

CONFLICT TO RECONSTRUCTION



Some Observations
on Nagaland and
Manipur

Editors:

R. Gopalakrishnan

C. Joshua Thomas



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This book discusses the implication of insurgency in North-East India with special reference to Nagaland and Manipur. It begins with the analysis of the geography and socio-economic framework of the area and then attempts to analyze how the continuation of insurgency has eroded the social fabric and economic base of the people. In the process it introduces questions like, what is insurgency? How does one define it? What are its scope, content and extent? How does it exploit the situation in a given area? How can it be brought to an end? Is it different from militancy, terrorism, etc., or is it more effective or otherwise than these other forms of violence? How does it attract and encourage mobilisation in the initial stages? How does it undermine the economy and erode the social fabric? In a sense this book is intended to be an interpretation of the problem of insurgency in Nagaland and Manipur in relation to the ground realities.

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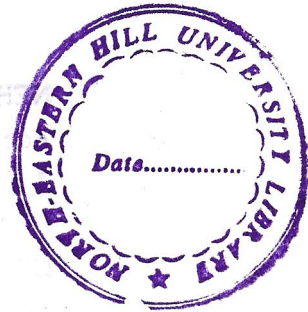
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and Manipur

Editors:

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C. Joshua Thomas



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Preface

Insurgency, law and order and economic development in the North East India are some of the issues that have stirred up a great deal of debate in the last two decades. The responses, observations and comments on them have come from people representing every walk of life. They were variably impressed, intrigued, outraged, frightened and perplexed by arguments ranging from secession and independence to the utter neglect of the social, economic and political development of the various sub-regions of the North East. The North East today is keenly observed by mainstream India.

Given this interest on the region, as well as misrepresentation of and controversy over issues, the present efforts review the problem of insurgency in the states of Nagaland and Manipur. It is intended to provide fuller and deeper understanding by analysing people's responses to issues of insurgency, law and order, development and so on. Thus, providing for a wider regional level generalisation.

This book is a revised and marginally edited version of the final report of a project we had undertaken recently, which was intended to be an interpretation of the incidence of insurgency in Nagaland and Manipur in relation to the ground realities. It is an attempt at presenting a framework or a paradigm for scholars and policy makers to view insurgency politics meaningfully. The test of its meaningfulness and usefulness is not whether it accounts for everything that is happening in Nagaland and Manipur landscape or the regional landscape; rather, the test is whether it

provides a more meaningful and useful lens to view internal developments or not.

The work on this project was made possible by the financial support of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi. Without the Council's financial assistance, completion of the project would have been delayed for years. The staffs of ICSSR North Eastern Regional Centre, particularly, Ms. Cerilla Khonglah, Ms. Christine Blah, Ms. Narisha Kharbuli, Mr. Tiameren Aier, Mr. Passi and Mr. Doyan as well as their library were immensely useful for this research. The questionnaire surveys in Nagaland and Manipur were carried out separately and took more time than anticipated. We are thankful to Professor T. Lanusosang Aier, Department of Geography and Resource Management, Nagaland University, Lumami Campus and his team and to Mr. Leikholen for their interest and commitment in carrying out difficult interviews in the interior parts of Nagaland and Manipur. But for them the work would not have been completed. We are grateful to Dr. N.P. Goel, Centre for Adult and Continuing Education, NEHU, Shillong, for helping in the analysis of questionnaire and in planning the manuscript of the final project report. Our special appreciation goes to the two dozen field investigators for travelling in to the interior parts of Manipur and Nagaland to collect the required data, without their kind and timely help this work would not have seen the light. Ms. Fiasta Diengdoh, programme officer, ICSSR-NERC deserves special appreciation for her assistance in the final stage of the project and the publication. Finally, we own up responsibility for the errors and omissions that may have crept into our presentation of facts and analysis.

