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“Understanding India-Myanmar Borderlands”



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SRIVIPRA PROJECT 2023

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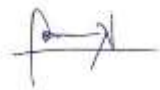
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Certificate

This is to certify that the aforementioned students from Sri Venkateswara College have participated in the summer project SVP-2361 titled “**Understanding India Myanmar Borderlands**”. The participants have carried out the research project work under my guidance and supervision from 15th June 2023 to 30th September 2023. The work carried out is original and carried out in an online mode.



Signature of Mentor

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Abbreviations

AEP:	Act East Policy
AFSPA:	Armed Forces Special Powers Act
ATS:	Amphetamine-Type Stimulants
BADP:	Border Area Development Programme
BOSCO:	Bosco Organisation for Social Concern and Operation
BROI:	Belt and Road Initiative
CHRI:	Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
COBS:	Company-Operated Bases
DAJI:	Development and Justice Initiative
DC:	District Council
DONER:	Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region
EDI:	Electronic Data Interchange
FMR:	Free Movement Regime
FRRO:	Foreigners Regional Registration Offices
FTF-I:	Fair Trade Forum India
FTR:	Free Transportation Regime
GNMS:	Gandhi National Memorial Society
GPID:	Global Placement ID
HC:	High Court
ICP:	Integrated Check Post
ICWA:	Indian Council for World Affairs
IDMC:	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP:	Internally Displaced Persons
IDSA:	Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses
IDW:	Internally Displaced Women
IHL:	International Humanitarian Law
IPCS:	Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies
KLO:	Kamtapur Liberation Organisation
LCS:	Land Customs Stations
MAP:	Migration and Asylum Project
MLA:	Member of Legislative Assembly
MXCS:	Mobile X-Ray Container Scanning System
NDFT:	National Democratic Front of Bodoland
NH:	National Highway
NNC:	Naga National Council
NOR:	North Eastern Region
NSCN (IM):	National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah)
NSCN (K):	National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang)
ORF:	Observer Research Foundation
PLA:	Peoples' Liberation Army
RFID:	Radio Frequency Identification
SEZ:	Special Economic Zone
SF:	Security force
SGBV:	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Against Women
SLIC:	Socio-Legal Information Centre
SOP:	Standard Operating Procedures
ST:	Scheduled Tribe
TO:	Terrorist organizations

UK: United Kingdom
ULFA: United Liberation Front of Assam
ULFA: United Liberation Front of Assam
UN: United Nations Organisation
UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHRC: United Nations Human Rights Commission
UNODC: United Nations on Drugs and Crime
UNRWA: United Nations Relief and Works Agency
USWA: United Wa State Army
WPC: Women Protection Delhi
YLA: Young Lushai Association
YMA: Young Mizo Association

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Abstract of the Chapters

Chapter-I: Navigating complexities in India- Myanmar borderland with special emphasis on Manipur – Mansha Kohli

The India-Myanmar borderlands, stretching over 1,643 kilometres, are an incredibly diverse and dynamic region that encompasses a rich tapestry of cultures, ecosystems, and socio-political realities. This abstract zeroes in on the critical subtheme of border management and governance within this complex borderland region. Border management stands as a linchpin for maintaining peace, security, and economic cooperation between India and Myanmar in this unique territory. Characterized by porous boundaries, ethnic diversity, and deep-rooted historical connections, the India-Myanmar borderlands present a set of both challenges and opportunities. Effective border management and governance become paramount in addressing these complexities.

Border management encompasses a multifaceted approach, encompassing immigration control, cross-border trade facilitation, and security measures. The India-Myanmar borderlands witness a constant flow of people, goods, and ideas, necessitating efficient border control mechanisms. These mechanisms not only ensure legal and regulated crossings but also aim to prevent illegal activities such as human trafficking, drug smuggling, gun running, and arms proliferation.

Governance in the borderlands involves cooperation and coordination among national, state, and local authorities from both India and Myanmar. It necessitates establishing effective governance mechanisms tailored to the unique needs and aspirations of the borderland communities, many of which straddle national boundaries. Collaborative efforts in areas like infrastructure development, education, healthcare, and the creation of socioeconomic opportunities are vital for the overall well-being and development of these borderland populations. Furthermore, the principles of inclusivity, respect for human rights, and sustainable development should serve as the foundational pillars of border management and governance in the Indo-Myanmar borderlands. Recognizing and respecting the cultural diversity and identities of the borderland communities are crucial steps toward fostering harmonious relations and ensuring equitable development in the region.

India-Myanmar borderlands represent a unique blend of challenges and opportunities when it comes to border management and governance. Addressing the intricacies of this region demands effective border control mechanisms, cross-border cooperation, and inclusive

governance approaches. By fostering peace, security, and socioeconomic development, well-managed borders can serve as conduits for enhanced regional integration and cooperation between India and Myanmar, thereby unlocking the immense potential of this borderland region.

Chapter-II: Understanding the Insurgent Organization in Nagaland – *Edith Minz*

In a world of continuous interconnectedness, the Border is often seen as a political entity that acts as a realm of interaction rather than a physical line of separation, which divides the domestic realm from the international realm. It is a place where constant interaction between two or even multiple countries occurs. The historical borderlands of the northeastern regions of India and Myanmar are highly porous land sharing around 1643 kilometres. However, the underdeveloped areas and less border security, have led to amplified illegal activities of insurgency, drugs, and arms trafficking around the border regions closely connected and affecting the Indian states of Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh.

The constant contentious conflicts around border areas have created a series of security threats and interrupted the state-building processes, rising significantly due to insurgencies and insurgent political organizations, in return, unfortunately, affecting the stability of ethnic and tribal groups of the states. The Sagaing division of Myanmar and Indo Myanmar region at Moreh pose a great threat with clustered illegal activities.

The interrelationship between illicit narcotics and arms trafficking with guerrilla Insurgent groups around the Golden Triangle (Myanmar, Thailand, Laos) is also a cause of concern. As Indian security is only stationed in 52 out of a total 1643-kilometer stretch, the lack of response from Myanmar security forces has become problematic in the last six decades. A fragile situation has occurred resulting in extortion, violence, and demands by various insurgent groups to maintain safe camps in neighboring countries. Understanding the insurgent activities as a threat to India's security with the reality of unfenced borders and studying its impact on culturally dominated regions of northeastern areas is vital in contemporary times. The continuous insurgencies are preventing the country from opportunities for Trade and globalization between India and South East Asia.

Through this, it analyses the conflicted regions of NER borders with Myanmar, as it's an important country for India's connection to Southeast Asia, and briefly study the case of the Nagaland insurgent Organization which is termed the largest Insurgent genesis in Northeast by Delhi. Hence in the words of Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar, the Former Minister of Development

of the North Eastern Region, “The emergency of the Northeast as an economically prosperous zone could be the best guarantee to the security concerns.

Chapter-III: Understanding Internally Displaced Women Affected by Ethnic Violence in New Delhi – U. Sai Sruti

This paper aims to place and navigate the question of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the context of the recent Manipur crisis between the dominant Meitei and the tribal minority Kuki-Zo communities. The research will discuss the subjugation of women’s bodies during violence and the making them “war zones”. It will examine this conflict through understanding the situation of the IDPs with a special focus on the Kuki-Zo women, who have been forced to seek shelter in Delhi, in order to comprehend the gendered dimension of marginalization in such violence. These personal accounts of violence and trauma will be studied in the broader framework of the dire circumstances confronting the IDPs such as the lack of facilities provided by the state. The objective of this study is to bring focus to the IDPs, their legal and social protection, or lack thereof, along with placing them in the larger problem of ethnic conflict in the border state of Manipur. It also highlights the need for proper legislation pertaining to the IDPs, rights, and protection for them with special sensitivity to gender minorities and children, adherence to international standards of rehabilitation of the affected such as the 'Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement' by the UNO (created in 1998).

Chapter-IV: The Chin Refugee Crisis in India – Tanvi Sharma

This research paper examines the encounters and difficulties encountered by Chin refugees within the Indian context. It also partly sheds light on Myanmar’s turbulent democratic situation which led minority communities, like the Chin people, to seek refuge in India. context. Utilizing a comprehensive methodology, the study investigates the multifaceted aspects of their displacement and adaptation in India, encompassing socio-economic, legal, and cultural dimensions. The study's results highlight the Chin refugees’ ability to persevere, their engagements with Indian society, and the policy ramifications for both the host nation and global stakeholders. It also provides valuable perspectives into the real-life encounters of Chin refugees in India, suggesting strategies for enhancing their welfare and fostering their social integration through more efficient support systems.

Understanding India-Myanmar Borderlands

Introduction

The forces of globalization and non-state actors in international arena compelled nation states to come together as almost everything involves bilateral, regional and multilateral dimensions. This has greatly reduced the significance of boundaries as barriers to movement of people, goods, information, and weaponry. In this horizon, nation states began to reshape their boundaries thereby giving way to the process of borderless or de-bordering world. The lines separating states seems to have been transformed from barriers into points of contact. From the global and the national, to the local and micro-scales of socio-spatial activity, borders are now understood as formal and informal institutions of spatial and social practice, as well as physical and symbolic markers of difference. This is also true in the case of Asia where it had witnessed many closed and then re-opened borders. The new connections and corridors that are being created lead to networks, communities and pathways being reimagined and restructured. As such, the North-East India and North-West Myanmar strategically stands at the crossroads of South, Southeast and East Asia. The hitherto forgotten and blank space borderland has thus resurfaced as a meeting point not only for India and Myanmar, but also for two regions i.e. the South Asia and Southeast Asia. Therefore, the dialectics between commonalities and political divides in South Asia and Southeast Asia makes it a unique region for understanding various socio-political dimensions pertaining to borders. The everyday border practices, notional and psychological borders, living experience of borderland communities, security problems, trade and economic activities related to borders are the emerging areas of special relevance.

Statement of the Problem

Under contemporary globalization few studies are available on the emerging issues of borderlands as social and communitarian spaces other than being politico-economic spaces as well. Today, an understanding related to borders has moved beyond the static and deterministic notions of political geography. The lived experiences of border communities have to be at the centre of this new rethinking on borderlands. Without connecting with the lives of the people who inhabit the physical spaces, studies will remain both unimaginative and reiterative. The North-East India and North-West Myanmar is a home to various ethnic groups people who live on both sides of the border hitherto separated by artificial boundaries hence under two political systems. They have ancestral, ethnic and linguistic affinities and links that span several centuries. An important investigation is needed to examine the capacity of border narratives in

India and Myanmar to move beyond the linear modes of problem solving and shift the focus to local sites, towards issues that have a direct bearing on borders?

Pending the raising of critical new questions, India-Myanmar borderlands have remained research peripheries and yet to experience a creative recasting of their ageing agendas. In order to fill this gap, this study attempts to understand the concept of border with special reference to India-Myanmar borderlands.

Objectives

- i. To understand the issue of Refugees (illegal immigrants) in India-Myanmar border.
- ii. To study the security dynamics of insurgency & ethnic conflict in the region.

Data and Methodology

The methodology adopted for the study is descriptive and analytical based on data collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include documents and reports of: Annual Reports, Ministry of Defence, Government of India, New Delhi; Annual Reports, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi; Publications and Reports, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DONER); Year End Reviews, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi; Publications and Reports of Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, (IDSA), New Delhi; Indian Council for World Affairs, (ICWA), New Delhi, Observer Research Foundation (ORF), New Delhi, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), New Delhi and Speeches, Interviews, Commentaries, Keynote Address, of The Presidents, Prime Ministers, External Affairs Ministers and other Cabinet Ministers, Ambassadors, Foreign Secretaries etc.

The Secondary sources include Books, Articles from Journals, Seminar Papers, Occasional Papers, Working Papers, Discussion Papers, Monographs, Unpublished M. Ph il. Dissertations and Ph. D. Theses, Magazines, Weeklies and Newspapers.

A qualitative content analysis is undertaken with the data collected through the above-mentioned primary and secondary sources, and major findings and conclusions were drawn.

Review of Literature

Many scholars have attempted to provide a comprehensive explanation of India-Myanmar borderland with reference to border management. A border is not just a geographical demarcation of political sovereignty and authority but also involves psychological, social, cultural, linguistic, sociological and economic demarcations. Earlier, the study of borders was a separate academic field, but today, it is dominated by several academic realms, and it is becoming transdisciplinary.¹ The Anthropological division of borders has added multifarious roles and embedded and influenced social institutions and ideologies related to this boundary. The specialization of different aspects of border studies seems to be dwindling in order to support a holistic academic approach.

When a person's culture-their language, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and place of belonging-differs from another person's, it either divides territory and communities or, when they share the same culture, it crosses international borders. For instance, Michael Keating stated that certain groups of people are stateless and bound by cultural norms such as race, religion, language, and social status.² As evidence of an integrated borderland and transition zone, the notion that multinational communities coexist peacefully within the confines of a state is only recent,³ as is the practice of intermarrying members of various cultural and religious groups, which places a greater emphasis on cross-border ties than was previously recognized.

