

THE CRISIS IN MIZORAM : A STUDY IN GEOPOLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

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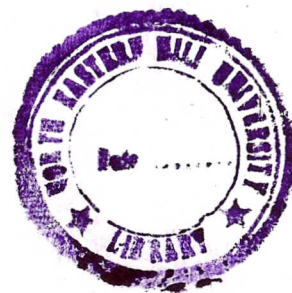
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INTRODUCTION

The entire belt of North-Eastern India is a zone of ethnic and political tension, which in turn bred political turmoil in the form of armed revolt or insurgency. Mizoram is not an exception. The land which was ^aparadise for anthropologists, has become now-a-days, a part of local and regional instability. This instability has to be studied and analysed from the geopolitical perspective, as the region has become the focus of attention at national and international scale. The North-East Region, represented a melting pot of heterogeneous races,¹ language and cultures. The migration of races originated from the East or North-East to West. In the process of migration inter-mingling of races took place in the region, and then many of the inhabitants confined themselves to the difficult terrain of the mountainous periphery. The geographical distribution of phenomena kept them isolated and this phenomena enabled them to retain their traditional characteristics.

In the North-East Region, identity and individuality (of groups and sub-groups) crisis assumed serious proportions.

1. R. Gopalakrishnan 1987. Territorial Structuring and aspects of geo-administration in North-Eastern Region of India - NEHU Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Vol.4 Oct - Dec. 1987 p.24.

Each tribe and sub-tribe of the region is in the race for recognition of its racial identity upon which the demand or regional autonomy in political and economic terms has been propagated subsequently. This has given way to regionalism and irredentism in different forms in different parts of the region. Such claims based on narrow parochial considerations, fomented tension and crisis which ultimately encouraged secessionist movement. In fact, the ethnic and linguistic affiliations remained the most powerful elements of regional movements in the region particularly in Mizoram. The creation of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram had consequent impact in the minor ethnic groups, who were stridently rooting for autonomy, for example the Hmar, the Lakhers and the Chakmas.

The Government of India had to compromise with the situation by allowing smaller ethnic groups to have autonomous District Councils - Chakma, Pawi, Lakher D.C., but not smaller states (may not be economically viable) that may go against the name of national integration². But all these changes are the results of power struggle based on intense ethnic chauvinism and irredentism. This ultimately proved the role of geopolitical undercurrents.

2. Jean Racine - A Contribution to Geopolitical Analysis of India(in) Pascal Girot(ed) International Geopolitical Analysis, London, 1987 p.94.

The colonial policy largely aimed at excluding the area from the remaining part of the region and the country. They initiated specific policy measures that not only permitted the retention of traditional equations in political, economic and social relations, but also enabled the population to come under the limited influence of change. This, then, suggested that the administration's intention was of maintaining the status-quo rather than dealing with development and instability. The specific politico-administrative measures aimed at minimum interference while ensuring maximum mobilization to the policy measures. These were followed by the specific financial considerations, relaxation³ and grants that maintained the status-quo. They also initiated a form of representation, which largely comprised the various chiefs. This re-set the role of the population at large.

It was out of strategic necessity that a loose system of political administration was established in these frontier areas. Communication remained meagre if not non-existent. The contact with outside world was tenuous,

3. The Assam Frontier Tract Regulation 1880, The Scheduled District Act 1874, The Chin Hills Regulation Act 1896, Government of India Act 1919, Innerline Regulations Bengal and Eastern Frontier 1873.

which suited their geo-political interest. But, in the process, British failed to perceive and appreciate the economic and political requirements of the area and consequently neglected them. This policy, in fact, continued up to the 1940's and 1950's.

These aspects along with traditional aloofness, led to ^{The} conceptualisation that incorporated a conservative political establishment allied to, and providing justification for, the tribal resistance. Political perception of the mountainous inhabitants was that the centralization of power would deprive them of their legitimate authority. This to some extent still pervades their attitude.

The systematisation of the administration, therefore, was made intentionally different. The tribal societies found it difficult to perceive this distinction. To them these efforts were only means of bringing them under political sub-ordination. This suggested that the legal instruments were not implemented effectively to introduce political changes unless the tribal political culture is pre-disposed (to which the tribal society is not attuned).

The British kept the inhabitants particularly the tribals of eastern frontier of the region as a 'museum piece'

by inventing an exotic barb around them through the introduction of various Rules and Regulations. The British subjects were debarred from going beyonds the 'Inner line' without a permit from the District authority. This was primarily intended to maintain peace and non-interference in tribal affairs and economic exploitation. But its results were not bright. The tribals lost their contact with the plains people and thus a cleavage between the plains people and the Hill people was created by the British authority in India.

Based on the recommendation of the Bordoloi Sub-Committee of the Constituent Assembly, the Constitution of India incorporated a provision in the 'Sixth Schedule' for the social and economic development of the Hill Districts of the North-East. These districts fell under the category of 'Excluded Area' or 'Partially Excluded Area'. Lushai Hills District (now Mizoram) came under the 'Excluded Area'⁴. This arrangement was sequence to the colonial policy and was continued in order to safefuard interests of the tribal people after independence. It is said that this policy had to do more with geopolitical⁵ considerations that took into

4. Government of India Act 1919, Government of India Act 1935.

5. Constitution of India 1950 (Sixth Schedule of the Constitution), Government of India.

account different racial and cultural identity as well as politico-economic basis of the Hill Tribes inhabiting North East India.

