settings of the respective countries.

Women Participation in Decision Making

Many Pacific Islands countries have well educated women who are already employed in various fields but political leadership has historically been a male dominated sphere. And most importantly the social conditions of women in the Melanesian states are worrying with very low status and discriminated on various grounds. The chief and local assemblies are often against women running for election. The traditional land holding system also provides unequal access to land titles and wealth in the society. And women access to education is still limited and restricted in some cases, confining women to the formal and informal economies are regarded as secondary (NZ Parliament 2014). Women continue to be under-represented in almost all the political spheres in Melanesia and Pacific islands countries apart from Australia and New Zealand. In the hindsight, the Pacific region is slowly catching up with the rest of world²⁸ in electing women to public office. In March 2016, 42 Member of Parliament (MP) out of 559 MPs in the Pacific Islands Forum countries excluding

²⁸ The Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 1979 (CEDAW) requires the member states to have at least 30 percent of women representation in decision making positions.

Australia and New Zealand out of which 7 from Fiji (out of 50 MPs), PNG 3 (111 MPs), Solomon Islands 1 (50 MPs) and Vanuatu none (PACWIP 2016). Since 1975, women have been under represented in PNG political life and women continues to face discrimination at home and workplace in the hands of the men folk (Kar 2017). In regards to women participation in national politics only seven women have so far entered the national parliament since independence. In 1977, Nahav Rooney, Walliyato Clowes and Hon Dame Josephine Abaijah were elected. In 2012, Hon Loujaya Toni, Delilah and Hin Julei Soso were elected. In the sub-national parliament 4 women are currently Member of Parliament and 3 members were elected in the past. Today, the PNG has 3 Members of Parliament. In Melanesia, only Bougainville in PNG has reserved 3 seats in House of Representatives for women. In Vanuatu, about 49.6 percent of the workforces are women but gender representation in Vanuatu is weak as only 5 women have been elected to the parliament since independence. In 2008, 18 out 349 candidates stood for election among which 2 women were elected. Though gender equity is enshrined in the constitution, women have been marginalized from participating in government. The quota system was mooted in 2001 but majority of the population was against such move. The cultural and patriarchal attitude were acknowledged as factors for the under representation of women. In 2013, following CEDAW provisions 5 women were elected to municipal council in Port Villa and Santo (PACWIP 2016).

According to 2012, Women's Political Participation Report Asia Pacific, parliamentary seats for women in New Caledonia has helped secure resources which target at improving women's wellbeing positively shaping debates about female leadership (Swan and Walton 2013). The first female head of state in Pacific was held by Marie Noelle Themereau in 2004 and once again by Cynthia Ligeard in 2014 both Caldoche. Representation of women in public life in Fiji remains miniscule and it is not widely encouraged either. The first woman elected to House of Representatives was Adi Losalini Dovi in 1972. In 2014 election, 8 women were elected to the national parliament out of 50 MPs and Dr. Jiko Luveni became the first female speaker. In Solomon Islands, adult suffrage was granted to women in 1974 but only 2 have been elected to the parliament. It is a common perception among the Islanders that by custom men are born to be leaders. In Melanesia, reserved seats are seen by many as effective temporary measure to assist women to establish a presence in

parliament. It can help change attitude, increase the acceptance of women in public roles and ensure women's voice to be heard at the highest decision taking level (NZ Parliament 2014).

Corruption and *Poor Governance*

Corruption is a big issue within the government and its bureaucratic administration in Melanesia. It is considered to be one of the main reasons for political instability and underdevelopment. The US Department of State in its Human Rights Report on Fiji states that bureaucratic corruption is systemic and acts as a major constraint for doing business. Corruption at the higher political and bureaucratic level is serious and widespread issue and often goes scot free with impunity in Fiji (Wickberg 2013). Nepotism leading to appointment, recruitment and promotion in the civil service and state owned enterprises often times depend on ethnic or political affiliation and loyalty to the government. The weak legal system couple with administrative inefficiency creates significant corruption risks. In Fiji, corruptions continue to be main source of illegal procedures, smuggling, environmental crimes, proliferation of counterfeit goods, illegal logging and fishing in Solomon Islands. Corruption is widespread within the government and in the bureaucratic circle (ADB 2005: 23). For instance, Alex Bartlett who was Solomon Islands minister for agriculture and livestock was arrested on September 2, in 2004 by RAMSI and charged with inciting others to committing violence and other financial irregularities. Solomon Islands rank 72 among the least corrupt nation out of 175 countries according to 2016 Corruption Perception Index reported by Transparency International with an all time high in 120 in 2011 and from 2007 to 2016 it was ranked 105 (Trading Economics 2017). In 2017, Minister for provincial government David Tone was arrested and charged with stealing more than \$ 67,000 from his constituency coffer. The legal system in Solomon Islands like in any other Melanesian is weak with inefficient or unreliable officials and slow and uncertain court process. The public administration is also weak with unqualified staffs and a widespread absenteeism from office. These situations in the rural areas are reportedly worse. The social infrastructure is poor even in Honiara and other provincial towns (ADB 2005:24). New Caledonia also has reported corruption at the higher political level. In March 2017, a former President of New Caledonia Harold Martin was given a 6 months suspended prison sentence for corruption. In 2015, he was found guilty of favoritism over the allocation of a US \$

29million contract to an associate (Bruel 2017). Transparency International Corruption Perception Index ranks PNG 139th out of 163 in 2015. In PNG, corruption has become one of the main issues that literate youths and the common public want it to be erased. The Finance Department Commission of Inquiry (COI) uncovered fraud involving senior bureaucrats and law firms (2000-2006) period with 780 million Kina (A\$ 380 million) of public finances (Green Left 2015). In 2005, Ombudsman Commission found the 80 percent of the public officials of them were found to have misappropriated funds and of which 20 percent were related to cases of personal benefits. In 2012, Greenpeace found that over 5 million hectares of customary land has been improperly leased between 2003-2011 periods through Special Purpose Agricultural and Business Leases. Of which 3.9 million hectares were owned by foreign owned companies run by Australia and Malaysia. In June 2014, Taskforce Sweep also discovered Peter O'Neil alleged corruption in which he authorized the Finance Department the payment of 30 million Australian to law firm Paraka lawyers (Andrew 2016). In March 2016, the National Fraud and Anti-Corruption Directorate (NFACD) arrested Attorney General Ano Pala, Supreme Court Justice Bernard Sakora and Prime Minister lawyer Tiffany Twivey Nongorr for corruption, fraud and perverting the course of justice (Andrew 2016). Political patronage and nepotism are common in PNG with politician turned businessman owning majority of the businesses thereby diverting public money for personal benefit. Anthony Loewenstein (2015) argued that this isn't sole Australian fault; endemic corruption has blighted PNG for decades and Western loans and resource companies were principally blamed for engaging in neo-colonial practices by treating the country as nothing more than a source of wealth for outsiders.

Politics across Melanesia is plagued with politicians manipulating the government and its agencies to pursue personal business interests. There are evidences of investors trying to influence politician and bureaucrats in Vanuatu. For example, a major offshore financial investor Thomas Bayer was alleged for bribing officials to further business interest in Vanuatu. This has been further complicated by the Vanuatu's status as tax haven allowing real estate transactions to launder money received in offshore bank accounts (McDonnell 2015). Corruption at the higher level is endemic as evident from Justice May of the Supreme Court finding 14 members of parliament

including former PM Serge Vohor and the acting PM Moana Carcasses guilty of corruption in 2015.

Ethnicity and Governance

Clan and community diversity plays a role in policy formation and decision making both at the local and state levels. The Kanaks like any other Melanesian see land as their source of identity and livelihood and this was being reduced since the beginning of colonialization. As the space for cultivation and expansion decreases, social conflict often motivated by politics are common in New Caledonia. The cultural hegemony or stereotyping denies the legitimacy of Kanaks definition of progress as politics are control by Caldoche. The Noumea Accord provide for Economic and Social Committee, Custom Senate which look into matters relating to Kanaks community. The Kanaks who are numerically superior indigenous community began to tilt towards nationalist demands and it continues till today. The politics of Vanuatu is divided into two groups, Anglophone and Francophone with severe differences between them. Government instability is the norm in Vanuatu with political parties fragmented to such an extent that government are formed by party leaders who can weave personal and political alliances with only small margins making them vulnerable to challenge and repeated motions of no confidence. Thus, such practice limits the capacity of even a good government to govern to successfully in the country. Political leaders with ready access to cash can buy the support of members of parliament in order to move the motion of no confidence designed to change the government (McDonnell 2015). And voters tend to judge candidates on the basis of its ability to serve the narrow communal interest rather than a policy position or political ideology. This narrow political interpretation has not only limited the works of the legislature but also brings about social tension in a country where numerous communities live together in the same province or area. The lack of accountability is another reason behind political instability as seen from the Edward Natapei case in which he was stripped of his position in 2009 after missing three consecutive parliamentary sittings without submitting written explanations. And rightly so, Edward was replaced by Sato Kilaman as Prime Minister.

Solomon Islands ever since its independence has been facing numerous challenges ranging from corruption, misappropriation and conflict (Kwa'ioloa and Burt 2007).

Though democracy has taken roots in Solomon Islands with reasonably free and fair elections but that has not been converted to give good governance to the people. Solomon Islands ranks poorly in most of governance indicators. The members of the parliament perform legislative functions very poorly and government departments fail to deliver public services due to poor political management (Wood 2014). Solomon Islands have one of the highest degrees of political instability in the region and high turnover rate²⁹ of Prime Ministers. In a serious threat to democratic institutions a coup in June 2000 removed the Prime Minister, Bartholomew Ulufa'alu, and his replacements, first Manasseh Sogavare in 2000 and 2001, then Sir Allan Kemakeza became the PM (Moore, 2004, Carter, 2006). Due to ethnic tension between the Guadalcanal and Malaitans, political instability and infighting among leaders, law and order were the major cause of concern (Dinnen 2002).

In Fiji, the relations between Indians and Fijians depend on historical factors (Chauhan 1970). The ethnic difference has also made inroad to politics often leading to sharp division between the two communities. The coup of 1987 was against the Fiji Labor Party which has a considerable Indo-Fijian influence leading to the emergence of Taukei Movement (Owners of Land). Another coup in 2000 was targeted at Mahendra Chaudhry who was the first Indo-Fijian to become the Prime Minister. The 2006 military coup and thereafter the interim government through Public Emergency Regulations severely restricted civil society spaces giving the government the power to forbid marches, protest and conduct events regulating even the public and private space (Wickberg 2013). The Constitutional crisis of 2009 was based on the argument of giving more legal, political and social status to the Fijians. Though the 1970 constitution provided a balance in accommodating the various ethnic groups but this was changed in 1990 to suit the interest of the indigenous Fijians. The constitutional crisis continued till 2013 which eliminated race based electoral roll, race based representation.

²⁹ Since independence, Solomon Islands has seen 17 governments headed by Peter Kenilorea (1978), Solomon Mamaloni (1981), Peter Kenilorea (1984), Ezekiel Alebua (1986), Solomon Mamaloni (1989), Francis Billy Hilly (1993), Solomon Mamaloni (1994), Bartholomew Ulufa'alu(1997), Manasseh Sogavare (2000), Allan Kemakeza (2001), Snyder Rini (2006), Manasseh Sogavare (2006), Derek Sikua (2007), Danny Philip (2010), Gordon Darcy Lilo (2011), Manasseh Sogavare (2014-till date).

In PNG³⁰, traditional forms of social organization play an important role in society, and continue to be yield significant influences upon the conduct of modern representative politics. Political instability is a common feature in PNG but transition of government is relatively peaceful. Since 1975 to 1997, there had been eight changes of government (Reilly 1999). The military insurrection of 1997 was one of the closest military attempts to overrule the democratically elected government which was the outcome for inviting Sandline international, an international mercenary to handle Bougainville crisis. The secessionist movement in Bougainville started as a resistance movement to the environment destruction caused by the Panguna Copper Mine in 1980's. Bougainville Copper Limited (BCL) opened in 1972 in which Bougainville barely benefited. Rebellion against the mine BCL, PNG and Australian governments led to devastating effect which led to lost of 20000 human lives and destruction of infrastructures (Loewenstein 2015). In order to resist the corporate and the government, the Bougainville Revolutionary Army was formed under the leadership of Francis Ona in 1988.

Law and Order

Law and order posed a serious threat to HS. The high level of crime and violence also act as a major impediment to economic development in the region. The 2014 World Bank Report noted major crime spots in PNG like Port Moresby, Madang, East New Britain, New Britain, and Western Highlands etc. Jenny Hayward Jones (2016) attributes the rise of crimes to the introduction of firearms, instead of traditional arrows and dao (knife). Majority of the crime occurs in urban areas with foreigners attracting more attention than the local citizens due to perceived notion that they carry more money. Both international and national media indicate the prevalence of high rate of crimes and violence in PNG ranging from family and sexual violence, inter-personal violence, violence between different clans, armed burglary, weakness of nation building agenda, growing firearms, lack of effective law enforcement and the introduction of large scale natural resources projects, corruption etc. According to Lakhani and Willman (2014), high rate of youth unemployment is directly linked to

³⁰ Some characteristics of PNG politics are fragmented party system with high candidacy rates, very low support levels for some successful candidates, vote-splitting, low party identification on the part of the electorate, high turnover of politicians, and frequent party-hopping or party switching on the part of MPs.

levels of crime and violence. Poverty and lack of gainful employment in the formal and informal economies since independence is seen as one of the key drivers for high crime. Fiji cyber security is also being threatened, particularly in ATM (Automated Teller Machine) and credit cards scams, email and social media fraud schemes are also increasing. Organized crimes have become notable with number of cases relating to human and drug trafficking and migrant smuggling has been reported with the involvement of transnational criminal gang (US Department of State 2012). There is no known local terrorist threat in Fiji but the country is aware of the threat that can be posed by international terrorist organization as it is located in trade zone with porous border and poor immigration system. The police have raised concern relating to rising crimes in Vanuatu such as break in, assault, theft, broken homes and family disputes so that government will fund and provide materials to strengthen the various logical roles of the force at all wings to combat crimes in urban areas especially in Honiara. The police have also sought the assistance of the church, Chief and civil society in combating crimes (Ligo 2012). Gang based criminal activity, petty theft and yatch related robberies are increasingly reported in Solomon Islands. Riots in Solomon Islands has often been an issue as it target one particular ethnic groups mostly Chinese. The 2006 national elections and the riots was one glaring example of increasing tension and volatile relationship between the locals and the outsiders (Hawes 2006). Rising crimes are also reported in New Caledonia particularly in Noumea (Wordsmith 2012). In 2016, Paris committed to posting 53 police officers to New Caledonia in response to rising clashes and youth crimes and delinquency (Radionz 2016).

