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**INSURGENCY
MOVEMENT
IN
MANIPUR**

09

Omeo Kumar Das Institute of
Social Change and Development
Guwahati, Assam

Ayekpam Ibemcha Chanu

Working Paper 09

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CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION:

The term 'insurgency' is not an unfamiliar one in the North-Eastern part of India especially in Manipur. The history of the North-East over the last five decades has witnessed the emergence of a number of insurgent groups. The region has been grievously suffering as a result of endless and unmitigated violence and social restlessness caused by insurgency since the Naga armed revolt that started in early 1950s when A.Z. Phizo proclaimed independence of Nagaland. Over five decades, the problem of insurgency has become a part of life of the people of the region so much so that even an ordinary citizen is aware of the term and its meaning and implications.

However, there is no specific definition of the term 'insurgency'. The *International Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences*, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and the *Encyclopedia America* are silent about the term. The *Reader's Digest Dictionary* refers to insurgency as an uprising and 'an act of revolt', and defines an 'insurgent' as a person who revolts against authority.¹ The *Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary of Current English* defines the term 'insurgent' as a person fighting against government forces in her or his own country.

Very often the term insurgency is being interchangingly used with terms like terrorism, extremism, and guerilla warfare.² Terrorism and insurgency have different meanings. Insurgency is a political movement with a social base and has different attributes that separate it from other types of movements.³ The word 'terrorism' connotes the use of violence, especially murder, kidnapping and bombing, including suicide bombing in order to terrorize civilian

1. Reader's Digest Great Illustrated Dictionary, Vol.-1, 1984, p. 873.

2. B. B. Dutta, "Insurgency and Economic Development in India's North East" in R K Samanta, (ed), India's North East: The Process of Change and Development (New Delhi: B. R. Publisher, 1994).

3. *ibid.*

population and to achieve a political objective or to force a government to do something, which it cannot do in the normal circumstances.⁴ According to V. K. Anand, 'insurgency could be considered as an extra constitutional, compositely progressive and variegated struggle launched against the incumbent authority by the consciously mobilized sections of indigenous masses for the fulfillment of certain conceptual goals manifesting emancipation.'⁵

The term social movement means sustained, collective mobilization⁶ which is generally oriented towards bringing about change, either partial or total, in the existing system of relationships, values and norms.⁷ In this sense, insurgency is nothing but a particular form or type of movement, the only difference being that in most movements, arms and violence do not play such an important role as they play in insurgency though 'even the most non violent agitations rarely manage to remain entirely free from some strains of insurgency'.⁸

In the North-East, the problem of insurgency began first in Nagaland. The Naga National Council (NNC) raised its insurgent voice even before the transfer of power in 1947. The Naga National Council, which spearheaded the insurgency movement in Nagaland, later on emerged as the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) to continue its violent and sustained movement for an independent Nagaland. The formation of the state of Nagaland covering the district of Naga Hills in 1964 did not alter the politically charged and violent scenario in the state. Close on the heel of the developments in Nagaland, another hill district of Assam called Luchai District followed the path shown by Naga insurgents. The Mizo National Front (MNF) in the said district led by Laldenga revolted against the Union of India in 1967 and continued a bitter insurgency movement till 1987 when the Mizoram peace accord was finally signed. Mizoram returned to normalcy and it is one of the most peaceful states in the region today. Various insurgent groups surfaced in Manipur in the decade of 1960s out of which the most formidable one was the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which was essentially a leftist outfit trying to

4. Collins Cobbeuid English Dictionary 1987, p. 1509.

5. V.K. Anand, *Insurgency and Counter Insurgency: A Study of Modern Guerilla Warfare* (New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publication, 1981) p. 28.

6. MSA Rao, "Conceptual Problems in the Study of Social Movements" in MSA Rao, (ed), *Social Movements in India* (New Delhi: Manohar Publication, 1984).

7. *ibid.*

8. V.K. Anand, *op.cit.*, p. 28.

establish an independent and revolutionary government in Manipur. It was followed by another insurgent group known as the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK). Thereafter, several militant groups appeared in other states of the region such as the Tripura National Volunteers (TNV) in Tripura and the United Liberation Front (ULFA) of Assam. Among the above mentioned organisations, the ULFA is the youngest of the organizations that emerged in the late '70's.⁹ It is noteworthy that the insurgency movement in Nagaland has been the forerunner of all other similar armed movements in the region, which has made the political situation extremely difficult and complex.¹⁰

At present, more than 20 (twenty) insurgent groups are active in Manipur.¹¹ According to Government of Manipur as many as 18 insurgent groups are operating in the state. They are the NSCN (IM), the NSCN (K), the UNLF, the RPF (PLA), the PREPAK, the KCP, the KYKL, the PULF, the NEMF, the NNC, the KNF (P), the KNF (MC), the UKNF, the KNA, the KRA, the ZRA, the HNC, the MPLF etc. The MPLF is the joint body of the UNLF, the RPF and the PREPAK. The PLA and the MPA are the armed wings of the RPF and the UNLF respectively. In 1988, the NSCN faced split and two groups were formed—NSCN (IM) and the NSCN (K). Both are operating in the Naga inhabited hilly areas of Manipur. In 1999, the UNLF, the RPF and the PREPAK jointly formed one group, which is known as the MPLF. Both the PULF and the NEMF are the Muslim militant organizations.

The activities of insurgents such as extortion, kidnapping & killing are increasing day by day in Manipur. Very often Manipur bandhs called by the insurgents paralyse the normal life the people of the state. There are bomb blasts quite often killing innocent civilians. The common men, women and children are caught in the exchange of firing between rebels and security forces. All these have destroyed the civil life of the society. As a result, from the ordinary man on the street to the top personalities in the corridor of power, all are affected by this unending problem. The problem of insurgency has been haunting the minds of the people and no one is certain when this unusual situation will come to an end. Even in the print and electronic media insurgency covers the

9. Tarapot Phanjoubam, *Insurgency Movement in North Eastern India* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1993), p. 63.

10. Labango Mangang, *Kangleipakta Revolution* (Imphal: Kh. Sanatombi, 1997).

11. *Assam Tribune*, July, 22, 2004, p.7.

prime slot of the daily news, others are relegated to insignificance.¹² In the name of counter insurgency various steps, such as combing operations have been taken up by the government. During the period of one single year, i.e. from January to December, 1999, altogether 1070 insurgents belonging to various organizations were arrested and 49 others killed by police and security forces. Among them 925 were valley based and 145 were hill based organizations.¹³ In the 1980's various laws were enforced to deal with the insurgency problem in Manipur. But the question remains unresolved whether or not this ongoing policy can solve or minimize the present problem of insurgency in Manipur.

1.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Various studies have been made to assess the insurgency problem in Manipur and its impact on the Manipuri society. Scholars, authors, researchers have opined that the problem is rooted in the historical factors, the geographical location, the demographic composition and the conditions inherent in economic underdevelopment that afflict the state of Manipur.

R. Gopalakrishnan (1995) observes that in a multi ethnic, multi linguistic and multi religious society, the people are generally proud of their history, tradition, polity and culture, and therefore, they want to be decisive and express themselves in terms of political autonomy. Such a position leads them to work for separation from the rest of the world and strive for an independent political existence. Consequently, the society tends to respond to the sentiments of the people. Certain factors such as feeling of relative deprivation and neglect stimulates the already existent but dormant sentiment of the people to take methods they think appropriate to not only ventilate their grievances but also eventually take recourse to violent means to achieve the ultimate political objective, i.e. political independence. He further observes that the societies and communities create organizations, advance political ideologies and establish institutions to foster their separatist agenda and link the environmental

12. Pradip Phanjoubam, *Insurgency and its impact on the development of Manipur* in C. Josuna Thomas, R. Gopalakrishnan, R.K. Ranjan Singh, (eds) *Constraints in Development of Manipur* (New Delhi: Regency Publication 2001).

13. L. I. Singh, *Problems of Law and Order in Manipur*, in C Josuna Thomas, R. Gopalakrishnan, R. K. Ranjan Singh, (eds) *Constraints in Development of Manipur* (New Delhi: Regency Publication, 2001).

conditions with their political position for separatism and violence. His work has a passing and inadequate reference to the situation in Manipur.

V.K. Anand (1981) observes that an area with contiguous jungle-infested low mountains and a sympathetic population across the international boundaries, alienated minorities of virile stock who have had a turbulent past and take pride in their cultural heritage and who are imbued with the spirit of sacrifice and respect for heroism; an area which has a primitive economy and or underdeveloped infrastructure in a multistructured economy, where the age old social institutions become ineffective and newer institutions are yet to strike roots; where the population has an easy access to arms, such an area is ideally suited to insurgency.

B. B. Kumar (1995), in his study, assessed the present social tension in North-Eastern India and argues that the historical, social political and economic factors have created conditions for the emergence of insurgency in the region. To him these factors did not suddenly appear in the region. The problems of insurgency have origins in the past and only surfaced recently when the people became aware and tried to handle their own destiny within the framework of separatism and militancy. The forces which once remained dormant for many years, have appeared with their new permutations and combinations creating an explosive situation in the region.

R. V. Kumar and B.P. Sharma (1998) offer a simplistic explanation of insurgency in North East India by saying that it is a legacy left by the colonial power at the time of independence.

V. K. Anand (1980) opines that whatever may be the cosmetic form of the cause, in reality poverty is the mother and maladministration is the father of any insurgency.

B. B. Dutta (1994) in his study indicates that the insurgency movement is likely to come to terms with the established authority at some point of time of the struggle when insurgent leaders are convinced that there is a prospect of achieving more autonomy for the people whose cause they espouse. If the envisioned arrangement is likely to bring forward a partial change in the structure of the polity to their advantage, they are likely to accept the arrangement and

thus shun the violent and insurgent course. Insurgency is, therefore, a political movement with a social base and have definite attributes. To him, the North East has witnessed such an example, when the MNF signed the peace accord with the Union Government and thus paved the way for national reconciliation.

Prof. Gangumei Kabui (1984) opines that the leaders of the insurgency movement and many of their followers have been victims of bureaucratic apathy and corruption. He further says that the failure to provide social and economic justice to the people especially the youth, has led to deterioration of the situation, which has strengthened the hands of the insurgents to carry on their violent activities.

P. S. Dutta (1992) observes that as and when the outraged feeling of the oppressed and minority nationalities in North East India who seek political readjustment with the existing political framework do not find any viable platform to express themselves they take recourse to insurgency. To him the centralized tendencies of the pretentious federal system of our country cannot offer any permanent solution to their grievances. In the number based political maneuvers, they become lonely travellers, aggrieved and frustrated. Frustration naturally generates aggressive rethinking, bringing them closer and closer to extra-constitutional methods and means to get their point noted by the concerned authorities.

In an earlier work B. B. Dutta (1992) opines that rampant corruption, nepotism and callous and indifferent attitude of the governments in the region about the future of the youth are responsible for the alienation of a large number of youths and intellectuals. Similarly, the isolated conditions of the different tribes induce them either to seek separation from the rest of the country or to demand political autonomy within the Constitutional arrangements. While trying to make their voice heard by the Union Government, they feel that the sound of their guns is more audible than their democratic voice. The Nagas and the Mizos demanded independence because they did not feel closer to the national government and were fiercely independent as observed by M. Horam and K. S. Khanna (1990).

M.S.A. Rao (1984) observes that some sections of the indigenous people of the region have been against the central authority on 'certain issues and interest' such as deployment of security personnel who symbolize the coercive approaches of the Government of India and enactment of repressive laws. These measures alienate them psychologically from those in authority. C. Joshua Thomas, R. Gopalakrishnan, R. K. Ranjan also observe that the escalation of insurgency can be contributed by the dynamics of internal geographical situation and negligence and economic stagnation. From the Marxist point of view it is clearly showed that the root cause of every act of insurgency is fundamentally related to economy.

It is important to note than there is hardly any serious study on the insurgency movement in Manipur. This realization has steered the conceptualization of the present work, though within a limited framework considering the time limit of the study. No one has studied the conditions of high degree of social fragmentation, stagnating economy and insurgency activities in Manipur despite the fact that insurgency movements in the state is now a matter of more than four decades and the factors cited already are closely interrelated. Even after five and a half decades of independence, the political administrative reforms and plan economic transition have shown no sign of development in Manipur. So, there is a need to analyze the insurgency problem in the state, taking geographical location, socio-economic structure and political factors into consideration. A number of research questions on insurgency problem in Manipur which can be raised are:

- a) What is the root cause of insurgency in Manipur ?
- b) What is the goal of insurgent groups?
- c) Do geographical location and economic underdevelopment have a role to play in the insurgency movement?
- d) Why is this region more favourable for insurgency movement?
- e) Is there any solution to the insurgency problem?

1.3 AN INTRODUCTION TO MANIPUR:

Manipur is a small hilly state situated in the North Eastern region of India. It is situated between 93.030E - 94.780E longitude and 23.830N-25.680N latitude. It has an area of 22,327 sq. km consisting of only 0.7 per cent of the

total land surface of the country. The state splits naturally into two regions – the hills and the valley. The hilly region constitutes 90 percent of the total land of the state. The majority of the people are Meitei, inhabitants of the valley, forming about 60 per cent of the total population whereas the hilly areas are inhabited by 29 tribes of the Kuki-Naga stock.

Manipur has a long border of about 854 km of which 425 km is international border shared with Myanmar. On the south it is bounded by Mizoram. On the west and on the north it is bounded by Cachar district of Assam and Nagaland respectively. Out of nine revenue districts, four are in the valley and five are in the hilly areas. Manipur became a full fledged state on January 21, 1972 and the Assembly constituencies were also delimited in the same year in 60 constituencies out of which 19 seats are reserved for scheduled tribes and one for scheduled caste.

According to 2001 census, the state has a total population of 23,88,634 consisting of 12,07,338 males and 11,81,296 females. Comparing the rate of growth of population with the country as a whole, it is found that (except during the decade 1941-51) the rate of growth of population in Manipur is higher. The sex ratio is 978 females per 1000 males and the density of population is 107 per sq. km. The density of population per sq. km. in the valley is 628 person while the density of population in hill districts is 49 persons. Manipur is basically a rural state where 76.12 per cent of the total population are living in the rural areas.

According to *Economic Survey of Manipur 2001-02*, more than 28 per cent of the population are living below poverty line. The Government records state that there are 4,43,427 registered unemployed youths in Manipur. Though agriculture is the mainstay of the economy of Manipur and provides employment to about 60 per cent of the total working population, it is confined to only 10.48 per cent of the total geographical area where 47 percent is in valley districts and 53 per cent in the hilly districts.