At the fag end of the British Raj in India, a plan was proposed by a British constitutional expert, R.Coupland to create a buffer state comprising the 'Excluded and partially excluded Areas' in the eastern most part of the country. The plan was not acceptable and consequently shelved and discarded.

The colonial administrators annexed, expanded and integrated different tribal districts with the mainland for their own imperial interests. But they did not interfere in the inhabitant's internal affairs, and left them to manage their affairs according to their own respective tradition. The British did not take initiative to bring them into the mainstream of national life. Rather by their attitude and approach they encouraged differences between and among the plain people and the Hill inhabitants by creating an artificial barrier under the cover of 'Inner line'. The declaration of Hill Areas as "Excluded Areas" tended in the long run to insulate the aspirations of the inhabitants of the

6. R.Coupland, 1944. The Constitutional Problem of India Part III, London, p.164.

hill section from sharing common perspective with the rest of the inhabitants of the country.

The present state of Mizoram was a part of Assam known as Lushai Hills District. It was one of the districts of Assam in the extreme southern fringe of N.E. India. In 1954 the nomenclature of the Lushai Hills district was changed to Mizo Hills District⁷, by the Act of Parliament which later on in 1972, was elevated to the status of Union Territory - Mizoram⁸ and subsequently, attained its Statehood on February 20, 1987.⁹

Mizoram is located between $22^{\circ} 19' N$ and $24^{\circ} 19' N$ latitude and $92^{\circ} 16' E$ ^{93 26E} longitude covering a geographical area of 21087 sq.km with a population of 4,93,757¹⁰ (1981 census). It had an average density of 23 persons per sq.km. The state of Mizoram is surrounded by Burma in the East, Manipur and Cachar district of Assam in the North, Tripura and Bangladesh in the West and again Burma in the South. Geographically, it is 277 km from North to South, 121 km from East to West. The Tropic of Cancer goes through the middle of the State (just south of Aizawl town $23^{\circ} 30' N$). (Map No 1)

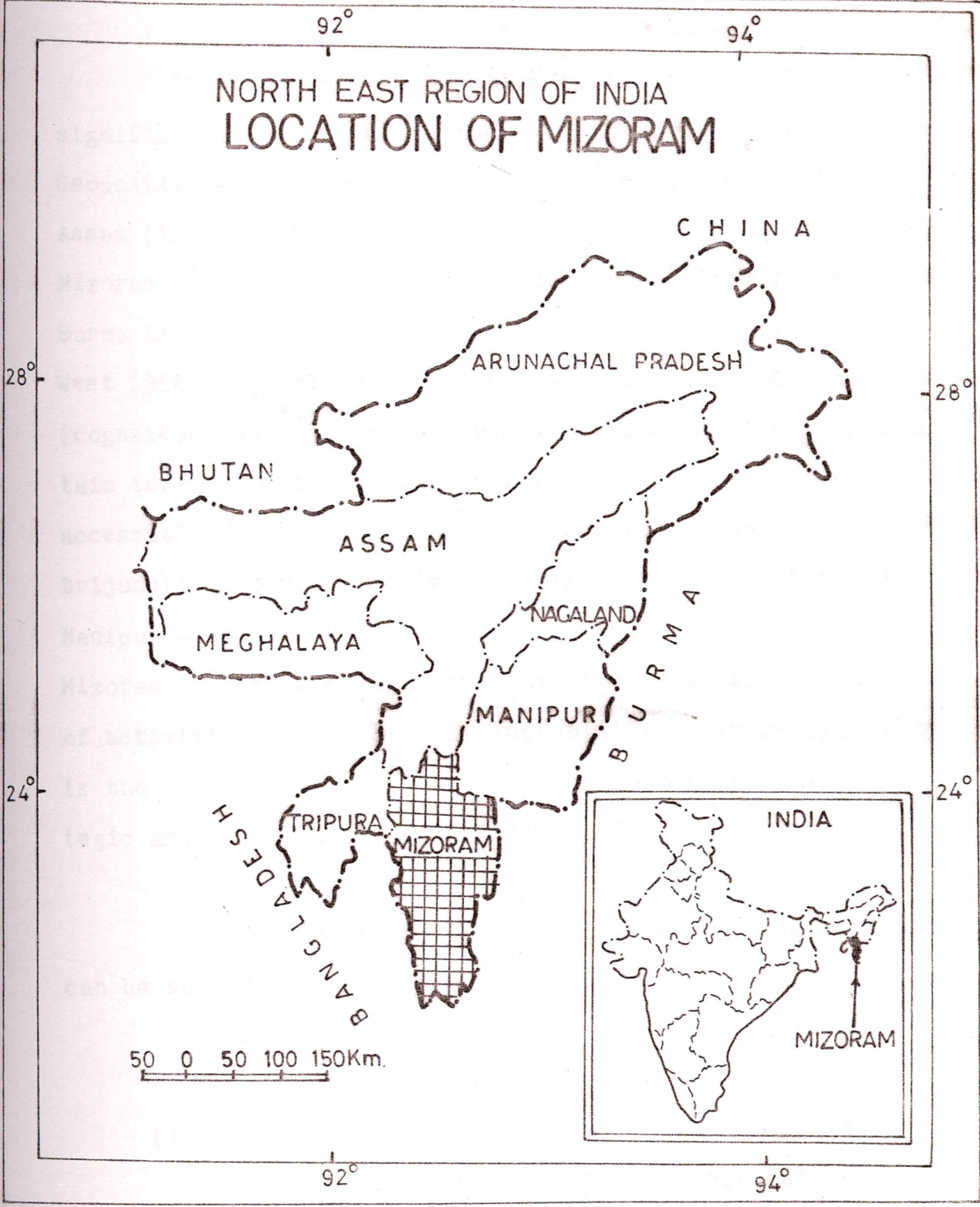
7. Amendment of the Constitution, 1954.