Shillong
January 2005

R. Gopalakrishnan
C. Joshua Thomas

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Introduction

The present work discusses the implication of insurgency. It begins with the analysis of the geography and socio-economic framework of the study area and then attempts to analyse how the continuation of insurgency has eroded the social fabric and economic base of the people. In the process, it introduces questions like what is insurgency? How does one define it? What are its scope, content and extent? How does it exploit the situation in a given area? How can it be brought to an end? Is it different from militancy, terrorism, etc., or is it more effective or otherwise than these other forms of violence? How does it attract and encourage mobilisation in the initial stages? How does it undermine the economy and erode the social fabric?

These are some of the questions that constantly figure in the discussions and literature on insurgency.¹ Most commonly held notions identify insurgency with an agency aiming for radical social and politico-economic changes. It is a strategy of contradiction that has become an ideology as well as means to access political power. It is an extension of political power through armed confrontation with the existing state system. It is a conflict between perceived haves and have-nots. It is a paradox emanating from the allocation and distribution of scarce resources and of goods and services. It is a product that envisages an entirely new attitude towards life. It is an attempt to resolve historical and geopolitical injustice by promising transformation of the material life conditions of the population. In addition to causing relative deprivation and contradictions within the society and the state

system, it encourages the protagonists to mobilise and lead the population to militate against the government. It poses challenges hitherto not anticipated by the government and the state, so that, insurgency becomes a tool that provides the catalysts enough power to bend the popular will towards hastening changes. It provides required ideological premises and hopes of future affluence to sustain itself.

Thus the geopolitical, socio-political and economic relations become three parameters on which objectives of stability and instability are anchored.² The success or failure of tackling insurgency depends either upon destroying the insurgent premises and thereby encouraging stabilisation or on maintaining the premises while encouraging destabilisation to take firmer roots in the polity. Normally, a scholar is content with identification of disruptive tendencies and providing explanatory interpretations. However, much of these interpretations require qualifications that could provide an acceptable alternative rationale to the growing incidence of insurgency. This will help not only in resolving the crisis but also in encouraging acceleration of politico-economic processes that can seek marginalisation of the problematic issues in the long run. Geographically, Assam displays significant spatial differences in human relationships and their responses to sets of stimuli. The present attempt will seek to identify the different responses in Nagaland and Manipur.

An Overview of Insurgency

The geography of insurgency and its spread in North East India in general and Assam in particular is distinct from a similar situation elsewhere. The background of the ideologies of the insurgents reflects a pre-determined frame of reference. Geopolitical parameters provide alternative explanations to the combination of notions held by groups who form the insurgent environment in this part of the country.

Insurgency is as old as the history of man³. The activities of Spartacus and the campaigns of Julius Caesar in Spain are some of the early instances explaining the formative years of insurgency situations. Till date, only a very few insurgencies have resolved political uncertainties successfully. Even in its dormant stage, insurgency has the potential to upset the equilibrium and

status quo of the society. It is inevitably linked to the people-territory-ideology continuum.⁴

Sun Tzu⁵ and Von Clausewitz⁶ have contributed to the theoretical development of the concept of insurgency. It deals with the elements of Guerrilla strategy and tactics. Among the post-1945 proponents of war, Mao Tse Tung⁷, Fidel Castro⁸, Vo Nguyen Giap⁹, and Gen. Grivas¹⁰ stand out. Their efforts and practice of Guerrilla tactics have been some of the few instances of successful insurgency movements. Their movement provided the needed credibility and importance of ideology, nationalism and religion as some of the factors essential for such movement.

Mao emphasised on *space, time* and *will*. These were to lead towards the *war of attrition*. The protracted struggle encompasses all dimensions, ultimately leading to the collapse of the government. Mao made the Guerrilla strategy dynamic with positive political objectives and military goals.

Che Guevara¹¹ considered insurgency as a militant social protest against how the existing political and social system functions. Guerrilla strategy and tactics was towards aggravating social and political dimensions. This led to political regression. It also deepens popular opposition to the regime and hastens the process of dissolution. One of the objectives of the Guerrillas was to erode the credibility and ultimately destroy the stable image of the government. It also included the denial of its credit, to dry up its source of revenue, to create dissension within government bureaucracy and so on.