Political borders are intriguing but complicated research topics at the moment. The complexity of the bounded state in terms of territorial ideologies, the ever-growing number of states, sub-state, and supra-state borders, and the methodological challenges associated with analyzing borders. The tension present in border areas, the ever-growing number of state boundaries, and their shifting roles and functions in a globalizing world are all elements that matter.⁴ The fact that the definitions of sovereignty are constantly evolving is another significant factor that complicates this constellation. Political borders are processes that develop and exist through boundary-producing behaviours and discourses. They may be manifested and symbolized to a greater or lesser extent. Tuathail and Dalby⁵ have noted that

¹Anssi Paasi. "Border Theory: An Unattainable Dream or Realistic Aim for Border Scholars?" *The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies*. in Doris Wastl-Walter (ed.), Ashgate, 2011, pp.16-17.

²Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly. "Theorizing Borders: An Interdisciplinary Perspective, *Geopolitics*, Vol.10, No.4, 2005. pp.633-649.

³ Munmun Majumdar. "India-Myanmar Border Fencing and India's Act East Policy." *India Quarterly*. Vol.76, No.1, 2020, pp.58-72.

⁴ Martin Deleixhe, Magdalena Dembinska & Julien Danero Iglesias. "Securitized Borderlands", *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, Vol.34, No.5, 2019. pp.639-647.

⁵Simon Dalby, Gearoid O.u Tuathail. *Rethinking Geopolitics*. Routledge. London. 1998.

approaches looking at boundary-producing behaviours should explore both the conceptual borders that mark material limits between an ostensibly secure inside and “anarchic exterior” as well as the literal borders at the outskirts of states.

Due to the fragmentation and rearrangement of the social environment, the process of territorialization is also accompanied by de-territorialization and reterritorialization. De-territorialization has traditionally been used to describe the alleged circumstance in which borders are disappearing in a globalizing society or, occasionally, the requirement to deconstruct their fixed or seeming meanings. Reterritorialization, on the other hand, typically refers to a situation in which new borders are established or appear in border studies. Both processes unavoidably lead to differentiation of the already complex spatialities of borders since they are ongoing, overlapping, and intermittent.

The borderlands between India and Myanmar are a vital and dynamic area influencing geopolitics, international relations, and cross-border contacts. The borders between India and Myanmar are known for their diverse cultures and solid cultural identities, yet socio-cultural perspectives are lacking. There is a dearth of study that explores the viewpoints and lived experiences of local communities living in these areas. The research mostly focuses on the political and economic elements of the borderlands between India and Myanmar. However, much of the available literature falls short of capturing the subtleties of their customs, beliefs, and everyday lives, which hinders our ability to understand how borders affect people's identities and daily lives. Understanding how borders affect the identity of people and communities requires an understanding of the socio-cultural components. On topics including cross-border economic activities, traditional knowledge exchange, and the effect of border rules on cultural traditions, local perspectives might provide insight.

Some writings neglect to contextualize the borders historical evolution. To understand the contemporary difficulties and prospects in this area, it is essential to understand the historical intricacies. Interactions, conflicts, and trades between numerous ethnic groups over a long period of time have impacted the history of the borderlands between India and Myanmar. Limited knowledge of how historical occurrences continue to influence current border dynamics results from ignoring historical analysis. Without historical analysis, it is impossible to comprehend how historical border conflicts, migratory patterns, and commercial contacts continue to influence modern border dynamics. For example, these factors have a significant

impact on the geopolitical environment of today. Policymakers can learn more about the effects of past choices and how they might affect relations today by investigating historical circumstances.

The apparent disregard for how the communities on each side of the boundary are divided: The idea of a state as a confined, self-contained entity assumes a traditional understanding of state boundaries as a territorial marking of a geographic region. According to this theory, state borders are "natural," self-sustaining containers of state action that distinguish between the domestic and international spheres of government activity. They only serve as a point of interaction between the state and the "outside" when contact with immigrants occurs only at the territorial border's discrete points of entry, which are the state's self-selected locations for interaction with immigrants. Therefore, borders should be seen as a dynamic tool of division rather than a fruitless attempt to comprehend them as a place of state action

An account of special state obligations to irregular immigrants, "Borders as a Space of Interaction"⁶ (Marian Hovdal-Moan) Although some publications explore border theories in general terms, they frequently do not do so in relation to the situation between India and Myanmar. By recognizing the connections between political boundaries and local interactions, border theories could help shed light on the malleability and fluidity of borders in this area. The complexity and intricacies of the boundary between India and Myanmar can be better understood through the lens of theories like "borderlands" or "borderlands identity." Understanding the region's socio-political structure requires understanding how various populations negotiate fluid boundaries and forge hybrid identities. Most generalized theories have a limited application and don't contribute to the issue.

The borderland between India and Myanmar is one of those places where very few people have set foot because of the challenging terrain that makes investigation tough for academics. Communities with historical ties and close socio-cultural proximity live in this borderland, just like its geography, and the underrepresentation of Grassroots Perspectives leads to the formation of ill policies.⁷ Beyond state boundaries, numerous actors compete and participate in the Indo-Myanmar borderlands. Non-state players, including armed groups and international organizations, have a big impact on how the dynamics of the region develop. The

⁶M. Hovdal-Moan. "Borders as a Space of Interaction: An Account of Special State Obligations to Irregular Immigrants." *American Behavioral Scientist*. Vol.56, No.9, 2012, pp.1223-1240.

⁷Roluahpuia. "Whose Border is it Anyway? Control, Contestation, and Confluence in Indo-Myanmar Borderlands." *Contemporary South Asia*. December, 2019.

complexity of the security environment in the region would be made clear by a thorough investigation of past and present external actor involvements.

Researchers like Ahsan Ullah and Ahmad Kumpoh have vocalized the economic Importance of Border Connectivity.⁸ They underline the significance of improving border connectivity to support regional collaboration and economic progress. However, the research frequently ignores the necessity of balanced cross-border interaction and potential obstacles to infrastructure development. Building transnational commerce channels and connectivity necessitates juggling conflicting geopolitical interests, old resentments, and infrastructure limitations. Sustainable development in the area requires striking a balance between commercial interests, the preservation of cultural legacy, and environmental concerns.

Ziipao's research on infrastructure and frontier tribes' sheds light on the growth of infrastructure in the Indo (Naga)-Myanmar borderland.⁹ The analysis would be strengthened by incorporating comparable viewpoints from other border regions, providing a deeper grasp of infrastructural intersectionality and its ramifications.

Roluahpuia investigates Borderlands contestation and power in the Indo-Myanmar borderlands.¹⁰ A more thorough investigation of historical backgrounds and the influence of outside actors on the region's development, however, could strengthen the interpretation. It is possible to create policies that support the sustainable growth and wellness of border residents by conducting inclusive research that amplifies grassroots voices. We can develop a more thorough and nuanced understanding of the India-Myanmar borderlands and their importance in local geopolitics and international relations by filling in these gaps and critically analyzing the already available literature. The study of the India-Myanmar borderland frequently ignores the dynamic and ever-changing nature of the communities that exist there and approaches them through the optics of a static border or, more typically, from the perspective of other frontiers. In conclusion, filling in the gaps in the body of knowledge on the India-Myanmar borders is crucial to fully comprehending the intricacies of the area. Thanks to a multidimensional analysis, policymakers, scholars, and stakeholders will be able to create inclusive policies and encourage sustainable development while respecting the cultural and historical heritage of the borderlands between India and Myanmar.

⁸A. K. M. A. Ullah, & A. A.-Z. A. Kumpoh. "Are Borders the Reflection of International Relations? Southeast Asian Borders in Perspective." *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*. Vol.5, No.3, 2018, pp.295-318.

⁹ Raile Ziipao. "Frontier tribes and nation states: infrastructural intersection at the Indo (Naga)-Myanmar borderland." *Asian Ethnicity*. Vol.23, 2020.

¹⁰ Roluahpuia. "Whose Border Is It Anyway? Control, Contestation, and Confluence in Indo-Myanmar Borderlands." *Contemporary South Asia*. December, 2019.

Many scholars have studied about problems of insurgency which affect peace and security in the Northeast India. Nandini Basishta¹¹ in Indo-Myanmar Cross Border Insurgencies, examines and provides us with a brief introduction to the theoretical aspects of insurgency and the reasons for its occurrence, delving into how the systems, political and social environment are responsible for developing insurgencies in a region. The paper covers her debates on the failure of the government and the existing connections of the groups in volatile regions of Northeast India, already prone to internal insurgencies.

Rimli Basu¹² looked into two aspects, viz., guns and illicit drugs in the contextual perspective of India-Myanmar Relations at present when India is quite formidably pursuing the Act East Policy. U. A. Shimray¹³ evaluate the socio-political unrest in the north-east as an offshoot of unequal power relationships between the ethnic groups in the region. The expansion of ethnic identity has captured political institutions and social movements. Moreover, the socio-political assertion is based on demographic power in order to maintain ethnic hegemony.

Pavithran Nambiar¹⁴ highlights the impact of Insurgency on the societies of Nagaland and studies two main elements which are Naga cultures and the corruption in public offices. Hence it links our study consequences of rooted insurgency in society. Also identifying the commonly used terms for anti-state activities namely Insurgency and Terrorism and bringing clarity. Analyzing the existing system of kinship and social bonds leads to a vicious cycle that sustains Insurgency outfits in Nagaland and Myanmar Borderlands. Focusing primarily on the behavior in the second half of the twentieth century helps to explore the link between culture, corruption, and Insurgency in our research.

Thangzakhup Tombing¹⁵ explore the unheard voices of certain sections of society such as women and especially the hill folks, also elaborates on the silent victims of insurgency and counterinsurgency movements. Also, it examines the concept of judicial opinions about state accountability and for concerned tribal women of insurgency-related atrocities committed by non-state actors.

¹¹ Nandini Basishta. "Indo-Myanmar Cross-border Insurgency." *Journal of International & Peace Studies*, 2008. pp.151-168.

¹²Rimli Basu, "Guns, Drugs and the Mystery of Indo-Myanmar Relations", *Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.69, No.4, October-December, 2008, pp.716-728.

¹³ U. A. Shimray. "Socio-Political Unrest in the Region Called North-East India." *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 39, no. 42, 2004, pp. 4637-43.

¹⁴ Pavithran Nambiar. *Culture, Corruption and Insurgency: Threats and Quest for Survival in Nagaland*. Om Publications. New Delhi. 2021.

¹⁵ Thangzakhup Tonsing. "Insurgency Movements in North East India and its Impact on the Hill Women folks of the States of Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur: Voice of the Unheard Victims." *Journal of National Law University, Assam Law Review*, Vol.3, No.1, 2019, pp.102- 121.

According to an article by Namrata Goswami in *Small Wars Journal*, she accumulates accounts of various army officials and analyzes and forms a counterinsurgency theory to be implemented especially in northeast regions of India. And selected best practices have been identified across the literature as most critical for the successful conduct of counter-insurgency operations. The result of popular support and legitimacy is often emphasized and supports our study on the impact of Insurgency as well as measures.

In today's context, borders are to be understood as a living entity that transcends territorial demarcations and also encompasses cultural and emotional boundaries. Borders can be conflict-prone due to many factors including geopolitical considerations, security concerns, economic and territorial control, and cultural and ethnic disparities. While focusing on the realm of ethnicity, armed conflicts, and insurgency movements can emerge due to the division of communities with shared cultures and history across borders, leading to alienation, marginalization, and demands for self-determination or reunification. Consequently, this often gives rise to movements for the assertion of their identities and the protection of their rights by such communities.

States at the borderlands are susceptible to not only external but internal conflict as well. In such a context, it is imperative to understand the concept of 'Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)' and their vulnerabilities due to the lack of political and social protection compounded with a lack of rehabilitation efforts. Women constitute a large proportion of the IDPs and face increased violence and a different kind of marginalization in such conflict situations, including rape, discrimination, trafficking, etc. The border state of Manipur (which shares borders with Myanmar) and its continuous struggle with the ethnic conflict between its different communities is an example that we will be focusing on here.

In his work on *Borderlands*, Doris Wastl-Walter talks about how borderlands are peripheries within the state, characterized by geographical marginalities.¹⁶ He explains how there are large proportions of ethnic minorities living in these regions with a limited presence of state institutions. Any changes in relations between the central governments of both states can affect borderlands in dramatic ways. When talking about politics of the North East India specifically Indo-Myanmar borderlands, Thongkhohal Haokip in his work "Territoriality, Conflict and Citizenship in the India-Myanmar Borderlands" sheds light on how borderlands become "zones of cultural overlap" where national identities haze out in the populations.¹⁷ This,

¹⁶Doris Wastl-Walter. "Borderlands". *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, 2nd edition, Vol.1, 2020.

¹⁷Thongkhohal Haokip. "Territoriality, Conflict and Citizenship in the India-Myanmar Borderlands". *The Journal of Indian and Asian Studies*, Vol.4, Issue 1, 2023.

he says, is one of the major reasons of ethnic conflict and the tussle over claiming the status of “indigenous”. Here, cultural identities become the “faultlines”, as seen in North East India, where the major issues since independence remain that of territoriality, conflict and citizenship. This research aims to focus on the problem of internal displacement induced by war, persecution or violence. The UNHRC’s ‘Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement’ has been a tool for advocacy of the rights of the internally displaced on a global level, amongst some other landmark conventions aiming at providing rights and protections to the different categories of forcibly displaced persons, including the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1967 Protocol, the Kampala Convention, and the 1998 Guiding Principles.¹⁸ Cristina Churruca Muguruza & Patricia García in their work ‘Internally Displaced Persons: A Vulnerable Group in Need of Protection’ discuss how internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain marginalized in peacebuilding processes regardless of the growing intensity of the issue.¹⁹ This can be substantiated by the fact that the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre has estimated about 59.1 million displaced due to armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations, and disasters in 2021.²⁰ The paper highlights the situation of IDPs as a vulnerable group and discusses the limits of humanitarian action in preventing and coming up with solutions for displacement. It stresses that durable solutions require a human security approach that builds on the efforts and capabilities of IDPs and stresses the need to understand the impact of sovereignty as responsibility and the rights-based protection approach on international politics.