8. North-Eastern Area (Reorganization) Act, 1971 (27 amendment).

9. North-Eastern Area (Reorganisation) Act, 1986 (53rd amendment).

10. (i) Survey of India Map. (ii) Statistical Handbook of Mizoram, p.10.

NORTH EAST REGION OF INDIA
LOCATION OF MIZORAM



Map No. 1

The geographical location of Mizoram is of great significance, and forms an ideal field of geographical (and Geopolitical) study. It has a long inter-State border with Assam (123 km) Tripura (66 km); and Manipur(95 km). Besides, Mizoram shares international borders with (from three sides) Burma in the East and South (404 km) and Bangladesh in the West (306 km). This has divided the Mizos and their associated (cognate) clans.¹¹ It has a complex North-South trending mountain terrain which is, thickly forested. Alongwith its inaccessible and isolated nature, the southern margins and the trijunction points (of Mizoram - Tripura, Assam; Mizoram - Manipur - Assam; Mizoram - Bangladesh - Tripura; and , Mizoram - Burma - Bangladesh) have formed an important core of activities at the time of instability (insurgency). This is the reason why this frontier state has exaggerated strategic and geopolitical significance.¹²

The important characteristics of the state of Mizoram can be summed up as -

- (i) It has a predominantly mountainous terrain
- (ii) It is predominantly composed of tribal population.
- (iii) Its accessibility is limited to Silchar-Aizawl Highway (NH 54). The communication within the State is also limited.

11. Statistical Hand Book of Mizoram 1987, p.12.

12. R.Gopalakrishnan, n.1.p.25.

- (iv) It has predominantly subsistence agriculture with wide-spread jhum cultivation.
- (v) Its socio-economic profile is confined to tribal structure.
- (vi) Its economy is dominated by small-scale industry and cottage industry that substantiates local needs, and
- (vii) The tribal population is highly politicised and is predominantly Christian. Significant non-Christian elements in the Southern part of the state have added to the ^{Tendency of} balkanization of the state.

Mizoram is the cradle of diverse communities like the Lushai, Ralte, Paite, Bete, Powi, Lakher, Hmar, Riang, Tlanglau, Bawm, Chakmas and so on. They are mostly of Mongoloid stock, who migrated to the present location from the southern and south-western parts of China through upper Burma. The inhabitants are mostly Christians (83.81%) followed by Buddhists (8.19%) and others Hindus (7%) and Muslims (0.45%). The literacy figure in Mizoram is one of the highest in the country, next to Chandigarh, Delhi and Kerala (70.42%)¹³ as against all India average of 36.23%. Despite the high literacy, Mizoram as a whole is economically backward. This backwardness is largely

due to unfavourable natural environment, the poor and inadequate communication network (11.89 km per 100 sq.km as against 47.02 km of all India). It is more or less isolated from the rest of the country.¹⁴ The communication within the state itself is also limited. The mountainous terrain of the state has exerted substantial influence on the agriculture which is the main source of livelihood of the people.

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Some Terminological Clarifications:

The use of the term 'Geopolitics' has long remained proscribed, as it connoted designs for territorial expansion and the ideologies that encouraged such an action. The constant figurative use of the term had further diluted its significance. But, persistent review of relevant literature suggested that Geopolitics was in effect a study of complex relationships between political and geographical configurations of a territorial Unit. Applying it on a scale, Geopolitical reasonings revealed alternative approaches to interpretation of crisis situations and parametres and their

14. Ibid, p.86.

15. Methodological and terminological definitions and clarifications have been adopted from R.Gopalakrishnan, Draft Manuscript of article on "Reflections on Political Geography of India". In addition to this, R.Gopalakrishnan's works on various aspects of Political Geography of the North-Eastern States have been widely and exclusively used and quoted in the present work.

impact on stability. In other words, inherent in such an understanding was the accounting of spatial configurations while examining the relationship between forces and masses and that crisis on scale were interrelated. Thus, the present study not only accounts for the role of permanent geographical features but also of change and movements which occur for a short time over a small area. These changes and movements frequently unsettled, or speed up and/ or at times overturned the peculiar power relationships to create specific pattern of spatial ensembles. The articulation of which outlines the value of geographical reasoning.