In the field of industry, Manipur remains an industrially backward state with all the districts under the category of 'No Industries Districts' by 'All India Standard'. Manufacturing sector contributes nearly 6.5 per cent to the total domestic product and less than 10 per cent of the total population engaged in this sector. Thus, it may be observed that all embracing and ever increasing

unemployment problem along with economic backwardness of Manipur leads to the present state of social unrest in the state.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objectives for this research are:

- a) To find out the very reason for the emergence of insurgency in Manipur.
- b) To study whether the political history, the geographical location and the economic policies of the central government and the state government are the root causes of present unrest situation in Manipur.
- c) To analyze the activities of insurgent groups in the past and present and to assess its positive and negative impact on the political and social scenario in the state.

1.5 KEY HYPOTHESES:

The study intends to test the following hypotheses:

- a) The existing policy of the central government has brought about a negative impact on Manipur causing high degree of unemployment and keeping the state in an underdeveloped condition. These factors have breed the insurgency movement in Manipur.
- b) The isolated geographical location and long international boundary has helped to germinate the seeds of separatist ideology among the youths of Manipur.
- c) The insurgency movement has shattered the socio political life of Manipur.
- d) There is an absence of a strong democratic movement in the state. This has enabled the separatist and chauvinist tendencies to grow unchallenged.

1.6 METHODOLOGY:

The work is mainly based on secondary data available from different sources, such as books, newspapers and reports published by both government and non government agencies. The unpublished reports, documents are also consulted.

To supplement the secondary data, primary data have also been consulted. Further, the primary data has been generated through questionnaire administered to selected prominent scholars, social workers in different fields, student leaders and women organizations and office bearers of various political parties.

1.7 CHAPTERIZATION:

The study has been interwoven within the framework of four chapters. Chapter-1 is an introduction to the work in which various aspects of the study such as the outline of the work, review of literatures, objectives, hypothesis and research methodology are covered. Chapter-2 deals with the socio-economic conditions in Manipur. In this Chapter an attempt has been made to focus on the issues of demographic composition, problems of industrial development, agricultural economy, unemployment and poverty. Chapter-3 contains a detailed analysis of the most important issue i.e. insurgency - its past, present and future. It also highlights the contradictions among various insurgent groups operating in Manipur. Chapter IV presents the summary, the main findings and the policy recommendations.

CHAPTER-2

SOCIO ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN MANIPUR

2.1 INTRODUCTION:

As stated already Manipur is a small hilly state situated in the North-Eastern part of India. It is situated between 93.030E-94.780E longitude and 23.800N-25.280N latitude. It has an altitude of 790 metres above sea level at the plain level with specific reference to the capital city of Imphal. Manipur is a small state which has an area of 22327 sq.km consisting only 0.7 per cent of the total land surface of the country. Manipur has a long international border with Myanmar and shares boundary with other states of North East India such as Assam, Nagaland and Mizoram.

The state splits up naturally into two regions - the hills and the plains. The hilly region constitutes 90 per cent of the total land surface. Imphal is the capital of Manipur. Out of nine revenue districts, four are in the valley and five are in the hills.¹ In 1949, Manipur was formally merged with the Indian Union.² On 21st January, 1972, Manipur became a full fledged state.

Manipur is a multicultural pluralistic society. Indigenous people of Manipur belong linguistically to Tibeto-Burman family and racially to Mangolian stock. There are 29 (twenty nine) scheduled tribes, and 32 (thirty two) major communities in Manipur. The Meitei inhabit in the valley and form about 60 per cent of the total population. The hilly regions are inhabited by 29 tribes of

1. Valley Districts		Hilly Districts	
1)	Imphal West district	1)	Churachandpur district
2)	Imphal East district	2)	Chandel district
3)	Thoubal district	3)	Senapati district
4)	Bishnupur district	4)	Tamenglong district
5)	Ukhrul district		

2. In 1948, Assembly Election was held in Manipur. The constitution of Manipur was also adopted. From the elected legislatures, councils of ministers were also elected and M. K. Priyobata was nominated as Chief Minister. Soyam Satradhari Singh, *Manipurgi Itihasta Irawat* (Imphal: Soyam Publications 1972) p. 82.

Kuki-Naga stock (For details see Annexure II).

A sizeable (about 8 per cent) Muslim population inhabit in valley districts. There are small communities such as Marwaris, Bengalis, Punjabis, Tamils, and Nepalese inhabiting in the state. These are late comers to the state. At any rate all these communities constitute a pluralistic Manipuri society. As per the land system of Manipur (MLR Act) the hill areas are reserved for tribal people. Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Sanamahi are the major religions. Manipuri is the lingua-franca of all the people in Manipur.

The river system in Manipur flows from North to South. There are two main rivers, eight small rivers and numerous streamlets. The two main rivers are the Imphal river and the Barak river which play an important role in the economy of the state. The Imphal river irrigates the valley districts and flows into Myanmar through Chin hills and finally flows into Chinduin river of Myanmar. The Barak river serves as the only means of communication for the inaccessible Tamenglong district and Jiribam sub-division of Imphal East district. The Barak river passes through the western hill region of the state and then flows through Cachar valley. Manipur has an average rainfall of 1467.5 mm. The rainy season is from May to October. The temperature varies from 00C to 400C.

The state is mainly composed of tertiary rocks and the soil is mostly clay to clayey loam. But igneous rocks which contain quartz, sandstone, limestone and black clay are available in Ukhrul district. The soil of the valley region is very fertile and it is suitable for paddy cultivation. The slopes of the hills are more suitable for horticulture farming.

Agriculture plays the predominant role in the economy of Manipur and it employs as many as 57.37 per cent of the total workers. The household industries employs 9.16 per cent only.

In this chapter, the demographic composition, condition of women, condition of infrastructure, agriculture, industry, poverty and unemployment in the state are discussed.

2.2 DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION:

According to the 2001 provisional census report, the total provisional population of Manipur is 23,88,634. Out of this 12,07,338 are males and 11,81,296 are females. The valley districts accommodate 14,05,560 population while the hill districts have a population of 9,83,074. A comparative analysis of the growth rate of population of Manipur with the country as a whole tells that except during 1941-51 the growth rate of population in Manipur has been higher than that of all-India average. The trend of population in Manipur since 1901 is shown in Table 2.1. The rate of growth in population of Manipur for the two decades i.e. 1901-11 and 1911-21 were 21.71 per cent and 10.92 per cent respectively. Since 1951-61 the population has been growing rapidly registering a much higher growth than the all-India average. But the growth of Hindu population and Christian population has declined from 57.7 per cent in 1991 to 46 per cent in 2001 and from 34.1 per cent in 1991 to 34.0 per cent in 2001 respectively. On the other hand, the growth of Muslim population in the state has increased from 7.3 per cent in 1991 to 8.8 per cent in 2001. The religion-wise comparison of population in the North-Eastern States is shown in Table 2.2.

Table - 2.1

Population Trend in Manipur (1901-2001)

Year	Total Population			Variation persons	Decennial percentage variation	Density of population per sq. km.	Sex ratio female per 1000 males	Decennial percentage variation (India)
	Male	Female	Total					
1901	139632	144833	28465	-	-	13	1037	-
1911	170666	175556	346222	61757	21.71	16	1029	5.75
1921	188119	195879	384016	37794	10.98	17	1041	-0.31
1931	215815	229791	445606	61590	16.04	20	1065	11.00
1941	249183	262886	512069	66463	14.92	23	1055	14.22
1951	283685	293950	577635	65566	12.80	26	1036	13.31
1961	387058	392979	780037	202402	35.04	40	1015	24.80
1971	541675	531078	1072753	292716	37.53	48	980	24.66
1981	721006	699947	1421953	348200	32.46	64	971	23.50
1991	938359	898790	1837149	416196	29.73	82	958	23.51
2001(P)	1207338	1181296	2388634	551485	30.02	107	978	21.34

P = Provisional

Source: Directorate of Census Operation, Manipur.

Table - 2.2

Population Trend (Religion wise) in North East (1991-2001)

States	Hindus		Muslims		Christians		Buddhists	
	1991	2001	1991	2001	1991	2001	1999	2001
Assam	67.1	64.9	28.4	30.9	3.3	3.7	-	0.2
Arunachal Pradesh	37.0	34.6	-	1.9	-	18.7	12.9	13.0
Meghalaya	14.7	13.3	-	4.3	64.6	70.3	-	0.2
Manipur	57.7	46.0	7.3	8.8	34.1	34.0	-	0.1
Mizoram	5.0	3.6	-	1.1	85.7	87.0	7.8	7.9
Nagaland	10.1	7.7	1.7	1.8	87.5	90.0	-	0.1
Tripura	86.5	85.6	7.1	8.0	-	3.2	4.7	3.1

Source: *The Assam Tribune*, September 12, 2004, (Disparity in growth may hit NE).

The density of population per sq. km. is 107 persons (according to 2001 census). But the density of population in the valley and in the hills is very different. The density of population in the valley is 628 persons per sq. km. while the density of population in the hill districts is only 49 persons per sq. km. Imphal West district has the highest density of population among the districts with 847 persons per sq. km. while Tamenglong district has the lowest density of population with 25 persons per sq. km. As per as the 2001 (P) census, the population in the valley districts stand at 14,05,560 while the hill district has a population of 9,83,074. The following table 2.3 shows the district-wise population of Manipur. But there is no census data on the breakup of the tribal population of the state pattern for 1991 and 2001 census.

Table - 2.3

Districtwise Distribution of Population of Manipur
(as per 2001 Provisional Census Report)

State/ District	Total population		Sex Ratio		Density per sq. km.	Decadal growth rate
	Persons	Males	Females	Females		
I. Valley Districts :	1405560	702767	702793	1000	628	-
Imphal West	439532	218941	220585	1007	847	15.42
Imphal East	393480	197710	196070	992	555	19.16
Bishnupur	205907	102772	103135	1004	415	13.90
Thoubal	366341	183338	183003	998	713	24.62
II. Hill Districts :	983074	504571	478503	948	49	-
Senapati	379214	196646	182568	928	116	81.96
Tamenglong	111493	57994	53499	922	25	29.23
Churachandpur	228707	111740	113967	993	50	29.81
Ukhrul	140946	73413	67533	920	31	28.98
Chandel	122714	61778	60936	986	37	72.80
Manipur	2388634	1207338	1181296	978	107	30.02

Source: *Census of India 2001*, Provisional Population Totals Series I Paper I of 2001, p. 30, Registrar General Census Commissioner, India.

According to 2001 census, the urban population stand at 570410 as against 505645 in 1991 and the rural population stand at 1818224 as against 1331504 in 1991. It shows that 76.12 per cent of the total population live in the rural areas and only 23.88 per cent of the total population live in the urban areas.

As per the 2001 census, there are 594642 male and 474936 female workers in the state as against 424770 male and 350134 female workers in 1991. It means that there are 1069578 workers and 1319056 non-workers in the state. In terms of percentage, 44.77 per cent of the total population of Manipur are workers and 55.23 percent are non-workers.³ Among the workers, there are two categories- main workers and marginal workers. There has been a decrease in the percentage of main workers from 38.55 in 1991 to 31.67 in 2001, while the percentage of marginal workers has increased from 3.61 in 1991 to 13.10 in 2001. But as a whole, the proportion of the total workers to

3. The total population of the state may be divided into two categories. They are workers and non-workers. The workers are classified into two categories - main workers and marginal workers. Main workers are those who work for six months or more during the last year preceding the date of enumeration and the marginal workers are those who work for less than six months.

the total population has increased from 42.17 per cent in 1991 to 44.77 per cent in 2001. The details are shown in Table 2.4.

Table - 2.4
Distribution of Population by main workers, marginal workers and non-workers

Category	1991			2001		Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	
Main workers	414812 (22.58)	293471 (15.97)	708283 (38.55)	484240 (20.27)	272280 (11.40)	756520 (31.67)
Marginal workers	9958 (0.54)	56663 (3.08)	33321 (3.62)	110420 (4.62)	202656 (8.48)	313058 (13.10)
Total workers	424770 (23.12)	350134 (19.05)	774904 (42.17)	594642 (24.89)	474936 (19.88)	1069578 (44.77)
Non-workers	513589 (27.96)	548656 (29.87)	1062248 (57.83)	612696 (25.65)	706360 (29.58)	1319056 (55.23)
Total population	938359 (51.08)	898790 (48.92)	1837149 (100.00)	1207338 (50.54)	118196 (49.46)	2388634 (100)

Figures in the brackets indicate percentage to the total population.
Source: Directorate of Census operation, Manipur.

2.3 CONDITION OF WOMEN

Compared to the males, the work-participation rate of Manipuri women is very high. This stands at 57 per cent. Women do not plough the agricultural fields, but participate in all other agricultural activities. They also participate in all other economic activities as well as domestic works. However, it is seen that there is a wide disparity of wages among the males and females.

Manipuri women have been dominating petty trade and commerce in the state. In the capital city of Imphal more than 1000 stalls have been allotted to women. There is a market known as 'Ima Market' in the heart of Imphal city which is occupied by women only. According to one estimate, women constitute 8 per cent of the workers in the household industries at the national level, whereas in Manipur they constitute 12 per cent.

Women constitute about 48.4 per cent of the total population in Manipur. According to 2001 census the sex ratio was 978 females per 1000 males and the female literacy rate was 59.70 percent. In Manipur, women are pioneers in various professions and they work in different fields. The female workers are also involved in agriculture as cultivators and agricultural labourers. In the household industry, the number of female workers is more than male workers viz. 16.50 per cent, while the percentage of male workers is only 3.30. The number of female agriculture labourers (14.27) is also higher than the male agricultural labourers (8.95). Apart from the involvement of women in these sectors, as many as 23.94 per cent women are engaged in other sectors. These include government employees, factory workers and those engaged in trade and commerce. Table 2.5 shows the distribution of workers in different categories in the state.

Table - 2.5
Distribution of workers

Services	Male	Percentage to the totals	Female	Percentage to the totals	Total	Percentage to the totals
Cultivators	277583	46.68	215113	45.29	492696	46.06
Agricultural Labourers	53227	8.95	67764	14.27	120991	11.31
Household Industry workers	19603	3.30	98352	16.50	97955	9.61
Other Services	244299	41.07	113707	23.94	357936	33.47
Total Workers	597642	100.00	474936	100.00	1069578	100.00

Source: Provisional Population Totals
Census of India, 2001, Paper 3
Distribution of workers and non-workers
Directorate of census operation, Manipur

In other words, Manipuri women contribute a lot for the economic development of the state. They are involved in each and every sector. Since the time immemorial, they have been playing a great role for the development of the Manipur society. But at the same time there are reports of discrimination against and atrocities on women which reveal a depressing picture of the status of women in Manipur. Table 2.6 shows the increasing violence on women.