Today, tensions have emerged between the political system and the traditional indigenous mode of conducting the everyday affairs. The chief is most commonly used mechanism to deal with the disputation and grievances in rural areas and church are also employed in mediating conflict. The kastom system is becoming increasingly fragile and is not as effective as before. The existing institutional mechanism including the court system are not able to dispense justice on the issue involving such as logging and extraction of mineral resources (World Bank Group 2013). The institutional and external stresses are faced by PNG placing enormous pressure on traditional systems in resolving conflict. The migration from rural to urban, large scale resource project, introduction of modern governance system including state

institutions, education, modern technology, law and law enforcement have affected traditional life of the people (Haley and May 2007). Traditional system cannot effectively manage the social and economic conflicts arising from increasing investments in natural resources projects like mining, logging, corporate and local government and dispute over communally held land are common. The anonymity of urban life poses serious challenge to traditional social and political system which revolved around restorative justice and social sanction (Lakhani and Willman 2014).

Human Rights Violation

Human rights abuses are also reported in all the Melanesian states often perpetuated by the government and its agencies including police and security forces. The Manus detention centre in PNG continues to be centre of fierce human rights debate. In October 2013, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees visited the detention center and reported the inhumane conditions of the centre for asylum seekers (UNHCR 2013). The lack of funding, trained expertise along with lack of human resources for agencies like Office of the Ombudsman Commission, Police, the Public Solicitor's Office etc, are also considered to be an impediment in the fulfillment of its duties (Moliki 2017). Rogue police, cruel treatment of citizens has become normal occurrence and lethargic investigation is undermining the faith in criminal justice system (Asa 2013). In June 2013, police used machetes to slash the ankles of 74 men in retaliation for street brawls. Sorcery related attacks and murder are still prevalent in the country (HRW 2014). Coercion, violence and death, lack of accountability, police brutality are also ingrained in Fiji culture (Amnesty International 2016). In 2016, Fiji Deputy Police Commissioner told United Nations that the force will no longer tolerate police brutality in custody (Ligairi 2016).

Freedom of Media

Freedom of media has been a concern in Melanesia as the government in power often used as a tool to further their interest to an extent of choking opposing views with jail terms and other legal actions. Fiji is one country where the military government watchdog and Media Industry Development Authority enforced Bainimarama government media decree and Fiji First Party (party of Bainimarama) ended getting fair media coverage. The government has prosecuted media outlets and civil society for questioning the government, its policies and leadership. Individual media outlets

and civil society organizations practice varying degrees of self-censorship in order to avoid undue attentions and possible repercussions (OSAC 2016). Personal blogs, independent media, and social media have relative freedom unlike the traditional media (Freedom House 2015). The constitution of Solomon Islands in Article 12 guarantees freedom of expression and of information. Defamation is a criminal offense in Solomon Islands there has been cases in the past where the authorities have filed charges against press. Self censorship is common in Melanesia due to threat of lawsuit and defamation. But due to low literacy rate, only broadcast media have wider audience.

Economic Security in Melanesia

The International Committee of the Red Cross³¹ defines “economic security as the ability of individuals, households or communities to cover their essential needs and with dignity”. The socio-economic condition of the Melanesia region is primitive and has been practicing subsistence agriculture as their main occupation. Apart from agriculture, domestication of animals was common. This self-sustaining lifestyle of the Melanesia countries is due to the closed knitted social system where the tribe or clan are coalesced together in a particular demarcated territory governed by its sets of cultural norms and values. The colonial power set foot on the region in search of natural resources to feed their burgeoning industries in Europe and America. Their intention was more of a classic Marxist explanation which extracts the natural resources in order to gain profit by exploiting the mass of its human capital and natural resources. The Melanesian states have large Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) which is beyond their military and naval capacity to patrol or guard the sea. And due to lack of finance, human resources and infrastructures, the MSG states are dependent on countries like Australia, New Zealand and others for aid. The UN Sustainable Development Goals ³²(SDG) are very relevant for the Melanesian region due to its myriad problems and issues. The rapid growth in the metropolitan cities in the region

³¹ See what is economic security? International Committee of the Red Cross *June 18, 2015*.URL; <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/introduction-economic-security>

³² The goals are contained in paragraph 54 United Nations Resolution A/RES/70/1 of 25 September 2015. The goals are; no poverty, zero hunger, good health and wellbeing, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace justice and strong institutions and partnership for the goals.

is not equated with the growth in the rural areas. The concentration of wealth within the cities has been a cause of conflict in recent years as people often flock to cities for better livelihood. The exchange of products between the rural and the urban are also not favorable for the rural areas, as this transaction is between the agricultural products and the industry finished goods. Low awareness of monetary values also poses a constraint in the economic relationship. Though there are significant produce of finished goods in all the states in the region, as stated above, the poor connectivity between the countries is a serious challenge as most of the countries are islands and there are a huge distance gap which can only be travelled through boat/ships or airplane which are costly and cannot be afforded by the small businessman.

The current economy of New Caledonia is worrying due to stagnant economy, poor public finances, tax reform and the dying of the nickel industry, and the huge social and ethnic inequalities among the New Caledonians. The global collapse of nickel price has taken a toll on the economy of New Caledonia together with the technical problems. The major private players are Societe Le Nickel owned by French, Vale Brazilian and Glencore owned by Canada (Fisher 2016). The GDP of Vanuatu in 2014 is USD 85 million (World Bank 2017), Gross National Per Capita is at \$ 2,805 and inequality by Gini Co-efficient is 37.2 with HDI at 0,597 ranks at low 134 (UNDP 2016). The major workforce of Vanuatu is confined to small scale agriculture activities consisting of 65 percent. Vanuatu has been dependent on forest economy since the prehistoric times (Regenvanu et al. 1997). There have been a number of conflicts over the use of land and its ownership often involving stakeholders like the government, landowners, and logging companies (Regenvanu et al.1997). Due to narrow resource base and production the Melanesian states concentrates on a few primary commodities for production and exports. The country is also dependent on the remittance from France which amounts for 15 percent of the GDP (ABC/AFP 2014). The rapid population growth rate coupled with increase migration to urban centers is creating social and economic problems. People are more or financially poor but not materially poor due to secure land ownership in which 90 percent of the lands are owned traditionally (Welegtabit 2012).

The GDP of Fiji per capita in 2016 is 4.63 billion USD (World Bank 2017) with 1,290,000 km² of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The working poor at living on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) \$ 3.1 percent per day is of 13.2 percent of the total

population. Sugar production was the bedrock of Fiji economy but has been decreasing by 31 percent over the years (UNDP 2016). The future of sugar industry is under threat as large numbers of landowners have not renewed their leases and European Union (EU) which is the main importer of Fijian sugar has stopped importing in accordance with World Trade Organization regulations after 2008 due to its highly subsidized price. Today, tourism has become an important source of revenue generation for the Fijians. But the rising inequality has also called for development assistance with focus on the disadvantaged and marginalized especially the rural poor, women and people living with disabilities.

The GDP per capita of Solomon Islands is 1,010 (2012) and 1.57 billion USD in 2015 (World Bank 2016). The Gross National Income Per Capita (2011) is 1,561 (UNDP 2016). The HDI is ranked at a very low 156 (0.515 points) in 2015. The working poor live s on PPP \$ 3.10 a day which is of 52.6 percent of total employment with income inequality by Gini Coefficient at 46.1. The life of average Solomon Islanders has become more difficult because of the rising cost of living and the unavailability of or limited access to social service. The absence of other means of revenue, the island has relied heavily on exports of logs which are operated and owned by foreign companies. The near collapse of the economy, political instability, deforestation and lack of resources to control and regulate the activities of the logging companies operating in the country are major economic issues. The exports of palm oil and palm oil products fell from an estimated \$SI98 million in 1998 to \$SI65 million in 1999, and, subsequently, to \$SI6.5 million in 2000 due to the closure of Solomon Islands Plantations Ltd (Pacnews 2001). The weak economy is also caused by long term economic and political mismanagement since the 1990s. Ethnic tension and the civil war in 2000 rendered the government helpless in the pursuit of vibrant economic policies (Moore 2007). Today, youth unemployment and limited economic opportunities have become a major challenge. According to Dinnen (2002), the economic crisis is due to the inheritance of a narrow economic base and that in turn has made the country hugely dependent on international commodity markets. Solomon Islands have made significant political and economic gains in the last decade but the major constraint to growth include land tenure issues, low labor skills, poor infrastructure, high cost of living and weak financial management have reduced

incentives for international investors (DFAT 2016). Solomon Islands ranked at low 157 out of 187 countries in the 2014 UN HDI.

PNG like any other Melanesian economy relied on subsistence agriculture with 85 percent of the population living in rural areas. The GDP of PNG is \$ 16.93 billion in 2014 with per capita income at \$ 1790. The working poor live on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) of \$ 3.10 a day which is 66.5 percent of the total population (World Bank 2017). And the HDI is ranked at 156 (0,466 points) with 75 percent dependent on subsistence agriculture (UNDP 2016). PNG is dependent on extracting industry which has driven the economy and has also attracted foreign investors and trade with the growing Asian market. But PNG mineral resource can also be a curse as it is vulnerable to global economic crisis and due to its effect on the environment. And the neglect on commercialization of subsistence agriculture which can give substantial job and economic returns is partly a reason for this economic dilemma (Jones 2016). The economy of PNG is decelerating with the GDP growth expected to fall by nearly half to 2.4 percent in 2017 as it is in the construction phase of PNG Liquefied Natural Gas project and unexpected drop in energy and mineral prices decreasing the government revenue. According to International Monetary Fund (IMF), the country's debt to GDP increased from 23 percent in 2014 to an estimate of 39.4 percent in 2015 (Oxford Business Group 2017). In order to diversify PNG and Melanesian economy as a whole, there is an urgent need for investment especially by private sector in order to strengthen institutional capacity, improve road and transport, electricity and telecommunication and enhance human capital and other physical infrastructures (World Bank Group 2017).

Food Security

Food security is one of the main concerns in Melanesia due to lack of availability of land area and destruction of forest covers. In recent years, the changing climatic condition, the erratic and unpredictable weather has caused severe floods, drought and even tsunamis destroying standing crops and infrastructures. Due to rise in sea temperature, the availability and the arrival of fish at a particular season and location has changed seriously threatening the food chain of the people. El Nino in 2015 triggered drought and frost in PNG highlands triggering a major humanitarian crisis and food stocks (Europa 2016). The national food security and the rural urban food

security systems are weakly related. The household food security in rural areas is primarily determined by the availability of land and fishery resources³³ whereas in the urban areas household, food security is primarily determined by access to employment. PNG economy has shifted from a small scale agricultural to a resource driven economy (ADB 2011) but without equal distribution of the profits generated from the natural resources between and within the communities there are chances of major violent conflict (Banks 2008). The transition from subsistence to semi-subsistence and commercial agriculture has also raised concern about food scarcity as majority of the population is still dependent on subsistence farming (Hiagim 2001).

Community, Family and Personal Security

Community security is based on promoting community driven approach to understand and provide security with the active participation of communities themselves in order to give better service delivery, reduce social tension and social exclusion and strengthened democratic governance (Bennet 2014). Ethno linguistic diversity is one of the main characteristics of Melanesian countries and PNG is one of the most fragmented societies with secessionist movement in Bougainville, violent clash in highlands and urban crime and violence. This violence do not necessarily pose threat to national government but have considerable impact at the local level (Reilly 2008). Church as one of the most prominent social institutions plays a mediating role in conflict situation discouraging fights and promoting peace mediation. The reach in jurisdiction and the participation in dispute resolution process by state agencies vary in accordance with culture, tradition and need of the people. traditional systems of customary law often incorporate two types of conflict resolution i) conflicts within the village, communities, kin groups were solved through compensation, exchange of gift and ceremonies like sorcery ii) but conflict resolution outside the community is solved thorough warfare (Hassal 2005). In New Caledonia, there are marked disparities between the different ethnic groups in the capital Noumea. Kanak are discriminated against in employment, holding low paid unskilled jobs and unemployment rate among Kanaks are high with very few employed in nickel industry. About 80 percent of the Kanaks lives in reserved lands and the redistribution of land have not been

³³The value of the ocean and the coastlines in Melanesia at around US \$ 548 billion which contribute to food, livelihoods and economic activity.

effectively pursued. Resentment against French domination of language and education has been on for a long time and the employment of media by Kanaks to raise their concern with a newspaper Bwenando, radio station Radio Djiido in 1985 and an alternative school movement Ecoles Populaires Kanaks founded by FLNKS in 1985 has made considerable impact in advancing their interest in the country (World Directories of Minorities 2008). In Vanuatu, community ownership of land is common with men having greater management right over women but women in some matrilineal society have a say in land management. Men continue to be on the top position in economic and political leadership even though there are educated capable women in the country. Most of the villages do not have access to electricity and there is acute shortage of piped water despite government efforts to expand rural water supply. Solomon Islands mode of capitalist development has resulted in the uneven breakdown of traditional structures because of their tie to land. The ethnic conflict in 2003 is the testament to this uneven distribution of wealth and income. Norm Dixon (2003) has argued that ethnic conflict in Solomon Islands is a legacy of imperialist exploitation.

