

State, Insurgency and (Wo)man's Human Rights

Two Cases from the North-East India

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The early conception of the 'rights of man' in the seventeenth century and the subsequent international idea of 'Human Rights' in the twentieth century as explicated in the Universal Declaration, had the male household in mind.¹ Human Rights or 'rights of man' were conceived as rights of each individual against the other and rights especially against the government which ruled them. It was generally assumed that there existed a *private sphere* of the family protected by rights from intrusion from outside but it was not necessary that rights of members were preserved within that *private sphere*, where maximum number of human rights violations take place. In many countries, it has been seen that a woman's most insecure and dangerous space is the 'home' she lives in, and I would, in a broader sense, extend it to the ethnic community. The public/private dichotomy ushered in by the institutions of modernity has made the sphere of 'home' or 'community' a more volatile space with the assumption that 'right to privacy' of the male household is the right to do whatever the male head wants. Under Article 12 of the Universal Declaration, 'rights' become a double edged word for the 'male' to isolate the gendered subject in a more private sphere where she can be fully exploited without official intrusion from outside. It reads "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence..."² One should mark the gender specific word 'his' in this Article. Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which is devoted to marriage and family, naturalizes the heterosexual two parent patriarchal model. Therefore,

any rational analysis of 'Human Rights' and appreciation of all 'beings' as human cannot but begin with an interrogation of the institutionalising of Human Rights and the male bias in it. Recent growth of feminist Human Rights literature argues for a rethinking of Human Rights and a change of male priorities for women's rights to be fully recognised as Human Rights. Rights of all human beings to exist as 'human' cannot be perceived without challenging the concept of Human Rights and the institutions of family, cultures, communities and religion which serve as the agencies of the institution of Human Rights. At the institutional level, significant development in the direction has been, a petition drive, before the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993. It was urged that the conference should address women's human rights at every level of its proceedings and recognise gender-based violence as "a violation of human rights requiring immediate action...". This had positive impact on Vienna declaration and programme of action. The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995 followed this agenda in significant ways.

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Following my extension of the *private* space of the family to the private space of the (ethnic) community in which gross violation of women's human rights take place, it can be seen that "respecting cultural differences" has become an euphemistic expression for denying women's human rights within the community. Relevance of the sanctity of cultural practices is evoked on issues of sexuality, marriage and reproduction while the same traditions or rules are conspicuously ignored in matters of commerce or crime. In countries where religious fundamentalism is the weapon of political power, emancipatory drive of women is associated with 'western' or 'white' values and is therefore, rejected. These values are further accused of being anti-national and anti-religious. One can recall here the case of Taslima Nasreen of Bangladesh. Cultural construction of femininity continues to be the ontological ground for a sexual or ethno-sexual definition of a woman and therefore it becomes an urgent political necessity to re-think human rights as women's rights. Looking at women's rights would mean looking at the institutions of family, religion and (ethnic) community in a new light and contextualizing the cultural rights of women. At least after the American Civil Rights Movement, there has been an

awareness of the harm suffered by ethnic or cultural minorities and the subsequent moral claims of these communities to cultural integrity. But the idea of Minority Rights itself is problematic because of the perceived clash between individual rights and group rights which makes the creation of “internal minorities” inevitable.⁴ The question of personal autonomy even in the realisation of cultural or political rights of minorities can be at stake as the empowerment of minority groups might lead to the persecution of their own “internal minorities”. The gravity of this problem has been one of the bases for the emergence of subaltern histories, which are the histories of the voiceless, historiless, unorganized “internal minorities”.

In this article, while making a critique of the patriarchal model of Human Rights, I examine the process of the formation of the ethno-national communities in the North-East at the backdrop of which Insurgency has been shown as an inevitable consequence of the “Nation formation from above”. However, the main thrust of my argument is that the gendered subject of the North-East has experienced a ‘natural’ exclusion both in the process of the nation formation and from the discourse of Insurgency, which claims to have interrogated such a formation. She is an internal minority, who is defined by the multiple categories from which she is excluded—State, Insurgency or Human Rights. Unfortunately, the mainstream feminist over-generalisation of ‘patriarchy’ and the inside-outside role of feminist social critics had not taken care of the ethno-sexual positions in ethnic and tribal societies. Amidst Ethno-national claims of ‘saming’ and ‘othering’ and in the tension of inter-ethnic conflicts, it is the (wo)man, on whose body violence is deeply inscribed. In countering the hegemony of power of the Indian State, Insurgency does not succeed in overcoming the logic of power. It is a game of power which in its patriarchal essence is neither philosophically liberating nor is politically revolutionary.