Table - 2.6
Violence on Women (2000-2004)

Types of Crime	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
1. Murder	11	03	05	05	07
2. Rape	12	16	12	15	31
3. Molestation	29	36	37	25	09
4. Kidnaping	40	69	61	65	46
5. Assault	09	12	86	52	63
6. Women Burning	-	-	01	-	-
7. Others	07	08	24	33	26
Total	108	144	227	195	182

Source: Manipur Police Department

2.4 INFRASTRUCTURE

In the terminology of economics, infrastructure means a system of economic and social overheads like a network of transportation and communication, generation and distribution of electricity understood in terms of power supply, financial and credit institutions, basic services, more particularly, education and public health. These constitute the basic foundation of economic development of a country. Therefore, adequate infrastructural facilities determine the rate and pattern of growth of an economy. Due to the absence of proper infrastructural facilities, development potentials of different regions of the country largely remain underutilized.⁴ To understand the economic condition of Manipur, it is necessary to have an overview of the infrastructural facilities available in Manipur. Therefore, an attempt has been made to give a focus on some of the constituents of infrastructure, such as, the existing positions of transport and communication, power supply, and banking and credit facilities

(i) Transport and Communication:

Up to the Fourth Five Year Plan, the Government of Manipur allotted huge fund for the development of transport and communication. The proportion of plan outlays on transport and communication during the first,

4. *Draft Eight Five Year Plan, 1990-95 and Annual Plan 1991-92*, Vol. 1 (Planning Department, Government of Manipur, 1991), p. 163.

second, third and fourth Five Year Plans of Manipur were 72.22 per cent, 33.44 per cent, 33.44 per cent and 38.71 per cent respectively. But since Fifth Five Year Plan, the allocation for the transport and communication has been decreasing. The following table (2.6) shows the proportions of plan outlay on transport and communication of Manipur from Fifth to Ninth Five Year Plans.

The following table shows that except in the Ninth Five Year Plan, the plan allocation on transport and communication in Manipur is higher than all India plan allocation. But the outlay has been reduced from 22.2 per cent in the Fifth Five Year Plan to 16.47 per cent in the Ninth Five Year Plan.

Table - 2.7
Percentage of Allocation of Plan Outlays on Transport and Communication during Fifth-Ninth Five Year Plans Manipur and India

Plans	Manipur (in percentage)	India (in percentage)
Fifth Five Year Plan	22.20	17.40
Sixth Five Year Plan	14.79	12.73
Seventh Five Year Plan	16.63	12.58
Eighth Five Year Plan	16.40	12.88
Ninth Five Year Plan	16.47	16.70

Source: Draft Annual Plan 2000-01 P - (iv), Planning Department, Government of Manipur

In Manipur, in the absence of a railway line running through different parts of the state, surface road stands as the most important means of transport and communication. There are three National Highways. They are N.H. No. 39 (Indo-Myanmar Road), N. H. No. 53 (New Cachar Road) and N. H. No. 150 (Jessami-Tipaimukh Road). The N. H. No. 39 connects the state capital with an important railway station at Dimapur and touches the international border town of Moreh in the South East. The N. H. No. 53 connects the state capital with new rail head at Jiriban as well as connects the Silchar town of Cachar district of Assam. Both the highways pass through the difficult mountain terrains. Naturally, these highways are the lifelines of Manipur.

Since the attainment of statehood (21st January, 1972), there has been some progress in the expansion of road communication. But it is not satisfactory despite the fact that there is a significant increase in the length of the total road. The total length of road which was 2,833 km in 1972, increased to 10,760 km

as on 31st March, 1996. Out of this only 3,595 km are surfaced and 7,165 km are unsurfaced road.⁵ It shows that the total road length in the state has increased by 3.8 times during the last two and half decades. But the conditions of the road have been far from satisfactory.

The following table (2.7) presents the road structure in different states of the North Eastern states vis-a-vis the country.

Table - 2.8

Length of Roads in North Eastern Region vis-a-vis India (in km) (as on 31.3.96)

States	Total Road length	Surface road	Unsurface road	Road per 100 sq. km.	Road per 1000 population	Percentage of surface road to total road length
Arunachal Pradesh	10240	3692	6548	12.23	11.8	36.05
Assam	68079	11421	6658	86.79	3.05	16.78
Manipur	10760	3595	7165	48.19	5.98	33.41
Meghalaya	8391	3946	4445	37.41	4.66	47.03
Nagaland	13732	2515	11217	82.83	19.44	18.31
Tripura	14726	4577	10149	140.43	5.45	31.03
Total	132836	32106	100732	52.08	4.23	24.17
All India	2403634	1334078	1069552	73.0	2.85	55.50

Source: *Basic Road Statistics of India 1995-96*, Ministry of Surface Transport

Note: I. Total population as on 1-3-1996

II. Total Road Length as on 31-3-1996

Although there was a promise in the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) for upgradation, strengthening and increasing the road length, it could not be fulfilled due to financial constraints. Similarly, during the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) it appears that no upgradation of roads of all state highways, major district road, other district road and inter village road would be taken up. Instead, the main thrust will be the improvement of all the existing roads with a proposed outlay of Rs. 12960 lakh.⁶

The roads play the most important role in the system of communication in Manipur in the virtual absence of railway and river transport. Yet, the road

5. *Draft Tenth Five Year Plan, 2002-07 and Annual Plan 2002-03*, (Planning Department, Government of Manipur, 2002) p. 43.

6. *Mid Term Appraisal of Eight Five Year Plan, 1992-97* (Planning Department, Government of Manipur 1994) p. 50.

system in the state is very underdeveloped and inadequate. Table 2.7 clearly shows that Manipur has only 33.41 per cent surface roads. Till now, even the existing important roads like National Highways, State highways and major district roads are sub standard. There is immediate need for improving width and crust thickness of the roads. At present even sub-divisional headquarters and other administrative centres are not adequately connected. There are large numbers of villages which have no road and are connected by only fair weather roads.

There is only 1.35 km of railway network (metreguage). The railway station of Jiribam (222 kms from Imphal) is occupied by the Army. There is one airport at Imphal. Indian Airlines and Jet Airways are operating regularly though in a limited manner. In some parts of Manipur such as, Thanga, Karang etc. waterways are also used as a means of communication.

(ii) Power Supply:

Power is an important component needed for economic development. In Manipur, in the past power generation was based on diesel generating sets. The state has neither coal or oil reserves.⁷ Prior to the First Five Year Plan, the small hydroelectric plant at Leimakhong served Manipur. The power generating system comprised of two hydel sets of 100 kw and 56 kw and diesel sets 62.5 kw and 46.5 kw with a system demand of 130 kw in 1950-51.⁸ But it was meant exclusively for electrification of Imphal and its surrounding suburbs.

The major activities to harness the hydel potentials available in abundance in the state were started in mid 1950. The construction of Loktak Hydro Project as a central sector project with a capacity of 105 MW was first taken up by the Manipur Public Works Department and it was finally implemented by National Hydro Electric Power Corporation. The Loktak Hydro Electric Project was commissioned in August 1984 but it was not enough to cater fully to the needs arising out of the shortage of power in the state. Manipur gets a little share of only 28.95 per cent from the Loktak Hydro Electric Project which means that only 26.06 MW of electricity is generated from this project. The share of power of Manipur from the centre sector is shown in Table 2.9.

7. Dr. S. Brajamani Singh, *Economic Growth in Manipur: An Empirical Analysis* (Imphal, S. Romesh Singh, 2003) p. 27.

8. *Techno-Economic Survey of Manipur*, (NCAER, 1961), p. 59.

Against a peak demand of 142 MW, the present availability of power from all sources, when all units of Manipur are operated is around 87 MW only.⁹ All the more, the power situation in the state regularly deteriorates in the lean seasons when the generation is reduced following the recession of water levels in the rain fed reservoirs of the Loktak lake and hydel power plants. So there has been always a shortfall of about 38 per cent of the peak power in the state which has an adverse impact on all the development activities in the state and it results pro-rata load shedding throughout the year.

Table - 2.9
The Share of Power of Manipur from the Central Sector
(at the end of Eighth Five Year Plan)

Source of Power	Electric Availability (MW)	Manipur's Share	
		MW	Percent
Loktak	90	26.06	28.95
Kopili	200	10.66	5.33
AGBPP	100	6.90	6.90
Total	390	43.62	11.18

Source: Ninth Five Year Plan, 1997-02 and Annual Plan 1997-98 Planning Department, Government of Manipur.

The percapita consumption of electricity in Manipur was only 5 KWH in 1970-71 rose to 34 KWH in 1986, to 80 KWH in 1989-90 and to 104.00 KWH in 1992-93 against the all India per capita consumption of electricity rate of 90 kwh in 1970-71, 178 kwh in 1985-86, 236 kwh in 1989-90 and 330.60 kwh in 1992-93.¹⁰ But the per capita consumption of electricity in the state fell to 127.9 kwh in 1996-97 against the all India per-capita consumption of electricity of 338.5 kwh.¹¹ But according to state government sources, it is found that by the end of 1999-2001, 91.70 per cent of the villages of Manipur were electrified (Table 2.9). During 1985-86 only 32.19 per cent of the total villages of Manipur were electrified. However, the figure got increased to 80.11 per cent in 1995-96.¹²

9. Draft Tenth Five Year Plan, 2002-07 and Annual Plan 2002-03 (Planning Department, Government of Manipur 2002) p. 34.

10. Basic Statistics of North Eastern Region, 1995 (North Eastern Council, Shillong 1995) p. 112.

11. Statistical Abstract of India, 1998, (Government of India, 1999) p. 71

12. Statistical Abstract of Manipur, 2001 (Government of Manipur, 2001) p. 140

Table - 2.10
Number of Villages Electrified

Year	Inhabited Villages	Villages Electrified	Percentage
1985-86	2035	655	32.19
1990-91	2182	1487	68.15
1995-96	2182	1748	80.11
1999-2000	2182	2001	91.70

Source: Office of the Chief Engineer Electricity Department, Government of Manipur

The pattern of utilisation of electricity and the proportion of electric power actually utilised to the total electricity output in the state is not encouraging. The major portion of electric power in Manipur is utilised for domestic uses. In 1999-2000, 58.76 per cent of the total electric power was gone in domestic uses while only 6.3 per cent was used in industry. The following table 2.10 shows that in 1999-2000 only 1.75 per cent of the total electric power was used for agricultural purposes including irrigation. It means that electricity is hardly or not at all utilized for irrigation and other agricultural purposes.

Table - 2.11
Consumption of Electric Power by Users (million kwh)

Types of Consumption	1980-81	1985-86	1990-91	1995-96	1999-2000
Domestic	79.50	30.488	79.451	113.765	101.685
(Small power, lights & fans)	(73.00)	(56.44)	(45.24)	(46.00)	(58.76)
Commercial	0.632	2.490	11.942	10.075	14.133
(Small power, lights & fans)	(5.80)	(4.61)	(6.80)	(6.50)	(8.17)
Industrial (low medium volt & high medium volt)	0.926	14.308	33.773	48.226	10.908
	(8.50)	(26.49)	(19.23)	(19.50)	(6.3)
Agricultural including irrigation	0.926	1.826	2.803	6.183	3.033
	(8.50)	(3.38)	(1.60)	(2.50)	(1.75)
Others	0.457	4.902	47.663	63.066	43.307
	(4.20)	(9.08)	(27.14)	(25.50)	(25.02)
Total Consumption	10.891	54.014	175.632	247.315	173.066
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)

* The figures in the brackets indicate percentage to the total consumption of electricity.

Source: Office of the Chief Engineer, Electricity Department, Government of Manipur.

13. Draft Tenth Five Year Plan 2002-07 and Annual Plan 2002-03 (Planning Department, Government of Manipur, 2002) p. 34.

14. Ninth Five Year Plan 1997-02 and Annual Plan 2002-03, (Planning Department, Government of Manipur, 1997) p. 73-74..

The main objective of the Ninth Five Year Plan in respect of power sector was to raise per capita electricity consumption to 300 kwh by the end of the plan and to achieve 100 per cent rural electrification.¹³ And with this objective in mind, the government of Manipur planned to increase the domestic power production to 78.7 MW by taking up new generation schemes and completion of ongoing schemes. Among the ongoing schemes Leimakhong Stage III (1000 KW), Maklong MHP (800 kw) projects and new schemes, General Stage II MHP (400 kw), Tuipaki MHP (500 kw) and installation of Gas turbine generating station at Jiribam with an installed capacity of 40 MW were planned to be completed during Ninth Five Year Plan. But it could not be completed due to paucity of fund and existing law and order situation. The State government established a new public sector company 'Manipur State Power Development Corporation' in 1997-98 which is establishing a Heavy Fuel based plant having installed capacity of 36 MW¹⁴ and during the Ninth Five Year Plan, the Heavy Fuel based power project of 36 MW capacity at Leimakhong was completed and commissioned by the President of India on 5th October, 2002.

With a proposed plan outlay of Rs. 44,331 lakhs, the main thrust of the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) in respect of power sector in Manipur includes among others, completion of ongoing projects/schemes, narrowing down the wide gap between the demand and the supply of power, taking up of rural electrification work of cent per cent electrification etc.¹⁵

(iii) Banking and Credit Facilities:

In Manipur, till 1970, there were only two commercial banks.¹⁶ The number of bank offices increased to 105 as on 31 March, 1999. Among them there are 30 branches of Regional Rural Banks and 18 branches of the co-operative banks. Excluding the Regional Rural Banks and Co-operative Banks there are 57 branches of nationalized commercial banks. But the district-wise distribution of bank offices is not so encouraging. Most of the branches of nationalized commercial banks, Regional Rural Banks and Co-operative Banks are concentrated in the Imphal West district. It has as many as 38 branches of various banks whereas Ukhrul district has only 4 branches.

15. Draft Tenth Five Year Plan 2002-07 and Annual Plan 2002-03 (Planning Department, Government of Manipur 2002) p. 36.

16. Economic Review 1990-91 (Government of Manipur, 1992) p. 61.

Table - 2.12
District-wise Distribution of Banks (as on 31.3.1999)

Name of the districts	No. of Nationalized Commercial Banks	Regional Rural Bank	Co-operative Banks	Total
Imphal West	24	5	9	38
Imphal East	8	4	1	13
Thoubal	2	6	2	10
Bishnupur	2	3	3	8
Ukhrul	1	2	1	4
Chandel	4	1	0	5
Churachandpur	7	1	1	9
Tamenglong	2	3	0	5
Senapati	7	5	1	13
Total	57	30	18	105

Source: Calculated from the sources published by Government of Manipur (2001) in the *Statistical Abstract of Manipur 2001*, p. 162-163.

The commercial banks are important instruments in mobilizing savings and in extending institutional finance to the various sectors of the economy. The following table 2.12 shows the overall credit deposit position in respect of scheduled commercial banks in the state in 1987, 1990 and 1999 respectively. The table clearly shows that on 31 March, 1987 the credit deposit ratio was 60.89 per cent but it has declined to 45.25 per cent as on 31 March, 1999. In other words, it may be said that the credit disbursement from commercial banks in the state is low.