Civil society in the Melanesia region has varying freedom. PNG has been influenced by the role of churches and traditional social structures. Churches remain the largest and the most prominent components of civil society, fulfilling primary services delivery in health and education. The churches run about 50 percent of the health service, run two universities and 40 percent of the primary and secondary education. Churches are often seen as quasi state entities due to high proportion of social services. Caritas, Adventist Development and Relief Agency are prominent church entities and other international NGOs such as Save the Children and Transparency International are active in the region. The Civil Society Organization (CSO) in PNG has limited interaction in rural areas especially in health and education. Domestic NGOs of the Melanesian states exist in consonance with the law of the land like National Council of Women in Fiji, Fijian Teachers Association and National Teacher's Association and Literacy Network of Solomon Islands.

Social Security in Melanesia

Social security is an important aspect of HS which is enshrined in Article 22³⁴ of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Social security refers to the protection provided by the society to households and individuals by ensuring easy access gainful employment, health, education and providing basic services to senior citizen, women and children etc,. The Melanesian states are lagging behind in providing basic necessities for its population. Vanuatu is faced with myriad number of social security issues ranging from health, unemployment and discrimination based on gender. The revenue of Vanuatu government is insufficient to fund the huge social infrastructure like education and health services and the constraint caused by inefficiencies in providing public services.

In Melanesian society, women were confined to the role of procreation and restricted to the custodian of the home. Most marital relationship continues to be dictated by the rule of alliance and to make a different choice by a woman invites family disapproval and even beating. A survey conducted by Christine Solomon and Christine Hamelin (2008) in New Caledonia found that 12.5 percent of Kanak women had experienced forced sexual intercourse. Any deviation from social norms by a girl legitimate male sexual abuse but majority of the women no longer legitimize rape or physical violence even if the perpetrator is their partner. The rates of domestic and sexual violence in Solomon Islands is one of the highest in the world with 64 percent of women aged between 15-49 reported physical violence or sexual violence by a partner or person known to them (Ming et al. 2016). Gender based violence has largely been normalize with people believing that violence against women is justifiable if it is related to infidelity and disobedience. Fiji National Gender Policy seeks to promote women's human rights in accordance with CEDAW. In Vanuatu, violence against the weaker sex and children is the most common crime with 72 percent of women having faced sexual and physical violence (DFAT 2017). The youth unemployment rate is just at 8.8 percent for age group 15-24. The Women's Crisis Centre survey in 2013 titled 'Somebody's Life, Everybody Business' found that a total of 64 percent of women in

³⁴ Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

intimate relationship and by non intimate partner 9.0 percent (UNDP 2016) have experienced physical and sexual abuse by husband which is being done through control, intimidation and humiliation.

In Solomon Islands, gender inequality is also a cause of concern as there are social and economic barriers that constraint women access to education and formal employment sector. Violence against women is among the highest with estimated two-thirds of women aged 15-49 having experienced physical or sexual violence (DFAT 2017). In Solomon Islands, marital rape is not a criminal offence. And the constitution gives customary law its own jurisdiction and customary practices have huge influence in the formal criminal and civil process. The minimum marriageable age is 15 for both man and woman while CEDAW recommends 18 years of age. Amnesty International estimated between 1998-2003 about 75 percent women suffered some form of direct personal trauma. Women are poorly paid and mostly non-skilled labor largely due to their lower level of education and poor accesses to skill training. The enrollment in school in the rural areas favors boys over female. About 60 percent of the female population is employed as compared to 72.2 percent of men. And land title is held by 73 percent of men whereas only about 2 percent held by women.

PNG has one of the highest rate of sexual assaults and accusations of witchcraft which are considered to be threats to a stable society (Blackwell 2016, Davidson 2016). Family and sexual violence rate in PNG are among the highest in the world. Life expectancy is only 62 years with the infant mortality rate at 47.3 per 1000 live birth. Women are less likely to be employed in the formal sector, receive lower pay, and occupy few position of leadership in communities and government. The Family Protection Act 2013 was passed to tackle widespread gender based violence but the legislation has not been implemented. Police responses are found to be inefficient and largely ignore pursuing investigations or filing criminal charges. There is no proper service for victims such rehabilitation centre, counseling services and financial or legal support. Women are also victims of violent mob attack as women are very often accused of sorcery and witchcraft including burning of home, assault, beating and murder. Customary practices like polygamy are still practiced undermining the rights of women. And the repayment of bride price to their husband in case of separation placed women at a higher risk of domestic violence (Amnesty International 2017).

Health or medical issue is one important challenge in Melanesia. The colonial power was also responsible for the introduction of smallpox and measles. In PNG, diseases like cancer, malaria, cholera, tuberculosis (TB) and typhoid fever are common (Harter 2012). The life expectancy of Solomon Islanders is at 68 years with infant mortality rate is 23.6 per 1000 live births (UNDP 2017). In Fiji, the life expectancy 70.2 years with infant mortality rate 19.1 per 1000 live births. And the maternal mortality rate is 30 per 100,000 live births (UNDP 2016). In the educational sector, the expected years of schooling 15.3 years with inequality in education between male and female is 10.5 and income at 22.6 (UNDP 2016). In Vanuatu, malaria, meningitis, respiratory death, diabetes, neoplasm and maternal death are major health issues. And in Solomon Islands, hepatitis A, typhoid, malaria, cancer, diabetes, respiratory disease, communicable diseases like HIV, TB along with maternal, prenatal death are major health concerns. Due to high rate of unemployment, depression, alcohol and drug abuse are on the rise. There is no pharmaceutical manufacturer in the country so the country has to import all its pharmaceutical needs from outside. There is also shortage of health care workers. The life expectancy of PNG at birth is 62.8 percent with infant mortality rate of 44.5 per 1000 live birth. The rate of people living with HIV/AIDS is 0.8 percent of age between 15-49 which is one of the highest in the Pacific. Whereas the public health expenditure stands at just 3.5 percent of the total GDP (UNDP 2016). According to Oxfam, the about 61 percent of the population are yet to have access to portable water. PNG is one of the worst performers in terms of health and sanitation in the East Asia Pacific.

Water scarcity and access to portable water has become a major social issue in the Melanesian region which can be attributed to human activities including mining and logging destructing the main source of water supply in the highlands and natural calamities such as flood, cyclone, tsunamis and other natural disasters destroying the infrastructures. The rise in sea level has also inundated fresh water in some areas. In Fiji, only 47 percent have access to clean drinking water (Preston 2011). Lack of proper sanitation causes poor health and disease and to large extent restricts social and economic development of the communities. In rural area, less than 50 percent have access to portable water with another 40 percent who have access to the system is in need of repair (World Bank 2015). Sanitation is also a huge issue with open defecation rampant as 4 out of 5 people don't have access to safe toilet. There are no

facilities of safe drinking water in about 70 percent of all the schools in Solomon Islands (Kang & Kar 2013). In PNG, access to water has increased 6 percent slightly since 1990 but access to sanitation facilities during the same period has decreased by 1 percent (Galing 2016). More than 60 percent of the country's population has no access to portable water and improved sanitation. According to World Bank, collection of development indicators, the sanitation facilities in rural areas in New Caledonia was reported at 100 percent in 2015 (Trading Economics 2017). According to Riddell (2012), majority of the country's GDP is spent within Honiara and rural areas face numerous challenges like disposing the waste at sea due to lack of garbage disposal or recycling mechanism.

Education is a major challenge in a traditional based society where preferences are often given to male on the pretext that they take major family decision and women should be confined to the four walls of the house. In Solomon Islands, primary education is compulsory since 2009 but access to secondary education is limited as most of the population cannot afford. There is a need to support the teachers and administrators to deliver better education in the region and better partnership between the community and the state system. In PNG, the government has officially abolished school fess but barriers remain such as distance to school, insecurity, access to water and sanitation etc. About 13 percent of primary school aged students and 60 percent of secondary students were out of school in 2012. The adult literacy rate is at 63 percent (HRW 2017). In 2015, of the 23,000 students who completed 12 grade, only 4700 are continuing with the education in 2016 (Jone 2016). The National Disability Policy (2015) of PNG aims at enabling the disable to have a self-reliant life with active participation in community life. But major impediments to this policy are lack of accessibility, limited health care service, social stigma, inaccessible infrastructure and high dependence on traditional health care.

The Melanesian countries are also keeping pace with the advancement of modern technology especially in mobile phones and internet connection. In PNG, mobile networks cover about 70 percent of country with 25 percent of the population owning mobile phone but internet coverage is low. This is changing the way PNG engages in politics, business and social sphere (Rooney 2012). And Fijian has also made foray into social media world with 46.3 percent of the population using internet. In Vanuatu, internet is used by 22.4 percent of the population and mobile phone

subscription is 66.2 per 100 people which show increase in people's mobility (UNDP 2016).

Urbanization

Population growth and urbanization are correlated as increasing number of rural islanders move to towns and cities for employment and better social services, the rural subsistence agricultural practices is slowly diminishing. Today, societies are grappling with new aspects of urban issues like poverty, unemployment, health, malnutrition and rising crime. Solomon Islands remains predominantly rural but there is a high urban growth in recent years. Even in Fiji, rural migration has changed the city landscapes as renters who worked on the land lease are slowly pushed away in order to seek employment and shelter in towns and cities after the termination of leases. Slade (2012) is of the opinion social crime and violence, diseases, unemployment and environmental destruction affecting the common masses in general is due to unregulated migration. In Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu, the urban growth rate exceeds the national population growth. The rising urban issues cannot be solved without adequate urban policies and action like building of proper infrastructures like housing, road, lighting, health facilities, school etc, but planning and management of urban areas remains largely neglected. PNG National Urbanization Plan of 2010 has made little progress. PNG and Fiji are the two Melanesian countries that have Ministries dedicated to better housing and urban development (Keen & Barbara 2016). But there is a peculiar characteristic of urban squatter known as city village as people of the same community or clan often resides in the same settlement with order largely maintained through custom or informal governance systems. Effect of urbanization also leads to loss of direct contact with indigenous authority structures and traditional controls, gradual break down of extended family and indigenous values, and conflict arising due to land ownership. This rapid irreversible unplanned population shift from rural to urban has created other problems including sewages and sanitation issues, water scarcity and air pollution (Loison et al.1974). The increasing vehicle traffic is also a major cause of air pollution in the region. A particular feature of urban migration is the clustering of migrants from one area of origin which charts the city's population into a mosaic of mutually antagonistic blocs which often resort to violence even on petty issues. The

failure of social integration has bred various forms of unemployment, petty crime, prostitution, gambling, drug abuse and excessive drinking in urban areas.

Environmental Security

“Our nation lies at the climate frontline and will disproportionately feel the impacts of global warming.” (First Declaration of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, Maldives. 10 November, 2009).

Environment security examines the threats brought about by anthropogenic interference, natural disasters and climate change and global warming in the environment and its effect on individuals, communities or nations. The fragile ecosystem coupled with excessive extraction of natural resources particularly in the hilly areas without much concern for the natural environment and the people living in the vicinity is a major concern in Melanesia. The Bougainville conflict was caused due to conflict of interest between the landowners and the company responsible for mining. Climate change is also responsible for a series of environmental impact in the region, where cyclones, tsunami and other natural phenomenon are creating severe security issues. The rising sea level has started to threaten the existence of the Islanders itself. So eminent is the situation, that Vanuatu government has made a plan to purchase land in Fiji in case of eventuality due to sea level rise and inundation of the island itself. The London School of Economics estimates that across Pacific up to 1.7 million could be displaced due to climate change in 2050³⁵. Mining projects in PNG such as OK Tedi, Pogera, Liher, Ramu are considered to be environmentally destructive. Gold and copper mines have polluted waterways with untreated heavy metal runoff. Deforestation of rainforest is a serious issue due to growing commercial demand for tropical timber and expansion of habitable areas to meet the rise in population. PNG has about 1571 known species; amphibians, birds, reptiles, mammals, of which 25.6 percent are endemic and 7.0 percent are threatened. Each year about 50,000-60,000 hectares of land are cleared of which 50 percent for agriculture, 25-30 percent for industrial logging and the rest for infrastructure road and mining etc, (Mongabay 2006). The PNG government has been slow in addressing mining pollution and associated deforestation as this sector contributes 25 percent of

³⁵ See Business Standard (2017), Accessed on July 5 2017, [Pacific Island countries meet to battle climate change | Business .www.business-standard.com › News-IANS › Politics](http://www.business-standard.com › News-IANS › Politics) Jul 3, 2017 -

GDP and 72 percent of export revenue. According to Sarah Lagdom (2017), deforestation has caused loss of habitat, bio-diversity and ecosystem in which both cultural and traditional knowledge are lost forever (medicinal, material culture-clothing and food). Fijians are connected to the sea for its food and have significant cultural values attached to it. But unsustainable fishing like use of explosion and driftnet fishing has caused lots of concern for the conservationists and the people alike. The sea is becoming increasingly polluted from chemical wastes and solid wastes accumulating in the seashore, beaches and coastal areas as there are no proper management of municipal waste coupled with weak tourist management mechanism. The region is a transport hub and so oil spill are common and even shipwrecked and abandoned marine vessels are found along the coastal area. The lack of policies and infrastructure mechanism makes the country extremely vulnerable to natural disaster associated with climate change. The natural resources depletion rate is 0.8 percent of Gross National Index with 6.7 percent of Forest area change between 1900-2015 (UNDP 2016). Fiji is traversed by tropical cyclones like Winston and its geographical location favors the influence of both seasonal and inter-annual variations in climate. The focus on health and environmental issues are lacking in Fiji as the country focuses itself on economic recovery (Sarah 2014). There is a high level of dissatisfaction with the current environmental practice in Fiji (King and Weaver 1993). In 2012, Vunidogoloa became the first village in Fiji to relocate to higher ground due to sea level rise. According to World Bank Report climate change in Fiji will lead to higher rate of disease as average temperature rises, increase destructive storms, severe weather patterns and disruption of agriculture due to intrusion of salt water into the farmlands.