By the term 'crisis' we mean the consequences of the locational attributes at local, regional and national levels. In other words, problem faced by a given territorial population group/sub-group and its inter-relationship with the environment. The environment in such a context is applied in a wider sense and covered perception and responses. Frequently, crisis is often used in conjunction with problems. The present attempt adopts the same approach but with one qualification ^{that the} i.e., problems/or crisis faced by a territorial group with a definite territorial parameter transforms itself when there are changes in preconditions.

The study of the relationship of the geographical conditions and political processes are the primary task of

political geographer. Apart from the knowledge and background of economic and geo-political implications, the field of study also embraces the application of concepts of State power through which measurement and evaluation of the State policies could be made.

The influence of the 'core' on the activities of the 'periphery' (Mizoram) inevitably leads us to an area-analysis emphasising the tactical concepts and processes. The identification and formulating explanation for questions like under difficult terrain condition with limited resource potentials, how insurgency developed become obvious. Other aspects like the psychological background and the environment that made the inhabitants responsive to these conditions fall within such a perspective.¹⁶

The conflict of two or more opposing interests are the inherent causes for aggravation of problems everywhere. The two opposing interests in this case were the State (Central Government) and the dissidents comprising of traditional pressure groups and extra-mural forces. The final outcome of the two interest groups depended much on the mobilisation of resource and management of the crisis parameters.

16. Patrick O. Sullivan, 1985, Geopolitics, London, p.9.

Mizoram, by virtue of its location at the periphery of the North-East part of the country reflected the interaction and tension between the State and ethnic nationalism. These have created a dynamic socio-economic structure that reality responded to the changes introduced in the mountainous landscape. Traditional patterns and modernization have exhibited clash of interests between the State, the pressure group and the population. This also reflected a sustained rivalry between them. The resort to insurgency was a means to eradicate this conflicting relationship for despite the attempts of the State to rationalise social and economic relationships, violence as a means to redress problems has continued. ¹⁷ These were either launched by the majority population group like Lusei and affiliated groups, or by the minority groups such as Pawis, Lakhers, and Hmars, etc. The crisis parameters were also different from the pattern of State formation. These influenced the nature of conflicts and had determined the development of the territorial unit's extent. Ample testimony is provided by the size and shape of the unit as well as by the recommendations of the boundary Commissions. The demarcation of the boundary were also clear reflections of settlement pattern of constituent territorial units as in the north Mizoram particularly those sections

17. See R.Gopalakrishnan, 1990, Political Geography of India's North-East, Vikas, New Delhi.

bordering the thickly populated plains of Cachar, Manipur, Tripura and Bangladesh plains.

Mizoram was conceived to represent a specific social organization and social economic relations. It also indicated the advantages the erstwhile intermediary territories achieved through State intervention. However, it allowed the individual and factions to challenge the existing pattern and required use of administrative machinery (legal or illegal) to force a change in the pattern.

Because of its evolution, terrain condition and policies, Mizoram lacked behind in economic, social and political development. It represented strong entrenched feudal element and was re-inforced by virtual divisions. Influence of modernization process and exposure due to the World Wars enabled the traditional pressure groups to seek separation. In consequence, the State experienced dependence and under-development; its economic and political rhythms were reactions to change or to the impulses generated in other parts of the country.¹⁸

Crisis or problems, therefore, reflected the responses of a territorial population/sub-group to a given set of circumstances - these circumstances were primarily locational

18. Ibid.

attributes of the State.

The geopolitical perspective emerged when relationship between people, territory and ideology was sought on the basis of the distribution of geographical phenomenon of the State. In other words, crisis was the manifestation of inherent drawbacks of the territorial unit and the response of the inhabitants who continuously strove to offset these drawbacks vis-a-vis regional and national conditions.

The crisis posed a threat to the traditional imperatives. It is premature to deal extensively the responses of the government, for the diagnosis of the ecological aspect is only at the beginning stage. The impact of this depended on a variety of unpredictable factors including the attitude of the participants (also the leaders of the political organizations) and the shape of the public opinion. Much depended on whether these crisis were coherently interpreted as a part of the overall ecological imbalance, or whether a rational path to equilibrium can be treated with vividness and equity.

Initial response was to strengthen the co-operative tendencies in the state. They were, however, of greatly different views of causes/and were product of circumstances and effect

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of intense perceived diversity. It did not lend itself to solution by way of regional contrast.¹⁹

It is an accepted proposition that physical and ecological phenomena affected the political events in a state. It is more applicable to Mizoram where geographical environments has had a tremendous influence on the developments in the State. The socio-economic changes were due to the same phenomena. The course of events and pattern of development in Mizoram can be analysed in the light of some important factors such as distance, accessibility, resource endowment, location of territorial groups, perception ~~and~~ ²⁰ as response of inhabitants distributed in a wide territory.

Mizoram, like the other State of the North-East has a peripheral location. This peripheral location offered an ideal ground for study of the interplay of distance, ^{the} dependence and differences which interact with each other to create a mosaic of uncertainty within the territory and the people living therein.