It is violence or power-thrust for the hegemony, of either the State or Insurgency, because both have statist agenda in which the (wo)man is conspicuously absent. The ethnic woman of the north-east suffers the imposition of the ethnic males regarding preservation of traditional customs and costumes during ethnic movements, mostly without a decision of their own. She is only a giver because in the patriarchal game of power, she has nothing to gain. On the other hand, during army operations by the Indian State she is a silent spectator, as her beautifully kept hearth and home is ransacked, her brothers and sons killed in the encounter in front of her eyes and she is finally abused

and raped. Neither the Indian State, nor Insurgency can safeguard the life and rights of a woman because she is the common sight/site for both, for enacting the drama of power and violence. From her position of a twice marginalised subject what is her plausible alternative? Can she go on bearing the violence? Should she articulate a new language of her own, which can re-define her identity as a woman rooted in her culture, outside the violent drama of the State and Insurgency? It is interesting to see how a woman of the north-east asserts a female subjecthood through her indirect rejection of the logic of the State and of Insurgency. This assertion constitutes her Cultural Rights as Human Rights, which explodes the interior of the patriarchal symbolic order of her community (in violence) and of the State. She discovers for herself a tradition specific role that secures her a position of a subject within social bonding amidst the social distortions produced by the patriarchal dispositions of hegemony. She does not embrace the agenda of Insurgency irrationally—an agenda that offers no perspective for changing the entire bourgeoisie structure of the Capitalist State, but seeks to replace one for the other, which will obviously lead to the same consequence of deprivation and violation of Human Rights. The whole ideal of Human Rights will remain a misnomer so long as the Capitalist State does not wither away. Therefore, the counter hegemonic struggle of insurgent groups only at the level of acquisition of political power, without posing a philosophical challenge to the logic of the Capital, will yield no good to the people. Insurgency becomes a self defeating drive that destroys itself, and its internal minorities especially the 'woman'.

I make a study of two women's organizations of North-East India — The Mizo Women's Federation and the Naga Mother's Association, which are unique examples of cultural refiguration of women and widening of their sex specific roles, which is also a redefinition of their Cultural Rights in the form of ethnicity inscribed on sexuality and vice-versa. These organisations celebrate cultural specificity, within cultural diversity and also interrogate 'cultural excuse' for marginalising women. An important section of women in the North-East seems to have realised that "Patriarchy which operates through gender, caste, class and ethnicity, is integral to the problems facing women".⁵ Some women from North-East India have been participants also in the Beijing conference which in an unprecedented manner has rejected "cultural justifications" for violating women's human rights.

North-eastern tribes in general never had a defined community as such although their life style was communitarian in nature. The generalised problem of Representation, of the subaltern subjects of North-East takes a critical turn, because the political or ideological embeddings of these tribes were never national or post-colonial. It was rather a partially tinted social space, where certain identities were articulated through an extraneous discursive agency. This process had left the North-Eastern tribes, out of the national metaphor and the colonial national artifacts of power left them as unadjusted outfits. This in turn, produced a difference in culture and at the same time an implied compulsion, of the tribes to make themselves considered within the language of history, thereby attenuating the already disrupted voices of that found articulation in the social space of the tribes. The tribes who were so long kept out of the emerging colonial public space (s), were forced to make a forcible intrusion into the colonial national public spaces — the force of which in turn made them subjects of contingent self-fashioning.

At such a phase, the homing in of Christianity with the residues of colonial liberal western discourse and responses to earthly pathos and disempowered spirituality, paved the way to something demonstrably optimistic. Famines and traditional saviour spirits were all losing ground and vanishing in front of the white man's religion. The cognitive shift of the natives was by way of rejection of the wrecked structure of faith, only to get accommodated within something more strong. This is how the North-Eastern tribes, as subalterns were unconsciously caught within the currents of the dominant discourse, without a decision of their own, yet they were different. With the absence of the artifacts of history / time, memory and an ordered language, the tribal natives in general lacked the agency to appropriate the concealed violence of the colonial ruse. This epistemic violence was also marked by an absence of desire in the tribes to recreate themselves in indigenous artifactual ways of world making. It may be mentioned here that this type of cognitive shift is also visible in modernity, which has language to articulate it, unlike the crisis in the tribal societies which lacked even the language to describe. A sense of community emerged among the natives of the North-East only with the advent of modernity, when a desire arose in their heart to articulate their traditional ecritures into language of modernity. In contesting the always already contaminated