Vanuatu is also vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters including cyclone, storm surges, landslides, flood, droughts and geophysical threats like volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunamis (Govt. of Vanuatu 2017). And as the country lies in the Ring of Fire, the country has many active volcanoes like Ambae/Aoba, Yasur, Ambrym, Epi and Lopevi which in turn causes earthquakes and tsunamis in the region (SPREP 2013). According to IPCC 2007 Climate Change Synthesis Report, the intensity of cyclone is expected to rise as the temperature rises to 2 degrees Celsius by 2050. As majority of the population are dependent on land for their basic needs, there is a crucial need for policy readjustment in the face of climate change particularly in

agricultural sector. The impact of climate change is also likely to impact the ecosystem and most importantly the fishery harvest on its 680,000 km² EEZ (Gay 2009). The Cyclone Plan in 2015 caused severe devastation where 90 percent of the crops were destroyed which led to a financial toll of \$ 500 million. The environmental sustainability is also threatened as forest area which 36 percent of the total land area is cut down for logging and other infrastructure projects (UNDP 2016). Port Villa is the most exposed city to natural disasters according to global risk analysis study (The Natural Hazards Risk Atlas 2015). Similarly, Vanuatu has been ranked as the most vulnerable country to extreme events like earthquake, tsunami, cyclone etc, (World Risk Report 2014).

The rise in sea level also threatens coastal villages as many of the Solomon Islands living in low sea level areas especially the coral atolls and coral reefs. The expansion of human settlements, agriculture and timber harvesting in Solomon Islands has led to deforestation and pollution, while blast fishing and illegal export of exotic birds has raised serious concern about the biodiversity of the country (Kremer 2012). The Gold Ridge Mine in Solomon Islands also has several destructive effects on soil and water resources with report of cyanide spills onto the Metapono river contaminating water and affecting the fish and human, as people in the lower riparian are dependent on it for food and drinking water. New Caledonia dry unique forest has faced destruction by fire, trampling by cattle and invasion of non endemic species such as fire ants. The coral reef is a fragile ecosystem and due to repeated human activities the ecosystem has been destroyed or in some case on the brink of extinction. Mining of nickel has serious effect on environment and the nickel industry is the major contributor of air pollution.

Conclusion

The Melanesian region is known for its exotic location and diverse culture for long. But in recent years international concerns relating to HS has emerged as peculiar characteristics of the region. The Melanesian countries are unique in the sense that no country is immune from security issues and one or the other HS concern plagues the countries. The region's traditional system has been diluted with the introduction of modern political system which is occupied by the educated elites and those who have better access to resources. Apart from political instability, the economic condition of

some countries apart from New Caledonia is seen as economically unstable. Even though countries like Fiji, Papua New Guinea have high GDP and are in the middle income economy but they failed to deliver basic social service for its citizens. The lack of accountability, transparency, mismanagement of funds and lack of capacity in running the complicated political and bureaucratic administration are major issues which need to be addressed in order to solve HS concerns. The Melanesian governments face the challenges of ensuring transparency and accountability for revenue flows. And in order to attract foreign investors in the region, they have to restore investor confidence by restoring the integrity of the state system. As the foregoing discussion suggest, that neocolonialism is not the only reason for the various HS issues in the region but the political elites and the society at large are equally responsible. The abandonment of the social values and indigenous practices in exchanged for complicated modern system which do not necessarily fit into the social and political system in the society where traditionalism is the basic foundation for the everyday survival is not accounted for in many of the emerging studies and policies concern. All the Melanesian countries come under the Small and Developing States but the region is rich in bio-diversity especially marine ecosystem which drives the tourism industry and forms an important part of revenue generation. But this biodiversity is threatened by climate change. In this regard, Pacific Health Ministers identified climate change and health as key priority in 2009 meeting at Madang in PNG committing themselves to assess health vulnerabilities to climate change and providing access to information regarding climate change in order to adapt and to increase their resilience. In order to overcome the above challenges, the state and its agencies need to provide infrastructure, better access to technology, health and social networks (Slade 2012). The issue of HS has lot to do with the government of the Melanesian states and it is visible that the governments have not taken sufficient steps to address various issues of HS ranging from gender inequality, health issue, corruption or excessive use of force by polices. And this has led the people raise question and even protest against the government like in PNG where the government has been the focus of sustained protests including student's boycotts and acts of civil disobedience over corruption allegations by the political and bureaucratic elites.

The traditional economy offered an alternative to understanding global economy and the government strategies should recognize this fact in order to strengthen and

enhance it in development plans reflecting the central role the traditional economy plays in providing livelihood and sustainable development for the people. Regenvanu (2010) suggested some measures in order to overcome the challenges faced by the Melanesian region where he opined the need to recognize traditional economy in framing the policies of the government. According to him traditional economy is tangible with social and economic benefits. Secondly, the customary land tenure should be reconstructed to suit the changing time, as emerging issue like climate change can make food security and water security into a social and political crisis. He cites a viable example of Vanuatu Development of Agriculture, *three garden policy* which would apportion agricultural production into three parts a) market b) fulfill customary obligation and c) family consumption. And finally, he laid emphasis on education in order to transform the structure and syllabus of basic education system to reflect the realities of the central role of the traditional economy. At a time when Melanesian governments are facing many competing priorities, it also presents an economic justification for investment in protection, management and restoration of ocean and coastal resources (Panda 2016). As Melanesians have relied on the ocean and its marine resources for millennia not just for food and sustenance but also spiritually and culturally, a sustainable and inclusive 'blue economy' will help ensure these assets to provide benefits to all people of the region (Panda 2016). And a proper management of macroeconomic by the state with equitable and effective service delivery is necessary to ensure that development benefits are reached even to the members in the lowest rung of the society in the future.

In Melanesian states where ethnic diversities are a characteristic of a nation, a clearer and up to date study and documentation on the role of customary methods of customary conflict management and greater understanding of the nature of inter-clan and intra-family conflict around land leasing and benefit sharing would offer valuable insight for strengthening government and assist in dispute resolution in natural resource sector. Decentralize of state mechanism is necessary so that public services such as security and justice are delivered satisfactorily in the region (Bennet 2014). HS concerns in the region such as lack of institutional resources and capacity, weak state citizens relationship, tension within community, weak accountability in politics and public services, lack of decent employment opportunities and gender inequality need

to be addressed at different levels with the active participation of community, CSO, state and regional actors.

Chapter 4

Role of Melanesian Spearhead Group (1986-2016) and Other International Actors in Addressing Human Security Issues in the Melanesian Region

The chapter will look into the role of MSG in relation to the issue of human security in the region. It will analyze the participation of European Union, United States, Australia, New Zealand, China and Pacific Island Forum in providing aid assistance and development of infrastructures for the region through MSG or other regional organizations or through bilateral relations. The chapter will also look into the role of media in disseminating HS issues.

The Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) and Human Security

Regionalism can play an important role in securing human security concerns as regional body can effectively respond to the issues concerning the region. Regional bodies have more expertise and finance which are major criteria in order to address issues on human security. One cannot overlook the capability of regionalism by the size of it. Regionalism in the context of Pacific region or the Oceania region is not new. It emerged in the late 20th century which saw the birth of the Canberra Agreement of 1947 establishing the region's first formal organization- South Pacific Commission (SPC)³⁶ later renamed Secretariat of Pacific Community which looked into the economic, social and scientific areas including fisheries, tourism and education. Today, states are into various systems of competing and overlapping regional associations. The South Pacific Forum was founded in 1971 which was later renamed in 1999 as Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) with its Secretariat in Suva, Fiji dealing with trade, fishery, nuclear related issue etc. The regional forum also helps in maintaining the Western hegemony in the region which is a legacy of colonial era under Australia, New Zealand and France. And since PIF is dominated by Australia and New Zealand, the issues and proposal of other smaller member countries were seldom accepted by the Secretariat. This led to the emergence of MSG, it is more like

³⁶The founding members of SPC includes France, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, United States and United Kingdom

a movement to cater to the Melanesians since it is more unique than Polynesian and Micronesian regions. The MSG aims to give the region a distinct identity, an idea of a region with similar history and politics. The membership consists of countries lying in sub region in Oceania extending from New Guinea Island in the Southwestern Pacific Ocean to the Arafura Sea and eastward to Fiji. The countries are Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and West Papua. Though, regionally Australasia countries like Australia and New Zealand are close to Melanesia, it is not a member to the MSG as ethnic and cultural identity are the parameters to identify its members giving a unique regional identity. As stated earlier, one of the main goals of MSG was to pursue the interest of Kanaks in its struggle for self-determination. Alongside the pursuit of the issue of New Caledonia, the MSG has expanded its goals to include economy, health, political and social issues in its agenda. But the origin of the Melanesian Spearhead Group can be traced to the failure of the PIF in addressing the political and economic issues in the region. It is a counter reaction to PIF and SPC with a resolve to address the sub region specific issues at the sub-regional level.

The leadership role in the pursuit of economic and political security is guided under the leadership provided by the MSG where the group shares objectives and mobilizes the states for adherence to its purpose. This multilateral agreement called regionalism as described by Claude (1958) is as “a forum for debate; a forum which allows for mobilization and focus of opinion.” The MSG aims at regional economic integration through partnerships and seeks to address sustainable development and climate change issues collectively. As Melanesian countries are the largest and most economically dynamic island’s states in the Pacific. The MSG has brought about identity consciousness in the region and due to its success, the Polynesian and Micronesian groups of Islands has started their own group to look into their economic and political affairs in their respective areas. In 2003, The Micronesian Chief Executives Summit³⁷ emerged and the major achievement of this Summit to date is the establishment of the ‘Micronesia Challenge’ (Cain 2015: 152). The Polynesian Leaders Group³⁸ emerged in response to the success of MSG in the region. The

³⁷ Territory of Guam, Northern Marianas, the Republic of Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau (ROP).

³⁸ Cook Islands, American Samoa, Samoa, French Polynesia, Tuvalu Tonga, Niue, and Tokelau

Polynesian Leaders Group put emphasis on establishing cordial economic and cultural ties among its 8 states and territories (Cain 2015: 152).

The Melanesia region accounts for 98 percent of Pacific Islands land area, 90 percent of its natural resources and bio-diversity, 87 percent of the region population (May 2011:1). In 1980, the region was concerned with the nuclear testing issue, and in the 1990s, about the decolonization of New Caledonia. In 1996, an agreement was signed putting greater emphasis on economic corporation, cultural identity and values and in 1998 Melanesian Art Festival which was followed by annual meetings of foreign minister, officials and biennial meeting of leaders. In 2005, institutional and legal standing constitutional structure was framed which was signed in 2007 establishing the MSG. Apart from attending to economic and political issues, the MSG in recent years has drawn its attention to environmental issues due to climate change and has put emphasis on the management of biodiversity and ecosystems through environmental monitoring, proper disposal of waste management and pollution control. Tess Newton Cain (2015:151) states that Melanesian state has mature diplomacy as MSG members have broaden its relationship within and beyond the sub-region. The partial success of MSGTA is seen as part of its diplomatic and political maturity. In the initial years, MSG focuses on the self-determination process of the French territory of New Caledonia and the FLNKS was added as a non-state member in the Group. In recent years, the movement for the independence of the Indonesian provinces of West Papua has been a sensitive issue for MSG. The inclusion of Indonesia as an observer member of the MSG since 2011 has made this complicated as Indonesia used its membership to further their domestic interest of retaining West Papua by dispatching pro-Indonesian West Papuans to MSG meetings. Indonesia was granted an associate member of the MSG in June 2015. The inclusion of Indonesia is regarded by many as the end of the road for ULMWP, which is just a observer member in MSG (Carter and Firth 2016). The MSG Leaders signed the following Instruments of Cooperation at their Summit in Honiara on 26 June 2015 to promote, coordinate and strengthen intra-MSG relations, in support of Members' shared goals of sustainable development, good governance, economic growth, peace and security. The Declaration on the MSG 2038 Prosperity for All Plan is one of the policy framework to achieve MSG's Vision and Mission of enhanced sub-regionalism and integration, while the Implementation Framework serves as the operational guideline

for the Plan's Objective and Strategies and to guide future MSG resource allocation and programming (Melanesian Tok Issue Issue 3/2015).