19. See H. Gopalakrishnan, 1990, Ideology, Autonomy and Integration in the North-East, Omsons, Delhi.

20. See Gopalakrishnan, n.12

Purpose, Objectives and Justifications:

The purpose and objective of the present study is to understand and identify the geopolitical viability of Mizoram. The present study becomes important when the strategic and security environment of the country is also considered. Thus the study of political-geographical processes suggest a close inter-relationships and linkages between Environment-processes-population-behaviour. Geographers are equipped to tackle the political processes and spatial consequences directly. Explanation of areal arrangement and landscape forms a natural fall out of the present study. It is also contended that the locational perspective goes a long way in understanding the politico-geographical processes operating in Mizoram. Moreover, political processes are inseparable from the societal forces by which man orders his political life.

The scope of the study includes the conspicuous alternative i.e., the rationale of which being adaptations and responses. The study will identify the action-space of the people which they have individually perceived and responded to. These are co-relates of social and psychological mechanism on which the geographical attributes of Mizoram have spatio-structural implications. There are two distinct

co-relates in the study; these are space and time. These suggest qualitative implications offering contextual considerations. The study thus includes following hypotheses.

Hypotheses

- 1) Generalisation concerning the location of the State can be organised into some sort of geopolitical frame-work.
- 2) The processes of change affected political and geographical patterns and relationship as evinced in places, area and landscapes. It has direct influence on the succession of events, actions and operations that man employed to establish and maintain change in the political pattern in geographical space.
- 3) Perception of a population can be related to appraisal of the environment on a spectrum between opposite extremes of determinism and possibilism.
- 4) Environmental possibilism which interprets man as a free agent choosing between the wide or limited range of choices made available by his environment.
- 5) The fact that these react to environment as it is provided rather than as it really is with decisions being made in the light of perceived factors and past experiences.

Review of Literature.

The literature on Mizoram available so far is not comprehensive. Earlier, the British administrators, who were incharge of district administration made an attempt on the anthropological aspects of Lushai Life and that the administrative convenience in view. The army and the civil officers highlighted the land and the people from the administrative and strategic points of view. For example, J. Shakespear, who was the Superintendent of Lushai Hills for fourteen years acquired a knowledge of the Lushai and other tribes inhabiting the district and published a valuable book, 'The Lushai-Kuki clans' in 1912. Another book entitled 'History of Assam Rifles' was published by L.W. Shakespear in 1929. N.E. Parry, the Superintendent of Lushai District in 1920 wrote "A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies" in 1928 and "The Lakhers" in 1932, B. Carey and H.N. Tucks wrote a book "The Chin Hills - A History of the People" in 1931. A.G. McCall wrote "Lushai Chrysalis" in 1949 which was descriptive in nature throwing light on social systems of the Lushais. But these original works of the British administrators concentrated mainly on the sociological and anthropological aspects of the Lushais and other tribes stressing their mode of life and environment. The

growth of political and administrative system, policy and prospects along with the socio-economic problems of the Mizo tribals were peripherally treated in these studies.

The post-independence works on Mizoram have no doubt widened the range of study, but no work has been done on geopolitical aspects of Mizoram. The interplay of space and politics has been completely untouched as yet. L.B. Thanga (1978), Lalthangliana (1977), A.C.Roy (1982), N. Bibedon (1980) have written comprehensive books on Mizoram which highlighted social, political and administrative matters. The economic aspect of Mizoram has been studied by D. Bose (1967), P.C.Goswami (1969), J.B. Baveja (1970), N. Saha (1973) and K.K. Upadhyaya (1985). The publications of the government of India and the Government of Mizoram also dealt with social-economic aspect of the state. R.N. Prasad (1986) and V.V.Rao (1987) highlighted the evolution of the government and the party politics in the state. The historical aspects of Mizoram were studied by A.Makenzie(1869) A.S. Reid (1893). However, none has touched the geographical aspects. J.M. Cosh, and H. P. Das (1970) have only studied geography of the region, including Mizoram, but it, too, is not complete in all respects. It has ignored the impact of geographical factors on the political process of Mizoram.

Recently, two books on geopolitics in the Indian context have been written: Debabrot Sen's 'Basic Principle of Geopolitics and History' (1975) is the most original work on the subject but it is mainly concerned with the theoretical aspect of the subject with relation to history and geography. However, it is a great source and a guide to the present study. The second book on geopolitics is by G. S. Singh (1966) 'Maratha Geopolitics and the Indian Nationalism, but it deals mainly with Maharashtra whose context is different from that of the North-East Region (Mizoram).

METHODOLOGY

The present research is based on empirical method and follows the line of J.R.V. Prescott, R. Muir and R. W. McColl. The emphasis on description, analysis and evaluation of inter-relation between geography and politics as done by McColl in his political ecological approach(1966) has been made. The organisational basis for the study of interrelationship between political-process and environment as followed by R. Muir (1975) has been kept in mind in the analysis. The behavioural approach in which the political authorities instigated landscape changes through legislation concerning security, territorial integration, socio-economic policy has also been taken into consideration.

The present work mainly depends on the secondary source such as books, magazines, articles available in various libraries, published and unpublished works of scholars. The old government records, the reports of various commissions and committees have also been consulted. The Constituent Assembly debates, Assembly and Parliamentary debates have been utilised for the analysis of the work. The Survey of India, Shillong and Silchar branches have been fully utilised. Topographical maps and various other records have been of great help to this researcher. The field work mainly included on-the-spot study of natural environment and human activities, economic functions, political and social behaviour the people of the State. The personal contact with the personnel of various state and central government organizations are worth appreciating.