There is a substantial body of literature available on insurgency, guerrilla strategy, militancy, terrorism and other similar themes.¹² These cover a wide spectrum of factors ranging from ideology, theory and practice strategy, tactics, sociological and historical bases, geographical patterns, economic relations and so on. The analysis encompasses states like China, Vietnam, Kampuchea, Afghanistan, India, Sri Lanka, Central and Latin American countries, states of the Middle East, former Yugoslavia, Ireland, Angola, Nigeria, etc.¹³ These literature examine access to and role of political power through insurgency, their causes and manifestations and provides explanations to the status of these instances in China, Cuba and Vietnam and their failure as in Malaysia¹⁴ and Indonesia¹⁵ or their continuation as in India,¹⁶ Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland and ultimate political resolutions as in

Angola and Nigeria. The studies also highlighted the ideological-political bases, while critically evaluating the role of social and economic factors in such movements. These studies, infact, suggest the role of regional and global geopolitical processes in the insurgency movements.

In addition, these studies also suggest theoretical bases for counter insurgency movements. Detailed treatment of various insurgency movements throws much light on counter insurgency models that were adapted. As far as India is concerned, particularly the North East, availability of literature on insurgency themes is limited. Hence, one can contribute further materials on themes like geography, society, economy, etc., in relation to insurgency. Those that are available deal with situations in Jammu and Kashmir, the Naxal movement,¹⁷ etc. Within North East,¹⁸ available materials are restricted to Nagaland and Mizoram with very limited literature on similar situations in Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura. Even for states like Nagaland, the materials largely deal with situations leading to the 1975 Accord. However, the late 1980s, 1990s and early 2000 saw an increase in the availability of literature through the efforts of Bhowmik, Tarapot, Gopalakrishnan, Hazarika and others.¹⁹ Articles appearing in various local, regional and national newspapers and periodicals reinforced these. This period also saw several seminars addressing this problem.

Outbreak of insurgency is the first phase. Continuation of insurgency increases its support. It reveals government weakness. Sabotage, kidnapping, extortion, murder, spreading of terror, etc, reinforce insurgency position. This forces the government to resort to tough laws. It undermines political, social and economic stability. Social and political dissolution emerges as a distinct consequence. Erosion of the economy enhances poverty conditions. Protracted struggle aggravates this. Government laws to restore status quo alienate the populace. Moreover, the question of Human Rights, customary and traditional rights and Constitutional provisions are brought sharply into focus.

For the insurgents the protracted struggle means futility of maintaining a fight for social goals within the framework of civil debate. Accordingly, when forces of oppression come to maintain themselves *in power* against established law, peace is considered as already broken. But when a government has come to power

through elections (fraudulent or not) and maintains an appearance of Constitutional legality, insurgency cannot be promoted, for the possibilities of peaceful struggle have not been exhausted. Insurgency is an extension of politics by means of armed conflict. The true effect of the insurgency arsenal of terror, murder, etc., is to create an intolerance situation and to sabotage the orderly functioning of the government. Its effects are psychological and political.

Areas where insurgency occurs reflect glaring discrepancies in distribution of wealth, slums, unemployment, backwardness of rural areas, corruption of normal democratic government, surging birth rate, mediocre annual rate of economic growth, etc. The aspirations of people and high popular anticipation of progress are the greatest impetus to radical political actions. Awareness creates a revolutionary base. Limited economic progress is a revolutionary force. Popular education stimulates emulation and social ambitions. Commerce and industry, however inadequate, give rise to certain social mobility. New political alignments are formed. The new wealthy set aside the old feudal elite and strive for political power. A middle class is created when a revolutionary leadership is formed. As a consequence, the white-collar workers are scorned both by the middle class and the general populace. They are unable to make a common cause with them. In this, they were able to form a liaison with the elite, the administrators and politicians. They pursue the only avenue open to their interests and resist radical political opposition. On the contrary, the protagonists, unable to penetrate or become a part of the decision-making apparatus, make efforts to mobilise the population to their cause and some of them as their squad, and are, thus, successful in taking up the cause of the people who are discontented and some of who are disfranchised.