Political Security

The Melanesian states are faced with a number of issues in the political sphere. Majority of the states are unstable and excessive use of force by the state mechanism are common often limiting the credibility of government agencies. The states are aware of the numbers of human security issues in the region. But with little resource at the disposal, the MSG has failed to provide the 'freedom from fear' in the region. The MSG subcommittee on security since 2008 had 10 subcommittees and 4 Police Commissioner's Conferences. In 2013, MSG Summit the leaders signed Memorandum of Understanding for Police Cooperation. The 6th MSG Police Commissioners Conference held in Suva, Fiji on 28 April 2016 focused on the implementation of the Regional Police Academy (RPA), Formed Police Unit (FPU)³⁹ and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and training a 30-member FPU for approved deployments. It also decided to establish a Police Women's Network; facilitating information sharing, organizing Police Games and cultural exchanges on a regular basis (Melanesian Tok Issue 7/2016). The MSG also has a Humanitarian Emergency Response Force and MSG Humanitarian and Emergency Response Coordinating Centre (HERCC), which responds to natural disaster and emergencies in the region, stability situations and restores service in disaster stricken areas. The Department of Peace Keeping Operation (DPKO) strengthens security capabilities and cooperation between member countries in the MSG and assist in UN peace keeping effort. The military of Melanesian countries are ill equipped and ill trained to faced the challenges of the recent times and magnitude. PNG and Fiji has a military set up while others do not have defense mechanism at their own disposal apart from police and paramilitary force. The rest are dependent on the metropolitan states. Here there is a question of dependency⁴⁰ in the region which is a form of neocolonial structure which reinforced external influence. The 12th MSG Sub-Committee on

³⁹ Formed Police Unit is aim to assist member country or UN in maintenance of peace and security, public safety, provision of appropriate humanitarian logistic, training support and facilitation and coordination of deployment on humanitarian and security mission signed on 26 June 2015 but yet to be ratified.

⁴⁰ A notion that resources flow from a "periphery" (poor and underdeveloped states) to a "core" (rich states and developed states)

Legal & Institutional Issues meeting in Honiara, Solomon Islands on 17-18 March 2016 has discussed the national ratification and implementation plans for treaties and agreements such as Treaty on Reciprocal Enforcement of Foreign Judgments, Regional Police Academy and Framework Agreement on the Formed Police Unit etc.,. The MSG has also responded to the issue of RAMSI, Bougainville, New Caledonia, ULMWP and the political instability in Fiji and its relation with PIF urging for constructive dialogue with Fiji and PIF and seek for reconciliation and dialogue in their various MSG Leaders Summits (MSG Leaders Summit 2015 Communiqué, MSG Summit 2005, Special MSG Leaders Retreat 2009). The role of MSG is limited in most of the above issues as the members state themselves face various domestic challenges ranging from political instability, economic security to environment and others. The lack of technical expertise, human resources and finance has curtailed its participation in responding to issues facing the region.

MSG and Self-Determination of West Papua and New Caledonia

The most critical challenges that the MSG face today are political in nature. There are number of political issues which await a settlement ranging from political instability in Solomon Island and the future role of RAMSI, the struggle for independence in Bougainville in Papua New Guinea, West Papua and New Caledonia. Although colonialism is slowly fading from the people's memory; especially among the younger generation, the remnants of colonialism is still found and MSG is working on making the people aware of how colonialism is still present under different guises. As stated in the first chapter, the MSG was formed to develop as sense of collective identity in the region and also fight for its rights and place to govern itself without outside interferences. Melanesian Region still has the trappings of the colonial history with New Caledonia yet to get independence along with West Papua region which is under the Indonesian control.

New Caledonia

The formation of the Melanesian Spearhead Group was not only to give a sense of regional identity and cohesion but also to fight for issues that are plaguing the region. The cause of Kanaks in New Caledonia was one of the main goals of the Group. Right from its formation, the MSG has raised the issue New Caledonia and eventually granting a non-state membership status for FLNKS in 1991 itself. By achieving

recognition at the international level, the Kanaks have succeeded in loosening the colonial vise (Bensa and Wittersheim 1998). Apart from the Melanesian members, Australia and New Zealand have also expressed themselves for favorable independence. NGO's like Teachers and Mine Workers Union in Australia and Independent aid organization in New Zealand have also assisted in funding equipment like radio transmitter and printing press and also provide office space for the FLNKS to promote their cause overseas (Aldrich 1993: 271). The Pro-France did much less to internationalize the movement but raise their concern over outside interferences in the domestic affairs of New Caledonia. But there are some Francophone communities in Pacific that tacitly support the movement like the *Le courier*. France continues to retain power relating to defense, internal security, foreign police, justice, currency and public order. And has a huge influence in the domestic matter, even in education-the only language of instruction in the state supported schools is French. France continues to fund country's budget including health, education and military security forces (Shineberg and Foster 2017). The 2008 Defense White Paper⁴¹ of the French government has announced the significant changes to its military bases structure in the Pacific Islands as part of broader rationalization of military deployment around the world in which New Caledonia will become a major base in the pacific. This is being done in corporation with Australia as seen from Australia-France Defence Cooperation Agreement framework which came to force on 7th July, 2009 (MacLellan 2009) suggesting tightening of regional ties for influencing regional policies in favor of continued colonialism.

West Papua

The issue of West Papua has been largely ignored by the MSG which contradicts its longstanding support for New Caledonia. The fall of Suharto did dawn any change in the region as human rights abuses by the Inodesian police and military continued unabated. A new form of social advocacy emerged due to technological advancement, with modern social media such as facebook, twitter and others used in spreading information on West Papua across the region. This solidarity movement has forced a MSG to look into the human right abuse and its relationship with Indonesia in its

⁴¹See [The French White Paper on Defence and National Security](http://www.mocr.army.cz/.../French%20White%20Paper%20on%20Defence%20and%20N) 2008
URL: <http://www.mocr.army.cz/.../French%20White%20Paper%20on%20Defence%20and%20N>

summits (Maclellan 2015:271). The demographic projections indicate that Papuans will be reduced from 96.09 percent in 1971 to just 28.99 percent of the population by 2020 in West Papua (Elmslie 2010: 6). The MSG's new engagement contrasts with the silence of the PIF over the last decade. The Forum too avoided the issue of West Papua for nearly 30 years as major states like Australia and PNG reaffirmed the 'territorial integrity' of Indonesia (Maclellan 2015:271). Apart from the lackadaisical attitude of PIF, the policies and views within the members of MSG also differ. The position of PNG's policy on West Papua is also complicated as it has in its territory- an unfinished political issue Bougainville province, which still pose challenge for PNG's political leadership. Whereas Vanuatu has been vocal and instrumental in supporting and raising the West Papuans issue both at the regional and international level. Walter Lini, the Prime Minister of Vanuatu once said "Vanuatu will not be free until all Melanesians are free" (Cullwicj 2013). At the UN millennium Summit 2000 in New York, Nauru and Vanuatu and Tuvalu has raised the issue by declaring their support for West Papuan independence. Countries like Fiji and PNG fear further relationship strain in their developing relations with Indonesia (Sally 2015). But PNG in recent years has signaled the recognition of the national symbol and statehood by raising the Morning Star flag for the first time in the history at the PNG government building in Port Moresby marking West Papua National Day on December 1, 2013 (Robinson 2013). The MSG has also granted West Papua an observer status in 2014 after decades of denial. The membership for ULMWP was considered at the MSG biennial summit held in Honiara in 2015 whereas FLNKS also a non-state entity was accorded the membership in MSG in 1991. Despite the low attention given to West Papua, the issue is often found mentioned in MSG summit communiqué in support of 'the inalienable rights of the people of West Papua towards self-determination' and raising the concern of human rights violation in West Papua by the Indonesian government (Maclellan 2015:275). The ULMWP resubmitted application MSG membership in February 2015.

The growth of social media is also attributed to the rising profile of the West Papuan (Blades 2014). The technology revolution has reached the remote Papuans who have by now are active in social media with mobile phones and internet at their disposal. These tools are being use to raise their concerns and connect with the rest of the world assisting in their struggle for independence (Free West Papua 2017). The Free West

Papua Campaign is to ensure complete independence for Papua from Indonesian rules with its website sharing the condition and plights of the Papuan at the international level. International press access is still limited and has to be escorted by the Indonesian police in order to visit West Papua. Every Australian press like radio and newspapers were banned and eminent and Australians vocal of human rights abuse in the region were banned from entering the territory (TAPOL 1991). In 2017, Jokowi removed the restrictions on international media traveling to West Papua. There is a continued threat for secessionist leaders, human rights abuses, non judicial killings and other acts of violence by Indonesian authorities (Davidson 2016). Benny Wenda, a leader of ULMWP in 2003 sought asylum in UK after escaping prison in West Papua leading international campaign for independence. Currently, several international organizations are concerned the issue of West Papuan like International Parliamentarians for West Papua which consists of members of Parliamentarian from UK, USA, Solomon Islands, PNG, Vanuatu (IPWP 2015), International Lawyers for West Papua (2014) and West Papua National Coalition for Liberation of Vanuatu (2008). The issue of West Papua will continue to test MSG leadership and its genuine commitment and concern for human rights. There is also an urgent need to include West Papua in MSG programs such as sports, cultural events etc, (Somare 2015:294). Manasseh Sogavare proposes that the ULMWP be given a full membership to the MSG. He asserted that Indonesia is protecting its own interest thereby ignoring a dialogue on serious human rights issues in West Papua. The Ambassador Desra Percaga of Indonesia accused Manasseh as violating the basic principles of sovereignty and non-interference in the domestic affairs which is enshrined 2007 MSG agreement (Kabutaulaka 2016). Applications for full membership of ULMWP was pushed forward in 14 July 2016 MSG Leaders Summit but the leaders postponed the issue for future deliberation after wider consultation. The MSG in the larger interest of its members has to cement its role as the new regional champion of self-determination and the lead taken by Vanuatu and Solomon Islands is noteworthy. Patride M Walsh (2016) argues that without regional cohesion the issue of West Papua cannot be successfully table at the international fora.

Economic Security

Economic security is concerned with freedom want, food security, infrastructure development and transparency in finance. The region as seen in the third chapter has

low employment rate, high poverty and rising problems of urbanization. The sub-regional grouping have so far failed to bring up this issues and in doing so, human security factors are not taken into account in policy calculation. But the success of the MSG is attributed to the achievement of Melanesian Spearhead Group (Free) Trade Agreement (MSG (F)TA) which is at the state level with emphasis on trade and development with scope for investment, trade in servies and labor mobility. The Melanesian countries are not self-reliant in many cases due to its weak economies, political instability and outside interference. They are dependent on metropolises for financial investment in infrastructure development and providing social service. The MSGTA was first signed by Solomon Islands Papua New Guinea, and Vanuatu in 1993 and Fiji joining the agreement in 1997. The MSGTA became operational in 2013. In 2012, milestones were achieved with the MSG memorandum of understanding on Skilled Movement Scheme (SMS) (Marawa 2015: 166). The MSG 2038 Prosperity for All Plan are reaffirmed in the Declaration that Trade Ministers adopted on November 26, 2014 with the theme of “Securing Future MSG Prosperity Through Trade and Economic Integration”. The MSG also acts a mediator in regional economic issues. Like the case of protectionist measures imposed by Fiji, PNG and Vanuatu in 2005. The churches have also taken active part not only in the spiritual well being of the people but also in the promotion of economy. Workshops were also conducted on floral decoration, furniture making, fish farming, soap making, basic photography, vegetarian cooking and sewing machine (Melanesia Tok Issue 7/2016). The MSG Roadmap for Inshore Fisheries Management and Sustainable Development⁴² is a step forward in managing fisheries and marine products sustainably (Melanesian Tok Issue 3/2015). All these efforts are conducted in alliance with the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

Social Security

The Melanesian society has a very close communal living which is characterized by its attachment to culture and tradition. The MSG has been active in the promotion and nurturing of culture and traditions. The Melanesia Festival of Arts and Culture was

⁴²The vision of MSG Roadmap for Inshore Fisheries Management and Sustainable Development are managing fishery practices by imbibing traditional practices and securing a sustainable inshore fisheries.

first conducted in 1988 at Solomon Islands, 2003 in Vanuatu, 2003 in Fiji, 2010 in New Caledonia, 2014 in Papua New Guinea and 2015 in Indonesia. And the 18th MSG Leaders Summit in 2011 also committed to the formation of Framework Treaty on the Protection of Traditional knowledge and Expressions of Culture (TK&EC) which will govern the regulation of access to traditional knowledge with equitable benefit sharing, involves a range of national capacity building activities. And the 1st MSG Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Development Meeting was held on 15-16 February 2010 to assist MSG members assess trade agreements that contribute positively to member's economic and social development, its impact on communities are mitigated and to provide a forum to discuss economic and social issues and reforms. To address social problems in local communities, faith-based organizations are increasingly paying attention to small-scale income-generation projects which can help support the livelihood of their members, especially youths by coordinating between Secretariat and the Christian organization such Vanuatu Christian Council (Melanesia Tok Issue 6/2016). The Declaration on Combating Domestic and Family Violence in 2015 recognize the importance of a regional approach to combating domestic and family violence at the national and regional level, such as in advancing the role of MSG in complementing the work of relevant international and regional partners. An MOU on the Humanitarian and Emergency Coordination Centre was also signed in June 26, 2015 with focus on both man-made disasters and on natural disasters (Melanesian Tok Issue 3/2015).