Other data have been collected from the statistical handbook of Mizoram and the "Basic Statics of North-Eastern Region", N.E.C. Secretariat, Shillong, and various Directorates of Agriculture, Industry, Education, Statistics of the State. The Border Road organization's net work in the state and the neighbouring areas have also provided materials for the study. The data collected for the purpose have a geographical

and territorial basis. The region wise, i.e., district, Sub-division, Block or village-wise classification has been made, which will facilitate in analysing spatial attributes of the political process (political system) or Mizoram. Geopolitically, the international boundary and the security problems of the most sensitive part of the country can be analysed with the helps of data, charts, maps and secret documents collected from different sources.

Chapterisation:

The entire research work has been grouped into nine chapters. The first chapter begins with the theme of the research and its relevance and importance of the study with reference to local, regional and national significance. This chapter also includes the objectives, methodology, review of literature and hypothesis.

Chapter II deals with the entire physical environment of the State which throws light in detail on the physical potentialities of Mizoram. In brief, it discusses the physiogeography, geology, climate and vegetation, soil and resource potentialities.

Chapter III discusses the historical evolution of Mizoram and population characteristics and their settlement

during the pre-independence and post-independence periods. Chapter IV throws light on the socio-economic profiles of Mizoram. The agricultural landscape and economic potentialities are the main subjects of this chapter. The communication network is also another important part of this chapter.

Chapter V highlights the evolution of the boundary of Mizoram from the beginning to the present time. The second part of the chapter deals with the administrative subdivisions of the state. Chapter VI analyses the development of political institutions both traditional and modern, and their interrelationships.

Chapter VII speaks of the political participation of the Mizos and their political perception and behaviour and the role of the tradition of the Mizos in influencing the decision-making process. Chapter VIII deals mainly with the insurgency and counter-insurgency and finally, the settlement with the MNF.

Chapter IX deals with the problems and prospects of the whole project, including the testing of the hypotheses.

CONCLUSIONS

Problems and Prospects.

Mizoram is located in a most sensitive region of North Eastern India. This is an area of diversity and ethnic, cultural and geographic distribution. This has led to emergence of series of conflicts and tensions that continuously undermined the society and territory. Geopolitically the region is vulnerable. This had the potential to transform itself with wider ramification. Extramural forces have encouraged the discontented elements; thereby aggravating the tension - parameters. This was evident at the peak of insurgency and its aftermath when the discont^{-ented} elements were compelled to withdraw themselves on the face of effective modernization and stabilization processes.

The term 'crisis' has been used to imply something more than a problem, in which the whole is greater than the parts. It has been given an qualitative interpretation to emphasise decisions regarding current situations and perspectives as evident from past developments and as one that will affect the future propensities of the state.

The distance factor had great impact on the geopolitical

viability of Mizoram. There was constant interplay of centrifugal and centripetal forces operating within the geographical space of Mizoram which influenced, modified and sometime altered the aspirations of the inhabitants of the state. These aspirations have been articulated and reflected in the form tensions, armed revolts, insurrections and demand for autonomy. It was the 'distance' and spatial ensembles which encouraged separatism and particularly insurgency. The distance factor minimised the impact of the degree of loyalty and sense of commitments. These were evident from the consequence of peripheralization. These transpired from the fact that the degree of loyalty decreased with the increase in distance in Mizoram.

Mizoram is a mountainous region with north-south trending parallel and sub-parallel ranges. Its topography is rugged and covered with wild vegetation of tropical climate. The communication network is restricted ^{by} the physiographic constraints. The surface communication followed the north-south trending ranges along the high escarpments. This had severely affected the economy which has its chain-reaction in politico-economic set-up culminating into ~~ge~~political antagonism.

The physiography has been to a substantial extent responsible for the formation of territorial units of different tribes and sub-tribes in Mizoram. It also restricted their assimilation. The inhabitants came to the present habitat in successive waves and occupied a specific areas which ~~was~~^{were} isolated from each other. (In this context it is fair to state that the perception of space among the various inhabitants of the state were both distinct and a matter of necessity. It was defined and limited. and ~~whose~~^{the} interaction i.e. between individual and individual, individual and group and between groups and groups, induced stress and strains leading to changes and transformation. This led to growth and development~~s~~. The villages became small republics under the chiefs who were responsible for protection and security of their respective territories. Geography and history also contributed towards ethnic diversity and separate ethnic entity. The growth of regionalism and separatism in such a geographical situation was a natural corollary. ^{Sub}Regionalism (or ^{sub-}regional consciousness) in its varied manifestations became the expression of group sentiments of the people inhabiting the diverse sub-regions of the state. These geographical areas may be called sub-region on the basis

of demography, tradition, ethnicity, historical and cultural distinctiveness. Regionalism involved expression of diverse problems of various communities.