Spreading poverty, misery and social dissension create a powerful revolutionary base. Progress provides it with encounters and leadership. Political organisation follows and slogans and causes are indicated by the social ceremonies. These help in finding the ideological bases of most radical opposition movements and reflect Marxist (Stalinist-Leninist) rationalistic, religious and anti-state stances. In general, such themes have not attracted frequent detailed analysis and investigations.

Instability Parameters in the Manipur and Nagaland Landscape²⁰

Insurgency pre-supposes conflict of two or more opposing interests that are unable to arrive at equilibrium. It is believed that the outcome of insurgency will not depend on the relative power of the competing interest groups as much as on mobilisation of resources and strength of the state system. Such conflict occurs within a definite space and scale. These have regional and national level ramifications. Under these circumstances, it is the civilian population that first becomes the object of mobilisation, subsequently the target and later towards the end it is they who decide and determine the outcome of such events. Thus, the extent to which the population is involved defines the scope.

Manipur²¹ and Nagaland²² landscapes are strategically located. They have immense regional geopolitical significance. This importance stems from the fact that it is the eastern part of a region adjoining the territory in which flow the major rivers, Hwang Ho, Yangtizekiang, Sikang, Irrawady and their tributaries that flow into the Brahmaputra. It is a rough and fractured topography dominated by dense forests, with very limited accessibility conditions. It is inhabited by several known and less known tribes. These inhabitants have a known history of antagonism to established central authority and have at every opportunity asserted their autonomy and independence.

The nineteenth century political relations brought them under the administrative control of British India Colonial Authority.²³ As a result, these units have been politically divided. Since then, in one form or the other, the inhabitants of this difficult topographic region have frequently raised their banner of revolt. Their economy has remained primitive and backward. They had developed alternative sources of profitable income generation by providing sanctuaries to other adjoining groups in revolt, gunrunning, drugs, illicit border trade etc. However, continuous counter-insurgency operations by the respective central authorities to a substantial extent controlled the extent of these activities. Besides, as in the recent times, the greater success of counter-insurgency operations in Myanmar has not only reduced these instances but also have raised new fears of how the insurgent

groups in the eastern part of this area respond to these developments. This has opened up new avenues of speculation as to how the armed movements on the Indian side of the region will orient itself and what possible directions the conflict will take.

Thus, by virtue of their location, Manipur and Nagaland²⁴ are characterised by socio-political instability and economic backwardness. Isolation and inaccessibility continues to exert their considerable influence on geopolitical perceptions. The populations in Manipur and Nagaland are in constant competition, between and within themselves, for opportunities, resources and participation. As a result, Manipur and Nagaland are frequently threatened with escalation of tensions and conflicts. These involve complex parameters. The resultant problems have undermined the economic stability of Manipur and Nagaland, despite the fact that these states are known for exploitation of natural resources for economic and industrial purposes. Now they are experiencing more than four and a half decades of political, economic and social stagnation.

Manipur and Nagaland also experienced the consequences of the rising socio-economic and political aspirations of the people, land alienation, lack of adequate infrastructure and so on. These retarded the development efforts and discouraged normalisation. Consequently, the state and the participants have been caught in a framework of competition, confrontation and struggle for supremacy and control of resources (instead of being complementary to each other). The disruptive forces constantly encouraged fragmentation of the polity and the territory. This indicated the presence of a higher level of incompatibilities between the statists and the participants on the one hand, and between planned political transition and economic change (politico-geographical framework and requirements of the territory) on the other.