Table - 2.13
Deposits, Advances and Credit Deposit Ratio in Manipur in respect of Scheduled Commercial Banks
(as on 31 March)

Year	No. of Bank Branches	Deposits	Advances	Credit Deposit Ratio
1987	42	4835.98	2945.01	60.89
1990	50	8416.13	6221.74	73.93
1995	57	19414.02	9694.58	49.56
1999	57	36607.00	16563.00	45.25

Source : Directorate of Industrial Finance, Manipur Secretariat, Government of Manipur.

2.5 AGRICULTURE:

Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy of Manipur. It provides employment to about 70 per cent of the total working population. But it is confined to only 10.48 per cent of the total geographical area where 47 per cent is in valley districts and 53 per cent is in hilly districts. The growth of agriculture in the state has been quite unsatisfactory because still its production depends on nature.

In Manipur, one finds two types of cultivation. They are settled and shifting cultivation. The settled form of agriculture is concentrated in the valley districts which is only 1/10th of the total area and also thickly populated. Jhum cultivation or shifting cultivation locally known as 'pamlor' is practised in the hills. In the past, jhuming cycle had been 10-15 years and there was no noticeable disturbances in the ecological balance. But with the increase of population, jhuming cycle had been considerably shortened to an average of 3-4 years which has caused adverse affect on the ecological balance.¹⁷ Every year about 70 thousand hectares of land are estimated to be under shifting cultivation. But this system of cultivation supports only 41.16 per cent of the State's total population.

The budgetary allocation in the agricultural sector is very low. The proportion of plan outlays on agriculture and allied services in the First five Year Plan (1951-55) of the total state plan outlays was 4.07 per cent only and it has meagerly increased to 7.56 per cent in the Ninth Five Year Plan.¹⁸ The proposed plan outlay on agriculture and allied services during the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) is Rs. 4015.00 lakh out of which the capital component is Rs. 1285.00 lakh.¹⁹

As rice is the most important component of food in Manipur it has the largest weight in agricultural production and it covers the largest area under food crops. In 1972-73 rice production constituted 90.86 per cent in 1999-2000. The share of other food grain crops like maize, wheat and pulses to the total foodgrains production is negligible. The area under rice has also increased from 146.6 thousand hectares in 1972-73 to 157.1 thousand hectares in 1999-2000

17. *Basic Statistics of North Eastern Region*, 1995, (North Eastern Council, Shillong 1995) p. 30.

18. *Five Year Plan and Annual Plan: Various issues*, (Planning Department, Government of Manipur).

19. *Draft Tenth Five Year Plan, 2002-07 and Annual Plan, 2002-03*, (Planning Department, Government of Manipur 2002). p. 7.

as well as production of rice also increased from 1038 kg per hectare in 1972-73 to 2324 kg per hectare in 1999-2000 i.e. by 123.89 per cent. On the other hand, the area under food grains increased from 160.37 thousand hectares in 1972-73 to 161.5 thousand hectares in 1997-98 as well as food grains production increased from 167.46 thousand tons to 364.8 thousand tons. The food grain production performance in different years is shown in the following Table.

Table - 2.14
Food grains Production in Manipur

Year	Total Food Production			Rice Production		
	Area	Production	Yield	Area	Production	Yield
1972-73	160.37	167.46	1044	146.05	152.16	1038
1975-76	194.13	302.83	1560	177.91	276.42	1560
1980-81	206.17	293.74	1425	188.55	273.04	1450
1985-86	177.52	250.42	1974	164.60	322.53	1629
1990-91	162.00	285.60	1763	157.41	274.17	1742
1995-96	157.00	228.90	2159	134.93	331.80	2459
1999-2000	-	-	-	157.05	364.98	2324

Source: I *Statistical Abstract of Manipur* (various issues), Government of Manipur.

II *Basic Statistics of North Eastern Region*, North Eastern Council, Shillong.

The performance of agriculture was good during the seventies. The annual growth rate of food grain production and rice production during seventies were 9.27 per cent and 51.16 per cent respectively. It may be said that the high growth rates in the seventies was largely due to faster development of irrigation and power infrastructures particularly in the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79) with about 31 per cent of the total plan investment and alongside investment in agriculture and allied services has also increased considerably with about 16 percent of the total investment.²⁰ But from the late seventies to early eighties, the food production had been badly affected by successive drought and flood. The low agricultural growth in the nineties is related with several technical constraints. The share of agriculture and irrigation to total plan outlays has declined since the Eight Five Year Plan (1992-97). The allocation for agriculture and allied service has declined from 13.16 per cent during Seventh Five Year Plan to 9.35 per cent during the Eight Five Year Plan and to 7.56 per cent

20. *Sixth Five Year Plan, 1980-85 and Annual Plan 1981-82* (Planning Department, Government of Manipur, 1981) p. 12.

during the Ninth Five Year Plan.²¹ Similarly, the plan allocation for irrigation has also declined from 22.5 per cent during the Sixth Five Year Plan to 18.14 percent during the Seventh Plan to 18.08 per cent during the Eighth Plan and to 13.21 per cent during Ninth Five Year Plan respectively.²² It may be mentioned that the government's negative attitude towards the development of agricultural sector has resulted in decrease in the rice and food grains production over the recent years.

2.6 INDUSTRY

In the field of industry, Manipur remains an industrially backward state. All districts of the state have been kept under the category of 'No Industries Districts' by all India standard.²³ Manufacturing sector contributes hardly 6.5 per cent to the total state domestic product and less than 10 per cent of the total population are engaged in this sector.

Prior to independence (1947), there was hardly any industry in the state except handlooms. With the launching of the Five Year Plans, efforts were also made towards industrialization. In the beginning of the Fourth Five Year Plan, concrete efforts were made for rapid development of industries in Manipur. But the shares of industrial sector to the total plan outlay of the state during the first three Five Year Plans were only 0.66 per cent, 2.02 per cent and 1.49 per cent respectively.²⁴

So far as the public sector undertaking in the state is concerned, the rate of return is not quite encouraging. The rate of return in some of the state owned undertakings was (-) 26.98 percent in 1992-93 whereas it was only 3.14 in 1988-89. The following table (2.18) illustrates the rate of return on investment of 12 state owned undertakings in Manipur.

Table 2.15 shows that except Manipur Industrial Development Corporation and Manipur Agro Industries Corporation, there are eight public sector undertakings which show negative rate of returns. The rate of returns for Manipur Electronic Development Corporation and Manipur Police Housing

21. *Draft Tenth Five Year Plan, 2002-03 and Annual Plan, 2002-03* (Planning Department, Government of Manipur, 2002) p. (vi).

22. *ibid*

23. *Ninth Five Year Plan 1991-02 and Annual Plan 1997-98* (Planning Department, Government of Manipur 1997), p. 82.

24. *Economic Review, 1984-85*, (Government of Manipur, 1985) p. 31.

Corporation are also very low but there is no negative return on investment. So, it shows that a critical examination in the right perspective is highly needed.

Table - 2.15
Return on Investment

Name of the undertakings	(in percentage)	
	1988-89	1992-93
Manipur State Road Transport Corporation	- 6.52	- 90.34
Manipur Police Housing Corporation	37.13	2.76
Manipur Tribal Development Corporation	- 35.84	- 98.12
Manipur Industrial Development Corporation	30.31	90.77
Manipur Plantation Crop Corporation	- 90.55	- 6.05
Manipur Film Development Corporation	2.86	- 43.46
Manipur Spinning Mill Corporation	- 52.50	- 84.63
Manipur Cycle Corporation	- 29.25	- 38.21
Manipur Cement Ltd.	0.00	- 11.01
Manipur Electronic Development Corporation	119.66	16.93
Manipur Agro Industries Corporation	6.67	45.30
Manipur Handlooms and Handicraft Development Corporation	18.44	- 107.73
Total	- 3.14	- 26.98

Source: Planning Department, Government of Manipur (1996): An analysis of the performance of the State Public Sector Undertakings.

SMALL SCALE INDUSTRY

In 1975, there were only 304 small scale industrial units in Manipur which included 175 rice mills, 41 oil mills and 18 saw mills.²⁵ As on 31 March 1998, there were 9090 registered small scale industrial units in the state with an investment in plant and machinery of Rs. 30.05 crore employing 46,390 persons with an annual production of Rs. 134.84 crores. But the growth of production declined from 19.33 per cent in 1987-88 to 2.11 per cent in 1997-98. But the average employment per small scale industrial units has increased marginally from 5.0 persons in 1987-88 to 5.1 persons in 1997-98.

There is also a wide disparity in the distributions of registered small scale industries in Manipur. In 1998, only 320 small scale units were registered in Senapati district with an investment of 1.08 crore but 5410 SSI units were

25. *Economic Review, 1984-1985*, Government of Manipur, p. 31.

registered in Imphal West and East districts with an investment of 17.81 crore. The following table (2.14) clearly shows the district-wise performance of SSI units in Manipur as on 31 March, 1998.

Table - 2.16
Number of Registered SSI Units in Manipur (1998)

District	No. of Unit	Investment Rs. (in crore)	Production Rs. (in crore)	Employment (No. of persons)
Imphal	5410	17.81	78.85	27832
Thoubal	476	1.62	7.08	2436
Bisnupur	630	2.10	9.18	2753
Ukhral	864	2.81	13.42	4382
Senapati	320	1.08	4.80	1704
Churachandpur	549	1.81	8.91	2861
Tamenglong	484	1.61	7.12	2527
Chandel	357	1.21	5.47	1895
Total	9090	30.05	134.04	46398

Source : Commerce and Industrial Department, Government of Manipur.

According to the Fourth Economic Census of 1998, there were an estimated 80,489 enterprises in the state (excluding crop production and plantation) giving employment to about 2,00,728 persons in usual activity status. It is reported that 74,316 (92.33%) enterprises were engaged in the non-agricultural activities other than crop production and plantation. Among this 81.34 per cent enterprises were located in the valley districts. Around 53.45 per cent enterprises were reported to be located in the rural areas and the rest 46.55 per cent in the urban areas.

Handloom industry is the largest cottage industry in the State. According to the National Handloom Census, 1987, there were around 2.7 lakh looms with a weaver population of more than 2.8 lakh of which about 1 lakh were full time weavers. Besides handicraft is another important industry.

Here it is found that due to inadequate infrastructure like transport and communication, absence of adequate power supply, lack of capital, and the existence of difficult terrain, Manipur continues to be an industrially backward state.

2.7 POVERTY

It is generally agreed in this country that poverty can be termed as a situation where a section of population fail to reach a certain minimum consumption standard.²⁶ Poverty is one of the serious problems that the state of Manipur has been suffering for the last few decades. Needless to state that no development process can be sustainable without taking recourse to measures for poverty alleviation.

The Task Force on Projections of Minimum Needs and Effective Consumption Demand defined poverty line as the mid point of the monthly per capita expenditure class/level which have daily caloric intake of 2,400 per person in the rural areas and 2,100 in urban areas of the country. Accordingly, the minimum desirable standard was worked out at Rs. 76 for the rural areas and Rs. 88 for urban areas at 1979-80 prices.²⁷ According to Economic Survey 2001-2002, the rate of people living below poverty line in Manipur was 28.54 only. But more research work is needed to calculate the actual condition of poverty. About the poor, Nobel laureate Amartya Sen observed that, "The poor is not an economic class nor convenient category to use for analysing social and economic movements. Poverty is the common outcome of a variety of disparate economic circumstances and a policy to tackle poverty much, of necessity, go beyond the concept of poverty".²⁸ He further observed that it is not sufficient to know how many people are poor but how exactly they are.²⁹

According to an estimate made by the Planning Commission, Manipur has been experiencing considerable reduction in poverty and the percentage of people living below the poverty line has declined from 49.96 per cent in 1973-74 to 33.78 per cent in 1993-94 and to 28.54 per cent in 1999-2000.

26. P.K. Dhar, *Indian Economy its Growing Dimension*, (Ludhiana : Kalayani Publishers, 2002) p.655.

27. *Sixth Five Year Plan, 1980-85* (Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi 1981) p.51.

28. Amartya Sen, "Poverty and Economic Development" in Wadhver, D.Charan, (ed), *Some problems of India's Economic Policy* (New Delhi, 1977) p. 246.

29. *ibid.*

Table - 2.17
Estimate of Poverty Ratio in Manipur vis-a-vis India

Year	Manipur		India		Combined	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Manipur	India
1973-1974	52.67	36.92	56.44	49.01	49.96	54.88
1993-1994	45.01	7.73	37.27	32.36	33.78	35.97
1999-2000	40.04	7.47	27.09	23.62	28.54	26.10

Source: *Economic Survey 2001-2002*, Government of India, Ministry of Finance, p. 239

The Table clearly shows that though the state has been witnessing a secular decline at the macro level, rural urban disparities are visible. The urban poverty has declined sharply between 1973-74 to 1993-94 from 36.92 per cent to 7.73 per cent. But the rural poverty has declined marginally from 52.67 per cent in 1973-74 to 45.01 per cent in 1993-94 and to 40.04 per cent in 1999-2000. So, rural poverty is to be considered a serious problem in Manipur.

2.8 UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment is also another serious problem that the state is facing today. It is often said to be the main reason behind the prevailing social unrest in Manipur. It means that there is a situation where the total number of job vacancies is much less than the total number of job seekers in the state. It is a kind of situation where the unemployed persons do not find any meaningful or gainful job in spite of the fact that there is willingness and capacity to work among the educated and trained youth.

Till January 2004, registered unemployed in various employment exchanges of Manipur has reached 4,43,427. According to Employment Exchanges data, it was only 10,639 in 1960-61 but it has risen alarmingly. In 1980-81 the number reached to 1,15,546, in 1990-91 to 1,83,495, in 1999-2000 to 3,87,276 and in 2001-2002 the number reached to 4,09,652. From 1990-91 to 1991-92, the annual growth of job seekers was 7.98 per cent but it has increased to 9.49 per cent during 1998-99 to 1999-2000. It is apparent to note that during 1999-2000 around 61 per cent job seekers were in the age group of 15-34 years which is generally considered as youth in the state. Besides this, there are many others who have not enrolled in the employment exchanges.

There is no clear-cut and concrete policy to solve this problem. In the name of solving the fiscal deficit which the state is facing today, as per the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with the Union Government in June, 2003, the State Government has decided to cut over 14,300 jobs in the state government departments by 2005. The Government of Manipur has not initiated any new recruitment policy due to the existence of a ban on recruitment imposed by the central Government after the New Economic Policy 1991. The unemployed youth is easily lured to join insurgency or armed movement in the state which has a strong population who consider that the Union Government committed excess by annexing an independent state and there is a justification to spearhead movement for either better deal or to secede away from the Union of India. The geographical isolation and the proximity of the state to a foreign country has also added to the advantage of the militant organization to continue the armed insurgency in the state.