In the article ‘Rights in Exile: Does India Need to Rethink its Policy on Displaced Persons?’ by Nupur Dogra for the Outlook, she states that IDPs loosely fit into three categories- displaced due to natural disasters, displaced due to development activities, and displaced due to violence and conflict.²¹ There are laws in India for the first two sections of people, The Land Acquisition Act, 2013, and the Disaster Management Act, 2005. But there are no well-defined laws for those displaced due to violence. Rehabilitation of IDPs is done by the State governments with the help of the Centre through various rehabilitation and assistance schemes. As of now, there are seven sub-schemes under an umbrella scheme called “Relief and

¹⁸OHCHR. “International Standards.” *OHCHR*, www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IDPersons/Pages/Standards.aspx. Accessed on 20/09/2023.

¹⁹Churruca Muruguza, Cristina & Garcia, Patricia. “Internally Displaced Persons: A Vulnerable Group in Need of Protection.” Alberto del Real (ed.) *Law: Current and Future Developments Vol. 1* (“Human Rights Issues and Vulnerable Groups”), *Bentham Science Publishers Ltd.*, Sharjah, 2017.

²⁰ Christelle Cazabat. et al. “Women and Girls in Internal Displacement.” *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre*, March 2020, p.5.

²¹ Nupur Dogra. “Rights in Exile: Does India Need to Rethink Its Policy on Displaced Persons?” *Outlook India*, 6 April, 2022.

Rehabilitation of Migrants and Repatriates”²² for 2021-22 to 2025-26 with a total outlay of Rs 1,452 crores- these include schemes for victims of terrorist violence including militancy, insurgency, communal, left-wing extremism violence, cross-border firing, etc. Yet there are no uniform schemes or laws to look after the IDPs.

Muguruza and Amado in their work discuss how Francis M. Deng and Roberta Cohen, redefined the issue of IDPs by developing an approach centred around the idea of “sovereignty as responsibility.” Cohen in her work ‘Developing an International System for Internally Displaced Persons’ elucidates the reasons why the development of an international system for IDPs is urgent.²³ Mark Duffield’s ‘Security, Development and Unending Wars’ and ‘Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security’ are other important works that discuss the misuse of humanitarian and development aid for international security purposes.²⁴ Stephen Castles in ‘The International Politics of Forced Migration’ gives a critique of containment policies of forced migration.²⁵

This work places the issue of internal displacement and looks at borderland states as conflict-prone through the example of Manipur and the recent ongoing ethnic violence. A seminal work in this arena of understanding ethnic conflicts, especially in Manipur, is the work ‘Contested State-craft’ on the Frontiers of the Indian Nation: ‘Hills-Valley Divide’ and the Genealogy of Kuki Ethnic Nationalism in Manipur’ by Ngamjahao Kipgen and Arnab Roy Chowdhury.²⁶ This body of works delves deep into the divide between the hill tribals and the valley inhabitants. It touches upon the dynamics that exist between the Kukis, Nagas and Meiteis, and highlights how the disempowerment, deprivation and marginalization of the Kukis in terms of political and administrative disparity, lack of resources, unemployment, the issue of reservations and bearing the unequal impact of famines or natural calamities. as opposed to the Nagas or the dominant Meitei. It identifies the rise of Kuki ethnic nationalism in colonial and post-colonial times and the rising demand for a separate state (the idea of *Zale’n-gam*, Kukiland) under the Indian Union as a consequence of this marginalization. and traces the “genealogy of the Kuki identity formation”.

²² “Cabinet Approves Umbrella Schemes for Relief and Rehabilitation of Migrants and Repatriates.” *Press Information Bureau, Government of India*, 2018. p.

²³Roberta Cohen. “Developing an International System for Internally Displaced Persons.” *International Studies Perspectives*, Vol.7, No.2, 2006.

²⁴ Mark Duffield. *Security, Development and Unending Wars*. London: Polity, 2007.

²⁵ Stephen Castles. “The international politics of forced migration.” *Development* 2003; Vol.46, No.3, pp.11-2.

²⁶ Ngamjahao Kipgen & Arnab Roy Chowdhury. “Contested State-craft’ on the Frontiers of the Indian Nation: ‘Hills-Valley Divide’ and the Genealogy of Kuki Ethnic Nationalism in Manipur”. *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Vol.16, No.2, 2016.

The Meitei's opposition to Kuki demands and their reasons have also been discussed in the paper. Kipgen and Chowdhury argue for the inclusion of neglected ethnic tribal minorities in state government developmental schemes, with development that is contextually appropriate, culturally sensitive, and based on local resources. The emphasis here is laid on better local governance with greater autonomy and democracy for the hill regions, including constitutional protection for existing District Councils (DCs) and a Kuki autonomous zone. For an organized 'politics of recognition', it stresses the need for primary and steady access to structural and institutional resources for the Kukis and emphasizes on how development should come as a demand from the community through participation, rather than being imposed on them. This aligns with the importance given to community agency. This question of governance, bias and "politics of recognition" therefore, becomes more relevant than ever in the context of the ongoing ethnic violence in Manipur.

Another article that we will be reviewing is 'Ethnicity and Socio-Political Assertion: The Manipur Experience' by U.A. Shimray.²⁷ It explores the ethnic-based conflicts and resistance movements in Manipur and the challenges faced by the government in addressing the problems. Shimray highlights the need to recognize the political issues in the northeast as more than just "law and order" problems and emphasizes the importance of understanding the social and cultural complexities of the region. It examines the significance of ethnicity and political aspirations in Manipur, with a focus on the multi-ethnic nature of the state. It discusses the assertion of ethnic identity. Shimray argues that the Manipur government has patronized and propagated these issues leading to the failure to address these issues effectively has contributed to ongoing ethnic tensions and conflicts. This work emphasizes the importance of recognizing and understanding the socio-cultural dynamics and political aspirations of the ethnic groups in Manipur.

Though the article lacks an in-depth analysis of the cultural and socioeconomic factors leading to ethnic conflicts, it highlights the need for inclusive governance, dialogue, and efforts to address the underlying causes of ethnic tensions. The article raises awareness about the challenges faced by the region and advocates for a more comprehensive approach to resolving the issues. When studied together with the above-mentioned paper by Kipgen and Chowdhury, we can understand the issue of ethnic conflict in Manipur in a multidimensional way including the long history preceding it, political and economic reasons and also the need for

²⁷ U.A. Shimray. "Ethnicity and Socio-Political Assertion: The Manipur Experience". *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.36, No.39, September 29-October 5, 2001, pp.3674-3677.

understanding social and cultural complexities of the state, and other power dynamics. A reading of both together also emphasizes on the need for inclusive governance, efforts to address the issues and suggestions in which the same can be done.

The focus of this research is to also understand the internally displaced Kuki-Zo women in New Delhi. To understand the gendered violence and the effect it has on women, one can look at Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin's writing in 'Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition' where they talk about women's bodies being treated as territory to be conquered, claimed, or marked by the assailant.²⁸ The research will try to understand gendered violence in ethnic conflict situations and its effects better through real accounts of the experiences of Kuki-Zo women.

To this end, this study proposed to view India-Myanmar border regions as not just physical spaces but also as social and cultural spaces that involve the flows of people and goods, as an economic space that involves the flow of goods and services and as zones of vulnerability in both traditional and non-traditional security dimensions.

²⁸ Menon, Ritu & Bhasin, Kamala. 'Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition'. Rutgers University Press, 1998.

Chapter-I: Navigating complexities in India-Myanmar borderland with special emphasis on Manipur – *Mansha Kohli*

Introduction

In a world where nations are interconnected yet defined by boundaries, the concept of borders transcends the mere demarcation of physical spaces; it encapsulates intricate narratives of historical evolution, geopolitical interests, and cultural interplay. The India-Myanmar borderlands, a realm where nations converge, histories collide, and diverse communities thrive, offer a compelling vantage point to explore the multifaceted dynamics of borderlands. This paper embarks on an expedition into the heart of the India-Myanmar borderlands, unravelling the tapestry of significance and complexity that envelops this fascinating region.

Often overlooked as mundane delineations, Borders embodies the essence of a nation's sovereignty and identity. The entire essence of a country's sovereignty and character is embodied by its borders, which are sometimes disregarded as simple delineations. In addition to dividing the two countries, the India-Myanmar boundary as a result of colonial divisions and geopolitical realignments that permanently altered the landscape, this borderland region emerges as a living monument to the historical origins of these markers. The Indo-Myanmar borders best represent the interactions between nation-states and their territorial aspirations. India and Myanmar, nations of many different ethnic groups and cultures, have shared objectives in these border regions. A dynamic interweaving of policies is created due to the convergence of diplomacy, security concerns, and economic goals here, navigating the challenges of nation-building.

India's North Eastern border has long been a significant geographical area due to its diverse cultures, breathtaking landscapes, and rich historical heritage. One of this region's most significant characteristics is its shared border with Myanmar, which has fluctuated. Focusing on the state of Manipur, this chapter examines the intricate management and governance practices utilized to address border concerns along India's border with Myanmar. After end of colonialism, India and Myanmar (formerly Burma), two independent sovereign nation-states that established the foundation for the bilateral relationship, came into being in 1947 and 1948, respectively. The borders between the two nations have varied throughout time due to political, social, economic, and security factors. The dynamic character of the border necessitates the development of suitable management and governance systems to safeguard the security and well-being of the citizens of both countries.

The boundaries between India and Myanmar are not merely an issue of political cartography; they also resonate with shared human emotions. Since they frequently traverse borders to see relatives, conduct cross-border business, and participate in festivals both cultures enjoy, communities living in these areas are innately resilient. This story, which focuses on the human experience, talks about borderlands that defy traditional borders and shows how people are fundamentally connected despite boundaries imposed by other countries. Among the many Indian states that border Myanmar, Manipur stands out as a focal point because of its ideal location and historical significance. Manipur is vulnerable to several issues because of its porous border with Myanmar, including illegal immigration, drug trafficking, and cross-border crimes, including weapons smuggling. These problems pose a significant danger to the security and stability of both countries.

India has begun building a border wall along specified stretches of Manipur to address these border-related issues. Physical barriers are being constructed to halt illegal activities and regulate cross-border transit of people and goods. There have also been discussions over the effectiveness of this tactic, its impact on the local communities, and the implications for relations with the government of Myanmar. This region portrays tales of perseverance, cultural exchanges, and intertwined histories that go beyond geographical boundaries. By looking at the plethora of stories, concerns, and policies etched across the India-Myanmar borders, we hope to create a roadmap for peaceful coexistence, sustainable development, and cross-border cooperation while respecting the unique characteristics of this enigmatic region.

The complex issues caused by the permeable border are also covered in this study paper, including how to handle cross-border trade and cultural interactions while upholding national security objectives. The essay also looks at the effects of drug trafficking on the socioeconomic systems of the two nations and the challenges associated with halting unlawful cross-border trade and migration. India has responded proactively to these issues by combining traditional border management techniques with soft diplomacy. Soft diplomacy emphasizes cooperation, conversation, and cultural exchanges to develop stronger bilateral ties and effectively address common challenges. With this approach, it is accepted that the security and prosperity of the border region are interconnected and necessitate collaboration and understanding.

The India-Myanmar borderlands encapsulate the interplay between nation-states and their territorial ambitions. India and Myanmar, entities woven from diverse ethnicities and cultures, have converging interests in these borderlands. Diplomacy, security considerations, and economic pursuits converge here, resulting in a dynamic interweaving of policies that navigate the complexities of nation-building amidst diverse communities and historical

legacies. The shared border with Myanmar has changed and is one of this region's most notable features. This chapter explores the complex management and governance practices used to solve border concerns along India's border with Myanmar, focusing on the state of Manipur.

In order to protect the security and well-being of the residents of both countries, it is necessary to develop appropriate management and governance measures due to the border's dynamic nature.

The India-Myanmar borderlands are not just a matter of political cartography but also resonant with universal human experiences. Communities in these areas are naturally resilient since they regularly cross borders to visit family, conduct cross-border business, and participate in festivals shared by both cultures. With a focus on the human experience, this story reveals a tale of borderlands that defy traditional borders, demonstrating the fundamental interconnectedness of people regardless of territorial restrictions.

Due to its advantageous location and historical importance, Manipur stands out as a focal point among the several Indian states that border Myanmar. Due to its porous border with Myanmar, Manipur is susceptible to several problems, including illegal immigration, drug trafficking, and cross-border crimes, including weapons smuggling. These issues seriously threaten both countries' security and stability. India has started installing border fencing along specific portions of Manipur to alleviate these border-related problems. Physical barriers are being built to stop illicit activity and control cross-border traffic in people and products. Discussions about this strategy's efficacy, influence on neighborhood communities, and consequences for relations with Myanmar's government have also arisen.