Rigorous natural attributes fostered specific physical, economic and socio-cultural responses.²⁵ This enabled the polity to mobilise and propagate against different forms of centralisation. They expressed themselves in terms of autonomy or separation, as if the space-time continuum had remained stationary and that the change (in integral element in the evolutionary process) had to be on terms other than that influenced by the environmental framework of the territory. This is applicable to both the statists and the proponents alike. Separate territories in which the

various social formations found themselves in, encouraged the development of distinct perspectives and compatible political organisations which backed their demands for separate existence. The statist's priorities and frequent intransigence in decision-making processes tended to restrict the scale and scope of accommodation in the region. Correspondingly, the proponents adopted similar stance, thereby keeping the situation volatile.

Systematisation and extension of administration in the region was a post-Independence phenomenon. This extension was viewed with hesitation and was interpreted in terms of interference in political and consequently economic and social transactions of the regional polity. It took the familiar platform of being culturally swamped. Thus exhibiting a paradox and limitation of approaches that led to the adoption of such perspectives (the State likewise had limited manoeuvrability and adoption). The responses of the various social formations and their respective pressure groups suggested the revival of alternative (traditional) centres of power. This became the focal point of mobilisation. Further, inroads made by administration and modernisation, extension and improvement of communication linkages and development revealed latent inadequacies and precarious extension of resources (of both social formations and the State.)²⁶ These constantly obstructed the efforts to strengthen the infrastructural facilities. It was at this point that the various territorial formations confronted the state with their demands, aspirations and requirements. At the same time it also enabled the state to strike a balance between satisfying the statist's requirements and creating conditions conducive for strong effective integrative processes. The response that dealt with political demands for separation was carried through the granting of arrangements towards autonomy. In other words, efforts were directed to freeze the situation that was fast going out of hand.

One can clearly discern the functions and operation of centrifugal tendencies. These constantly polarised the inhabitants and territories. As a result, the region was frequently convulsed and succumbed and independent efforts have brought about significant changes in the regional landscape. But they have not been able to do away with ambiguities and complacency of the last four and a half decades. The latter subjected each subsystem in

the region to a critical appraisal of the strategic considerations of partisan effectiveness. Moreover, each of the territories that was affected by such a movement indicated a significant lack of sustained efforts to (a) minimise the differences that existed within it, and (b) develop alternative sources that could compensate for the lack of resources.

Participants and Contestants

In this regard the statist and their proponents did not project an effective alternative. The situation indicated the role of destabilisation processes in eroding the administrative, politico-economic and territorial fabric. Administrative reorganisation not only accentuated the existing disparities and inequalities in distribution but also highlighted the complexities and inadequacies of the territories. This encouraged inter and intra formation differences and led to the cycle of mobilisation, confrontation and resolution within, between and outside these formations. This suggested that the policies and the associated processes fell short of imperatives. Statists' considerations transformed local and regional dimensions. This led to political confrontation. The latter, even after necessary resolution, continued to maintain instability characteristics. This trend has become common with increasing frequency in the region. Thus, review of the various social formations (of their response-reaction mechanisms) to changing circumstances reveals a potential explosive situation existing in every territory of the region.²⁷

This calls for a reappraisal of the perspectives on which the notion of regionalism is based and as applicable to the North East Indian region. It is obvious that the sub-national forces constituted a part of the total processes of nationalism. Apparent irritants that manifested in the form of mobilisation or separation are due to political linkages and interactions. These are due to growing complexity of socio-economic transactions and relations. Needs, aspirations and demands of the various population groups and sub-groups can be well articulated and met through the provisions of the Constitution (for the Constitution had enough provisions to accommodate the demands and aspirations of the social formations and does not require the recourse to movements

for separation). It also includes the processes of consensus among the participants and actors of various territories in the region. In retrospect, the recourse to socio-political movement and prolonged struggle, suggests imposition and assertion of dominance at all levels of the transactions. Passive responses frequently masked tensions. This indicated the need to view the accommodations available with realistic perspectives.