In addition to the complex scenario projected by strategic location and diverse population sub-groups the state clearly expressed the function and impact of processes (processes in the entire analysis has been applied and defined as succession of events and action that was implied to establish, maintain or to change the existing systems. Change was the result of political, social and economic transactions that established law - landscape relationship. Changing landscape condition, therefore, illustrated the changing requirements and perceptions of the administrator and the administrator^{and} as well as between the actors and the participants in the sub-systems that was the state). The state also exhibited contiguity and pockets of concentration of the settled population. This indicated homogeneity in the lower scale and ^{heterogeneity} at the state level. This then suggested that though the different areas of the state developed separately, ^{there emerged a} ~~it indicated a historical commitments~~ of the political area i.e. Mizoram. In other words, one can argue that this helped to develop forces of inertia that maintained the territorial organization of the state.

The interaction of these aspects with specific local condition in the state (i.e. each of the territory occupied by the Mizos, and the non-Mizos tribes ^{with} created their own specific conditions) created specific responses that characterised regionalistic perception and demands. The resultant articulation defined the tension and conflict parameters which underlined the role of centrifugal tendencies that were apparent in the state.

It is an obvious corollary from the discussion so far in the present dissertation that tension and conflict parameters demonstrated that problems were rooted in the territory. The aspects and elements consistently strove to achieve political recognition and sought resolution at the regional and national level as the development went beyond the scopes of local accomodation thereby exhibiting the presence of an amalgam of discour~~ses~~ directed against each other and state apparatus. This brought about new pattern of relationship and in doing so, established norms were often bypassed. This induced crisis, hesitancy and disruptions in the state system, and suggested that:

(a) Retracing the arguments put forward so far, it is clear that the analysis focuses upon the strategic location

of Mizoram as being flanked by Bangladesh (erstwhile E. Pakistan) and Burma which may be utilised as the spring-board of geopolitical ^{activities} on a scale. This situation was reinforced by location of the state which more or less lay outside the main route of movement. Moreover, this location encouraged significant activities among the weaker section ^{in respect of} of national interests (from the strategic and tactical point of view).

(b) The analysis highlighted the accessibility pattern following the parallel ranges trending north-south directions. Its east-west accessibility was most difficult. Further, the mountainous topography with sharp and steep slope and poor soil posed a great problem for human settlement and other activities. Again the state's recent geological history suggested the absence of minerals. Further, geographical constraints paved ^{the} way for isolation of tribes who were localised in a small pockets. This had to even specific impact. Thus the distribution of geographical phenomena in the state reflected profound consequences, the implication of which have been amply illustrated by socio-economic and political transactions. In a way the geographical parameters enabled many of the events to follow certain specific approaches towards conflict resolutions. As long as there

Was no imposition through annexation, the geographical milieu was superimposed on the former (transaction) but once difference within the society emerged depicting diversity of interest, the geographical factors asserted themselves.

(c) The analysis highlighted the search for food and security induced these groups to move from southern China to Burma ~~via Tibet~~ and then to westward present day Mizoram in successive waves. The communication barrier and lack of accessibility arrested social mobility of the tribes and sub-tribes. These resulted in the maintenance of distinct position of the tribes and sub-tribes. Subsequently, this posed a great ethnic problem that aggravated political relations. Low density of population depicted the nature and distribution of ^{over the} terrain with its resultant impact. Thus, the historical background and distribution of population clearly suggested the interaction between the majority and the minority inhabitants in the state. It also indicated the role of the associated groups like Hmar in the political relation and transaction in the state.

(d) The analysis also describes socio-economic profiles of the state. Mizoram is economically not a viable state.

The economic backwardness was reflected through the poor agro-economy, industrial backwardness, low productivity, poor per capita income and mass unemployment and poor communication network.

It is also evident, that the transport and communication played a very important role in not only accentuating the isolation of the state from the region and the rest of the country but also ^{affected only a limited} ~~encouraged~~ integration by very ~~limited~~ ^{tenous} ~~availabilities~~ of linkage facilities. These are explained by the location of the National Highway and by the state Highways. More importantly the communication link with the contiguous area with Burma, particularly at trijunction point and with Bangladesh played a significant role.

(e) The analysis traces the evolution of boundary and administrative sub-division. The boundary of the state gave a definite territorial fixation for the inhabitant. Although many of the associated tribes are found on all sides of the state boundaries, this gave the state a definite action - are in which the political ^{and} economic transaction could be carried out.

^{emphasises}
(f) The analysis/on the political institutions (traditional and modern). This clearly reflected the role of politico-geographical factors. It highlighted the impact of isolation

and inaccessibility. It also suggested that with the improvement of transport and communication network within and outside the state significant changes took place that affected the political participation and representation.

(g) The analysis describes political participation and political perception of the Mizo people. With the democratization of political institution since independence, Regional political parties (M.U., MNF, MFP, PC, HPC, etc) induced the inhabitants of Mizoram to actively associated themselves with the political institutions. A new political culture on regional scale emerged that gradually transformed the traditional equations and relationships.

(h) The analysis deals with insurgency and counter-insurgency situations in the state. Insurgency was inherent in the state milieu. It was an obvious corollary of the British withdrawal and consequent assertion and the recognition of the role of traditional elites. The developments at the various scales were only encouraging/intensifying factors. The politico-geographical factors though helpful to the discontented element initially, ~~but~~ were decisive at the end. In other words, the protracted struggle favoured the establishment which had the resources, than the insurgent's protagonists who depended on the resources of the state which ^{was} ~~was~~ limited and unexploited.