The detailed job seekers registered at various employment exchanges of Manipur is shown in the following Table.

Table - 2.18
Jobseekers in Manipur

Year	Registration	Placement	Percentage of Placement to registration	Jobseekers in the live register	Annual growth
1980-81	21,272	703	3.30	115548	-
1985-86	44,510	402	0.90	237179	29.89
1990-91	33453	242	0.72	183395*	-27.84*
1995-96	30135	143	0.47	276157	10.50
1999-2000	35760	69	0.19	387890	9.49
2000-01	14777	451	3.05	397304	2.42
2001-02	15866	55	0.34	409652	3.10

* This sudden decrease was because of removal of the names who did not renew their registrations.
Source: *Statistical Handbook of Manipur, 2002*.

CHAPTER - 3

INSURGENCY, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

3.1. INTRODUCTION:

As stated in Chapter I there is no specific definition of insurgency either in the *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* or in *Encyclopedia Britannica* and even in the *Encyclopedia Americana*. That is why any armed and violent movement against a sovereign state and its authority in order to realize a political demand with the objective of either seceding away from the state or to create a new political arrangement may be regarded as an insurgency movement. We have cited in the introductory chapter the definition of insurgency given in the *Reader's Digest Dictionary*, the *Oxford Advance Learners' Dictionary of Current English* and by some other scholars. Here we avoid repetition of the same exercise.

At any rate to recapitulate and to put the contours of insurgence one can argue that is an armed struggle (i) against the established authority, (ii) spearheaded by the consciously mobilized sections, (iii) generally belonging to a particular indigenous group, (iv) for the fulfillment of certain political goals, (v) through extra constitutional means.

Manipur is one of the worst affected states of North East India by insurgency of various types. North East India started experiencing a steady increase in the number of armed militant groups as well as a sense of alienation soon after the Independence. The worst affected states in the region are Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. Mizoram returned to peace and normalcy soon after an accord signed between the Government of India and the MNF. But other states are still suffering as a result of unabated insurgency movements. During the last five decades and a half the entire North-Eastern region has seen the emergence of a number of insurgent groups. In the 1950s only one armed militant group led by A.Z. Phizo of Nagaland was operating in the North-East. The number started increasing. In the 1960s only two groups were operating in Manipur. But after 2000, more than 18 armed militant (some

others say around 22) groups are operating in Manipur alone.¹

In the North-East, the insurgency movement began for the first time in Nagaland. The Naga National Council (NNC) raised its insurgency voice even before the transfer of power in 1947. Later on the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) emerged and replaced the NNC. There was a vertical split in the NSCN but its leading faction the NSCN(IM) took forward the armed struggle against the Government of India. However, there has been a cease fire agreement between this faction and the Government of India, and therefore, there has been comparative peace in Nagaland for last seven years. The Mizo National Front (MNF) in Mizoram was a product of 60's. As stated already, with the formation of the MNF Government in the state in 1987 normalcy in the state returned. Now Mizoram is one of the most peaceful states in the region. In Manipur insurgency movement started with the formation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) and the Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) in the 1960s. The Tripura National Volunteers (TNV) in Tripura and the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) in Assam are the late entrants in the region.

In all the states in North East India with the exception of Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya insurgency movements of various shades and colour are operating. In addition to various form of politically motivated insurgent groups, some Islamic fundamentalist organisations are reportedly active in this region.

It is a difficult task to conclusively brand all the armed militant groups as insurgent or terrorist groups. Many of the insurgent groups indulge in terror tactics which include destruction of economic infrastructure, including communication and transport networks, human lives by resorting to indiscriminate killing, take recourse to extortion of money, and in this way create terror situation. Their political goal of achieving autonomy or independence is often marred by their terror tactics. In this way they alienate themselves from the common people and lose credibility and respectability.

Though the aim of this study is to analyze the activities of insurgent groups operating in Manipur and to assess the positive and negative impact in the political and social scenerio in the state, it is not possible to analyze all the groups within a limited period of one year; whereas attempt is made to find out the very reason for its emergence in the state. The present study tries to make a survey of literature on insurgency and tries to find whether the political history, isolated geographical location and economic policies of the central government, are the root causes for the insurgency movement in the state.

1. A. Ibemcha Chanu, "Has AFSPA in Manipur really served its purpose?" *The Assam Tribune*, September 13, 2004.

3.2. GROWTH OF INSURGENCY (I)

After independence, there was a communist revolt led by Hijam Irawat Singh (1948-51) in the Manipur Valley. The revolt was short lived and failed to lay a definite impact on the political life of Manipur. Meanwhile, the Naga armed movements started gaining ground in Manipur's neighbour state, Nagaland since 1953. The Kuki-Mizos started picking up arms in Mizoram since 1966. After the Shillong accord was signed between the Naga National Council (NNC) and Government of India on 11 November 1970, the NNC accepted the Constitution of India, deposited arms and the peace loving moderates joined the mainstream. But a section led by Angami Zapu Phizo and Thuingaleng Muivah opposed the accord. On 30 June 1986, the Mizo Accord was signed between the Government of India and Mizo National Front for the restoration of normalcy. The MNF gave up arms and joined the mainstream. Though these movements have their varying degrees of success and failure, they reflect the aspiration of the three major ethnic groups of Manipur, namely, the Meiteis of Imphal Valley, the Nagas and Kuki-Mizos of the surrounding hills.²

It was in the late sixties when many educated youths of Manipur turned to armed movement for a specific political cause. During this period the people of Manipur were under central administration. They were politically frustrated and were struggling for political freedom either inside the Indian Union or outside.³ Manipur was formally merged with the Indian Union on 15 October, 1949 soon after the then Maharaja's signature was obtained on 21 September 1949. 'There was a deep sense of hurt' to the Manipuri people 'that, despite its long and unbroken history as a distinctive, if not always independent political entity, Manipur was not only denied the autonomy it sought but had to agonise for a full 23 years before it was granted statehood within the Indian Union, a status earlier accorded to Nagaland, Meghalaya and Himachal'.⁴

Manipur was considered to be a part C state; it became a union territory in 1956 with a territorial council, which was upgraded to a Territorial Assembly in 1963. After the merger of Manipur with India, the aristocracy, the elites and the feudal elements, benefitted most from the monarchy, exploited the political and economic situation in the state without taking any concrete step to develop

2. Gangumei Kabui, *Insurgency in Manipur Valley* in B.L. Abbi, (ed), *North East Region: Problems and Prospects of Development* (Chandigarh: Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development, 1984) p. 233.

3. *ibid*, p.234.

4. B. G. Verghese, *India's Resurgent* (New Delhi: Konark Publishers, 1996), pp 166-167.

the economy and instill trust in the mind of the people under the new dispensation. The Union Government too remained satisfied with the merger act and failed to adopt development policy towards all-round progress of the state. The common masses felt neglected, betrayed and alienated. A sense of relative deprivation gripped the people and the state became fertile for political instability and insurgency.⁵ This carried the potentiality to breed the sense of revivalism that could rationalize the quest for restoring pre-1949 status of Manipur.

Amidst the question of revivalism and political frustration, the late 1950s saw the formation of a pan Mangolian movement. In 1965, an armed insurgent group named as Meitei State Committee was formed. The first Chairman and the General secretary were Wangkheirakpam Temba of Keibikhul and S. K. Angami (Radhachoron) of Gyaspani respectively.⁶ But according to a booklet released by K. C. P. on 13th August 1994, the Meitei State Committee was formed by 7 members on the hill top of Thangal Surung on January 7, 1967. In November, 1967 police arrested 63 members including its president, general secretary and seized documents.⁷ After that there is no information available regarding Meitei State Committee.⁸

On 24 November 1964, some urban educated youths of Manipur formed the 'United National Liberation Front (UNLF)' with an aim of liberating Manipur from 'Indian colonial rule' and to drive out foreigners. The first leader of the UNLF was Arambam Somerendo, who was a relative of the royal family. Somerendo later gave up underground life but he was gunned down by the KYKL a few years after his surrender. He was succeeded by R. K. Meghen alias Sanayaima. Within a few years the membership of the UNLF galloped up to 3000.⁹ But within the UNLF differences occurred among the top leaders, more particularly between Somerendo and Sudhir. A split took place in the outfit and the Sudhir group formed a parallel organization called the 'Consolidation Committee of Manipur (CONSOM)'.¹⁰ Sudhir went to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) to contact Pakistani authorities for getting training in guerilla warfare and arms. In 1969, he set up 'Revolutionary Government of Manipur (RGM)' at Sylhet and printed pamphlets to circulate in Imphal. Under the advice of Sudhir, the RGM members collected money in Manipur for sending its members to Pakistan for armed training batch by batch. The RGM members received support in terms of finance and shelter in Manipur.¹¹ The Government

5. R. Gopalakrishnan, *Insurgent North-Eastern Region of India* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1995) p. 79.

6. Prof. K.S. Syamkanhai, *Manipuri Lingaklol (1950-1972)* p. 74-75.

7. *ibid*.

8. Paonam Labango Mangang, *Kangleipakta Revolution* (Imphal: Khuaijam Sanatombi, 1997).

9. *ibid*, p. 52

10. Phanjobam Tarapot, *op. cit.*, p.42.

11. Paonam Labango Mangang, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

of Manipur being alarmed at the situation took a decision on March 10, 1969 to crack down the organization. It was followed by mass arrest of Meitei youths belonging to the RGM and the UNLF. The Manipur police requested the Tripura police to arrest Meitei youths operating from that state and having relationship with militant groups. Within a week (1st August to 6th August 1969) Tripura police arrested 54 RGM members, out of them 34 were arrested by Kailashar Police Station and 22 more arrested by Dharmanagar Police Station. In Manipur, the police arrested 82 RGM member and 1 was arrested from Meghalaya. According to Manipur Government report, the total number of arrested youths were 142.¹² But important top leaders including its chairman, O. Sudhir, its foreign secretary N. Bisheshore, K. Brajabihari (Incharge - Pakistan command) could not be arrested by the police. During 1970-71, for about a period of two years, training was given to eight members of RGM by Pakistani military personnel at Borlekha Commando Training Centre in Sylhet district which included handling of highly sophisticated weapons and guerilla warfare.¹³

After the Bangladesh liberation war of 1971, the militant groups of Bangladesh operating from the then Pakistan had no option but to return to Manipur. Many of them were arrested on their way to Manipur after several encounters at Assam-Manipur border. Sudhir, chairman of RGM was arrested at Nungba, Tamenglong district of Manipur. By 1971, the RGM was suppressed. Most of the leaders were in jails in Manipur and Tripura. The ordinary members were forced to surrender and thus became inactive.¹⁴ In 1972, the statehood status was granted to Manipur and coinciding this development, the Manipur Government granted universal amnesty to the militants and offered Rs. 2000 (two thousand) to each arrested for rehabilitation. By 1975 all the arrested were released and steps were taken to rehabilitate them.

Although the UNLF was once a well-knit organisation, it split with the formation of the RGM under the leadership of Sudhir which weakened its credibility and strength. Sudhir's group was mainly formed by ultras who preferred to take up arms against India for secession of Manipur from Indian Union 'without delay'. But the UNLF leaders first wanted to make people what they called 'conscious' before launching any armed propaganda and struggle. The RGM could enlist the support of the masses and remained confined to a few hundred hardcore militants having base in erstwhile East Pakistan. Consequently, with the liberation of Bangladesh and arrest of most of the leaders

12. *ibid*

13. *ibid*.

14. Gangumei Kabui, *op. cit.*, 234.

it did not exist for a long time. The declaration of the general amnesty by the Government expedited its total collapse. It is noteworthy that during the early seventies many educated Meitei youths joined the rank and file of the underground organization. During this period, the economic condition of Manipur had worsened, there was rampant corruption and administrative inefficiency for which the common people became frustrated and found no hope in the political system within the constitutional boundary of Indian Union.

After the disintegration of the RGM, its former members and other insurgent oriented people emerged to constitute various militant groups. They could be termed as moderates, extremists and Marxists when viewed from their ideological and strategic contours. The RGM members in Tripura jails were attracted to Marxism - Leninism as a result of their contact with the Naxalites there. There was one extreme group which was Maoist oriented and China nationalist group led by O. Sudhir was greatly weakened. Bisheshore was one of the leaders of the RGM. In 1978, he formed the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of the Eastern Region and Revolutionary Government of Manipur (RGM) was abolished. Before forming PLA in 1976 along with 19 selected persons, Bisheshore went to Lhasa. Though the Chinese authority did not turn up to help them at the initial stage, eventually Bisheshore was successful in getting ideological and military training in Lhasa for a long period of time.¹⁵

The People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) was formed on October 9, 1977 by a group of seven members on the hilltop of Koubru. Bonbihari Singh, an ex-RGM leader became its first Chairman.¹⁶ They also claim to be a Marxist oriented organization. The seven founder members of the PREPAK also went to Tibet in 1978 to contact Chinese authority for military and ideological training. Another armed insurgent group based on communist ideology is the Kangleipak Communist Party, (KCP) which was formed on August 20, 1979 at Mapaokhul under the leadership of Y. Ibohanbi.¹⁷

After the completion of the training programme at Lhasa, the Meitei youths came back to Imphal in 1978 and began to cultivate their mass contact to

15. Ponam Labango Mangang, *op. cit.*, 70.

16. Greeting card of XXVII Anniversary Day (9th Oct. 2004) of Red Army, PREPAK.

17. A Report on Special Convention of Kangleipak Communist Party, August 13, 1994.

enroll the youth in their ranks. Due to scarcity of arms the PLA set out to acquire arms by ambushing security personnel and posts, snatching weapons and extorting money to fund its activities. It spread its wings to in the South Asian region and tried to operate from Bangladesh and Myanmar. It was successful in securing the assistance from Bangladesh and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in Burma in matters of shelter, training and arms.¹⁸ During the late 70s and early '80s Imphal valley became the centre-stage of militant activities. It witnessed various kinds of crimes such as extortion, senseless killing, looting which made the civil life miserable. There were encounters with security forces which trapped the common men in the cross fire. Hardly a week passed without such an incident in those days in late 1979. The PLA became very strong and their activities unleashed a series of violent actions throughout the valley.