We gain a profound understanding of the layers of complexity that define this region as we make our way through the challenging terrain of the Indo-Myanmar borderlands while respecting the character of this mysterious region by examining the myriad of narratives, issues, and policies engraved across the Indo-Myanmar borderlands. This chapter also addresses the complicated problems brought on by the permeable border, such as how to manage cross-border commercial and cultural exchanges while preserving national security interests. This comprehensive exploration sheds light on the successes, limitations, and potential prospects of soft diplomacy and other border management strategies employed in the Manipur region.

The Multifaceted Significance of the India-Myanmar Border: A Focus on Manipur

According to Balibar borders-frequently appearing invisible and diffuse and no longer exist as border landscapes-have evolved into components of control and surveillance infrastructures in the current dynamic world characterized by flows of people, ideas, ideologies, and goods, as

well as by a fluctuating fear of terrorism. If "emotional landscapes of control" can be applied to landscapes associated with nationalist ideologies and a sense of identity, then "technological landscapes of control and surveillance" are also becoming more significant²⁹ These occur in different ways in different societies, and that difference depends on the situation.

Through symbolic inclusion and exclusion processes, borders are thought to have a significant impact on belonging, affiliation, and membership. It is also generally acknowledged that boundaries can reflect current divisions or create new "others" With the hybridity of the members at border edges at both social and physical borders, such variances might imbue nations with the perception of superiority or inferiority, generating conflicts and a lack of tolerance. Because of transnationalism and hybridity, the legitimacy of states is called into question, and cosmopolitanism does not accept this. Borderlands, trans-national social fields, cross-border regions, and diasporic spaces are a few terms that are being used to describe places where shared identities are related both directly and indirectly to the dynamics of daily life impacted by the mere presence of a common border contact, which may also accentuate difference within such zones.

The 1643-kilometer-long border represents the complex interplay of geopolitics, economics, culture, history, psychology, and anthropology. Manipur stands out as an important focal point within this vast painting, illuminating the complex significance of the border in many different ways.³⁰ The development of the border area is carried out with consideration for the current situation because borders are an essential component of a country's national policy. The comprehensive investigation of these aspects begins in this chapter, which focuses on Manipur's crucial role in comprehending the border's significant significance between India and Myanmar. We disentangle the complex layers that constitute the essence of the borderland, revealing the tapestry of interconnection within its geopolitical setting, drawing on a wide range of literature, research articles, and scholarly works.

Geographic Importance: A Link to Diversity

The India-Myanmar border has major geographic significance beyond how it appears on maps because it serves as a crucial crossing point between South Asia and Southeast Asia. Manipur is the best illustration of this intricate topography, showing how deftly nature can craft varied landscapes. Its gently rolling hills, serene valleys, and labyrinthine forests, which mirror the

²⁹ Anssi Paasi. *op.cit.*, pp.16-17.

³⁰

geomorphic symphony of the borderland, leave no trace of human settlements or migration patterns. The Chindwin and Manipur rivers' link, which acts as a conduit for cross-border exchanges as well as an impediment, complicates matters even more. Myanmar's strategic position at the intersection of East, Southeast, and South Asia accounts for much of its importance. Its importance for the growth of India's northeast and the context of India's Look East Policy can be attributed to the fact that it is the only Southeast Asian nation with whom India shares a land border. The need for stability in the Indian Ocean, the China factor, and its potential as a nearby energy supply are other factors.

Cultural and Historical Ties: The Threads of Identity

The border between India and Myanmar is proof of a shared culture that has developed over many years of cross-cultural interaction. As indigenous communities like the Kuki, Chin, Mizo, Tangkhul, Kabui, and Meitei establish links that transcend political boundaries, Manipur's significance in this story is crucial. Both India and Myanmar have shared histories of colonialism and a Buddhist heritage. A great number of damaged pagodas are being repaired and conserved, and India is taking essential steps to restore the Ananda Temple in Bagan in order to build on this common heritage. Over the years, India's philosophy, culture, and arts have exerted a great deal of influence. The modern India is regarded as a superpower and a leader who pursues "democracy with development." India's massive market for agricultural and other products and its status as a supplier of manufactured goods, particularly pharmaceuticals, are other important considerations. The nation's overriding tendency is to pursue an autonomous foreign policy, which necessitates the necessity for one or more balancers against China's expanding influence. Given its continued willingness and resolve to support Myanmar's autonomy policy, India is very valuable in this situation.

As a channel for commercial exchanges, the border between India and Myanmar takes on significance beyond its physical boundary. The Moreh-Tamu border crossing in Manipur manifests as a thriving trading centre, serving as a symbol of this economic interaction. Monirul Hussain³¹ charts the possible trade and investment routes while echoing India's Act East Policy. Border-dwelling tribes are permitted to cross the border without a visa under a special agreement known as the Free Movement Regime (FMR) on the India-Myanmar border. Only forty goods may be traded within this area, and trade is strictly regulated. While this

³¹ Monirul Hussain. "Trade and Connectivity between India's Northeast and Southeast Asia." *Strategic Analysis*, Vol.38, No.6, 2014, pp.767-782.

arrangement strengthens links between borderland towns, it has generated issues with the Act East Policy's execution (AEP). By drawing on India's cultural ties to East Asian nations, the AEP seeks to legitimize its goal of liberalizing the region's northeastern borderlands. It has substantially changed borderland residents' lives by fostering new connections and reviving old bonds. The AEP has come to represent new business opportunities, border crossings, and a significant talking topic in political speeches. Multiple parties, including military forces and non-state entities, engaged in conflict as the liberalization process from a border to a gateway. This transformation emphasizes how borderland communities challenge governmental authority and establish their rights to space, belonging, and territory.³²

Numerous studies have challenged the idea that the region is remote and isolated by concentrating on the daily realities of the area, the nature of connections, and fluid attachments as opposed to traditional state-centred approaches. As part of the larger idea of "Zomia," the northeastern region of India is positioned, providing a larger regional and analytical framework for studying the area outside of national boundaries. The government's effort to formalize and facilitate border trade, institutionalizing governmental regulation and control, is shown in the creation of Land Customs Stations (LCS). According to Scott's idea of statecraft and legibility, where border control is intimately related to managing people and mobility, this has led to an increase in the presence of state institutions, central and state-level officials, and security personnel at the border. Local markets called "Border Haats" have been set up along the border between India and Myanmar to promote friendly commerce and trade.³³

Realities of Security and Strategic Complexity

Beyond geopolitical lines, the importance of the India-Myanmar border is intimately entwined into regional security dynamics. Manipur's proximity to Myanmar's Sagaing Region highlights its strategic importance and serves as an example of how both regions are interdependent. The region's permeable borders have made cross-border relations easier but also presented security challenges. These various layers of borderland security are examined in-depth in academic. The border between India and Myanmar is not just a geographical boundary; seen from a strategic perspective, it is a key factor in determining regional stability and balance. A prime example of the interdependence between the two regions is Manipur's proximity to Myanmar's Sagaing Region. Insurgent organizations have, however, taken advantage of this permeability,

³² Roluahpuia, *op.cit.*

³³ Roluahpuia, *op.cit.*

demanding joint efforts from India and Myanmar to address these security issues. In "Myanmar's Geopolitical Importance: A New Approach," Amitav Acharya's analysis and Maung Aung Myoe's thorough investigation weave through the borderland's complex web of security dynamics.³⁴

Shared Histories, Shared Identities in Psychological and Anthropological Perspective

The border between India and Myanmar is a psychological melting pot of shared histories that reverberate on both sides. These universal experiences are poignantly shown by the Battle of Imphal in World War II. The study *Free Movement Regime between India and Myanmar* by Anurag Tripathi captures cooperative efforts supporting people-to-people interactions, transcending historical divisions.³⁵

The significance of the border is amplified anthropologically by the intricate socio-cultural interactions between the indigenous people of Manipur. The complexity of cross-border relationships is explored which also reveals the anthropological diversity that results from previous exchanges.

Issues at the Border: Unravelling Challenges in Manipur's India-Myanmar Borderlands

When we zoom in on Manipur, a complex mosaic in the Indo-Myanmar borders, we find a microcosm of problems that best represent the intricacies that frequently characterize such areas. The porous and yet closed borders of Manipur reveal a web of complex socioeconomic relationships, security flaws, and cross-border exchanges. It is possible to solve a conundrum marked by socioeconomic complexity, security risks, and dynamic cross-border exchanges by balancing open and closed borders, both on land and at sea. Manipur's borderlands act as an intricate tapestry where physical factors, ethnic identities, and historical intersections come together to capture the multi-layered essence of border dynamics in the middle of these dynamics. This chapter delves deep into these issues, illuminating the multifaceted character of border dynamics through literature, research articles, and academic papers. The India-Myanmar border is porous, poorly protected, and situated in one of the world's top five opium-producing regions, making it susceptible to the actions of insurgents, drug and arms traffickers, and criminals. It is also located along a remote, impoverished, insurgency-prone zone. Since the early decades of independence, the northeastern borderlands of India have been entangled

³⁴ Maung Aung Myoe. *op.cit.*

³⁵ Anurag Tripathi. "Free Movement Regime between India and Myanmar." *IDS Comment*, No.177, 2013.

in three persistent dilemmas: territoriality, conflict, and citizenship. The discourse on security has strong linkages to policy proposals for the growth of border regions and how borderland populations are perceived. In other words, national security plays a significant role in the Indian State's policies.

In the border regions between India and Myanmar, security concerns are a result of a number of factors. The geography of the border between India and Myanmar, which increases its susceptibility, is the main source of worry. The borderland is characterized by tall mountains, wide river systems, and dense forests. The border region continues to be sparsely populated with weak economic growth since such topography does not readily lend itself to the creation of means of transportation and communication. The Indian government's attention to the border between India and Myanmar has been grossly insufficient due to the lack of roads, communication lines, and other border guarding infrastructure. Only 15 of the Assam Rifles' 46 battalions are deployed for border guarding duties; the remaining battalions are involved in counterinsurgency operations. The Assam Rifles are the official border guarding force for the India-Myanmar border. In order to prevent the force from controlling the border and limiting their ability to stop irregular cross-border movements, Assam rifle is also concentrated as company-operated bases (COBs) stationed deep within.

There are multiple underlying causes for the border between India and Myanmar being so vulnerable to these numerous dangers and difficulties. Notably, the international boundary between the two countries was officially delineated and demarcated on March 10, 1967, but it is still a moving target on the ground (with the exception of the northern tri-junction involving India, Myanmar, and China, pending resolution of the India-China boundary dispute). The borderlands' socio-cultural landscape is densely overlaid by it, making it more than just lines on a map. It frequently divides distinct indigenous groups and forces them to live as citizens of multiple countries. A booming drug traffic is hidden behind legitimate commerce movements and is mostly unrestrained. Smuggling has developed into a lucrative industry, especially when it comes to medicines and weapons. Officials have observed that smuggling, particularly of illegal drugs and weapons, has grown to be more lucrative than many other legal companies, becoming the main source of income for many wealthy families in the area. As a result of the Indian insurgents' exploitation of its provisions to freely pass into Myanmar and set up safe havens, it has become a source of worry for the security establishment. This sobering fact highlights the enormous challenge that these covert actions present, needing thorough and strategic measures to handle the intricate problems at the border.

Difficulties Caused by Illegal Activity

The border region of Manipur faces numerous complex difficulties as a result of the border's openness. Numerous smuggling operations, including illegal traffic in products, drugs, and wildlife, occur in the border region. Economic inequalities and border porosity provide fuel for these efforts. Because of the difficult terrain and scant surveillance, smuggling networks profit from the profitable business. People who are vulnerable are frequently the victims of trafficking, forced labour, and sexual exploitation, especially women and children. The importance of comprehensive anti-trafficking plans and international collaboration is the solution in the fight against this problem.

The proximity of the “Golden Triangle” to the border region renders the India-Myanmar border particularly vulnerable to the trafficking of heroin and amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) made in Myanmar. Opium and methamphetamine are two substances that are heavily produced in Myanmar and are imported into India. The most crucial trafficking route is the one that reaches Moreh in Manipur through Tamu and proceeds to Imphal and Kohima along National Highway-39. Both India and Myanmar must seriously consider their security in light of the illicit arms trafficking. Conflicts and insurgencies in the area are fueled by the trafficking of arms. Numerous studies and analyses have given light on the dynamics of the arms trade and how they affect regional security. Both from Myanmar-based rebel organizations like the United Wa State Army and illegal markets in Southeast Asia, Indian insurgent groups have been buying weapons (UWSA). While the majority of the weapons from Thailand and Cambodia are brought in via the sea, some are also brought in via the India-Myanmar border via land with the assistance of Chin and Arakanese insurgents.

Security Vulnerabilities and Socioeconomic Complexities

The intricate socioeconomic complexities of Manipur's borders are woven into a complicated tapestry that transcends traditional boundaries. The range of criminal operations that plague the area makes this abundantly clear. It is a conundrum marked by socioeconomic complexity, security flaws, and dynamic cross-border contacts that all unlawful activities contribute to. These issues are tested by the interaction of open and closed borders on land and at sea. Manipur's borderlands act as a complex tapestry where geographic factors, ethnic identities, and historical connections come together in the context of these dynamics, capturing the multifaceted nature of border management activities. The human factors that underpin such vulnerabilities are exposed when the study digs into the complexities of these cross-border contacts.