Like other parts of the country, the administrative units in the North East region continued to be dominated by pre-1947 political configurations. It has exerted considerable influence on the nature and pattern of participation and intra sub-regional differences and diversities in the pattern of political, economic and social relations. These were reinforced by divisions on cultural as well as territorial (hills and plains) lines that were more or less parallel to the responses.

Further, population agglomerations expressed loyalties and participation in cultural-political terms. They represented the weak economic base and the fragmented character of the sub-systems. These highlighted latent instabilities of intense factionalism, tribal implementation of political activities and exerted their negative influence on the pattern of development in the region. However, efforts are going on to evolve effective measures to check the escalation of excesses that resulted from the prolongation of movements, the continuation of which tended to distort the instruments of democracy and encourage the tendencies to turn natural competitions of irreconcilable opposites. These highlighted the development of less tolerant tendencies.

In this context, quite a few scholars have successfully argued about the need for reviewing the existing territorial arrangements from the point of view of size, social cohesion, effective administration and efficient Centre-state relations leading to better development possibilities. They have, however, sidelined what and how the actors and the participants could perceive development. Their perception clearly emphasised the pre-eminent position of geography and history²⁸ as determinants of relationships between people, territory and development as well as between policy alternatives, accommodations and implementation. Herein, each participant and actor defined the scale and scope of such activities. This is true of integration in the regional scale as well as at the national scale. These were evident

from the developments and issues in the 1950s, which helped to crystallise the main issues through confrontation between the various groups and the state.

These demands have found frequent expressions in the respective political forms and organisations, which put forth claims for region-based territorial group identity at the cost of other variables and conditions. Thus, today, the scenario of Manipur and Nagaland clearly indicates the revival of primordial factors rather than one of class politics that results from development. The resultant ideological positions adopted by the different groups prove to have inadequate support base to cope with the pressure exerted by their respective territorial locations and resource endowments.

This then suggests that the traditional ethnic, linguistic, cultural and political characteristics are superimposed on the complex geographical setting of Manipur and Nagaland²⁹. These exhibit several layers of identity and expressions. Each of these contains potential to encourage fissiparous tendencies as well as the scope for effective consolidation and accommodation. These aspects revolve around how and to what extent metamorphosis from social and geographical planes to political expressions have taken place in the region.

Post-independence situation in Manipur and Nagaland³⁰ has been dominated by ethnic resurgence. Strengthening of accessibility conditions, developmental activities and administrative reorganisation, failed to check this tendency. It then, becomes obvious that we seek answers for questions like why has there been a resurgence of ethnic identity? In normal circumstances answers are usually bound with the explanations of political and economic situations and of inequalities and sub-regional disparities. In addition to this, for the complex geographical mosaic of the North East, explanations include the impact of the historical patterns, integrative processes and the politicisation of ethnic elements. This has been compounded by the emergence of a distinct middle class identity as a factor in political, social and economic relations in the region.³¹

Hence, it remains fair to say that contradiction and fissiparous tendencies within the diverse social formations have forced change. In the process, the people found themselves at the crossroads with their traditional patterns and institutions. The resultant

impact manifested itself in the material and psychological perspectives that ran contrary to the requirements of regional and national cohesion.

In Manipur and Nagaland, the traditional people-territory-ideology relationships continued to be the basic reference point. Indeed it is so powerful that it continues to influence the socio-political perspectives of the inhabitants of these states. In this regard, it can also be said that their traditional order, equations (and policies pursued by the Colonial administrators) and relationships concerned themselves with closed systems and linear patterns of relationships in which small inputs uniformly yielded small but significant results.