Not only the valley but the Naga inhabited areas of hilly region of Manipur were also under fire. Although the NNC was formed in Nagaland, their movement for a separate political status spread through the Naga inhabited areas of Manipur. But by the Shillong Accord (1975) the two and a half decade old insurgency was officially brought to an end. Within this period, Nagaland emerged as a full fledged state of the Indian Union and substantial Naga population joined the state and national mainstream. But there was a sizeable section of the Naga undergrounds who remained dissatisfied with and hostile to the accord. After a gap of nearly five years, anti-Accord group led by Th. Muivah and Issac Swe, formed National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) in 1980 in order to continue their armed movement for a separate independent state of Nagaland. Eventually, it emerged as the strongest insurgent group in the North-East. The NSCN's independent Nagaland was to include all the Naga inhabited areas of Nagaland, parts of eastern Assam, northern part of Manipur, more particularly the districts of Ukhrul, Chandel and Senapati as well as the Naga inhabited areas of upper Myanmar.¹⁹

The tempo of violence was rising with the formation of the PLA, the PREPAK, the KCP in the valley and the NSCN was active in northern hills for the Naga cause, the Mizo National Front (MNF) kept up a modest presence in the southern hills of Manipur until the Mizo Accord.

Alarmed at the spate of violence, the Imphal valley was declared a 'disturbed area' in September 1980 and kept the entire state under the Armed

18. B.G. Verghes, op. cit, p. 119.

19. R. Gopalakrishnan, op. cit, p.85.

Forces Special Power Act' 1958. The PLA, the PREPAK and the KCP were declared unlawful bodies and combing operations started in many parts of the Valley to nab and crush the insurgents.

Although the Meitei State Committee and the Revolutionary Government of Manipur did not last long because of internal conflicts and the state repression, it may be said that their movement for an independent sovereign state of Manipur and to revert back the political status of pre-1949 Manipur could be considered as the first phase of insurgency movement in the state.

3.3. GROWTH OF INSURGENCY (II) (Insurgency Movement since 1980s)

The insurgency movement in Manipur during the 1980s and the 1990s presents a very complicated situation. On the one hand, a common platform was formed to fight unitedly against the Indian Government, it faced splits due to conflicts within its members; on the other hand, new groups surfaced with more or less similar cause and objectives. It is noteworthy that the external aids to the insurgents came to grinding halt as the Chinese and the Bangladesh Governments decided to keep a distance from the insurgent outfits of Manipur. Further, as a result of signing of the Mizoram Accord of 1986, the MNF activities in the southern part of Manipur virtually came to an end. But soon after that the Kuki insurgency in Manipur began to surface.

As the law and order situation was deteriorating following the intensification of the underground movements, the security patrolling was stepped up to dislodge the movements of the ultras throughout Manipur. This resulted in severe disruption in the communication infrastructure of the militants and identification of their network and location of their camps. On October 8, 1980, security forces attacked the PLA camp at Choro village near Myanmar border and killed four prominent Lhasa trained PLA activists. After the Choro attack, the PLA established a new camp at Chingkhei hill situated on north eastern side of Imphal. The training for the newly recruited members was going on at the footsteps of Barunihill, Natumhill and Keibi Village.²⁰ The activities of the PLA under the leadership of Bisheshore became very strong during the early period of 1980s. It had a big impact on Manipuri people, who started respecting the PLA as revolutionary organization based on Marxist ideology with a spirit of Manipuri nationalism.²¹ Special meetings were conducted by the PLA to 'rectify their wrong activities.' They even resolved to give capital

20. N. Bisheshore, *Paramlon* (Imphal: N. Bisheshore).

21. Paonam Labango Mangang, op. cit., p. 73.

punishment to those leaders who did not respect party decision. On July 6, 1981, an army operation resulted in the arrest of ailing Bisheshore and the killings of seven of his top aides at the PLA camp at Tekcham, 25 kms southeast of Imphal. After Bisheshore, Th. Kunjabihari alias Raghu became the new leader of the PLA but on April 13, 1982, Kunjabhari and eight others were killed in another encounter at Kodompokpi and four others were arrested with arms.²² The PLA was badly affected after such incidents but contrary to expectations their activities increased to new heights.

In October, 1982, a group under the leadership of S. Temba, around 100 newly recruited PLA personnels including 10 girls went to Kachen, near the Headquarters of the NSCN, for armed training. The NSCN arranged armed training for them at the Headquarter of the Kachen Independent Army (KIA). They established a PLA camp there. During the late 1980s, Manipur government tried for peace talks with a PLA leader, named Bajji Mangang, but on May 11, 1990, he was shot dead by the PLA activists. During this time an important leader of PLA named, Manikanta, was arrested by Assam Rifles and on September 20, Temba was killed by the NNC.²³

In February 1989, after a gap of about 2 years, the PLA under the leadership of Irengbam Bhorot alias Chaoren attacked the army personnel at Moirang, Bishnupur district, 45 km from Imphal town. After that incident they went to Bangladesh. They assembled at Chotadmai of Bangladesh. This gave the PLA, a new hope to reorganize itself in new shape in that country. The Revolutionary Peoples Front (RPF) was formed there. The PLA eventually became its armed wing. In May 1990 the first congress of the RPF (PLA) was held at Chotadmai and in July its constitution was adopted. I. Chaoren alias Bhorot and Y. Gunen became the President and General Secretary respectively.²⁴ The PREPAK and the KCP also camped at Bangladesh. In the year itself, the Revolutionary Joint Committee (RJC), a united front of the RPF, the PREPAK and the KCP was formed in Bangladesh.

After the split of the NSCN into two groups in 1988, the Issak Muivah group of the NSCN moved back to west along the Nagaland-Manipur border; from there they began its mobilization and set up its recruitment camps. In May 1990, 'Indo Burma Revolutionary Front (IBRF)' was formed and its constituents were the UNLF of Manipur, the ULFA of Assam and the NSCN (K).²⁵ The Kuki National Army (KNA) also became its member.²⁶ On the other side, the NSCN

22. *ibid.* p. 76

23. *ibid.* p. 78

24. R.PF's Constitution, May, 1990.

25. H. K. Borpujari, *North East India: Problems, Policies and Prospects* (Guwahati: Spectrum, Publication, 1998) p. 108.

26. B.G. Verghese, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

(IM) sponsored the Indo Burmese Liberation Front (IBLF) and the RPF, the KCP, the PREPAK, the HPC (Hmars Peoples Convention) of Manipur, Mizoram and the BSF (Bodo Security Force)²⁷ joined hands with this Front.

Amidst the armed struggle launched by the insurgents, a new violence clash between the Nagas and the Kukis took place in Manipur in 1992, resulting in the loss of hundreds of lives and torching of villages. Allegations were made that ethnic clashes between the Nagas and the Kukis had been deliberately incited by authorities, but the first fuel of that outbreak was the renewed Kuki-Naga clashes in May 1992 at Moreh on Kuki's refusal to pay taxes demanded by the NSCN (IM). In retaliation of the killing of a Kuki, quit notices were served on the Nagas by the Kuki National Army (KNA). The clashes between the Kukis and the Paites came to the forefront in June, 1997. Under the aegis of goodwill mission a truce agreement was signed between the Kuki National Front (KNF) and the Zoumi Revolutionary Army (ZRA) on July 7, 1997.²⁸ The truce was in place for more than a year.

After 20 years of its formation, the UNLF launched armed movement only in December 1991. Before taking up arms, to garner public support, the UNLF had a social reform programme against rape and other crimes. Within 9 months (from June 1990 to March 1991) the UNLF shot down at least 10 culprits who were involved in various crimes against women. The PLA also launched struggle against such social evils. Since January 1, 1991, the PLA has been imposing ban on selling of wine in Manipur. On the other hand, the counter insurgency operation were taken up everyday by the army, the state police and the paramilitary forces to maintain law and order.

Since 1992, either public curfew or bandh or general strike is being called by the militants on the Republic Day and the Independence Day every year. October 15, the day in which Manipur merged with Indian Union is being observed as a black day by the insurgent groups. Public sympathy to the insurgents has been increasing. Whenever one insurgent is killed by the armed forces, huge number of public come out to attend the ritual ceremonies and to organize protest rallies and dharnas. Not only armed struggles but also various social awareness programmes are conducted by the various outfits. And particularly in the interior places of hilly regions, where civil administration is virtually absent, they provide education and other medical facilities. Many educated youths have started to join various outfits and they have become successful to form their mass base among the women, students and cultural organizations.

27. Prabhakar, *States of Insurgency*, Frontline, 11 February 1994.p. 28.

28. Brig. G. B. Reddy, *Nation in Crisis*, Vol II (New Delhi : Authors Press, 2000) p. 713.

In 1999, a common platform of the RPF, the UNLF and the PREPAK was formed which came to be known as the Manipur People's Liberation Front (MPLF). The KCP became a crisis ridden organization. In the mid'1990s a faction of the UNLF formed a group called the Kanglei Yaol Kanna Lup (KYKL). But there were already three factions in the KYKL. In the early part of 2000, they assembled together and formed a common group once again. Their activities were especially aimed at educational reforms. The outfit started punishing those who encouraged the using of unfair means in the examination centres and who involved in the corrupt practices in Education departments. In the mid 1990s, Manipuri insurgent outfits banned the National Anthem and the PLA banned Hindi films and songs. According to them Hindi movies helped the degeneration of the Manipuri Culture.

In 1997, a truce between the NSCN (IM) and the Government of India was signed and ceasefire between the NSCN (IM) and the Government of India was going on in Nagaland not in Manipur. The truce has been extended on several occasions. Though there was ceasefire in Nagaland, the NSCN (IM)'s armed activities are very strong in Manipur. They also collect taxes from Manipur. Many Parts of N.H. 53 and N.H 36 are under the control of the NSCN (IM). On June 14, 2001, the Central Government announced the extension of ceasefire for another one year from August 1, 2001. The truce was extended to the NSCN (IM) operated areas in Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. It resulted in a violent reaction in the Manipur valley. 18 people lost their lives. People of all sections demanded withdrawal of the central government's proposal. After a long agitation, the Central government withdrew the proposal by deleting the words 'without territorial limit' from the agreement.

Not only the Nagas but also most of the ethnic groups belonging to Kuki took up arms. The Zoumi Revolutionary Army (ZRA) armed wing of the Zoumi Re-unification Organisation (ZRO), the Hmar Peoples Convention (HPC) started to launch different armed activities in the southern parts of Manipur.

The Muslim militant organization, namely the People United Liberation Front (PULF) was formed during the '90s. Another two new organisations, namely, the Islamic Revolutionary Front (IRF) and the United Liberation Army (ULA) came to the scene. At present nearly 22 armed militant groups are operating in Manipur.

3.4. CONFLICT AMONG INSURGENT GROUPS

Since their formation till early 2000 various factional problems and conflicts within the insurgent groups came to the forefront. The UNLF was formed in 1964 by some urban youths but in 1969 there was a split in the organisation due to the differences between A. Somarendro and O. Sudhir, its top two leaders. Sudhir group wanted to take up armed struggle against Indian Government for secession of Manipur without delay but Somarendro group wanted to wait for an appropriate time and to make the people 'conscious'. Sudhir was later expelled from the UNLF. This led Sudhir to go for its own brand of militancy.

The group led by O. Sudhir formed the Consolidation Committee of Manipur (CONSOM) and later it came to be known as the Revolutionary Government of Manipur (RGM). Within the RGM itself there were conflicts in the leaderships when they went to East Pakistan for training in guerilla warfare and arms. After the declaration of general amnesty in 1972, the arrested RGM members were released but the RGM ceased to exist soon after the general amnesty.

After the general amnesty, sharp differences of opinion was also found between the two leaders of the RGM, Sudhir and N. Bisheshore. Under the leadership of N. Bisheshore the PLA (Eastern Region) was formed in 1978. During 1977-78, both Sudhir group and Bisheshore group termed each other reactionary. Sudhir and his supporters wanted to take the help from the USA because they wanted to liberate or secede Manipur from India and build up a USA-like democratic set up. This was objected by the group led by N. Bisheshore who chose China instead of the USA.²⁹

The objective of the newly formed PLA was to organize people's support and to wage an armed struggle for the liberation of Manipur from Indian Union and to make the state a sovereign republic to be governed on the Marxist political ideology. However, their strategy and political campaign received a major setback when Sudhir along with his two associates were assassinated on January 14, 1979. Following this debacle the RGM was abolished.

After the arrest of Bisheshore in 1981 and killing of Kunjabihari by the Indian Army in 1982, Temba became the leader of the PLA and went to the NSCN's headquarter for armed training. But due to corrupt practices indulged in by Temba, irreconcilable conflict arose among the PLA cadres. Some of the

29. Phanjoubam Tarapot, op.cit., p. 5.

followers joined the Myanmar Communist Party (CPM). The issue of leadership and conflict among the cadres were easily solved during 1989 when Irengbam Bhorot alias Chaoren became the leader of the PLA and later on he became the Chairman of the RPF and the supreme commander of its armed wing the PLA. Since then there is no information of conflict within the RPF/PLA. However, unconfirmed reports suggest that during the early part of 1990, a group named the 'Peoples Republican Army' was formed to counter the PLA. It might be the handiwork of the dissident group within the PLA.

During the decade of 1990s, a sharp contradiction occurred within R.K. Meghen group and Oken group in the UNLF. This led to the expulsion of Oken from the UNLF. Soon after the expulsion, Oken with his handful of followers joined the KCP. The problematic issue of leadership within the insurgent groups did not come to an end, as most of the top ranking leaders vied for the apex position of the Chairman/ General Secretary. Consequently, Oken aspired for the position of General Secretary of KCP, which was opposed by others. The Oken faction started counter revolution within the organization. In the midst the crisis, the General Secretary as well as its founder member, Y. Ibohanbi breathed his last on July 1, 1995 during an encounter with CRPF at Andro. Soon after the death of Y. Ibohanbi, Oken claimed to be natural heir of Y. Ibohandi. Unable to get any concession in his favour, Oken formed a new group which came to be known as Kanglei Yaol Kanna Lup (KYKL). It is interesting to note that within the KYKL itself, there were three groups. They began to kill each other. During late 1990s and in the beginning of 2000, conflict occurred between the UNLF and the KYKL. It appeared that they were not sure of their real enemies. That is why perhaps the KYKL attacked the headquarter of the All Manipur Students Union (AMSU) in Imphal and declared that they had dismantled their relationship with the UNLF. This was followed by inter-insurgent-group killing for a considerable period of time. The worst victim of this kind is the defenceless common man.

During 1978, Maipak Sharma, ex- RGM member along with some members joined the PREPAK. It did not take time to see how conflicts surfaced within this group. Maipak Sharma and his group wanted upper hand in the organizational set up which was not conceded by the original member of he PREPAK. The Maipak faction was determined to change the structure. In a meeting of the central committee of the PREPAK held in March 1980 at Imphal, his group attacked and killed the leaders of the PREPAK including its Chairman. On August 10, 1980, the villagers of Khogman, burnt down the house where the Maipak group camped. When Khuman Leima Chanu became the leader

of PREPAK, she tried to settle the differences between the two groups. But she failed in her attempt to do so. The organisation still has the problem of factionalism.