Geographical Aspects and Border Conflicts

The serene borderlands of Manipur conceal the geopolitical unrest that may hinder efficient border administration. These areas have been affected by the contours of border conflicts between India and Myanmar for a long time, giving them historical complexities that reverberate in current tensions. Historical disagreements, such as the location of the boundary in the Manipur sector, have their origins in treaties and maps from the colonial era. These disagreements have the potential to sour bilateral ties and call for diplomatic action to settle them. The dynamics of the border are complicated by current geopolitical issues, such as China's influence in Myanmar and its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). These changes in geopolitics have an impact on India's security interests and its strategic engagement with Myanmar. Border disputes, both historical and current, have affected bilateral ties and boundary control along the India-Myanmar border.

Navigating Past Agreements: Historical Border Demarcation between India and Myanmar in the Context of Manipur's Borderland Management

The historical agreements and treaties between nations often hold the key to understanding the intricacies of border demarcation and management. Manipur, nestled within the intricate landscape of the India-Myanmar borderlands, provides a microcosm that encapsulates the nuances of these agreements and their ramifications. The history of the formation of this region is closely tied to its becoming a borderland, shaped by imperial power and the post-colonial successor state, that fixed and nationalized the boundaries of the northeast from a colonial frontier to that of a national border. Its emergence as a landlocked region, in particular, is an outcome of the longer historical process since the time of colonial rule. In the post-colonial period, the partition which produced East Pakistan and then Bangladesh further affirmed this, cutting off old routes and networks of communication. Ethnic groups in the region found themselves divided into two or more nation-states and within the region between states. With a focus on Manipur in particular, this chapter begins a thorough investigation of the historical agreements between India and Myanmar. This conversation reveals the many layers of earlier agreements and illuminates the historical roots of the current borderland administration.

Historical Accords: Charting the Development

A number of past agreements and talks have defined the borders between India and Myanmar. The Shimla Conference of 1913-1914, which aimed to define the border between British India and Burma, served as a crucial turning point in this trajectory. This significant occurrence establishes the historical foundation for border demarcation and paves the way for later agreements to be understood. *The Hidden History of Burma*,³⁶ a thoroughly researched book by Thant Myint-U³⁶ goes into the nuances of these negotiations and offers insights into the complicated power dynamics and historical elements that influenced the agreements.

The border between India and Myanmar has a troubled past. It is a holdover from colonial authority when settlements were divided along an administrative line of separation. Communities living in the borderlands were directly impacted by the formal partition of Burma from British India in 1937 because it was done without their approval. On May 2, 1967, India and Myanmar reached a final agreement defining the border. The boundaries set by the British during the time of colonial control, such as those in the Treaty of Yandaboo (1826), the Manipur-Chin Hills boundary (1894), and the Lushai-Chin Hills (1921), were a major foundation for this accord. Administrative borders established during colonial times served to define and strengthen these ethnic groupings' boundaries. These classifications served the colonial state well since they allowed for the administrative convenience of grouping together a sizable diversified population. The dynamics of local identification are further complicated by the colonially constituted ethnicity, which occurs concurrently with and in opposition to the emergence of post-colonial national identities. Diverse mobilizations that sought ethnic "unification (inside the nation-states) and of (re)connection (across the border)" were sparked by resentments against colonially imposed boundaries. This has involved two stages of play. First, through marriage, religion, and trade, communities at the border continue to retain loose ties and social interactions. Second, political forces seeking territorial unification have evolved in the form of military and non-violent conflict, but they have also highlighted the diversity of ethnic identification.

Implementation Challenges and Effectiveness

Although historical agreements try to establish a clear demarcation, the path from paper to reality is frequently paved with difficulties. The McMahon Line, which was formed during the Shimla Conference and is now a point of contention between India and Myanmar, is one such

³⁶ T. Myint-U. *The Hidden History of Burma: A Crisis of Race and Capitalism*. Atlantic Books. 2020.

disputed demarcation. A thorough investigation has been done on the effectiveness of these agreements in converting borderlines into actual boundaries.

Border governance and cross-border cooperation

Historical agreements continue to have an impact on border governance and bilateral relations on a much larger scale than just demarcating borders. These historical repercussions continue to have an impact on contemporary dynamics, influencing cross-border relationships and joint projects.

Post-Colonial Demarcation: Complexities and Nuances

Border management is significantly impacted by the complex historical history that post-colonial border demarcation inherits. It deepens our comprehension of why past agreements are crucial to the conversation about border management. The fundamental ramifications of the historic accords between India and Myanmar go much beyond their original goal of border demarcation. These agreements still influence regional security dynamics, bilateral collaboration, and modern border government. Awareness of Manipur's borderland management within the broader context of the India-Myanmar border requires an understanding of the complex interplay between historical legacies and contemporary reality.

Unveiling the Barrier: Exploring Border Fencing in the Context of Manipur

When we zoom in on Manipur, a complex mosaic in the Indo-Myanmar borders, we find a microcosm of problems that best represent the intricacies that frequently characterize such areas. The porous and yet closed borders of Manipur reveal a web of complex socioeconomic relationships, security flaws, and cross-border exchanges. It is possible to solve a conundrum marked by socioeconomic complexity, security risks, and dynamic cross-border exchanges by balancing open and closed borders, both on land and at sea. Manipur's borderlands act as an intricate tapestry where physical factors, ethnic identities, and historical intersections come together to capture the multi-layered essence of border dynamics in the middle of these dynamics. This chapter delves deep into these issues, illuminating the multifaceted character of border dynamics through literature, research articles, and academic papers.

The India-Myanmar border is porous, poorly protected, and situated in one of the world's top five opium-producing regions, making it susceptible to the actions of insurgents, drug and arms traffickers, and criminals. It is also located along a remote, impoverished, insurgency-prone zone. This chapter tries to offer a nuanced study of the problems that

influence the environment of the border. Since the early decades of independence, the northeastern borderlands of India have been entangled in three persistent dilemmas: territoriality, conflict, and citizenship. The discourse on security has strong linkages to policy proposals for the growth of border regions and how borderland populations are perceived. In other words, national security plays a significant role in the Indian State's policies regarding. In the border regions between India and Myanmar, security concerns are a result of a number of factors. The geography of the border between India and Myanmar, which increases its susceptibility, is the main source of worry. The borderland is characterized by tall mountains, wide river systems, and dense forests. The border region continues to be sparsely populated with weak economic growth since such topography does not readily lend itself to the creation of means of transportation and communication. The Indian government's attention to the border between India and Myanmar has been grossly insufficient due to the lack of roads, communication lines, and other border guarding infrastructure. Only 15 of the Assam Rifles' 46 battalions are deployed for border guarding duties; the remaining battalions are involved in counterinsurgency operations. It is also concentrated as company-operated bases (COBs) stationed deep within.

Borders divides distinct indigenous groups and forces them to live as citizens of multiple countries. Additionally, the Free Transportation Regime (FTR), which unintentionally gave rise to covert activities, permits the movement of specific items within a 16-kilometer radius into the territory of the neighbouring country. A booming drug traffic is hidden behind legitimate commerce movements and is mostly unrestrained. Smuggling has developed into a lucrative industry, especially when it comes to medicines and weapons. Officials have observed that smuggling, particularly of illegal drugs and weapons, has grown to be more lucrative than many other legal companies, becoming the main source of income for many wealthy families in the area. As a result of the Indian insurgents' exploitation of its provisions to freely pass into Myanmar and set up safe havens, it has become a source of worry for the security establishment. This sobering fact highlights the enormous challenge that these covert actions present, needing thorough and strategic measures to handle the intricate problems at the border.

There are substantial ramifications for national security and bilateral connections between India and Myanmar due to the porous nature of the border, illegal activities, and security threats. Insurgent groups frequently exploit the border as a sanctuary and a corridor for transporting weapons and drugs, which compromises national security. The northeastern states' security issues are highlighted in the 2014 "Report of the High-Level Committee on the Socioeconomic, Health, and Educational Status of Tribal Communities of India." Border

incidents erode diplomatic connections and harm bilateral relations. Diplomatic initiatives like the "Land Border Agreement" between India and Myanmar show the need for greater border management and cooperation. It is clear that there must be a careful balance between promoting cross-border connections and reducing security dangers placing an emphasis on the wider ramifications for fostering cooperative relations while upholding security imperatives.

Bridging Boundaries: Exploring Alternative Border Management Initiatives

The Manipur-Myanmar border region has developed over time into a centre for drug production and the primary route for the trafficking of weapons and heroin out of Myanmar. Additionally, these border provinces have a severe drug addiction problem, with Myanmar being a significant source of supplies. AIDS's spread is related to this issue. Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine trafficking, unrestrained trafficking in women and children, insurgency infiltration, and cross-border movements of insurgents have all found refuge there (UNODC, 2008). Because of the permeable boundaries and the lack of official oversight in these far-flung regions, instability has resulted. This formerly ignored physical region is now vulnerable in both traditional and non-traditional security dimensions, including the flow of commodities and services, as a result of the growing severity of transnational threats. People should address current issues; otherwise, the India-Myanmar borders will continue to be "authorized" and marginalized.

Border management focuses on the methods used to make crossing borders easier or more difficult. While crossing the border is an option for some, it is an existential problem for others. Borderlands are subject to conventional and unconventional security threats. Conflict resolution is hampered by isolation because it fosters ignorance, fear, and mistrust. Due to new concerns, modern appeals for open borders conflict with conventional geopolitics. Despite international law, nationalism and symbolic borders continue to exist. Nowadays, borders are seen as locations of active contestation that are shaped by different groups. The interpretations of borders differ among international organizations, government representatives, humanitarians, and others. Diverse tactics are required because there is no single method that can reduce border tensions. It is vital to strike a balance between security, cross-border collaboration, and central government objectives. Border policy should be tailored to the specific situation, which may call for stringent regulations to maintain long-term peace. These variations highlight the difficulties of border research, particularly in migration studies. A subtle approach to border management is required due to the complex web of problems that are woven throughout the India-Myanmar borderland. Alternative tactics like cultural linkages and soft diplomacy stand out among the range of tactics as effective weapons. In the borderlands,

Manipur provides a microcosm where these projects can show the way forward. The potential and difficulties of these alternate tactics are thoroughly examined in this chapter.

Engagement and Soft Diplomacy: Crossing Borders

A strong replacement for conventional border control techniques is soft diplomacy, a strategy based on cooperation. Joseph Nye offers a conceptual framework for comprehending the strength of non-coercive influence. Soft diplomacy in the context of India and Myanmar means developing connections based on similar interests, beliefs, and cultural affinities. This strategy entails ongoing communication, cross-cultural interactions, and collaborative projects meant to increase trust and promote peaceful conflict resolution. Soft diplomacy's power resides in its capacity to go beyond established security paradigms. Soft diplomacy can act as a bridge to reach amicable resolutions in the India-Myanmar border region, where long-standing historical issues and geopolitical complications still exist. Soft diplomacy can reduce tensions and promote cooperative border management activities by highlighting shared values and promoting understanding.

Cultural Ties: Fostering Cross-Border Bonds

In the web of border control, the fabric of cultural linkages is a strong tool. Manipur, which sits on the border between India and Myanmar, is a prime example of the significant influence that shared cultural ties have. These connections, which are based on shared cultural norms, linguistic backgrounds, and historical narratives, provide a strong framework for international cooperation. The strength of shared cultural narratives crosses boundaries highlight the capacity of culture to bring people together rather than separate them. A sense of shared identity that transcends political boundaries is fostered by cultural linkages. Communities in borderlands can work together by recognizing shared heritage and encouraging intercultural dialogue. Cultural connections have the power to transcend political divides and foster a sense of solidarity by bridging cultural gaps across populations.

Interactions Between Individuals: Establishing Trust from the Ground Up

Alternative border management solutions are based on people-to-people interactions. Through these meetings, relationships are developed at the grassroots level that cut over complicated political issues. Community-based partnerships, educational exchanges, and cooperative efforts are essential building blocks for fostering understanding and respect for one another.

People-to-people contacts are powerful when they can make cross-border relationships more human. These interactions encourage interpersonal relationships that destroy prejudices and preconceived assumptions, enabling a collaborative environment. Through these exchanges, a groundswell of goodwill can be created that can considerably aid in more general diplomatic efforts, ultimately resulting in more peaceful and cooperative border dynamics.

Advantages and Drawbacks: Assessing Alternative Methods

Alternative methods have a number of potential advantages, but they are not without drawbacks. In order to adopt soft diplomacy and cultural linkages, it is necessary to get over political complications, historical baggage, and competing interests. The execution of such attempts may be hampered by the power dynamics that characterize international interactions. Cultural exchange runs the risk of being seen as a means of dominance rather than a mutual sharing of tradition. Furthermore, if cultural projects are not carefully managed, they may unintentionally reinforce current power disparities. However, there are significant advantages of alternative strategies. Fostering an attitude of cooperation rather than rivalry can lead to conflict prevention, improved regional integration, and economic cooperation. The development of mutual respect and shared ideals has the potential to change border management from a competitive endeavour to a cooperative one.

Hybrid fencing with Smart Border

Border patrol agents should make sure that no illegal imports are passing through the area. Informal payments will probably be replaced by the implementation of an official payment system at borders. The border must be fence-lined, and border passes must be implemented with the aid of new technologies in order to stop all illegal trade channels. Promotion and capacity building of the human resources that will be used to monitor unlawful payment and trade require the help of the government. Large-scale illegal commerce (from neighbouring nations) has stifled the expansion of economic activities in Manipur and other NER regions. For the NER to advance industrialization, formal trade is essential. India's international borders are electronically monitored thanks to the smart border fencing installations established under the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) initiative.