Thus, politico-geographical factors continued to remain the most influential factor in the pattern of development. The river route was the only means of communication between the hills and plains. The British did not care to develop internal communication network and left upon the village chiefs to do so. This fostered animosity which was ultimately articulated in form of violent insurrection leading to demand of sovereign independent Mizoram. The insurgency of 1966 was the result of economic hardship and inadequate treatment of the administration to develop economy and other associated infrastructures. This was also largely due to the persistent failure of the state as well as the failure of the district administration to chalk out effective plans for development and implementation. In this context partisan attitude of the elements of the Mizo traditional ^{pressure} groups were also responsible ~~substantively~~ ^{at} ~~ively~~.

The withdrawal of the British from the sub-continent created additional problems in the state. They developed a fear psychosis that largely reflected the fear of dominance by the plain people. These were evident in several political discourses at the lower level. Moreover, specific policy initiative by the Assam government like the language bill of 1960 gave adequate encouragement and reinforcement for such fears that were exploited by the pressure groups of the state.

The inhabitants of the state unlike their counterpart elsewhere in the country came under the specific constitutional provisions that ensured their identity on the one hand while ensuring their development on the other hand. This arrangement reflected the inherent geopolitical dimension i.e. the interaction and close linkages of political discourses and geographical space between the periphery and the centre. The discourses of constitution in this regard clearly expressed the spatial arrangement wherein the peculiarities of a territory were attempted to be resolved separately from a larger territorial framework. The successive changes, action and operation in political geographical pattern in Mizoram has remained as the proof of the interplay of politico-geographical forces. However, geopolitical considerations have usually been under played in preference to psychological affinities and perceptual environment in the state.

There has been a conscious effort to induce co-operation and collaboration to bring about political integration in Mizoram. The subsequent developments in political, social and economic relations acted as centripetal forces at larger regional context. But at the local level these became divisive factors that divided the society. These were partially reflected in post-independent political development particularly insurgency. General economic backwardness, isolation,

inaccessibility, latent non-cooperation and power struggle within the society formed important elements in the destabilization of ^{the} area.

It was also observed that ^a series of administrative measures by the district and state administration failed to check the growing unrest in the 1950s. This reflected the power vacuum that was the result of the British withdrawal from the sub-continent. However, the policy measures initiated by the central Government, state of Assam and the district administration alongwith the Church, played a significant role in restoring the statusquo. These efforts were responsible for creating necessary infra-structure and institutional facilities that formed the basis of development. Later with the elevation of administrative status to a Union Territory in 1972 and state in 1987 alongwith political settlement of insurgency, stage was set where by constituent population groups and sub-groups participated in the state activities.

These activities replicated the activities i.e. the minority fear lower down the territorial scale was revived just like the fear of the Lushai hills district was aroused due to non-committed attitude of the state government prior to 1947.

Of late there has been frequent reference for the need of creating greater Mizoram. This concept in a nutshell included area occupied by groups coming under the nomenclature of Mizo and old Kuki (like the Hmars) It included areas of Chaurachandpur area of Manipur, Cachar in Assam, Eastern parts of Jaintiya hills of Meghalaya and Eastern parts of North Eastern Tripura Hills. This formed as one of the important elements in the manifestation of various political organization representing area and the associated tribes, but the frequent and aparent inter and intra-tribal animosity have prevented the emergence of any common forum representing common interest of elements that are said to constitute the inhabitant of the Greater Mizoram. The present analysis has indirectly referred to this aspect. This is largely because the scope of inquiry in dealing with such concept as Greater Mizoram is wider than the one applicable to the themes ^rsuch the present study (see p.315-319 for details).

In summing up it can be clearly stated that centrifugal and centrepetal forces have consistently influenced the nature and pattern of relationship in the state. This has also made impact of the following aspects very clearly. Forces of regionalism and isolationism would gradually

lose their impact with greater involvement of the people and the state in local, regional and national level activities. The efforts towards modernization and development ^{are} ~~is~~ thus a catalyst. that with initial disruptions in a traditional society, will involve the state and its people effectively. This should lead to effective integration.

With increasing percentage of literacy and impact of missionary activities the inhabitants are better equipped psycho-socially to gear themselves for greater politico-economic involvement. This has become an asset that will provide needed encouragement and impetus for accelerated development.

Return to tradition for security and self - identity has aggravated parochialism. This will act as a break to the development effort. Instead, efforts such as what is present to-day, should lead towards class formation. This aspect in the long run will strengthen the required base.

North-Eastern Indian, particularly Mizoram is highly sensitive and geo-strategically most vulnerable. Any neglect of the area would be geopolitically dangerous.

These have also geopolitical dimension that continuously undermine the state propensities to respond the crisis situation. The resolution in scale ^{reflects} singularly independent, collectively dependent within the state and between the state and region and the country. This is largely because although the state possesses a politically dynamic society, it does not have corresponding resources to meet the aspirations and requirements of the population. This can be achieved only through a framework involving regional and national co-operation. In this regard spatial policy measures and provisions will go a long way in strengthening the stabilization tendency in the state.