In 1998, ideological differences and inter-tribal feud led to a split in the NSCN; one faction was under T. Muiva and Issak Swu (IM South) and the other was led by S. S. Khaplang (K. North), a Remi Naga of Myanmar. There was a sharp difference of opinion between its Vice-Chairman S. S. Khaplang and General Secretary the Thuingaleng Muiva on number of issues related to their objective, strategy and leadership question. The difference became irreconcilable. This led to the expulsion of Muiva and his followers from NSCN. Muiva and his close associate Issac formed the splinter organization which came to be known as the NSCN-(IM).

It is noteworthy that undivided NSCN provided safety umbrella to other insurgent organizations of the North East and it also provided much needed training, material aid and ideological motivation. However, the insurgent groups suffered a setback due to the split in the NSCN in 1988.³⁰ The ZRA, the armed wing of the ZRO was allying itself with the NSCN (IM), but Kuki insurgents joined ranks with Meitei dominated insurgent groups in the plains of Manipur who historically opposed the Naga claims.

During late 1980s and 1990s there was a big contradiction among the insurgent groups and it resulted in the formation of many new groups. They started to kill each other, as if intra and inter group killing was the main objective of the insurgent outfits. The year 1999 saw a significant development in the history of insurgency in Manipur. The MPLF was formed by the RPF, the UNLF and the PREPAK and started joint struggles. It appeared that all these groups arrived at some consensus on common objectives, strategy and leadership. But it did not take time to get disillusioned with the peace temporarily achieved. Now reports are available to tell that such killings are continuing among insurgent groups in the interior regions of Manipur.

3.5. INSURGENT GROUPS: THEIR DEMANDS AND ROLE IN THE INTERNATIONAL PLATFORM

Most of insurgent groups have their common goal, that is, liberation of Manipur from the Indian Union as they alleged that Manipur, an independent princely state was merged with the Indian Union in 1949 by force. It was their supreme duty to liberate it from Indian Union. The reason for the insurgent outfits to take up arms is to fight for an 'independent Manipur'

30. Brig G. B. Reddy, op. cit., p. 709.

and to restore their 'right to national self-determination'. In other word, the argument for 'liberation of Manipur' is based on their rejection of the Instrument of Merger Act with the Indian Union in 1949. The arguments, they advance centre around three formulations: (i) the Act was neither approved by the Manipur Government nor was it endorsed by elected representatives of the state Assembly, (ii) the Maharaja was not the sole authority to govern Manipur, and therefore, he alone could not take the merger decision alone whether under duress or willfully, and (iii) the Maharaja signed the Argeement only in his name and that of his heirs and not in the name of Manipuris.³¹ There were three schools of political opinion in Manipur at the time of merger - (i) The peasant revolutionaries, under the leadership of Irabot, were fighting for the establishment of a sovereign socialist republic in Manipur including some parts of Upper Burma. A sizeable section of the people supported the armed struggle led by Irabot. (ii) The urban elite Congress leaders wanted integration with India, as they were greatly influenced by Indian nationalists, projected through the images and personalities of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. (iii) The third opinion was a weak and silent one, shared by many of the Meitei nationalists, who wanted to retain the independent status of Manipur, with a very vague idea of treaty relations with India.³² Manipur's status as Part C State gave more fuel to hurt the sentiments and pride of the Manipuris. It was indeed a politically disastrous decision. Had Manipur been given an equal status of a state like neighbour Assam, some degree of respectability could have been attached with the Union Government's merger related actions imposed on the state of Manipur.

At any rate, the political actions and decisions associated with the merger of the Manipur with Indian Union brought divergent forces to a common platform of militancy. It should be borne in mind that both the NSCN (I-M) and the NSCN (K) operate in Manipur, but their struggle is not directed to secure the liberation of Manipur from the Indian Union. The NSCN (IM) has been demanding for a Greater Nagaland or South Nagaland of 1,20,000 Sq. km. by expanding the present Nagaland of 16, 579 Sq. Km. The Greater Nagaland or Nagalim area in the imagination of NSCN factions includes at least four districts of Manipur, viz, Senapati, Ukhrul, Chandel and Tamenglog; five districts of Assam viz, North Cachar Hills, Sigsagar, Golaghat, Jorhat, and Karbi Anglong and two districts of Arunachal Pradesh, viz, Tirap and Changlang, besides a portion of Myanmar territory.³³ However, the insurgent groups in Manipur do not have any concept of Greater Manipur which transcends the present boundaries of the state.

31. Phanjoubam Tarapot, op. cit., p. 63.

32. Gangumei Kabui, op. cit., pp. 233-234.

33. R. K. Mani Singh, *A reflection on the Indo-NSCN (IM) Cease Fire extension* in R. K. Mani Singh (ed), *For our Tomorrow* (Imphal: SILYA, 2001) P. 27.

In November 1994, the NSCN (IM) formed an umbrella organisation, that is, the Self Defence United Front of South-East Himalayan Region' (SDUF) with the objective of fighting against 'Indianization of indigenous peoples through its policy of allowing massive influx of Indian nationals' in the region.³⁴

The NSCN opened offices in Geneva, New York besides establishment of offices at Bengkok, Kathmandu and in few foreign capitals. Defying all security and diplomatic hurdles, the NSCN has been successfully carrying on its anti-Indian propaganda in a number of International forums including the Unrecognized Nation's People's Organization (UNPO).³⁵ On the other hand, the insurgent groups in Manipur have not been able to achieve anything in drawing international attention. There are valid reasons for this. While Nagaland has only one insurgent group the NSCN, despite the split into two factions, commanding the loyalty of various Naga ethnic tribes, the counterparts in Manipur are numerous and mutually hostile to each other to the fullest extent possible. It becomes difficult to identify which insurgent group does command respect from the vast section of the Manipuri people.

As stated already various armed groups are operating in the state with different objectives. The objectives of one is diametrically opposite to the other. The Kuki National Organisation (KNO) with its constituent the Kuki National Army (KNA) has been demanding a part of an autonomous state in Myanmar, a homeland in parts of Ukhrul in the Imphal Valley, Kuki - inhabited areas of Nagaland and Assam.³⁶ The Hmar People's Convention (HPC) has been demanding for separate a homeland in the Hmar dominated areas of Mizoram, Manipur, Assam and Meghalaya.³⁷ The Zomi Reunification Organization, which came into being during 1992-93, with the support of several social and Church groups, is claiming to represent a *welter of non-Naga hill tribes spread across India and Myanmar mainly the Paite, the Simte and the Vaipeh*.³⁸ Till now there is no specific demand of Zomi Homeland within Manipur but they too have taken arms 'to safeguard their people against their enemy'.

Regarding the political role of the Government of India, the UNLF claims that 'their politics which is devoid of any nation building work has pushed

34. NSCN Redraws Strategy in NE, *The Sentinel*, 21 February 1995.

35. 'NSCN goes international', *The Statesman*, 20 January 1996.

36. 'Naga - Kuki Clashes' in Shimray Gam A., and others, *An Introduction to the Ethnic Problem in Manipur*, 2f.

37. M.S. Prabhakar, 'Elusive Peace, Mizoram half a decade after the accord' *Frontline*, 8 June 1992. p.42.

38. Praveen Swami, 'Despair and Democracy', *Frontline* June 18, 2004. 4., p.70

Manipur to the brink of disaster. No Manipur Government, no political Party and no politicians functioning under the Indian colonial system have been able to give the right political direction and leadership to unite all the ethnic groups of Manipur and build up a harmonious life on the basis of co-existence and collective development'.³⁹ Claiming that Manipur had never been a part of India, they opine that there is no question of secession of Manipur from India. On July 25, 1995, in the meeting of 'Working Group on Indigenous Population' of United Nations Human Rights Commission, held in Geneva, the general secretary of the UNLF R.K. Sanayaima addressed the gathering with a brief account of Manipur's merger with Indian Union and violation of human rights by the Indian army.⁴⁰ This was the first reporting by an insurgent group of Manipur in an international platform.

On December 11, 1996, the RPF submitted a memorandum to the United Nations Decolonization Committee with an appeal for sending 'visiting mission to Manipur in order to enable Manipur to exercise its inalienable right to self determination at the earliest and to take up all necessary steps to enlist world wide support among governments and all the national and international organisations for the decolonisation of Manipur from the Indian Colonial Regime'.⁴¹ In this way at various levels the insurgent groups have been trying to highlight their views in international forums.

3.6. GOVERNMENT POLICY TOWARDS INSURGENCY

Most of the policy makers consider that insurgency is basically a law and order problem. Therefore, they act within the parameters repression as a tool to put to an end of the problem. They prefer to deploy army and security forces to crush insurgency movements. So, since 1980, various draconian laws, such as Armed Forces Special Power Act, are being imposed in Manipur to maintain law and order with the help of security forces. It goes without saying that the success in these matter is far cry till now.

It appears that there is no specific policy adopted by the Government of Manipur to solve the insurgency problem in the state permanently. The ad hoc measures, such as counter operation or counter insurgency activities with the help of police, paramilitary forces, are the main steps taken by the Government to deal with the insurgency problem so far.

39. "Oppose Indian Annexation" Month, Sept. 14. 1994., Department of Propaganda & Education, UNLF.

40. 'Malemgi Miyamda Ahanba Paodam' - UNLF September, 1995, p. 11.

41. Memorandum submitted to the United Nations Decolonisation Committee. 1996, p. XVII.

The centre rolled on 'Operation Orchid' in Nagaland and the 'Sunny Vale' in Manipur during 1995.⁴² But the operation launched by the Indian Army had faced setback due to non-cooperation of local administration.⁴³ In the month of April-May, 1995, a joint operation called 'Golden Duck' was conducted by the Burmese Army and 57th Mountain Division in the border area of Burma and India to flush out the NSCN, the ULFA and the Manipuri Insurgent groups. While the operation was going on, the Indian government awarded 'Nehru Peace Prize' to the pro-democracy leader of Burma, Aung Sang Suu Kyi that year. Next day the Burmese pulled out the joint operation without informing the Indian army.⁴⁴ During the regime of the BJP, India and Burma signed an agreement for increased co-operation to tackle cross boarder terrorism and drug trafficking. In October 25, 2004, the UPA government and Myanmar (Burma) government signed a 'Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of co-operation on non traditional issues'.⁴⁵ On the eve of the 14 Lok Sabha Election a large number of armed personnel were deployed in Sajik Tampak area of Manipur with the task of combing operation. In mid 2004, the United command structure of police and central forces for 'Operation All clear' was formed in Manipur with Chief Minister O. Ibobi as its chairman. A counter insurgency operation was started in two districts of Churachandpur and Bishnupur. The number of Manipur police commandos increased from 500 to 800.⁴⁶ With the help of central assistance, the Indian Reserve Battalions were set up by the state government. As a result of the counter insurgency steps taken up from March 7, 2002 to the first week of November around 200 ultras were killed, 1704 cadres of several outfits were arrested along with 247 sophisticated weapons in Manipur.

In the year 2000, the Government of Manipur decided to provide government jobs to 18 surrendered insurgents. But the system could not be continued for long. At present as per the newspaper reports 84 surrendered rebels are taking shelter in the state government custody.

3.7 INSURGENCY: HUMAN RIGHTS AND COMMON PEOPLE (SOME EXAMPLES)

Some of the insurgent groups got themselves involved in constitutional activities like elections to Lok Sabha and Bidhan Sabha. In the 14th Lok Sabha

42. Centre asks Manipur and Nagaland to fight militancy. The Sentinel, September, 1995.

43. Sabhir Bhumik, *Guns, Drugs, Rebels: India Burma Relation at the crossroads* Paper presented at Seminar on Towards a New Asia Transnationalism and North East India, September 10-11, 2004, Guwahati.

44. *Wild Goose Chase* The Sentinel Editorial; 7, May 1995.

45. India Myanmar Sign MOU, *The Assam Tribune*, October 26, 2004.

46. *Assam Tribune*, November 14, 2004.

election, in the valley, the KYKL, the UNLF, and the RPF strongly opposed the general elections and even banned the activities of the INC and the BJP. But some groups directly supported some candidates in the hills. The ZRA supported the BJP candidate for outer seat and the NSCN (IM) chose to back independent candidate Mani Charanamei.⁴⁷ In such situations common people become the victims of the wrath of the insurgents. The defenceless common man is not left with his choice as he is dictated by the wishes of the armed insurgents.

Some parts of Manipur especially the hilly areas are controlled by different outfits. Again some parts of the NH 53 and the NH 36 are under the control of different insurgent groups. They collect money in the form of tax from the buses and trucks. In early 1994, bus and truck drivers had to pay road and goods taxes of various forms on the NH 39 which runs through Nagaland. In protest against this when the truck drivers were on strike for a period of over one month neither the state nor the central forces could make their presence felt despite the fact that the people of Manipur were on the verge of starvation. In 2001 when one outfit burnt down oil tankers on the NH 36, there was an unprecedented hike of oil prices and the people of Manipur had to suffer a lot. In the late 90s when an insurgent group attacked a Tata Sumo on the NH 53, more than 5 innocent people lost their lives but later that group claimed that they had attacked the passengers on the basis of a wrong information. During 2001, one group imposed dress code on Manipuri women but Manipuri women voiced against this under the banner of a woman organization, named All Manipur Democratic Women's Association (AMDWA). The militant outfit remained silent about the implementation of its dress code.

To the common people of Manipur, the machinery of the state appears only to be an instrument of repression and exploitation, rather than law and order enforcement agency. The State's presence as a protector of life and property of the common man has become a myth in the minds of the average Manipuris. Even the presence of the security forces and their combing operations to nab the militants appear to be fiasco as the result of such activities is not so encouraging. The only locals, who actively help the security forces, are the ex-rebels who had surrendered to the government and are commonly known as 'Surrenderees'. They can be dangerous as guides to the security forces to the hide outs of the rebels and very often alleged to have misled them. Consequently, innocent and defenceless common citizen is harassed and sometimes killed. The surrendered insurgents, it is alleged, are not bothered

47. *ibid*

about human rights and the consequences of violation of such rights. There are several instances of violation of human rights by the army and paramilitary forces. By taking advantage of draconian laws like the Armed Forces Special Power Act, 1958, numerous innocent people have been killed by the police and paramilitary forces; a number of women are being raped and countless persons have been arrested.⁴⁸

On January 7, 1995, the CRPF gunned down 9 innocent people including one medical student from Arunachal Pradesh on the campus of the Regional Medical College (RMC), Imphal. During the operation 'Blue-bird' conducted by Assam Rifles from July 3-23, 1987 at Oinam village of Senapati district, 14 civilians lost their lives. Villagers reported various kinds of harassment and many were crippled for life as result of ruthless beating and physical assault. Heart rendering report reveal the cruelty of extreme form committed by the security forces. In one instance a woman was dragged to an open place when despite the fact that she was into an advanced stage of pregnancy. Instead of arranging medical facilities, the woman was made to deliver in front of everybody and the army enjoyed this like a festival.⁴⁹ In a retaliation of a bomb blast, in November 2000, 17 Assam Rifles personnel killed many innocent people at Malom in the Imphal-West district and from that day one women named I. Sarmila Devi has been on indefinite fast demanding withdrawal of Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958 from Manipur. On August 1, 1996, while conducting combing operation, 2 security personnel of the Maha Regiment raped one married women (aged about 35 years) of Takyel Khagbal of Imphal-West district. Recently in July 2004, one girl named Manorama Devi was picked up from her Residence of Bamonkampu by Assam Rifles and her bullet ridden body was found next day. The violation of human right is not a new phenomenon in Manipur. There are numerous examples of such incidents. The common people are the victims of both insurgent outfits and state machinery. The violence committed by the militants causes indignation in the mind of the people and that leads to erosion of their support base. But the excesses committed by the security forces alienate the already disillusioned people from the symbols of Indian Union. In this way more youth find a rationale in joining the militants to avenge the injustice committed by the government forces. Thereby the state of Manipur has been trapped in an extremely difficult situation of insurgency. There is hardly any symptom of early resolution of the conflict and the people of Manipur will have to bear the trauma for many more years to come.