Environment Security

Climate change poses one of the most imminent threats in Melanesia. The MSG is responsible for coordination and implementation of Environment and Climate Change (ECC) Declaration of March 30 2012 with four key committees are Melanesia Green Growth Frameworks (MGGF), Melanesia Terrestrial Commitment (MTC), Melanesia Blue Carbon Initiative (MBCI), and Melanesia Green Climate Fund (MGCF). It supports members in the effort in national program such as natural resources management, environmental sustainability, climate change and international efforts which includes UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD). The Apia-based Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) is also actively engaged in implementing projects in the Melanesian sub-region consistent with the spirit of the

memorandum of understanding signed with MSG in 2013. The activities of MSG include measures on climate change like environmental monitoring, management of biodiversity and ecosystems, waste management and pollution control (Melanesian Tok Issue 2/2015). On 26 June 2015, the MSG leaders signed the following Instruments of Cooperation at their Summit in Honiara on the Declaration on Transshipment of Nuclear Wastes and Trans-boundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes (Revised 1995 Lakatoro Declaration) (Melanesian Tok Issue 3/2015).

The MSG celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2013 facing up and down in its humble journey. Even though, the sub-regional body has overlapping policies and programmes with the Pacific Islands Forum the MSG has been striving to push forward its aim for the larger interest of its member's states and the Pacific region at large. As seen from its establishment, the MSG was born to address issues which affect the region particularly that of political self-determination of New Caledonia and at the later stage that of West Papua. As PIF could not serve the specific interest of Melanesian state, the MSG was instituted to fill the gap. In the economic sphere, the MSGTA was a huge step in the direction of solving economic issues such as unemployment, lack of investment, infrastructure etc. The success and effectiveness of the MSG has given birth to two sub regional entity such as Micronesian Chief Executives Summit and the Polynesian Leaders Group. As Melanesian states have the largest land area and resources both natural and human resources, the MSG can fill the gap of PIF and to a large extent be the forerunner in addressing the human security issues that is plaguing the region which can be achieved only when there is political instability, economic viability, transparency, accountability and above all political will to carry out plans and policies which are outlined by the respective members and the MSG itself. The MSG as seen from the foregoing discussion has given some attention to human security issues but it is limited given the gravity of the situation in the region. All members' states have issues which need immediate attention like gender violence, health, corruption and issues of urbanization. Though MSG has done commendable work in the direction of trade and economy, it has not fully attend to social and community issues which affects the citizen directly. The failure to collectively fight for self-determinations of New Caledonia and West Papua also questioned the credibility of MSG as an organization formed to pursue this particular issue.

Domestic Mechanism of Melanesian States in Addressing HS Issues

The Melanesian states have also adopted domestic mechanism to address the various human security issues in their own state. There are domestic mechanism aims to address human security issues ranging from food security, environment, human rights to corruption. In order to meet food security challenges Vanuatu National Plan of Action on Food and Nutrition Security 2013-2015, Food Security and Agriculture Cluster with FAO and PNG has National Food Security Policy, National Agricultural Advisory Committee working alongside FAO Pacific Islands Climate Change Assistance Program. On gender issues, Solomon Islands have ratified CEDAW in 2002, National policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development: Partners in Development 2010-2012, the National Policy on Elimination of Violence Against Women (2010-2013), the Family Protection Bill 2014. The state agencies are working coordination with NGOs such as Christian Care, Family Support Centre (FSC) and other Christian organizations. PNG have put in place Family and Sexual Violence Units (FSVU), National Disability Policy (2015), Family Protection Act and Fiji National Gender Policy (2014) which aims at gender mainstreaming, equity, awareness, empowerment, counseling, development, justice, gender sensitivity, and gender responsive budgeting.

In Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu-Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) are working in coordination with courts and other state agencies. Labor officers in the region have statutory obligations to resolve dispute through grass root mediation⁴³. Grassroots customary based justice system is conducted under state judicial framework (Hassal 2005). In Fiji, out of court settlement is encouraged initiated by lawyers and has law such as Reconciliation, Tolerance and unity Bill under Qarase in 2005 and Ministry for National Reconciliation and Unity. In Vanuatu, the community legal centre engage in negotiation as a means of resolving disputes and law such as Customary Land Tribunal Act of 2001, the Island Courts Act. In PNG, Public

⁴³Divine World University in PNG offers nine steps in mediation process which can be employed throughout the region i) Talk to each other or group separately ii) allow each other to share their needs iii) Brainstorms option for dealing with the conflict iv) Select options for dealing with the conflict v) Assist the parties in their bargaining to modify their options to suit both parties vi) Write down the agreed options and give time for discussion and further negotiation if necessary vii) Write an agreement viii) Set a time to reopen the matter if one party failed to carry out their agreement ix) Reconciliation.

Services Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1969, Industrial Relation Act of 1962, Organic Law on provincial government and local level government, Fairness of Transactions Act 1993 are important acts and regulation that incorporate ADR in the legal system. ADR is also taught in universities like University of South Pacific and Divine World University.

And in the protection and conservation of environment PNG have the Environment Act 2000, and Department of Environment and Conservation. Solomon Islands have Environment Act in 1998 and Environment Regulations 2008 to safeguard its environment. Fiji also has its domestic Environment Management Act 2005 and Vanuatu's Environmental Management and Conservation Act (CAP 253) 2002. The Melanesian states are concerned with human rights issues which are faced on daily basis. PNG has its National Human Rights Commission and is party to International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), CEDAW and Fiji is party to Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and domestic Bill of Rights (Chapter 2, article 6-45) in Fiji 2013 constitution and Human Rights Commission. Vanuatu is party to CEDAW and Convention on Right of Person with Disabilities (CRPD) and CRC and Solomon Islands is also party to CRC, ICESCR, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). As corruption is a major issue in Melanesia, every states have put in place an anti corruption mechanism such as Solomon Islands Independent Commission Against corruption and Anti Corruption Bill 2016, Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption, Ombudsmen Commission, the Auditor General's Office, The Treasury Department, the Finance and Provincial Affairs Department and the Public Prosecutors Office to address issues related to corruption. In PNG National Anti-Corruption Agency 2010-2030, party to UN Convention Against Corruption, Criminal Code criminalized active and passive domestic bribery, Sweep Task Force (2011), Anti Corruption Commission, Ombudsmen Commission, Financial Intelligence Unit, The Office of Auditor General National Anti corruption Alliance and today, media too has begun to play a proactive role in reporting issues of corruption.

International Actors Promoting Human Security in the Region

A number of actors both regional and international state and non state actor have been assisting or aiding the region both through regional actors like PIF, MSG etc but in

most cases the relations are conducted bilaterally. International non-state actors include World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), UN and its specific organs etc. Australia and New Zealand are the two most pre-dominant actors in the region apart from Britain, France, Japan and US. And in recent years Indonesia, Russia, India and most importantly China have shown interest and has invested in both building infrastructure and in extraction of natural resources. But in this study only PIF EU, Australia, New Zealand, US and China are discussed as they are the most prominent players among others.

Australia and New Zealand Assistance to the Melanesian States

Australia and New Zealand are the two metropolises with both economic and military power that overarch the whole of the Oceanian region. Australia is the principle regional aid donor for the region followed by New Zealand and these two donors has their own goals for investing in specific organization or investing in infrastructure developments which include good governance, enhancing security, agriculture, sustainable fisheries, water resources management, democracy, food security, gender equity, reducing poverty, disaster management, climate change, health and education. Australia continues to be the chief aid donor to Papua New Guinea with Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2014-15 was \$ 577.1 and for 2015-16 outcomes was estimated at \$ 549.7 million. The bilateral budget estimate for 2016-17 \$ 477.3 million with total Australian ODA estimate \$558.3 million for 2016-17 (DFAT 2017). Australia and PNG Aid relationship will continue even in the near future as both countries signed PNG-Australia Aid Partnership Arrangement (2016-17) in 3 March, 2016 in Canberra. The objectives of Australia's Aid to PNG are; i) To promote effective governance, public sector and rule of law. ii) Enable economic growth with emphasis on inclusiveness, support for infrastructure, skilling the workforce, reducing the cost of doing business and improve productivity.iii) Enhance human development (DFAT 2017). New Zealand main objectives are to achieve sustainable economic and social development to reduce poverty and become a more secure nation. The total aid for 2015-16 stood at \$ 27 Million of which \$ 18 million is bilateral and \$ 9.9 million is funded in partnership with others agencies (MFAT 2017).

Australia provides support to Solomon Islands through RAMSI and other bilateral cooperation. The Howard government's expenditure of more than 1 billion dollars in

RAMSI since 2003 is seen as Australia's long term investment in the country. The total Australia ODA estimated outcome for 2015-16 stands at \$ 172.2 million and the bilateral budget estimated for 2016-17 stands at \$ 92.7 million and the total Australian ODA estimate for 2016-17 stands at \$ 162.0 million which is the largest donor to Solomon Islands (DFAT 217). In Solomon Islands, Australia Aid Investment Plan 2015-16 to 2018-19 is aimed to support i) stability ii) enabling economic growth and promote growth enabling an environment of investment iii) enhancing human development (DFAT 2016). Whereas New Zealand aid is aimed at sustainable economic growth, improve the quality of education and make community safer. The total aid for 2015-2016 stands at 30.1 million of which 17 million is bilateral and the rest 13 million is conducted through various agencies.

The relationship between Fiji and Australia is not cordial and has faced hurdles in the diplomatic relation with accusation and counter accusation. But Fiji continues to receive substantial aid from Australia which focuses on the private sector development, good governance and gender equality. The total Australia ODA for 2015-16 is estimated \$ 78.7 million. And 2016-17 bilateral budgets estimated at \$ 51.0 million with a total of ODA estimate \$ 76.9 million 2016-17 (DFAT 2017). In return Australia expects accountability, transparency and reporting. The objectives of Australian aid are development of private sector, quality health and education, provide technical assistance and funding for employment and income generation and a focus on assisting the Fijian government to reform the public sector, streamline trade and bolster accountability institutions. Fijian government is committed to national Development Plan with Australia areas of joint priority are health, education, governance and gender and trade (DFAT 2017). New Zealand is also a major aid contributor to Fiji with its priorities in agriculture-increase economic and food security, education-improve knowledge skills, basic education and strengthen economic governance (MFAT 2017). New Zealand has been a major contributor to Fiji with a total aid in 2015-16 reaching \$15.4 million from which \$10 million is bilateral and the rest 4.9 million goes through other agencies.

Vanuatu is also an aid dependent state mostly from Australia. In 2015-16, the total Australia Official Development Assistance (ODA) estimated outcome is \$61.0 million in which \$ 41.9 million (2016-17) is bilateral aid. And total Australian ODA estimate for 2016-17 is \$ 62.5 million (DFAT 2017). Australia assisted in quantifying the

forest resources in the National Forest Inventory through the Island Forest Service and the Commonwealth Scientific Industrial Research Organization (Australia) and funded by the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB, now AusAid). The police force of Vanuatu has been supported in recent years by Australian Aid (AusAid) and New Zealand (NZ Aid). New Zealand is another major aid donor to Vanuatu targeting tourism, marine transport, education, providing communities with better access to potable water and sanitation services and assisting youth into decent jobs through vocational training opportunities. During 2015-16 New Zealand's total aid stands at \$ 25.5 million with \$ 16 million as bilateral trade and \$ 9.5 million invested through multinational agencies and organizations. New Zealand and Vanuatu has also signed a joint Commitment for Development. New Zealand has also donated \$ 2.5 million as immediate response including relief supplies, technical assistance and medical personnel in response to 2015 Cyclone Pam with about 2.2 million contributed as recovery support (MFAT 2017).

European Union (EU) and Melanesian States

The European Union is one of the main partners of Melanesia which provides assistance as European Development Fund (EDF) through Pacific Islands Forum, Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the South Pacific Tourism Organization among others or bilaterally. The EU bilateral engagement with the MSG states has been more pronounced than its engagement at the regional institutional level. The goals are to promote human rights, democracy, good governance, economic and social development, climate change adaptation and risk mitigation and environmental protection. The Cotonou Agreement (2000) which deals with political dialogue, trade, development cooperation, human rights, gender issues, elections, governance and security in African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP) has MSG shape partnership with EU. In bilateral relations, PNG has been in partnership with EU since 1975 and was the first country in the Pacific region to sign the 2009 Interim Economic Partnership Agreement with European Union. Through the 11th EDF National Indicative Programme (NIP), EU contributed Euro 85 million to rural entrepreneurship investment and trade in PNG and Euro 60 million to Water Supply,

⁴⁴The 11th EDF focus on regional economic integration; sustainable management of natural resources and governance, human rights and gender.

Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), and Euro 30 million for education and human resource development (EEAS (a) 2016). EU also provides Euro 28 million through EDF in 2014-20 for sustainable rural livelihoods and public administration reform and governance to Fiji (EEAS (b) 2016) and in New Caledonia EDF for 2014-20 is Euro 29.8 million whereas in 2008-2013 EU provided Euro 19.8 million (EEAS (c) 2016). While the 11th EDF National Indicative Programme for Solomon Islands for 2014-2020 is Euro 40 million which will be invested in WASH and rural development whereas in 2008-2013 Euro 13.2 million was given under EDF (EEAS (d) 2016). The 11th EDF NIP for Vanuatu stands at Euro 41million for 2014-20 out of which 3 Million will be invested for rural development, 3 million for civil society and 3 million for support measures. In 2008-2013, Euro 21.6 million was given to Vanuatu (EEAS (e) 2016). The EU is also helping member countries to further the MSG trade and investment as agreed to by Trade Ministers under the Port Moresby Declaration of 2008. The EU financial and technical support to the Melanesian region is not limited to just Pacific Integration Technical Assistance Project (PITAP) (Melanesian Tok Issue 2/2015).