space of modernity, the tribes for the first time, started experiencing a 'loss' of their identity which they thought they had, and so each time they tried to 'write' it, it resulted in an erasure (in the Derridean sense). And therefore the community formation here, was a kind of a con-social bonding an intersubjective primordial relationship of sharing, which projected a life-world beyond a community. It was not a political formation of a community like other subaltern communities but an ecological one. Modernity, with its statecraft demarcated life into too many autonomous spheres as private/public, secular/spiritual etc. which started generating a lot of tension in these ecological groups, which were used to a communitarian way of life. These divisions left the realm of everyday life a remainder and so the power relations became more visible in this 'space'. A sense of 'loss' pushed back the ecological community to their traditional way of life, but influenced by a critical modernity, the traditional society started assigning roles to the members of the community.

The power relations operating between individuals with various roles and between communities, arranged multiple identities against each other and brought them to the sites of production, politics and administration. This pattern of rupturing of various self-enclosed identities by the colonial modernity reinforced the dominant-dominated relationship in cultural terms in which one identity perceived others as a threat to its existence. The Indian national discourse operating through such a contest-ridden public space, mediated the intercultural relationship between communities without addressing their specific cultural claims. The abrupt attempt to turn them as individual members of a greater claim of Indian nationhood left cultural spots uncemented and has created dual subjects—'native' and the 'civic'. The 'native' subject could not adjust himself/ herself with the dominant imageries and symbols of the Indian Nation because of the 'otherisation' which had constituted it as the 'other'. On the other hand, the 'civic' subject activated its Indianness only in matters of civic interests because in matters of inter-community relations, the traditional and customary institutions were to secure them ethnic rights. This dichotomy transformed the civic sphere into a terrain of unequal competitions because different ethnic communities enjoyed different or no ethnic rights. In the decolonising process of post-colonial India, the dominance of certain communities over others became more clear and so discontent and deprivation became inevitable in the form of Insurgent resistance. In the context of NE-India, the existence of socially rooted dominance

in the political space gave way to the claim of various ethnic tribes and communities for separate province and State such as Meghalaya for Khasis, Nagaland for Nagas etc. These claims and the encountering of the State hegemony of dominance have been termed as Insurgency by the State, which through a mobilisation of national sentiments justifies its violence to curb it.

Thus the North-Eastern tribal societies emerged into ethnic national groups projecting various traditional ways of world making. In seeking to distinguish between individual ethnic cultures, minority discourse and the internal minorities,⁶ one finds that the woman is the internal minority—the ethnic subject, with colourful ethnic costumes and gender specific roles. Under various institutions of modernity and the conflict between the ‘Minority’ (an awareness which is quite recent in the North-East) and the State, the ‘woman’ becomes an ethnic object under the male ‘gaze’, — gendered and fetishized. Being an ethnic subject of a community, which has been subject to the process of nation formation from above, the cultural rights enshrined in the Constitution become a misnomer to a woman of the North-Eastern tribal societies. And so, her ‘culture’ and Cultural Rights are asserted in her celebration of self-reflexivity in carrying out her gender specific roles. In a community which inscribes ethnicity on her sexuality and vice-versa, an assertion of Cultural Rights would mean ‘becoming a woman’, and as Elizabeth Grosz describes “going beyond identity and subjectivity, fragmenting and freeing up lines of flight, liberating a thousand tiny sexes that identity subsumes under one”⁷ In her predicament as ethno-sexual subject, she must celebrate ‘a body without organs’ (Bwo) as Grosz states, which does not oppose or reject organs but — opposes the subordination of the body to the exigencies of property and propriety. As mentioned earlier the tribal/ethnic woman remained conspicuously absent from the visible spaces of the emerging public spaces of politics and administration. She also remained excluded from counter hegemonic struggle of the insurgent groups. In the play between identity and non-identity and in her assigned traditional sex-specific role, she could not emerge as a subject—‘native’ or ‘civic’. And therefore, from within the cultural system which has metaphorically erased her identity, she has asserted her new-found subjectivity. Let us examine the growth and functioning of two ethnic women’s organisation, the Mizo Women’s Federation and the Naga Mother’s Association, which are operating in a manner, suggestive of a viable alternative to the mal-logic of Statist hegemony and ethnic Insurgency. Their discourse action

projects the violation of human rights that ethnic women suffer and how such a fractured subject could gather herself to celebrate her Cultural Rights, which none but she herself can guarantee for herself.