48. Praveen Swami, op. cit., p.70.

49. A. Ibemcha Chanu, 'Manipur : A boiling Cauldron', Student Struggle Vol. 33 August 2004 - 0

CHAPTER - 4

CONCLUSIONS

In the previous chapters an attempt has been made to relate the problems of economic underdevelopment and insurgency in the state of Manipur. The case study of Manipur shows that since the two variables are highly inter-related, it leads one to infer that in any given society where the state has failed to address to the economic issues in a positive and conclusive way, the political setting is very likely to succumb to violent means of resolving political disputes. As economic condition of a society tends to nurture the roots of every political crisis, considerable attention has been given to focus on the economic perspectives of the insurgency problem in Manipur so that a cause effect relationship could be found to explain precisely the present crisis in the state. The exercise in this study is not interwoven to depict the historiography of the crisis in the state, despite the fact that the insurgency movement, as discussed in the third chapter, has been largely the result of not only the economic underdevelopment but an outcome of the complex history of the state and the people.

In order to find out the tangible reason(s) for the insurgency movement in Manipur and to make an objective recommendation on the basis of available secondary data, a questionnaire has been developed and administered to supplement the tentative findings as well as to cross examine the secondary data.

PART - I

The questionnaire containing a set of questions was administered to 40 persons drawn from all walks of life. It is admitted that the answers of these 40 respondents may not represent the views of the entire people of Manipur. Further, it was not possible due to time constraint to cover all the districts of the state. Despite the limitations of the questionnaire in terms of number and the group of people, it is hoped that it would serve as a source of first hand data and would help in making an objective recommendation.

The questionnaire was administered to 40 persons belonging to the age group of 20-70 years. The age-wise distribution of the respondents system is

stated below:

Age	Number of respondent
20-30	15
31-30	12
41-50	09
51-70	04
Total	40

Out of 40 respondents, 10 are women. All the respondents are from Manipur and most of the respondents are from Imphal West district. The majority of the respondents belong to the younger generation. They are purposively selected on the ground that most of the militants come from this age. It is necessary, therefore, to monitor the attitude of this young group to various issues covered in the present study.

District-wise distribution of respondents

Name of the District	No. of Respondents	Name of the District	No. of Respondents
Bishnupur	2	Tamenglong	-
Churachanpur	1	Thoubal	1
Chandel	-	Senapati	1
Imphal East	8	Ukhrul	2
Imphal West	25		

Total number of districts covered are 7.

The highest number of respondent is from the business circle including petty traders followed by academicians. It includes two University professors, two college lecturers and one research scholar.

Occupation-wise classification of respondents

Occupation	No. of Respondents	Occupation	No. of Respondents
Advocate	2	Entrepreneur	3
Artist	4	Farmer	2
Academicians	5	Media Person	1
Businessman	7	Medical Practitioner	1
Defence Service	3	Political & Social Activist	4
Driver	1	Student	4
Educated Unemployed	2	Others	1
Total	40		

Questions were asked to find out the attitude of the common people to the issue of insurgency. For example, the questions were designed to find out how many respondents view the situation in Manipur as an insurgency affected state and how many do not think so. 40 respondents replied that 'insurgency' is the most appropriate term to describe precisely the current situation prevailing in Manipur. It is followed by 'identity crisis' (8), 'quest for nationality' (6), some used 'terrorism' to define the situation (2) and finally one suggested that Manipur is passing to a phase of 'revolution' (1). One respondent did not make any comment. Nobody used the term 'ethnic conflict'. When asked about the factors responsible for the present scenario of Manipur, 12 respondents opined that all the factors i.e. economic underdevelopment, political instability, socio-cultural religious revivalism, political history of Manipur and economic policy of the Central government were responsible for the present political scenario of Manipur. According to 11 respondents only the factor responsible was political instability; followed by economic underdevelopment (5). But a small section believed that only the economic policy of the Central government and political history of Manipur (3) were responsible for all the ails in the state. Mixed response is also found from some respondents. According to some respondents, economic underdevelopment, political instability, socio-cultural and religious revivalism were the responsible factors. The majority of the respondents believe that sharing of international boundary of Manipur with Myanmar has helped to boost insurgency movement (22).

It is found that a sizeable number of respondents (17) supported insurgency, while more than 50 per cent of respondents (23) believed that the majority of the people of Manipur do not support insurgency. 50 per cent of respondents did not agree to the statement that Manipur's merger with Indian Union was not a right step. But a large section (19) believed that it was wrong to forge a forceful merger. The majority (21) did not agree to the arguments of the insurgents that Manipur, as an independent entity, will progress better than before. This more or less corresponds to the figure which hold a position diametrically opposite to that of the insurgents. Nevertheless, a sizeable section believed that a sovereign state of Manipur will flourish more than what it is today. As many as 14 respondents did not agree that the insurgency movement in Manipur drew inspiration from the movement in Nagaland and Mizoram but it was agreed that the geographical location of Manipur helps in nurturing the insurgents.

It is a striking observation that the majority (31) of the respondents blamed the Central government for its step-motherly attitude towards Manipur. This

indicate the general perception of the people New Delhi. However, 23 as against 16 agreed that the Manipuris are not capable to participate effectively in the economically competitive world, signifying thereby that the people have readiness to self-criticism. As many as 31 as against 6 agreed that democratic movement is the better option to express the views of the people in the present society. It is also agreed by majority (34) that job opportunities for unemployed youths would help to minimize the problem of insurgency. More than one third did not agree with the arguments of the insurgents that the problem in the state cannot be solved within the framework of the Indian Constitution. It is not surprising to see that those who share the view of insurgents (21) feel that the problems in the state cannot be resolved within the constitutional mechanism.

The information obtained from the questionnaires reveals that the present crisis in Manipur has a distinct character of social formation of an emergent society. The insurgency movement has the elements of identity crisis and quest of nationality. The Manipuris believe that the present crisis is the result of various factors, viz, economic underdevelopment, political instability, political history of Manipur, economic policy of the Central government and social cultural and religious revivalism. However, the major factors which can be easily pointed out are political instability and economic underdevelopment. Economic policy of the Central government and political history of Manipur are also responsible for the present crisis to some extent.

The need for a clear cut strong political stand and economic policy in favour of common people is needed to solve the present crisis is the opinion of respondents belonging to the world of academics. An editor of local daily newspaper expressed that there should be stable democratic foundation in the state to solve its social, political and economic problems. They argue that democratic movements of the people should be encouraged. They feel that the democratic rights of people are being curtailed. The people of Manipur are living under a military rule as such the repressive situation created by the presence and activities of armed forces drives the youths away from the mainstream - this is the expression of major section of respondents aged between 31-40 and 41-50. The academic community strongly feels that that the security personnel coming from outside the state harshly treat the people of the state and that boils the anger of the youth to the height. According to one respondent from business circle, the sincere efforts on the part of the political parties can bring peace and economic development in Manipur. An opinion expressed by a social worker is that the present problems of Manipur are the

symptoms of the infantile disorder of young capitalism. A social activist opined that removal of black laws including Armed Forces Special Power Act 1958 will help bring peace and minimize the separatist tendency of youths. The two most priority areas which have been pointed out by many of the respondents for solving the present crisis are strong political will with stable government and economic development of the state. Most of the respondents aged between 50-70 and women express that government should give special attention towards the insurgent groups to bring them for a dialogue so that peace process could be initiated in the right earnest.

PART - II

In the general perception of the common citizens, both the central and state governments are largely responsible for economic underdevelopment of the state. Even after 57 years of independence there is no significant sign of development in Manipur.

On the one side, the growth rate of population in Manipur has been higher than that of all India average. The land available for cultivation has not been able to accommodate the pressure of population. The distribution of land among the people does not reflect an equitable system. The problem has been compounded by the fact that the valley districts offer the cultivable land which covers only 10 per cent of total land area. The distribution of workers shows that there is predominance of agriculture and it employs around 68 percent of the total work force. Participation of women in various works is very high compared to the all India average.

The poor communication infrastructure in the state does not create a condition conducive for economic development of the state. The state capital is not connected by railways. The road system is very inadequate and suffers from many deficiencies. The natural calamities like landslides and floods very often snap the surface communication. Though the state has a rich hydropower potential, power shortage paradoxically is acute. The per capita consumption of power is below the all India consumption. The major portion of power is utilized for domestic lightening, as the state has virtually no industrial infrastructure. Banking system is inadequate and the credit deposit ratio also has declined at an alarming rate. The agrarian structure of the state reveals that cultivation is practiced by numerous cultivators both in terms of numbers of operational holdings and ownership holdings but they are facing the problem

of fragmentation, and there is lack of modern facilities. There is not a single large and heavy private industry and public sector units are also not able to earn profits. Though a few small scale industries can generate profit to some extent, the number of sick SSI has increased. Though the poverty rate of the state decreased marginally, the rate of unemployment has been growing.

The present insurgency in Manipur is not a direct continuation of the earlier revolts led by the communist leader Hijam Irawat Singh. But communist ideologies are behind most of the insurgent groups. Though there is a history of contradiction among the insurgent groups, it is found that common platform or joint groups are formed to fight against the Indian government.

In the beginning, the insurgency in Manipur was an urban phenomenon. And they got active support from the urban middle class and intellectuals with a wide mass sympathy. Insurgent groups in the state comprise mainly of educated youths. Not only in armed movements, they also get themselves involved in social awareness programmes. There are around 22 armed militant groups in Manipur and out of them 18 are actively operating. Most of the ethnic groups have their own insurgency movement and their demand is for a separate homeland either outside or within India. But the Meitei led Manipuri insurgents demand is for an independent Manipur and their aim is to establish a society based on 'socialism'.

The international boundary with Burma and Bangladesh helps the insurgents in matters of shelter, training and arms procurement. Though the Military junta of Myanmar frequently attack some Naga insurgent groups, there is no such attack and action against Manipuri insurgents. The counter-operations are carried out by the state police, paramilitary and armed forces. Such operations prove to be meaningless as they have not been able to achieve any significant success in containing insurgency movements in the state. Such operations are known for the violation of human rights of common citizens of the state. It is now clear that the black laws imposed in the state have failed to resolve the problem rather it has helped the alienation of the youths from the mainstream. This tendency is increasing day by day.

For a long period of time, after the merger of princely independent Manipur to Indian Union, the central government denied the state many political and democratic rights. After a long central rule, statehood was granted only in 1972, nine years after it was granted to Nagaland. The statehood was

denied on the ground of economic viability, confirming its discriminatory treatment, because in 1963 Nagaland too did not have enough to prove that it had achieved economic viability. The people have the right to point out that when Manipur was under the Central rule for more than 23 years, there was no visible step taken by the Union Government to improve its economic condition. If the democratic rights and privileges which were enjoyed by fellow citizens were denied to the people of Manipur, the question naturally arises whether such an association with India was helpful to them at all. Added to the political frustration of the people and economic stagnation, there has been allegations of corruption, not refuted by the concerned authorities. Disillusion strikes hard. As the agricultural sector is overburdened by labourers, and there is no industry, the tertiary sector is the only option for employment. The government is becoming the biggest employer but there is rampant corruption and jobs are given to the highest bidders. The number of educated unemployed youths is increasing, at the same time there is a ban on recruitment as per the memorandum of understanding signed between State government and the Central government. The failure to provide social and economic justice to the people of Manipur especially to the youths has further worsened the situation. This in turn helps in increasing the activities of insurgents. It is said that many of the insurgents and their followers were the victims of bureaucratic apathy and corruption. In other words, the corruption at the bureaucratic and political levels has added fuel to the psyche of insurgency.

In such a situation of economic underdevelopment, lack of faith in the state and central administration, the people of the state started questioning the benefit of Manipur as state within the Indian Union and they began to turn to the past 'glorious history of the kingdom of Manipur'. In such a situation Marxism-Leninism has become the weapon for making a new society and the insurgents have opted this ideology and method, which, to the insurgents believe in are anti-capitalist and anti-parliamentary system. The international boundary with Myanmar, which has very thick jungles, provides the insurgent groups the hiding place and camps. The imposition of draconian laws, have stifled the expression of critical voice against the non-functioning state government and also obstructed any democratic movement. Consequently, the chauvinist and separatist tendencies are growing in the minds of people. Insurgents are collecting money in the form of donations or tax, and the government's law enforcing machinery remains a silent spectator. The state sponsored violence during combing

operation lays devastating impact on the civic life of the common people. In other words, insurgency movement and its fallouts have disturbed the civil society in Manipur in a grievous way.

Insurgency is not merely a law and order problem. It has to be tackled at the political, economic, social and administrative level. This has been voiced by countless organizations, academics, members of civil society and the common man of Manipur. Time has come when the Government of India and the State government of Manipur have to play a positive role to solve a long enduring problem. The repressive measures, combing operations, imposition of draconian laws will yield temporary result but cannot lead to the final solution to insurgency. Both the governments should have a clear-cut policy of economic development and have a political will to solve the crisis. The government should take up pro-people economic policies which can generate more employment, save cultural heritage and eradicate poverty.

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ANNEXURE - I

SCHEDULED TRIBES IN MANIPUR

AIMOL, ANAL, ANGAMI, CHIRU,
CHOTHE, GANGTE, HMAR,
KABUI, KACHANAGA, KOIROU,
KOIRENG, KOM, LAMKAN
MIZO, MARING, MAO, MONSANG,
MOYON, PAITE, POUMEI, PURUM,
RALTE, SIMTE, THANGAL, THADOU,
VAIPHEI, ZOU, TARAO, KHARAM

OTHERS : MATE & SEMA

OKDISCD