The border Haats

Border Haats are regional markets set up at specific points where two neighbouring countries' borders meet to encourage commerce and intercultural exchange. These markets are especially

important in areas where bordering local communities have shared historical, cultural, and economic ties. The likelihood of curbing illegal trade along the permeable borders increases with the establishment of border haats. They can increase bilateral trade while fostering the growth of effective value chains. These haats, which operate once a week on a certain day and for a set amount of time, have been constructed within five kilometres on either side of the international boundary. They have improved the income levels and living standards of impoverished and marginalized individuals by creating a variety of new job opportunities for them as vendors, drivers, labourers, and other support service providers, among others. Border haats have fostered people-to-people connections among residents in border areas while also strengthening cultural and economic ties. By giving women who engage as merchants at the haats additional opportunities, these haats have aided in the empowerment of women. They also experience difficulties like restricted infrastructure, connectivity problems, and regulatory barriers. Due to their modest size, they may also have a limited influence.

International SEZ

A thorough strategy is needed to improve trade and passenger flow. To facilitate direct freight shipments through Moreh ICP, this includes renovating the Friendship Bridge close to Gate 1 at the Moreh-Tamu border. The infrastructural gap must also be addressed in order to ensure greater connectivity. Combating the spread of counterfeit cash in local banks requires the establishment of foreign exchange facilities and the use of cutting-edge equipment to check foreign currency notes. Effective border operations depend on the adoption of precise Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for managing cargo and travellers, as well as the compatibility of customs Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) systems. Container freight handling will be simplified by incorporating cutting-edge technologies like Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), Mobile X-Ray Container Scanning System (MXCS), and Electronic Cargo Tracking System (ECTS). Understanding a sector's economic potential is essential. Security demands the installation of intelligent border barriers to prevent unauthorized imports. It is advised that Special Economic Zones (SEZs) be established to strengthen cultural and economic linkages. These areas can support cross-border commerce, business ventures, infrastructural development, and marketing hubs. Additionally, accelerating the Border Area Development Programme (BADP) building and deployment operations will aid in the general development of the region.

Chapter-II: Understanding the Insurgent Organization in Nagaland – *Edith Minz*

Introduction

The homeland of India has been the victim of many insurgent activities, Naxalites, and terrorism. Often the feeling of separation or demand for autonomy is the primary reason for the disturbances in these regions. India has battled several internal security issues ever since attaining independence in 1947. The majority of the institutional and academic discussion in India concerning national security has been centered on talking about the militancy in the region of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), which is controlled by India and where the Indian government has been waging a war against a Pakistan-backed insurgency since the late 1980s. In addition, substantial media attention has been given to the effects of the Naxalite-Maoist insurgency that occurs in the "Red Corridor," which runs through areas of eastern India.

North East India especially experienced the activities of Insurgency and guerilla warfare in the past years and is quite active in the states of Manipur, Assam, and Nagaland. These agents of Insurgency have also taken shelter and spread to the neighboring countries of Myanmar and Bangladesh. North East India has witnessed many ethnic conflicts and insurgency movements that are inevitable given its ethnic diversity. Ethnic groups in the North East cannot be defined based on geographical–territorial cartography alone, considering the fluidity of the population in the region over centuries amidst constitutional boundaries. Although there is no unanimity about the causes of homeland movements or insurgencies.

With recent tremors of conflicts in Manipur, it becomes even more important to address the issues of the Northeast. The clash between the dominant Meitei group and the Kuki Tribal community elucidates the example of an ethnic conflict for the recognition of the Meitei community as a scheduled tribe along with the Kukis Tribal Group. The clashes turned violent with hints of militancy involved in some regions. Maoist Insurgency is more visible and also declared as the most formidable security challenge facing the country, which posed a great threat since the 1950s. The porous borderlands of India especially become difficult to guard due to the presence of inhospitable terrains and the positioning of troops is a major challenge in northeastern India. Indeed, the North East cannot be defined based on geographical territorial cartography alone, the ethnic groups have a fluidity that no border or political divisions can define. And same is the case with the Myanmar Borderlands concerning the insurgency. There are various types of insurgent activities, hence insurgencies based on the deep-rooted historical ethos of independence that developed into a struggle for secession from India, the Naga

Insurgency follows this category of guerrilla warfare. However, in recent years the NSCN demand shifted from secession to one of a special federal relationship within India today.

In this chapter, although there has been a decline in the insurgency activity of Nagaland, the activity continues to haunt the citizens present in their region. Trapped in the web of underground leaders with illegal activities to fulfill their Agendas of a separate state of Nagaland, The Greater Nagalim, the long dream of NNC leaders. Naga insurgency was the first blast-out encounter that India witnessed after independence, one of the oldest Insurgencies Tremors of violence forced the government to invoke AFSPA which was another debated or controversial counter-insurgency operation to date as well. Termed as the mother of Insurgency, Nagaland Insurgency, this study would help to find causes and solutions of Naga insurgency to understand the problems of guerrilla warfare in the context of border areas of Myanmar especially and can be applied to the changing context.

Understanding the Insurgent Organization in Nagaland

Nagaland is part of the northeastern region of India earlier known as the North Eastern Frontier Agency. It is a beautiful diverse state of India with historical ties and tribal groups present in other Neighbouring countries such as Myanmar. The years of insurgent activities on ethnic lines in Nagaland have caused major havoc in the rest of northeast India as well. The Northeastern part of India has been played by insurgencies since its independence in 1947. And most violent among the armed movements had been the Naga National Council in 1950 and today the NSCN (IM). Nagaland covers around 16488 sq km of area and is part of a dense mountainous region with humid climatic conditions. That poses a recurring challenge to counter-insurgency measures in a hostile environment to border troops. Many states including Manipur state in the south, south Myanmar in the east, Assam in the west, and Arunachal Pradesh in the north surround Nagaland. In independent India, the Eastern Himalayas, Brahmaputra River, and neighboring regions of Myanmar and North East Indian States including Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Assam, Tripura, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Sikkim are together recognized as a single socio-political and geographical unit.

Before delving into the activities of an Insurgent organization, analyzing the difference in the functionalities and agendas of a Terrorist organization and an Insurgent Organization is crucial. Both groups try to extract political power through the act of militancy. According to Unal 2016, terrorism is considered to be a pejorative term. Guerilla warfare and Insurgency,

hold a much broader legitimacy due to their association and connection with liberation, freedom fighters, or political leaders.³⁷

According to Hayden, Insurgency is best defined as an organization that aims to overthrow or focuses on the destruction of a constituted government by various means of espionage, subversion, insurgency, armed conflict, and reallocating power within the country. Terrorist organizations (TO) aim to instill fear in the minds of government and citizens. The description of a group as a Terrorist organization is also not a politically neutral act. The reflection of the groups in media and public or by the government necessarily doesn't accurately represent the aims and their strategic approach in their group. In most cases, the classifying of the groups also depends on the political positioning and objectives of the political party.

An important distinction would be to identify the way groups interact with larger public communities. De Jwik, an international relations scholar, suggests that " the insurgents rely on the support of the populations whilst terrorists are individual or isolated groups or cells without broad public support ". Also defining the large community it's difficult to quantify the support, because of its fluidity in conflict environments. The idea of greater support for an Insurgency organization is generally more when it comes to conceptualization. In the case of demand for Greater Nagalim, initially by the NNC club the people of similar ethnic identities supported the groups soon after independence. Here the support can be quantified by the groups in favour of a Greater Nagalim. An earnest attempt to probe this definition would be to formulate an operational definition in the present context. Currently, Insurgency means running a parallel administration in the state by creating fear in the government and people.

The origins

The insurgency activities are deeply rooted in northeast India due to complex historical processes and demands for ethnic groups to recognize and preservation of their identities. With many ongoing conflicts in Southeast Asia, the roots of such conflicts arose from the colonial

³⁷ Ethnic Insurgencies and the Crime-Insurgency Nexus in India's North Eastern Region. European Foundation for south asian Studies. 2021. <https://www.efsas.org/publications/study-papers/insurgencies-in-india-north-eastern-region/>

past of India. The way colonial administration led the region politically for their benefit laid the issues for the areas after independence.

Ethnicities in Nagaland

Although the people of Nagaland are called 'Naga', there are mainly sixteen tribes in Nagaland, namely Konyak, Ao, Sema, Chakhesarg, Angami, Lotha, Sangtam, Yimchunger, Chang, Khamyungan, Pham, Zeliang, Rengma, Kuku, Kachari, Mikir and a few others. Various characteristics of the life of Naga make these unique groups so fascinating. Each tribe has its special design in weaving and a man in Nagaland can often be identified to his tribe by the cloth he/she wears. One of Nagaland's extraordinary features is its linguistic diversity of different tribes.

Genesis of Insurgency Terror

Nagaland has just two entry points from the rest of India including the road and a few Second World War jeepable tracks. Communication and transportation in these regions of Nagaland were almost nonexistent due to the rugged terrains in Nagaland, a hill region. It became difficult for rebel groups or Insurgent groups, time-consuming, challenging, and tiring. However, the presence of dense forests with partial visibility was exclusively used by the groups to hide and carry out illegal activities. The absence of state authorities and governance worked in the favor of the groups, as force multipliers.³⁸ The Northeastern India name evolved during the time of Colonial Rule due to administrative convenience and other political processes. The main reason for insurgency has remained the feeling of being separated from the mainland of India in terms of Identity ethnicity and underdeveloped regions especially present in Nagaland. A prolonged period of violence since independence has developed an atmosphere of violence and a strong military presence.

India inherited many problems from the colonial period. One energized by the tribesmen of the erstwhile Naga Hills and Tuensang that now constitute the State of Nagaland. Also taking the first path to violence historically was the State of Nagaland, followed by the states of Manipur and Mizoram, and then finally by the whole of the Northeastern region. The inhabitants of the Nagaland region have lived in isolation for many years and the various Naga languages can be traced back to the Tibetan Burma Family of languages.³⁹

³⁸ Insurgency in Nagaland. Lessons from India's Counter Insurgency Experience. India's Strategic Knowledge on Line

³⁹ Kotwal Dinesh. The Naga Insurgency Past and Future. Strategic Analysis, Volume 24, 2004- Issue 4. P. 751

From Naga Club to NNC

In 1839 during British rule, the Britishers came in direct contact with the people of Naga. As a means to control the area, they sent an expedition over Naga Hills however could not succeed. This process was termed *control from without*. In the second act, which was turned as *controlled from within*, the British tried to establish an outpost in the Nagar Hills but they did not succeed. It was evident that the British continued to adopt several means and methods to keep the Nagas under control and to access their territories.

Naga Club was formed in 1918 consisting of an organization consisting of local villages and headmen and youth of the population. In 1935, the British government enacted the Government of India Act 1935. Under this law, Naga Hills District has been declared an "excluded area" in Assam province. The constitutional position of Naga Hills district (present-day Nagaland state) until August 15, 1947, was that it was an ordinary district in the province of Assam and it was part of British India like any other district or province of India. At that time Naga Club wanted a withdrawal of the proposed reform, as they did not want to be under the control of Assam and be overwhelmed by the people of Assam and suppress the identity of Nagas. This was later cunningly twisted and interpreted by the insurgent groups for the demand of an Independent Naga state known as Nagaland, reiterating the fact that historically the Naga Club representing the Naga people didn't accept the union of India. The Naga Club, which was essentially established to promote the welfare and social aspirations of the Naga people under official patronage, was replaced 1946 by the Naga National Council (NNC), then in June 1946.

The beginning of Insurgency began when in dealing with the Nagas, the British adopted a variety of postures; however, their main thrust was always on colonial gains. Gradually, the British administration entered Nagaland. The state of Nagaland was known as the Naga Hills District earlier. The district administration was based in Kohima, the current state capital. During the Burma campaign, the Japanese invaded Nagaland and advanced to Kohima via Manipur. The British sought the help of Nagaland's people to fight against the Japanese invading forces. A local youth was trained in jungle warfare, ambush, raids, etc. Nagas who were tough mountain fighters adapted to guerrilla warfare easily and during the Burma campaign, they collected arms and ammunition from both the British Army and Japanese forces when they retreated from Nagaland towards Myanmar. The campaign's success gave them the confidence to wedge armed conflict. Burma Campaign was the invasion of the Japanese armies in northeastern India in the Second World War. After invading Burma, the Britishers sought

the help of the Manipur and Nagaland people to defend the administrative posts in northeast India.

The Rise of Major Insurgent Groups

Insurgency is one of the largest and worst challenges for the normal functioning of the state and administration. The rebel activities also ceased the developmental and other non-governmental activities. According to Nandini Bhasitha Insurgency is an obvious action of the weak against a strong force which is often adopted by aspirant political groups who were earlier oppressed tribes and classes and were deprived of opportunities.⁴⁰

The insurgency has been characterized as a long-term battle carried out deliberately and step by step to achieve particular intermediate goals that eventually lead to the overthrow of the present order. In modern times, insurgency encompasses a wide range of conflicts, from subversion to guerrilla warfare and the consolidation of guerilla bands into regular fighting forces. After the independence of India, the situation between the Indian army and the Nagas became worse. The increased strength of Underground Naga armies tensed the government of India. Naga National Council was formed in 1946. Its objective was the solidarity of all the Naga Tribes, including the ones who were inhabitants of unadministered areas and the hills that were earlier part of Assam. Demanding local autonomy and just safeguards for the protection and interests of the Naga Tribes.