The Mizo Women's Federation, more popularly known in Mizoram as MHIP, *i.e.* Mizoram Hmeichhe Insuihkhawn Pawl was founded in July 1974. The Constitution declares that the organisation would be solely engaged in social welfare works and it would be done by women because "we women also must contribute our share by uniting our efforts towards the accomplishment of this great task". The position is almost an ethical feminist one ⁸, as the Mizo woman is trying to enlarge the space of her articulation as an ethno-sexual subject struggling to achieve individuation from her gendered role. Her agenda is much more comprehensive than her ungendered counterpart, whose space of articulation is constituted by only a critique of the centre-periphery politics ⁹ This organization is the largest women organization in the State and all Mizo women are members of the MHIP, irrespective of social and economic position, starting from the first lady of the State, down to the poorest rural Mizo woman. Their aims and objectives include child welfare, women welfare and mediation between the civil society (Government Health & Immunization programmes) and traditional society. A unique feature of the Mizo society is the absence of class, caste, social hierarchy and this aspect has greatly helped the project of the MHIP to unite the Mizo women. The Mizo Women Federation, unlike mainstream feminist movements is not engaged only in exploding the interior of the patriarchal symbolic order. It strategically (consciously or unconsciously) avoids confrontation with the State. It pledges co-operation with the Government programmes of National Integration, observation of Republic Day, Independence Day etc. However, the MHIP's subtle critique of the traditional and modern patriarchal institutions can be deciphered by reading into the organisational text. The MHIP has come up with a very fundamental agenda of the improvement of the Mizo customary law which, according to them, is treating the woman "like domestic animal". The annual report of the MHIP for the year 1994-95 states :

"The women in Mizoram have no security in life due to the fact that the customary law treats the women like domestic animals. We have no rights to claim our property Although the old customary law relating to marriage and inheritance are still upheld, there are changes in some parts of India and beyond".

The MHIP is aware that the Mizos are still at an infant stage of civilisation, none the less they desire to be a part of the emancipatory movement of women and the improvement of customary law in other parts of India. The organisation states that earlier in the marriage system, the bride used to take only her personal dresses and bedding with her from her father's house. But now-a-days, brides from well to do families are taking much more valuable things from their father's house. The MHIP is raising voices against these practices, lest it should become a convention in the society. In a memorandum, submitted by the MHIP to the Chief Minister of Mizoram on the 16th of Oct. '97 at Aizawi, the Organisation has demanded 33% of elected seats and one-third of the Chairperson seats for women in the village Councils and district Councils. Further, the organisation feels that the reservation of 33% of seats for women should not only be in the Parliament but also in the State Assemblies, particularly in Mizoram, which so far has had no woman MP and which has had only 4 women members of Legislative Assembly during the last 24 years. Significantly, the MHIP has urged the Government for the adoption of (a) The Christian Marriage Bill, 1994; (b) The Christian Adoption and Maintenance Bill, 1994; and (c) The Indian Succession (Amendment) Bill, 1994, which will ensure and provide for better security in a Mizo woman's life. It may be mentioned here that in the Mizo Customary Law, the youngest son inherits the property of the father. For a woman there is no certainty that the youngest son would share the property with her after her husband's death¹⁰. It is strange to note that although Mizoram, (one of the smallest states of India) has high literacy rate, especially of women, the unjust customary law still holds good. It is also surprising to note that the Church, which had taken care of converting the Mizo people to Christianity, remained silent in relation to the implementation of the Christian Marriage, Adoption and Maintenance Act. This demand of the MHIP has shaken the roots of the patriarchal order, both traditional and religious. It is learnt that the Church Unions do not assign higher post to women, who qualify the Bachelor of Divinity and Master of Divinity (BD & MD). It is a clear case of gender discrimination in the Church, when qualified women on Divinity, have to work as clerks in the Church office and the higher posts are enjoyed only by men, who are equally if not more qualified. I have argued this elsewhere, that the Church as another patriarchal institution, still carrying the colonial legacy in certain ways, marginalises the woman. The North Eastern tribal states are mostly Christian, and it is almost a convention that even political matters are

imparted in Sunday Sermons in some Churches. The question is, how do the religious institutions maintain a conspicuous silence, when the whole region is burning and bleeding.¹¹