Further, it is fair to say that the sub-systems in Manipur and Nagaland contained innumerable other sub-systems, which were in a constant state of flux, moving between the extreme points of the continuum equilibrium, near equilibrium and far from equilibrium conditions. As a result, a single powerful fluctuation or politico-geographical impulse (either a process or combination of processes) may become so compelling and competing as to result in a feedback, either positive or negative. It shelters the pre-existing organisations of the states, particularly the people-territory-ideology relationships and interactions. This is a revolutionary movement or a point of divergence. It, then, becomes difficult to determine which direction the change or the transformation will take. Or, whether these, sub-systems will disintegrate or leap to a more differentiated level of organisation. This later aspect has been found in the region's societies where the traditional sub-systems continue to survive despite the fact that their functions and powers have been transformed (and in cases either replaced or used to the benefit of the protagonists). In the insurgent and other forms of socio-political movements, these changes in the traditional organisations are used for the spatial extension of the movements. This changer was conducive for destabilisation tendencies to assert themselves in the regional and sub-regional landscape. In other words, they emerged as dissipative structures as compared to the simple structures they had replaced. This is in the backdrop of subsystems which were self-organising systems and had the spontaneous response mechanism to restore the status quo, order and organisations. But, on the face of rapid changes in the political and economic

environment, these sub-systems were inhibited to the extent of being subjected to sudden impact.³²

Further, directly and/or indirectly, the colonial policies of administration, maintenance of economic and political isolation, inaccessibility (only bare minimum communication linkages were maintained) and non-interference in the social order and internal administration of the respective areas of the subsystems encouraged these types of processes to emerge in the region. However, the welfare, measures and the activities of independent agencies like that of the Missionaries, were able to exert considerable influence on the societies, particularly of the highland section. Some of the measures included spreading of education and other infrastructural facilities like road and health. The latter were responsible in bringing awareness among these populations. Consequently, this stabilised the population and ushered in an era of population growth. The primitive base of the economy, shifting cultivation, could not sustain the increasing population and so it began to erode the fragile near equilibrium conditions.

It was believed that strengthening of the infrastructural facilities and initiation of developmental activities will lead towards better forms of integration between the diverse people of the region and the territory (state). Policy measures were initiated and implemented to strengthen the rights of the inhabitants, particularly of the hills and to an extent in the plains for the tribals. This was particularly applicable to elements like land and the traditional associations, which the highland population of the region had. Moreover, it was this relationship with land that encouraged the development of specific socio-political responses and perceptions of the people. Thus, in the case of the dominant, overt or covert, the responses of the affected population followed the historical patterns.

Besides strengthening the traditional institutions through the creation of autonomous district councils to safeguard land ownership and control of land, specific measures like the Inner Line System (of the pre-1947 period) were retained. These controlled movement of population and curbed further alienation of land. In recent times, many of the states in the region have consistently emphasised the need for extending this system. However, one of the important negative aspects of this measure of Inner Line has been the perpetuation of the isolationist tendencies in the hill and

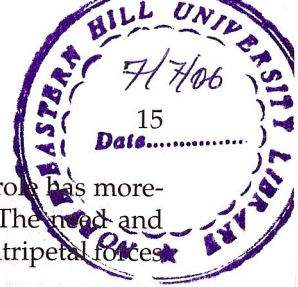
mountainous sections of the region. It has kept the people apart. It minimised the impact brought by modernisation. In other words, such measures have directly contributed to the growth and development of regionalism in a large scale.³³

All these cumulatively influenced separate development of the diverse sub-regions of Manipur and Nagaland. The relationship, people-territory-development, depended upon the intensity and scale of progress. This slowly transformed to political expression. These expressions became obvious after independence, when the inhabitants of the Naga Hills, the Tuensang district and Mizoram, for example, voiced their desire for separate existence from the Union of India. They resorted to insurgency to accelerate separation. The themes dominating these expressions can be summed up as fear of domination and of being swamped by a dominant population. It is obvious that the geography and history of these sub-regions have played a significant role in accentuating the hesitant responses of the affected population. These were reinforced by the problems of economic development.