Anagami Zapu Phizo from Burma was a significant leader who stirred the insurgency in Nagaland. Phizo helped the conflicts of the Naga people and brought them to the surface in a year in June 1947 and declared Nagaland as an independent state on 14th August 1947, the independence of India. It was in 1953 that Mr. Phizo, President of NNC on 11 December 1950, started underground activities. In 1955 he brought the warring factions of the Nagas, and their armed groups together and framed a so-called "Constitution". The armed revolt/insurgency then broke out. The many reasons for the eruption in Insurgency were fear of loss of ethnic and cultural identity of Naga people being part of Assam India. This strategy of instilling fears was used excessively by Mr. AZ Phizo. Inadequate knowledge of the bureaucrats leaders, and policymakers in Assam and New Delhi. Hence people considered the Naga Group NNC as their only hope. Naga National Council set up its government known as - the Federal Government of Nagaland on March 22, 1956. An underground parliament was also formed by the NNC

⁴⁰ Basistha Nandini. India Myanmar Cross Border Insurgency. Asteriskos Journal of International and Peace Studies, 2008. P.151

activists and Naga Home guard called the Tatar Homo. The relations between the Naga government and the Burmese communist party were amicable and supported their activities for independent Nagalim. However, It became part of the Indian Union with parallel Insurgency activities. President Radhakrishnan inaugurated the State of Nagaland at Kohima and P Shillo Ao became the Chief Minister. Around the same time, the Indian Government could be witnessed putting a lot of pressure on the NNC ultimately leading them to sign the "Shillong accord ", with some members of the NNC.

With the absence of important leaders such as NNC President Phizo, Isak Chishi Swi, and Thuingaleng Muivah there was the emergence of fractions in the NNC groups. Finally on 31st January 1980 national socialist Council of Nagaland was formed after violent internal clashes. The NSCN split into two groups: NSCN (IM) under Isaac Chusi Sau and NSCN (K) under SS Khaplang.⁴¹ These two insurgent groups came to be seen as the mother of all insurgencies in the Northeast region of India. The objective of Greater Nagalim was amplified in these insurgent groups. The objective under this included containing all contiguous Naga inhabited regions. Naga Tribes were present in different states of Arunachal Pradesh Manipur Assam and also Sagaing divisions and the Kachin tract of Mhannar. According to the map of the Greater, Nagalim's length was about 1,20,000 sq km while the state of Nagaland consisted of a 16,527 sq km area.

NSCN (IM)

Nscn IM operates on the lines of the state and is structured in the same way. It Assumes the functioning of a parallel government with 11 subdivisions to control parts of Manipur and Nagaland with two separate Wings including political and military. This insurgent group also has its Ministries including home, defense, finance, and Foreign Affairs. Garner also supports formal and non-formal words through media bodies. The Government of the People's Republic of Nagaland raises funds for the Naga by sending emissaries abroad. The presence of NSCN is the leading cause of insurgency problems in Northeast India as it has a deep nexus between illegal activities of Drug trafficking and the smuggling of arms in South Asia through the porous borders of India and Myanmar of different North Eastern states. A violent clash involved the borders of the Myanmar region. As evident in the Naga Kuki clashes in 1993 in Manipur. The

⁴¹ Selva Arockiai. Naga Insurgency. International Journal of Recent Research, Research Gate, 2018.p.838

fight was over the control of the smuggling of drugs and the illegal border trade through the Tamu- Moreh region insert map.

NSCN-IM's demand for Greater Nagalim is based on the territorial unification of all Naga-inhabited areas in Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh. Therefore, any resolution based on territorial change will not be acceptable to these states, as demonstrated by the violent protests in Manipur in 2001. The Government of India cannot give any part of Manipur to Nagaland as Nagalim. Because other tribes than Nagas live in Nagaland. The hilly region has long resisted Naga rule. Nor can you conquer another country's territory and turn it into Nagalim. Therefore, this demand remains unmet and poses a challenge for governments. This was the point of development of Kuki insurgent groups in Manipur one of the most powerful insurgent groups in North East India. There were inter-border conflicts between the insurgent groups of different northeastern states.

Dynamics of NSCN K in Myanmar

Khaplang wing popularly known as NSCN (K). Shangwang Shangyung Khaplang, the chairman of the NSCN (k). Khaplang has close ties with the Myanmar Nagas, who helped him to set up camps and track the movements of other Indian Insurgent Groups and also engaged in selling arms sourced from the Yunnan Province of Khaplang was the direct link between the Indian insurgents and Myanmar and the possession of knowledge of all the logistics bases in Myanmar and India. NSCN is quite active in eastern parts of Nagaland particularly rooted in districts of Arunachal Pradesh namely Tirap and Changlang. It has a cadre strength of around 2,000, with Konyaks belonging to both Myanmar and India. the Pangmeis of Myanmar, the Aos of Mokokchung district, the Phoms and Yimchangers of Tuensang district, the Angamis, the Semas, and the Lothas. Also runs a government in exile popularly known as the Government of the People's Republic of Nagaland, with general headquarters located in Eastern Nagaland in Myanmar.

This group has a footprint in the Upper Sagaing Division of Myanmar, opposite Mon, and a presence from Changlang in Arunachal Pradesh to Phek in Nagaland⁴², with emerging different factions within this insurgent organization. The NSCN (K) established a formal presence in Myanmar by signing a written accord with the Myanmar government on April 09, 2012. The recent talks with the Myanmar government solidified the presence of an insurgent

⁴² Shailendra Arya. Naga Insurgency and Leadership in Transition. Centre for Land and warfare Studies. Spring Journals. 2018

group in the 2016 peace conference. NSCN K was responsible for attacking many regions in Nagaland, upper Assam, the southern districts of Manipur, and the Tirap-Changlang districts of Arunachal Pradesh. The finances for such Insurgent groups usually derive from extortion, illegal drug trafficking, kidnapping, and terrorist activities.

However, the death of NSCN K leader Khaplang will bring some significant change in the dynamics of the insurgency politics in North East India, as it was the organization for extending its presence in Myanmar. The insurgent activities in Nagaland have indeed reduced over the years with the death of eminent leaders who led the struggles for the organization. For most rebel groups, NSCN is now a role model.

The Descent of the Naga Rebellion

One of the main driving forces of any insurgent movement is ideological beliefs and hope for success. No movement can be sustained for a long time without ideological beliefs. Greater Nagalim and has only one administration Governance for all Nagas been the driving force of the continuous struggle of the Nagas. However, the Nagas movement seems to have disappeared. The initial goals and ideological stance on that basis were initialized and established. Leaders and executives now seem motivated by More material benefits arising from conflict. Nowadays, most Naga insurgent groups are nothing but extortionists and criminals Union. It wouldn't be wrong to say that it has become an industry that represents a greater challenge to overcome given the circumstances. They have added money and resources to derail the solution further. No ethnic group or segment of society is willing to compromise or address other concerns. The bond between different peoples. The stands were torn apart and replaced with distrust. This fog of mistrust has resulted crisis of trust and identity among different ethnic groups. And even if the armed struggle is stopped by the Security Forces (SF), The political establishment was unable to end this initiative.⁴³

North East India is one of the most troubled areas and currently, India not only deals with 30 Insurgent Organizations but also transborder linkages of the existing Insurgent groups beyond Mainland India. Most of these organizations have strategic alliances and act as force multipliers. The cross-border linkages have made the border situations more prone to conflict dynamics. The demands of secession or autonomy and the right to self-determination and a

⁴³ Singh Pradeep. The Quest for Nagalim: Fault Lines and Challenges. *Journal of Defense Studies*. Vol.12, No.2, April-June 2018. p.49.

plethora of ethnic groups fighting to protect their distinct identity and culture are borderless when it comes to the case of India Myanmar borderlands as well.

Mapping Border Linkages in Myanmar

Cross-border linkages of Insurgent Organisations are widespread on both sides of the border. Despite the efforts of the governments of India and Myanmar, Insurgency remains the main challenge in Border regions, whether or not they are oppressive. North Eastern Insurgents use Myanmar both as a shelter and sanctuary. And Nagaland insurgent outfit organizations like NSCN have strong established roots in Myanmar, especially in certain regions because of common ethnic identities. The intricate web of historical, political, and social-cultural factors has contributed to Insurgency linkages. The insurgency Nexus has deep roots in both countries. Understanding these linkages leads us to connect ethnic groups of India and Myanmar. Earlier India and Myanmar shared a porous border of around 1600 km, which for many years has facilitated the sharing of goods, movement of people, and cultural exchange across borders, before the Independence of India. These insurgency links have exploited this geographical advantage, using the porous borders for their advantage. The Law and order of the countries, especially with a focus on internal security, is one of the three critical noneconomic visions of the North East Vision 2020. However, the rising Insurgent activities have affected the state-building processes among various northeast Indian states. And insurgents have been using these porous areas of these territories to travel among northeast and neighboring countries like Bangladesh and Myanmar.

The case of Indian insurgents in Myanmar

India being the largest democratic country in the world, still witnessed the dominance of insurgent organizations in northeast India. According to some intelligent reports, NSCN and the United Liberation Front of Assam have positioned their training camps as a source of financial resources. It allows for major arms supply contact in Myanmar and other illegal activities including arms trafficking and narcotics trade in borders.

Evolution of Insurgency in Nagaland

In 1966 the Naga rebels also started reaching out to China. The first batch left Nagaland and reached Yunnan China through the Sagaing Division of Burma and Kachin State. Similarly, Mizo and Manipur rebels started reaching China using the HKAI Kachin corridor of Myanmar to reach Yunnan. Later after the liberation of Bangladesh, there was an increase in activities of

Northeastern rebels like NSCN, PLA, and ULFA. They also started sourcing and shifting some activities in the Region of Bangladesh. The newly independent country became an easy target for Insurgents to carry out activities. The threats from the two countries were visible to India's internal security.

Tracing Ethnic Diversity

Ethnic diversity plays a crucial role in fostering the linkages among people and organizations. Myanmar, a South East Asian country is home to many ethnic groups, each comprising different identities, cultures, and aspirations. In certain areas, ethnic kinship and social relationships provided a safe place across borders for Insurgent groups to find sympathy among the kin communities and exacerbate the insurgency dynamics. As Jaswant Singh the Former foreign minister rightly said ' A dozen separatist groups Including the dominant NSCN, which has bases in Northwest Myanmar.

The establishment of NSCN Isak Chis Swu Thuingaleng Muivah and Khaplang was done with the support of Burmese Nagas. Burmese Nagas was a group living in the Naga self-administered zone in the Sagaing region of Myanmar, which is mainly dependent on subsistence farming and hunting. The presence of similar ethnic groups helped the leaders to expand their organization and pursue the aim for Greater Nagalim and easy access to those territories. Apart from that, the formal connection with the Kachin Independence Army of Myanmar was utilized for training and supply of arms. And engaged in other illegal activities like kidnapping, extortion, and ransom demands that become frequently common. And caused a threat to the economic operations of both India and Neighboring countries. With the ceasefire agreement supported by the Burmese government, with the Kachin Defence Army, the Kachin Independence Organization and other tribal groups have gained significant political independence in Myanmar. This step in this direction is a threat to India's Safety as a neighboring country, especially in an already turmoiled region of North East India.

Several Naga Insurgent groups also went to China and East Pakistan to obtain training, modern arms, ammunition equipment, and money to increase insurgency operations in Nagaland. Insurgents moved through the dense forest and difficult terrains. Burmese army and government have less control over the regions of North Burma. This situation was fully exploited by China to seek intrusion and control over northern Burma. China always had a welcoming demeanor toward Naga Insurgents. The reason argued for this is the response of the Indian Government towards granting Shelter to Tibetan refugees who came to India to avoid Chinese repression. Around 1968 it was confirmed that Isac Swu with their group of Insurgents

also had talks in China across Burma. It was later identified by the Indian government that China had a significant role in providing training and offering a wide range of assistance to Naga Insurgents. China was also ready to send some advisors to the Groups if they set up a government in exile based in a suitable place in China and guided them in foreign relations through a rebel radio station and permitting them to use propaganda machinery.

The envoys such as the Ambassador regularly meet with representatives of armed separatist organizations in Yunnan province and establish contacts in the regions. China's advances have been supplemented by the formation of the 'United National Liberation Front of Western Southeast Asia,' a Myanmar-based organization of insurgent groups that is operating in India's northeastern states (UNLFW). The UNLFW includes the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang), the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), the Kamtapur Liberation Organisation, and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland.⁴⁴ The intentions of the Chinese mainland were clear to infiltrate and weaken India's Northeast borders through the promotion of insurgent activities and giving them incentives to carry out their tasks.

External Links

Apart from that East Pakistan also utilised the Insurgency in Nagaland and later in Mizoram in 1966. Naga Insurgents develop contacts with Mizo Insurgents to fight for their common cause. And since the route to East Pakistan was through Manipur, which has a good amount of tribal and Naga population. Through this relationship, the Naga and Mizo Insurgents spread to tribal areas of Manipur as well. This way Naga Insurgents received material support from China and East Pakistan, and secured their bases and sanctuary in Burma. Even the Manipur woes have been aggravated by the insurgent activities in neighboring Nagaland as well as in the districts of the state. One such example is the dominance maintained in two national highways NH 39 and NH 53, which cuts off the links between Manipur and Assam and mainland India. NH 39 connects Dimapur Nagaland to Imphal and NH 53 connects Silchar in Assam to Imphal. The rampant cases of extortion of money from trucks around 20,000 to 30,000 were reported in 2009 in the name of good tax, vehicle tax, and godown taxes. In the absence of the cooperation of the government of Nagaland and New Delhi, the impact of such extortion has been heavily felt on Manipur's essential commodities.