The text of the MHIP, seems to be providing for an inter-textual reading of the various agencies of the modern civil society and how the woman is caught in the nexus. The MHIP has declared 1997-1999 as Women's year and is taking up cases of rape, exploitation of women etc., for legal redressal. In 1994, the MHIP organised a big demonstration, when a lawyer's wife (suspected of murder) died. The Organization with the help of the Village Defence force of a larger organization in Mizoram, called Young Mizo Association (YMA, of which both men and women are members), is trying to appropriate various currents of patriarchy operating in a Mizo woman's life. The word MI-ZO means man-hill, a landscape where woman is absent physically and yet it is the woman, who is mediating between the 'man' and the hill, the burden of sexuality inscribed on her ethnicity.

The Naga Mothers' Association, is another organisation of Naga Mothers, who have taken upon themselves the task of projecting themselves as effective citizens. Unlike MHIP which subtly contests the discourse of the traditional and the civil society, the Naga mothers have deliberately kept themselves outside this contestation. They have taken the responsibility of clearing their own homes and repairing the moral cores of the fractured Naga society. The Naga tribe is constituted by several sub-tribes, who collectively assert themselves as a community. The Naga mothers, whose sons are engaged in the battle with the Indian State, act as mediators between their sons and the civil society. Insurgency is a Statist discourse, in which the Naga woman does not involve herself, rather she carries out her role as a mother, who on the one hand prevents her sons from taking liquor and drugs and on the other hand works for ensuring eco-friendly environment. The Naga Mother Association makes individual mothers address the community as social mothers, enlarging the space of the tradition-specific roles. The community as an ethnic identity is not beyond gender consideration and so from her sexed subject position, the Naga mother figures the discourse of motherhood in the community. It is a delicate mixture of the impersonal communitarian entity with the personal female 'self,' almost a two dimensional matrix, in which the community emerges as the limit of the self; a kind of radicalisation of community (radicalisation in the Derridean sense) in the political sense, in the sense of an exterior mobilisation of the responses of the female 'self'.

This role of the Naga mothers is a quasi-appropriated, quasi-neutral role on the face of the coerced and feigned body of the community, which is suffering the predicament of a historical fracture. I call it a radical role of the mothers because it challenges the grotesque, the voir of the State in a voice enundated in a pool of tears and blood. The organisation symbol of the Naga Mothers' Association is very significant; projecting a human eye from which tears of blood are dropping down and a four worded message — SHED NO MORE BLOOD. This is a mediating message both to the Indian State, (with its coercive military force) and the insurgent sons in the NSCN (Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland). One interpretation of this could be that it is an intra-patriarchal battle in which mothers are wounded. The symbolic crying eye of Naga motherhood is an unprotected space in the highly protected policing spaces of the civil society. The Naga Mothers' Association radicalises the experience of violence, and its promised disposition towards a negotiated order of peace is the poetics of counter Insurgency that does not debunk insurgency but projects an area of hope. This hope is articulated through a counter ideology of non-violence that could struggle for reclaiming the lost position of Naga identity. It is an attempt of resurgence of a community from its wounds and a memorising enactment of a sense of ethnic bond, which can give birth to a 'nation from below'. The Naga Mothers' Association takes almost a eco-feminist stand, working towards an ecological restoration both of the cultural ethos and of the flora and fauna of Nagaland. Two questions are relevant at this point: Does Naga identity suffer defeat before the Indian State? Does the Indian State bank upon the communitarian capacity of resilience without holding a legitimate moral authority? These discursive questions loom large in the matter of ensuring social justice as an agenda of struggle, more than a prescriptive and normative legal justice.