United States (US) in the Pacific Region

The United States has been involved in the Asia-Pacific region since World War II throughout the Cold War. The fundamental goals of the new US policy are to broaden areas of cooperation in the region which is beneficial to the United States (Adamson et al. 2013). US programs such as UsAid, the Peace Corps, and the Fulbright student exchange are benefiting recipient states. The Pacific Islands Development Program, administers the United States-South Pacific Scholarship Program, the United Nations Governance Project, and the Fiji Futures Project and serves as the Secretariat for the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders and the United States/Pacific Islands Joint Commercial Commission. Tamara Renee Shie (2007) said that U.S. government should be more proactive with its allies in the region—Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Singapore—not to necessarily to contain China but to promote good governance and strong economies in Pacific Island nations.

UsAid is one of the most proactive contributions of the US in relations to human security issues in Pacific region. The aid is emphasised on democracy, human rights, governance and environmental issues. It is strengthening democratic institutions in

Papua New Guinea and Fiji by helping political parties form issue based platforms, improving transparency, peace building program that strengthen the capacity of women in civil society organizations and addressing gender violence issue through women's participation in peace building initiatives. UsAid also aims at environment and climate changes in the Pacific as people living in the coastline areas has increased and are vulnerable to adverse climate change. UsAid also supports activities that increase their resilience to the impacts of climate change—rehabilitating community, infrastructure, enhancing community engagement for disaster prevention and preparation, integrating climate resilient policies into land use planning and building codes. It also offer grants to CSO to assist communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change, restore degraded mangrove areas and improve the management of forest ecosystem in Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands and encourage the use of solar photovoltaic energy equipments for sustainable renewable energy UsAid in coordination with Peace Corps is mobilizing communities and disseminating information about disaster risk reduction. It has employed Geographic Information System for land use, forestry and soil mapping in order to provide food security and assist in harvesting and storage of rainwater and improving ground wells condition (USAID 2017).

Emergence of Chinese Influence in Melanesian Region

There is a deliberate determination to beef up Chinese military power projection abilities especially air and blue-water naval power with its military spending has doubled since the end of the Cold War. But the emerging relationships with the Melanesian states are cordial and beneficial to both. Eight countries in the Pacific including the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu have relations with China. China has invested in various areas such as building infrastructure, equipping government and military assets and developing natural resources. This dramatic rise is due to the decreasing aid engagement by US and European nations in the region (Shie 2007). Although Australia, New Zealand, Japan, the EU, and the US remain major economic partners with the region, Chinese engagement has increase manifold. For instance, China is the second aid donor to Papua New Guinea (Lintner 2004: 30). The Chinese has invested \$2 million for constructing sport's facility in Fiji, donated \$ 6,000 to improve Foreign Ministry website, \$250,000 worth of military equipment and stores and \$30,000 of

office equipment to the Fijian Parliament (Shie 2007). In PNG, China has donated at least 50 computers to the Department of Foreign Affairs, \$1 million to the Defense Force and gave fund to improve Papua New Guinea's highlands highway. In Vanuatu, China has funded construction of the National Parliament House, donated eight pick-up trucks to replace the government's aging fleet, provided two cargo ships worth \$9.4 million to facilitate the delivery of goods to isolated island communities and have constructed a television station and a rice planting project. In 2003, China joined the South Pacific Tourism Organization (SPTO) and donated \$100,000 to the SPTO in 2004 and became its member in April 2004. In 2004, China granted four South Pacific countries—the Cook Islands, Fiji, Tonga, and Vanuatu—Approved Destination Status (ADS) for tourism..China has also provided aid and development assistance for such projects as HIV/AIDS programs, a flour mill project, and the donation of medical supplies and doctors in Papua New Guinea. According to Tamara Renee Shie (2007) 'the Chinese government is winning new friends in the region with its interest free, no-strings-attached, open-ended style of financial support.'

In 2015, Chinese investors have agreed to invest in processing and manufacturing plants at two industrial parks in West Sepia Province, a dense jungle region in Papua New Guinea at a cost of \$ 3.8 billion (Reuter 2016). These investments are part of China's "One Belt, One Road Policy (OBOR)." It has also redeveloped the Lae airport, creates National Band Network, National Identity Card and developed a system to share information between different government departments. Chinese have invested in mining, infrastructure and property sectors attracted largely by PNG's relatively untapped mineral wealth. China has invested in agriculture, infrastructure, tourism and trade in Vanuatu (Joshua 2017). In Fiji too, China has become the biggest source of foreign investment. Since 2006, China has invested about US\$ 376 million in concessional loan to the region and about US \$ 1.4 billion through bilateral relations (Lowy Institute 2017). The major characteristic of this increasing relation is because Chinese delivers its aid via concessional loans whereas Australia delivers aid through grants to specific programme.

Role of Media in Disseminating Human Security Issues

Media, both domestic and international, has become an important mechanism in disseminating information through print, audio and visual medium. Melanesian has

become conscious about the used of media in propagating and sharing information within the region and to the world at large. This is visible as internet access and use of social media platform through internet such as twitter and facebook has increased. The West Papua leaders have effectively use internet to raise the issue of self-determination and human rights violation in particular through their website and other social media. The Pacific at large are also becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of media as a tool to garner national and international relations in relation to the issue of climate change. The region was known more for the exotic islands and sea beaches. But this image has changed and the social and political issues including environmental issues are in the front page of print and internet media. The issue of health, gender inequality and security are also widely discussed by the international media often giving a grim picture of the social life of the region. The Pacific Islands Forum has formulated a Pacific Media and Climate Change Toolkit- a manual and factsheet which includes climate change, ecosystem based adaptation and climate change mitigation. This toolkit is developed under the Pacific Media and Climate Change Projects which is part of Australia Climate Change Science Adaptation Planning Programme (SPREP 2014). Media was instrumental in raising the issue of Cataret Islanders in Bougainville which has become a climate change refugees or migrants who have relocated from their ancestral homeland drawing parallel to evacuation of Rongelapese and Marshall Islanders in the wake of nuclear testing and Banaban Islands to Rabi in Fiji due to phosphate mining (Robie 2011). Pacific Islands Climate Action Network (PICAN) and Pacific Media Centre “Bearing Witness “to climate change project etc. has raised the issue of unsustainable use of natural resources like land, marine and fresh water (terrestrial, coastal and reef ecosystem), impact of climate change are sea level rise, higher air and ocean temperatures, changing rain patterns and ocean acidification. Sebastien Malo (2016) and other international media has gave a worldwide attention by quoting Australian researchers⁴⁵ on the disappearance of five Pacific Islands uninhabited is Solomon Islands due to rising seas and erosion and the condition of Nuatambu Islanders who were forced to relocate to higher grounds. The World Bank paper argues the need to frame migration program in order to prevent migration related conflict in the future.

⁴⁵ But Dr. Simon Albert refuted the disappearance of the Islands saying it is partly due to Pacific Decadal Oscillation and not necessarily a factor of climate change. (Karl Mathiesen 2016)

So, far, New Zealand have received 17 refugees claims stating climate change as its reason. But none has been successful (four yet to be determined) as refugees convention does not recognize climate change as grounds for protection (Doherty & Roy 2017). The lack of international attention to the issue of climate change as it should be in the Pacific can be attributed to lack of interest by Australia. The Pacific countries were at the forefront of Paris Climate Agreement and were vocal in the fight against the rising climate change. The 2015 Paris agreement first came into effect in Pacific with all the Pacific countries ratifying the agreement (Doyle 2016) but Australia is yet to ratify (ABC 2016).

In the UN Oceans Conference in New York in 5th -6th June 2017, the Pacific Islands leads the agenda of climate change (ABC 2017) and when Donald Trump backtracked and withdrew from the Paris Climate Change the Pacific leaders liken him to a 'classroom bully' (Fox 2017). The leaders of Melanesia have been raising the effect of natural disaster cause by climate change. For example, Fiji Foreign Minister Ratu Inoke Kubuabola called on the world leaders in Paris that climatic shift has caused typhoid, dengue fever and diarrhea. In 2017, researchers found about 37 million pieces as waste plastic in Henderson Island. Plastic pollution in the sea has been known as worrying problem affecting marine life, sea bird and environment (Lui 2017). The news was widely covered by international media including the Telegraph, New York Times, and Guardians.

Comparison Between MSG and PIF in Addressing HS Issues

The Pacific Islands Forum is the overarching regional organization in the region and the Melanesia states are members to it. The Forum acts as regional central mechanism which undertakes a number of projects and steps related to HS issues in the region. The Forum has policy for development and coordination for assistance to address to the underlying causes of conflict and strengthening regional conflict response such as RAMSI. Since gender issue is one of the challenges, the Forum gender mainstreaming recognized the role of women in peace building. The PIF recognizes security as an essential prerequisite for sustainable development and economic growth in the region. The PIF has 4 declarations which are the 1992 Declaration on Law Enforcement Cooperation, Aitutaki Declaration 1997, Biketawa Declaration 2000 and Nasonini Declaration 2002 which emphasis on various HS issues such as social, economic

development, conflict resolution initiatives, regional security etc.,. The Pacific Plan (2005) and Framework for Pacific Regionalism (2014) identify security as a principle objective for regionalism. The PIF Human Security Framework for the Pacific (2012-15) and Land Management and Conflict Minimization are aimed at achieving institutional goals (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2017). The Pacific Island Forum has recently added New Caledonia and French Polynesia as its new members. Although the Free West Papua campaign has gained momentum in recent years, the international community has so far neglected this genuine struggle for self-determination. At the 71st UNGA in 2016, Pacific countries consisting of Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Nauru, Palau and Marshall Islands individually lobbied for immediate global attention to issues of human rights abuse in West Papua instead of the regional forum pleading the case (Walsh 2016).

In social security issues, the major achievement of MSG is the TK&EC which is aim at preservation and sustaining of indigenous culture and Declaration on Combating Domestic and Family Violence whereas the PIF is concerned about the gender equity in accessing gainful employment. The Forum promotes women on nontraditional career path and positions and improves conservation and management of fish stores. As seen from the earlier chapters, the Melanesian countries are closely knitted communities who identify themselves through their cultural affiliation. So, it is pertinent on the part of the PIF to strengthen policies and institution to tackle gender based discrimination and violence. The PIF adopts restrictive approach to youth crime and violence by utilizing the equitable traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and provides opportunities for inter-generational dialogue. The Forum is conscious of customary land holding system and has been formulating policies to minimize land related conflicts and strengthen community harmony (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2017). In environment sector, The PIF has adopted measures such as educating the people on the use of natural resources sustainably and imparting knowledge on disaster management, natural environment protection and preservation of ocean air and water. It has also strengthened Noumea and Apia Convention and promotes disaster risk reduction, implement international practice, strengthen metrological data, developed water management system and introduces crops resilient to the effect of climate change (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2017). SPREP is also working to ensure the protection and sustainable development of the region's

natural resources. The MSG also has Environment and Climate Change Declaration which is being carried out in coordination with UNFCCC and SPREP.

The Pacific Islands Forum seeks to impart basic education, provide basic primary health and tackling non-communicable disease through campaigns and maintain communal harmony through spiritual fulfillment. The Forum assist in the rehabilitation of former combatants, increase access to information technology and equitable education, ensure greater equality for women in accessing health care and reduce alcohol and substance abuse (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2017). The Strategic Partnerships and Coordination have undertaken training and capacity building for regional lawyers, human rights training for Member of Parliament, regional judges and magistrate. The MSG in recent years has gained momentum in the direction of addressing political and economic issues but is yet to reach up to the expectation of the members in emphasizing on other HS issues. The Pacific Islands Forum as a regional multilateral organization has formulated and acted on a number of HS issues. The PIF members not only cover the entire Pacific islands nations but the presence of middle powers, Australia and New Zealand, have made the Forum more credible with international recognition. Australia and New Zealand are the major contributors in the funding and in the assistance of infrastructures and technical knowhow in the Forum.

Conclusion

The Melanesian region faces the issues of human security in one way or the other. And no states are immune from security issues and this has allowed or warranted outside interference in the domestic politics of the region. The Melanesian states are coping up with the changing socio-politico and economic environment. The region is unique in the sense that the human security is embedded in its cultural settings as for instance, gender inequity is partly due to strict adherence to the traditional norms and values. Women were not allowed to perform certain function or act in certain way. In some cases the way they speak and behave in front of the male can invite punishment if it doesn't conform to set values. The setting up of regional organization like Pacific Islands Forum has brought about certain changes like adherence to democratic culture, bringing attention of climate change at the global level or raising human rights issue in the region. Pacific Islands Forum as the biggest and the most influential

organization work in close partnership with the members countries including the Melanesian states. Though Australia and New Zealand are the two countries who play a major role, the Melanesian states are not far behind. Though, MSG is yet to emphasis on the various HS issues, the success of MSG as a sub regional body has sent a strong message to other actors in the region. The MSG has taken up a number of issues ranging from political security to economic security and has also expanded its goals to achieve social and community security in partnership with its members and regional and international actors. The most eminent and challenging issue that the Melanesian region faces today is climate change and its effect. The member states are improving infrastructure and adapting to new agricultural practices in order to meet these challenges. Even though colonialism and threat of neocolonial powers threaten the core values of sovereign powers, the Melanesian Spearhead Group has actively raised issues that concern the region both at the regional and international level. And international actors are actively involved in human security issues in the region. Along with prominent regional actors Australia and New Zealand, EU, PIF, US and China are not only investing in industries and infrastructure development but are involved in addressing HS concerns through grants, aid, scholarship, medicine among others.