Suffice it to say, that the post-Independence phase in the region saw rapid transformation in the level of economy. The efforts to reduce the spatial disparities and measures to minimise the isolation have acted as stabilisation factors. Organisation and administrative welfare activities have substantially decentralised developmental activities in the region. Besides, having village, block, district and state level organisations, central organisations and institutions have stepped into accelerate the development process of the region. However, latent fissiparous tendencies particularly cultural confrontations and resultant conflicts have persistently obstructed these efforts. What is required is the understanding of the role of geographical and historical factors and resolve the problems of development through cooperation. This will ensure the effectiveness of the state's role in development and at the same time encourage the population to participate effectively.

Another important aspect in the process of integration is the role of regional political parties. Manipur and Nagaland as well as its constituent administrative units reflect the presence of numerous parties that emerged to signify the interests of diverse population sub-groups in the region. Conflicts in interests and priorities have consistently undermined the possibilities of the

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Introduction

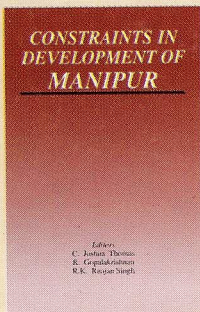
emergence of major political parties. As such their role has more-or-less coincided with the centrifugal tendencies. The need and requirements are obvious and should exploit the centripetal forces to strengthen the regional integration processes.

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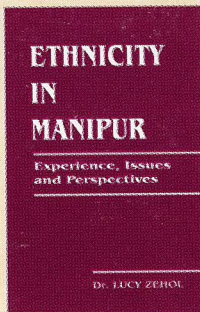
Dr. R. Gopalakrishnan is Professor of Geography, North Eastern Hill University (NEHU). He has done extensive research on ethnicity, insurgency and political geography of North-East India. He has authored several books on North-East India and Afghanistan. He is the President of Policy Alternatives for the North-East and Conflict Elimination Awareness (PANACEA), Shillong.

Dr. C. Joshua Thomas is Director in-charge, ICSSR North Eastern Regional Centre, Shillong. Dr. Thomas has been writing on issues related to the problem of displacement, border trade, ethnicity and insurgency in North-East India. Recently he had edited a book, *Polity and Economy: Agenda for Contemporary North-East India*.



This book is a collection of articles presented in the workshop. The issues raised in the articles were debated. The general consensus that emerged was to achieve a climate or status quo that can encourage development related activities in the state. There was also a broad consensus to evoke a frame-work, with appropriate flexible mechanism that will reinforce confidence building measures in the state.

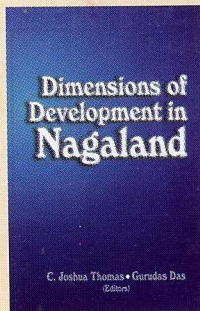
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The theme of the present book is "Ethnicity" with reference to the experiences from Manipur. Manipur, as the remaining six states of North-Eastern region of India, is multi-lingual and multi-ethnic. Most of the communities inhabiting Manipur, tribes or others, are in a state of flux as regards their identity.

The objective of this book is to systematize and reorganize the "data" from Manipur by drawing on conceptual perspectives available in Anthropology and also other relevant social science disciplines. A review of the available literature on "ethnicity" shows one thing—there is a need to formulate a comprehensive analytical framework on ethnicity. In view of all this, the book is an analytical exercise, attempting a comparative analysis of the different empirical situations as obtained in Manipur.

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Who are the Nagas? How did the Naga identity emerge? Why are they fighting against the Indian state? What are the economic and social consequences of this long-drawn conflict? Can Naga struggle for independence be traced to the under-development of the economy of Nagaland? What is the present status of development in Nagaland? What is the extent of educated unemployment in Nagaland? Is large-scale unemployment fuelling the insurgent movements in the state? What are the constraints of development of the economy of the state? What role is being played by the Naga students in enhancing the collective interest of the Nagas? Is there any in-built gender bias in Naga customary laws? What is the status of women in Naga society? Can the democratic political structure of the country accommodate the Naga interest? Is there any need for a paradigm shift in Nagaland?

Having addressed these questions from different perspectives, this book calls for a wider readership cutting across the activists, policy makers as well as academia.

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