The matter of social justice assumes priority in the vision of the interiorised community as manifested in women's assertion, with its immediate affront to the legitimacy of the Indian State. An interrogation of the Naga Mothers' Association in this public sphere of the civil society is irreducible to an altruistic or statist move because the stake of the State is jibed with the mistake of the State. How does the civil society adapt itself to this state of affairs? Does it take a legal and constitutional possession or does it leave open the question of procedural justice? The question is, who negotiates between these normative polarities and what prime place do these polarities occupy in the agenda

of struggle. Leaving aside the matter of balance of power to the confronting agencies (State *versus* Insurgents), the excluded fractions of the community who feel the pinch of this irresolution between the two, cognise these intricacies and take a radical non-conformist position, the appeal of which attracts both the warring sides. Naga Mothers' movement position itself in the narrow but intricate space with a self-delineated responsibility of recreating the fractured community. In this sense, the Naga mothers perform the role of symbolic authority of motherhood, which is more effective than the real authorities in the traditional society and the visible centres of State power. The women especially the mother is the most affected in the insurgency situation because it destabilises her physically and emotionally and so from a dis-empowered position the mother/woman manipulates the various agencies of State power. Interestingly, the Insurgents and the Indian State, both resist any subversion of the symbolic authority of the mother because neither can manipulate it. Both take recourse to the symbolic authority of the mother because the space of motherhood does not give rise to a dominating centre of power relation.¹²

Thus the two women's organizations, in a manner quite unique and different from the mainstream feminist struggle, configure the cultural role of the Mizo and Naga women respectively. Both the organisations operate with a collective ethos and yet leave the space of individuation of the female (sexed) subject. The Mizo Women's Federation is a case of more effective jerk to the foundation of traditional and modern patriarchy, where sexual identity has been inscribed on her ethnicity with the force of the Customary Laws that makes gender discrimination. The Naga Mothers' Association is a case of an ethnic communitarian role of the mother, who is past sexual youthfulness but who is using her gendered identity as a mother to resurrect the ethnic community. The mother had once been a sex-specific object from which she has emerged as a maternal authority, a responsible citizen and so, the Naga Mother is trying to inscribe her ethnic identity on her sexual identity. I, therefore, read the position of the Mizo and the Naga women in three phases—pre-critical, critical and post-critical. The pre-critical stage constitutes the period when the woman was totally a non-entity in the communitarian stage of the community, when the colonial ruse and the dominant Indian ideology was inflicting violence on the indecisive community. She had no memory, no decision and finally no language of her own. The critical stage consists of that period when,

with the advent of modernity, her sex-specific role was assigned to her and she realised her gendered position and the discriminating language game of patriarchy. The post-critical phase is the most significant, almost a post modern cognitive shift of the sexed subject, as she is effectively using the language of patriarchy to contest it and create the language of her own. This is what constitutes her rights as a human being and as a sexed subject in culture, that interrogates the male institutions of power and offers an alternative model for the recognition of women's rights as Human Rights and Cultural Rights.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This idea has been extensively discussed by Susan Moller Okin in her article "Feminism, Women's Human Rights, and Cultural Differences" in *Hypatia* Spring 1998, drawing on other feminist critics.
2. United Nations, 1948
3. Elisabeth Friedman, "Women's human rights. The emergence of a movement" in *Women's rights, human rights International Feminist perspectives*, 1995 quoted by Susan Moller Okin in *Hypatia*, Spring 1998.
4. Leslie Green in "Internal Minorities and their rights" in Will Kymlicka's. *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, OUP, Oxford 1995.
5. About 240 participants from 110 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the Asian Pacific region concluded on this note. See Charlotte Bunch's "Strengthening human rights of women" in *World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, June 1993 :The Contributions of NGOs' Reports and documents* ed. Manfred Nowak, Vienna 1994.
6. David Lloyd has given a comprehensive account of the problem of ethnic cultures and minority discourse in "Ethnic cultures, minority discourse and the state" in *Colonial discourse/post-colonial theory*, (ed) Francis Barker Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen 1994; p. 221.
7. Elizabeth Grosz discusses the terms (BWO) and 'Becoming Woman' in her article "A thousand tiny sexes. Feminism and Rhizomatics" in *Topoi* (An International Review of Philosophy) September 1993.
8. The idea is borrowed from Drucilla Cornell's "What is ethical feminism" published in *Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange*, Routledge, New York and London, 1996.
9. One of the most effective critique of the formation of the Indian State at the initial stages of the transfer of power from the colonisers to the Indians is available in *Ka Ram Leh Kei (My Country and I)* written by R. Vanlawma, the only living political biographer in Mizoram

10. These facts are gathered from MHIP literature collected from their office and from personal interviews with the executive members of MHIP in December 1997.
11. I have argued this elsewhere in relation to the women of the matri archail societies of North-East, who are making themselves productive in the global market, as commodities instead of enjoying a privileged position of matriarchy.
12. The facts are gathered from fieldwork in Nagaland (Interpretation mine).