According to David Peebles (2005:7), Pacific (MSG included) regional order should promote sustainable economic development, security, the rule of law, democracy, and integration with the wider region. In order to have a sustainable economic development there is suggestion that the Pacific countries or at least a substantial number of them—should adopt a common currency (or currency union) as part of a process of regional integration (Duncan 2005:105). The Australian Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade References Parliamentary Committee's recommended the Pacific community should recognize the cultural values and its diversity in the region. Today, HS issues in Melanesia and the Pacific at large are placed at the international table due to the pro-active states like Vanuatu and Solomon Islands which have vehemently contested the rights of New Caledonia and West Papua and also the HS issue such climate change and food security at the global level. This visibility is partly due to the emerging trend in media both traditional and modern media including social media such as facebook, twitter and internet blogs.

Conclusion

HS elements under UNDP include political security, economic security, community security, social security and environmental security. These security issues are common across the globe and no country is immune to it. The Melanesian governments along with domestic and international NGOs are engaged in addressing the various HS issues in the region. The birth of regional organization in the region like the PIF and MSG has brought political consciousness among the regional actors and offers the opportunity to reap the benefits of building a common identity. As seen in the second chapter, human security challenges in Melanesian region are largely due to colonialism and neo-colonial interference in the region. In the Pacific, 6 territories are still under UN list of non-self-governing states out of 16 territories. The territories in the Pacific are Tokelau (under New Zealand), Pitcairn (United Kingdom), Guam and American Samoa (United States), New Caledonia and French Polynesia (French administration) (Maclellan 2015:263). The Pacific leadership is increasingly aware of the issue and has used institutional mechanism such as such as the MSG and Pacific Small Island Developing States. The territories are faced with various issues in pursuing self-determination such as small territory with a weak economy, less population and other barriers to decolonization. The demographic composition in West Papua and New Caledonia also suggest that the indigenous peoples have become a minority in their territory (Maclellan 2015:265).

In an attempt to understand the complicated HS issues in Melanesia, the presence of village based societies with little or no contact with each other within the neighboring villages or tribes till today is noteworthy. The colonial powers were credited for bringing together the warring tribal communities under one political umbrella but the construction of national identity was weak as the imperialist constructed the nation based on their interest and not necessarily to unite or modernize the diverse culture and identity. As shown in Chapter 2 and 3, it is proven beyond doubt that colonial and neo-colonial powers are largely responsible for the various HS challenges facing the region. In colonial context, the division of labor for instance was such that one community is attached to particular employment sector like in New Caledonia, the Kanaks were made to work in subsistence agriculture where as the Caldoches are

made to work in nickel industries and occupy majority of the seats in state bureaucracy. In Fiji, Indo-Fijians were made to work in sugar plantation and indigenous Fijians were confined to indigenous agricultural practices. Such division not only led to difference in income generation but also brought ethnic conflicts as employment opportunities became scarce and income generation from subsistence farming can no longer sustain modern lifestyle. Land holding is one of the most contentious issues in Melanesia, In New Caledonia, the Kanaks are made to live in reserve lands and their movements and cultivation of agriculture, grazing of cattle were restricted by the state. The civil war in Solomon Islands which started in 1998 was also attributed to the issue of land and extraction of natural resources. The landowners of Guadalcanal were of the opinion that the income generated from the production of mineral and palm oil from Guadalcanal were not benefiting them as majority of the workforce were occupied by Malaitans, with the income going to the owners of companies which are mostly neo-colonial powers. The uneven distribution of wealth led to conflict with RAMSI led by Australia eventually intervening in Solomon Islands. In post independence era, huge investments are visible in urban areas like Port Moresby, Suva, Honiara etc, with all the state of art facilities urban areas with easy access to education, health and public services. The rise of high rise apartments and building are also accompanied by the rise in shanties (small, crudely built shack), diseases and crimes. The march of rural people to town and cities for employment, education, health and better livelihood has not been effectively addressed by the government of the day. And in the rural highlands, people still go with their normal life which has been on for generation.

As discussed in chapter 2, the colonial powers have granted independence to their colonial subjects but Melanesian politics and economy are still firmly controlled by the neo-colonialist. The extraction of natural resources without caring for the environment and the people has caused destruction even leading to loss of life. The neo-colonial powers influence the politics through its trade relation, investments, policy persuasion, aid and loans. This direct interference in the domestic politics and economy of the Melanesian states in the pretext of ushering democracy and human rights value has led Fiji to react to the action of Australia and New Zealand by forming Pacific Small Island Developing States in the United Nations and Pacific Islands Development Forum in the Pacific. The loan donors constantly monitor the

affairs of the recipient countries on the pretext of securing development and ushering democratic values in the respective country but there are evidences that suggest that aid and loans are given in such a way that it benefits the metropole companies who are active in the Melanesian states. Investment in extraction of natural resources for example do not reach the common populace instead benefits the political leaders, bureaucrats, police and the corporate. This in turn has led to unequal distribution of wealth, giving rise to issues relating to failure of delivering public services, rise of shanty in towns and cities, rise of unemployment, high cost of living and health issues. Urbanization has also threatened the social cohesion as conflict often occur between people who have settled in the area for long and the new migrants residents.

But the colonial and the neo-colonial policies and interferences are not the only causes for HS challenges in the region as discussed in Chapter 3. HS problems have been severely exacerbated by the attitude of the governments. Political instability coupled with poor governance is the main precursor to failing public services. Domestic issues such as endemic corruption, police brutality and human rights abuse, lack of transparency in judiciary are manifested in the day today affairs thereby threatening the life and dignity of its citizens. Bureaucracy is highly politicized eroding the capacity of various departments to function efficiently. Nepotism and political cronyism have also become a huge challenge in the government sector. Civil disturbances have been triggered by the government failure to deliver financial and development commitment made particularly to landowners in the project areas. This compromised political system is due to weak accountability between elected representative and their constituencies. And weak state capacity to provide security and rule of law has been pointed as a significant factor in high rates of crime and violence. The blame can be equally directed to the very functioning of the government, its policies, incompetent and weak leadership and adherence to outdated social values. In many cases, the rural areas remain untouched with steep adherence to culture and tradition with no proper established public amenities like electricity, health and education services. The people have to depend on the works of NGOs mainly affiliated to different churches. And due to lack of modern healthcare, people easily succumbed to curable diseases like malaria, typhoid and diarrhea. The people are still heavily dependent on traditional method of healthcare using leafs, roots and other medical herbs. They also relied on rituals, tribal healers and sorcery.

HS in Melanesia is not confined to political security alone. It has economic, social and community security dimension which is equally challenging as political security. As all the Melanesian countries are islands states, the emerging threat posed by global warming and climate change is eminent and have started to face the change in natural environment due to rise in sea level, unpredictable weather leading to flood, cyclone, and drought. Melanesia is also located in the Pacific Ring of Fire leaving the region susceptible to earthquake, volcanoes and tsunamis. The natural disasters caused earthquake and tsunamis are often very severe that the whole village is inundated and the standing food crops are destroyed leading to food security. The rising pressure on land owing to growing population, urbanization and the unavailability of food resources has made the states import food from outside the region. The consumption of imported goods has also caused serious health problems in a society which has for generation depended on healthy homegrown sustainable food crops. The industrial produce food stuffs such as canned food are not nutritious enough and pose risk health issue. The dependence for food from foreign countries has also made the region vulnerable to global economic crisis. The region has to adapt to new changes in order to survive the new threat that is emerging through climate change. International organizations like UN, EU and other NGOs are actively involved in prevention and adaptation to the threat posed by extreme climatic condition along with the PIF and the MSG. It is also noteworthy that the awareness being given by both state agencies and NGOs are bearing fruits in areas like education and health. The issue of discrimination against women such as limiting access to land, education and employment is serious in the region. And outdated social norms such as bride price and belief in sorcery and witchcraft are responsible for perpetuating inequality at the community level. On the positive note, there is also a growing awareness among the community regarding the impact of violence on the family unit. And community group have become more vocal in their opposition to sexual assault and family violence.

As shown in Chapter 4, the Melanesian Spearhead Group from its humble beginning has become a prominent sub-regional organization. The region has the largest geography, population and natural resources with a rapidly expanding economy such as PNG and Fiji. But the sub-regional group members have varying opinion on the issue which is central to the formation of MSG i.e. self-determination. While majority

of the states are in favor of self-determination for New Caledonia, countries like PNG and Fiji are hesitant to question and raise the issue of West Papua at the regional and international level. Fiji and PNG see opportunities in the emergence of Indonesia, which can be beneficial not only bilaterally but for the Melanesian region as a whole. The MSG secretariat also needs funds and technical expertise to run a successful sub-regional organization. In order to address the various HS issues, MSG has to have cohesive sustainable policies. The MSG has so far been paying more attention to trade and economy and other issues has been sidelined or ignored. The failure of the members states is responsible for the ineffectiveness of MSG as majority of the governments are politically unstable and embroiled in economic slowdown due to mismanagement of economy, corruption, lack of accountability and transparency in the government and the closer to competition, choice over quantity than quality in providing public services. But as the largest and the most economically viable sub-region with untapped natural resources at their disposal, the MSG can be counter force to other regional body like PIF which lack cohesiveness due to the overt control of its functioning by Australia and New Zealand leaving little space for the small and poor states to raise their concern and maneuver in the regional body. The respective governments on their part also need to effectively implement both domestic and international regulations in regards to securing the everyday lives of its citizen.

The purpose of the study seeks to examine the following hypotheses:

1. Human security challenges in Melanesian region are largely due to colonialism and continued neo-colonialist interference in the region
2. Melanesian Spearhead Group can act as a counter force to governing bodies and tackle HS in the region.

And these hypotheses are tested to be relatively positive. HS in the Melanesian region are largely due to colonialism and neo-colonialist interference in the region. But it is also found that HS issues in the region are partly due to political instability, poor governance and weak political leadership, which is also the effect of colonial and neo-colonial policies. MSG is emerging as one of the most prominent sub-regional organizations in the Pacific. Due to geographical size, economy and human resources, MSG has become influential in the region politically and economically. But as seen from Chapter 4, MSG has so far given more emphasis on economic issues thereby

sidelining HS challenges. The MSG leadership is of the opinion that economic prosperity will shape a more vibrant political and social community in the region.

Melanesian Spearhead Group: The Way Forward

The issue of HS in the region has not been given sufficient attention both by the Pacific Island Forum and the MSG and very little international attention is being given by both regional and international media. Though all the countries have adopted a democratic form of government, the often dysfunctional government due to coup, and unstable government riddled with internal issues has left the states with no choice to fend for themselves or raise their voice in the international forum regarding various human rights and HS issues. In order to achieve the objectives of MSG, boosting economic development will be its main prerogative even in the near future. And in this process all members ought to become active participants in this development effort. A cordial mutually beneficial relation between neighboring countries will also be of immense significance in this direction. The regional leaders are aware that Melanesian states can no longer isolate itself from globalization. Instead, they have to take part in the emerging trend at the world stage. Indonesia, for instance is seen as the engine for Melanesian trade due to its robust economy and geographical proximity. Taking cue from EU, Caribbean nations and other successful trade multilateralism the MSGTA was put into force. Though there is no complete free trade, members countries has opened up bilateral free trade relation which has encouraged others to follow suit.

Regional and international actors are playing a very prominent role in addressing human security issues in Melanesia. Australia and New Zealand are taking huge initiatives followed by European Union, United States and more recently by China. The emergence of investment in the region by China cannot be necessarily accounted as an act to assist in the HS projects but more of geostrategic calculation, trade and economic advancement in the Pacific region as a whole. But there is a danger as competing power also threatens the security of the small island nations which was once dragged into World War causing enormous hardship to the people. And international intervention or interference in the domestic or regional affairs has to be conducive to the party involved. Unilateralism should be avoided as it undermines both domestic relation and the regional cohesion. The political fallout between Fiji

and Australia has showed that regional metropolis can no longer be overruled or interfere in the domestic politics as it whims.

As seen from the study, trade has become the central emphasis of the group; but the MSG leadership also needs political will and proper implementation of agreements reflecting on the core social norms and the objectives of MSG. Here, the role of the two developing countries; Fiji and PNG will be significant in pushing the MSG to new frontiers through its political and economic leadership. Apart from the role of MSG, member states need to effectively implement domestic legislation relating to HS, regional and international agreements. MSG has the potential to be a regional leader in addressing a range of HS issues. A stronger and more effective trade relation as mentioned in MSGTA will promote economic prosperity and bring about a strong political presence in the region. The issue of barriers relating to trade and private investment should be address in order to create new employment, push economic growth and development of local industries. The member states also resolve conflict of interest bilaterally through dialogue and reconciliation. MSG member should utilize the platform of MSG to reach its full potential by actively engaging with the international community. It also requires identifying new areas of cooperation and assisting weaker member state in fulfilling its objectives. Amidst all these challenges, the traditional socio-political and economic life offers corresponding opportunities. Regenvanu Ralp (2010) opined the need to recognize traditional economy in framing the policies of the Melanesian states. According to him the traditional economy is directly related to tangible social and economic benefits. Secondly, customary land tenure should be reconstructed to suit the contemporary. The Alternative Indicators of Wellbeing for Melanesia is one such project which presents the welfare states of the people more accurately. Testing in Vanuatu has begun since 2012, with focus on free access to land and natural resources, community vitality, family relationship and culture. But this will not be easy for MSG as most Melanesian countries faced significant challenge in creating a viable political system and sustainable economic growth. Collaboration with PIF and other sub-regional bodies should also be enhanced by identifying common regional interests. The MSG should also improve the efficiency of expenditure, find common position and offer solidarity in spearheading regional issues. The importance of the MSG is likely to increase in the region as the Group has achieved success in intra-regional trade and in overcoming

various regional challenges. This shared experience will provide bedrock of strength for the success of the Melanesian region in the future.

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