⁴⁴ Yousouf Danish. "The Strategic Alliance of Trans-Border Insurgent Groups: A reason for the turmoil in North-East." *Centre for Land warfare Studies*, 2022.

Golden Triangle in South East Asia

The primary source of finances for Indian Insurgents is derived from the narcotics trade across borders. However, the Northeastern proximity to the Golden Triangle (Laos, Thailand, Myanmar) has been exploited extensively for the narcotics trade. With the help of flourishing drug cartels in the South East Asian Region, these insurgent groups have mainly benefitted.

The administration's focus on regions such as Moreh (Manipur) India Myanmar borders and Nagaland (Dimapur) were identified as the three main centers for drug transportation. According to a 2001 assessment, the region is believed to be “home to more than 30 percent of the country's total intravenous drug users”. The infamous drug cartel has caused infiltration into the Indian North East markets, especially in Nagaland as well.

Till 1971, the US was a major provider of arms, finance, and intelligence equipment to India's largest North East insurgent organization NSCN-IM. With east Pakistan before being liberated Bangladesh provided assures supplies of weapons and arms. NSCN IM insurgent organization has established good reliable contacts through its ethnic networks in Thailand and southeast Asian nations. And also, a good network system in Bangladesh and Myanmar where the demands for drugs and weapons are also there. Interestingly this IO also receives a good turn of aid from ISI, apart from their financial operations.

The Presence of Myanmar's Anti-State Group in India

Anti-state activities have been pretty common in Myanmar since independence because of the unstable junta government. Different ethnic groups and pro-democratic groups are opposing the current government in Myanmar. And they have been using the Northeast lands of India to hide away from the regime. The story of Arakan is another visible anti-state activity existing in Myanmar. The National United Party of Arakan is a revolutionary organization consisting of Arakanese people who are fighting to restore the region of Arakan which long ago was not invaded by Burmese. And successfully occupied the Arakanese Kingdom. A lot of anti-state activities in Myanmar have been settled in Mizoram. Similarly, the Indian government allowed to set up of base camps in Mizoram and also helped in supplying them with limited weapons and training.

Pro Democrat activities of Burma have been seeking Shelter in the northeastern region of India. Democracy and human rights advocates have supported these decisions. However, the Myanmar authorities have deprived their citizens of these rights since 1962. With the formation of the National League for Democracy under Aung Sang Suu Kyi, she as an exceptional leader is focused on gathering international support against the Tatmadaw government in Myanmar.

With the democratic uprising of students in 1987 hundreds of students and political dissidents in India's Northeastern states. India's stance to support the democratic activities in Myanmar was motivated to avoid external security issues for India by increasing China's presence in the Regions of Myanmar. China's growing influence and closeness to the Dictator government was a concern. The crossing Myanmar students were promised shelter and support. The case of Border linkage has been visible in various stances. The availability of support in the forms of arms and weapons, a haven due to similar ethnic identities in the regions along the borders. However most importantly a border permissible in nature, the presence of a defined border lacks the border fencing to prevent the spread of illegal activities carried out by the insurgents.

Impact on society, politics, and women

Insurgency activities heavily influence and affect the society, politics, and development in the Northeast regions. And have infringed upon human rights and forged a severe threat to the internal security of the country. The Naga resurrection posed a significant threat to India from the advent of its formation and affected the nation-building project. The Nagas have never had a homogenous identity and incorporated many ethnic entities. These created feelings of division and isolation among various groups. And the beginning of insurgencies deeply amplified the challenges even further on its citizens.

The public psyche is deeply wounded in such cases among the citizens. A fear of psychosis increases the insecurity among people due to frequent kidnapping, violations of human rights, extortion of money, and rampant corruption in the regions. The failure of the state to distinguish common crime from insurgent activities is one of the many challenges that has led to inefficiency in the running of the state activities.

Naga is a broader term under it comes different Naga Tribes and the amalgamation of all these tribes forms the demand for a greater Nagalim. These Naga tribes for years have believed in strong ties among communities and established that these are essential for building a strong Society. They have a patrilineal system where they trace the clan roots from their male figures. Central Naga life revolves around family, clan, and culture, and is not preferred to be interfered with by an outsider. The case of assimilation into the Indian Union was such an example in 1947. They are passionately attached to their land, Village, and the local government and tribal justice system only. In the olden days, Naga used to accumulate wealth through honest and legal ways the pillar of Naga's life, and anguished the hoarding of wealth as prestige held an eminent part of the local community.

Today the reality has changed with the structure of the Naga Society, especially after the genesis of insurgency. The concern for the community has vanished and given way to individualism. The Naga struggle during independence that started with ethics and ideology is now driven in the form of 'Taxes', and extortion on a large scale. Corruption Intertwined in the Naga Society has become a menace in the government offices of Nagaland. Corruption is one of the factors that hinders good governance and gives birth to several problems. The term 'corruption' has been defined by Ackerman⁴⁵ as 'using public goods or capacity for private benefits. Wherever there is insurgency, corruption is a precursor. But it does not mean that wherever there is corruption there has to be insurgency. Teets and Chenoweth opine that corruption and terrorism (insurgency) coexist in a mutually reinforcing relationship.⁴⁶ According to Ezung, some causes of corruption were the complacent attitude of the citizens, the culture of donation expectations for a job, unprincipled non-governmental organization leaders, expectations of getting work done faster, and the practice of sanctifying the corrupt officials by his community. In the words of Ezung, the primary factor was the attitude of people, in his study of corruption in Nagaland. The findings pointed towards misutilization or misappropriation of government funds bribery and nepotism⁴⁷. The existence of corruption was normalized in the society When Wouters⁴⁸ quotes the Governor of Nagaland he mentions, that the land of Nagaland is rich, However, corruption makes the people poor. Adding that "corruption is not the exception but the very norm of government and governance. It not only exists but thrives." The analysis proves the functioning of society as a corrupted one to gain power for those who accumulated and the ones who wanted to be protected against any atrocities conducted by the powerful ones. The prevalence of injustice gives impetus to Insurgent Organizations to thrive along with influential leaders and bureaucrats.

As mentioned in Purkayastha,⁴⁹ local Politicians, Some of the local politicians have vested their interest in continuing the violence so that there's a constant flow of funds to Insurgent states in the name of controlling the states. This also meant the officials and politicians wanted the problems of Insurgency to sustain to receive certain benefits from the government. However, the funds do not always trickle down to the people of Nagaland.

⁴⁵ Ackerman, Rose, Susan. *Corruption: A Study in Political Economy*, Academic Press Inc. Sandiego 1978.

⁴⁶ 3 Teets, Jessica & Chenoweth, Erica. *To Bribe or to Bomb: Do Corruption and Terrorism Go Together?*; in *Corruption, Global Security, and World Order*, Ed. Robert I Rotberg, Brookings Institution Press, Washington DC.2007

⁴⁷ Ezung, Zarenthung T. *Corruption and its Impact on Development: A Case study of Nagaland*, International Journal of Rural Studies (IJRS), vol. 19, no. 1, April.2012

⁴⁸ Wouters, Jelle JP. *In the Shadows of Naga Insurgency*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.2018

⁴⁹ Purkayastha, Rakhil. *Roots of Insurgency in Northeast India*, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi.

According to an opinion survey conducted by the Morung Express, the data showed the level of corruption may not be as big as observed in other states. But if Nagaland receives the same amounts from Delhi and the spending on actual purposes is analyzed the results would lead Nagaland as the most corrupt state⁵⁰. There is a system in function that aids in organizing the looting of public money by the statesmen who swear to protect Nagaland. The minister, MLA, and even the bureaucrats are involved.

The whole Region has been plagued by corruption due to which efforts of the Central government often go to vain with a corrupt ecosystem in society already operating. Naga worship 'wealth' as their god believing that economic development is the solution to all their problems. The success is calculated in terms of jobs. The evolution of such culture may have allowed the dominant Insurgent groups to deepen their roots in the administration systems and paralyze them by seeping in and offering wealth. Witnessing immoral and unethical behavior, people imbibed such ideas and accepted it was permissible to engage in corrupt practices. According to Chandrika, for the politicians of Nagaland, the most treasured thing was personal gain and prestige, which were considered far greater than ethics, principles, ideology, discipline, and loyalties.⁵¹ And argues, that some sections of Naga society have become corrupt, selfish greedy, and short-sighted. It's also reflected in their demands during elections which vary from pork, supply orders, and government jobs, which has increased the tendency to give rise to corruption, frustration, and social turmoil. She mentions although the people are aware of such rampant corruption, they cannot be blamed since most fields are corrupt and that any kind of preventive mechanism can easily be bent or manipulated by those in power. The impact of Insurgency on society is quite interlinked and intertwined in this manner, as it provides opportunities and easy paths for it to flourish with connections without any harsh punishments or laws. The nature of society is to be equally blamed for the growing Insurgency especially along borders and within Myanmar.

The Silent Struggles of women and children

Insurgency is not new in the Northeast and has been used synonymously in most Northeastern states of India. The continued struggle for identity and self-determination with diverse social cultural, and political aspirations with the economic hardships had been borne by the

⁵⁰ The Morung Express. Do you believe that Nagaland is the 'corruption capital' of India? 7th November <http://morungexpress.com/do-you-believe-nagaland-corruption-capital-india>

⁵¹ Singh Chandrika. *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, Mittal Publications. 2004.

communities here for the last 60 years.⁵² And particularly the Naga Insurgency assertion of separate identity and nationhood felt its implications on the regions of Manipur, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh. However, the demands have changed since the signing of the Naga Peace Accord between the Government of India and NSCN (IM) on August 3, 2015. Naga groups have changed their standpoint from complete independence to assimilation to mainstream India with special zones to protect the Naga identity, culture, and language in major Naga-dominated areas of Northeast India.

Another impact has been on certain sections of society especially women and children who are internally displaced from the region they've residing in for many years. Internal displacement of the population became more frequent as an impact of Insurgency depending upon the number of Insurgent organizations in that region. North East has witnessed eight cases of a significant conflict of induced displacements in recent years. For instance, the displacements of Hindu Muslim Bengali descent from and with Assam, the displacements of Bengalis from Meghalaya particularly from the Shillong. And particularly the displacement of Naga's Kukis and Paites in Manipur. This chapter aims to explore the various nature of impacts on Society, women, and politics of Nagaland, quite similarly followed in other Northeastern states of India due to its diverse ethnic groups.

Women and AFSPA in 1958

The insurgency in Manipur and Nagaland intertwined in many areas because of the presence of the erstwhile NSCN and NSCN IM. The main contention can be seen from the perspective of aspirational clashes between hill people and valley people. Naga's interest also lies in the Naga-inhabited areas in Manipur, due to Aspirations for Great Nagalim or Naga homeland. The states of Manipur and Nagaland have been disturbed due to the case of the Imposition of AFSPA Armed Forces Special Act 1958. In May a referendum was not conducted to demand independence for all Naga inhabited areas, it resulted in favor of Naga Independence. However, the efforts and ensuing mobilization of the Armed Forces by the Union government meant the advent of armed struggles which later amplified in Nagaland to other regions. In addition to AFSPA the Naga Regulation Act 1962 gave immense power to the governor to remove any class of residents to any other area or dislocate in the name of Nagaland's security. And in the name of safety unprecedented violence and atrocities were inflicted on Naga women in the

⁵² Prasenjit Biswas and Chandansuklabaidya. *Ethnic life-worlds in Northeast India: An Analysis*. Sage Publication, 2008.

name of counter-insurgency operations. Married or not the women were subjected to violence in public places. The allegations of providing shelter to Insurgents were that they would simply be interrogated and later detained and raped. And these allegations of atrocities continued till 1974.

Not only does the victim suffer from stigmatization from society (in Manipur, for example, the literal meaning of the word “rape” is “elimination of one’s esteem”), and loss of marriage opportunities and thus livelihood opportunities, but there is no proper access to justice as the perpetrators have immunity under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. The impact of armed violence on children has also been considerable and can be divided into three main areas: displacement and loss of service access, particularly health and education; direct targeting by the security forces and insurgent groups; and child labor and violence in the home.

Nagaland shares a border with Myanmar and Insurgency and counter-insurgency activities for years have inflicted a dark spot on the normal functioning of the life of women, men, and children. When a family is displaced by the burden of resetting the families and fighting for one's protection a woman has to make arrangements for survival. Thangzakhup Tombing argues women are most vulnerable to being targeted by the security forces and as well as the non-state actors like the insurgent groups. In conflict situations owing to the loss of loved ones, destruction of the house and stigmatization of rape, and facing other economic hurdles.

Deducing the Counter-Insurgency Measures of India

India has a long-standing counter-insurgency experience in the northeast, originating from multiple insurgencies since the 1950s. Counterinsurgency experience in India has gone through shares of successes and failures. Analyzing the counter-insurgency of the government, some best practices are conceptualized for a better mechanism for counter-insurgency. Alex suggests a typology that directly relies on Paul Staniland's definition of "armed orders" inside India's COIN operation in Naga Northeast India. It defines four major patterns of "order" and the forces that influence the state's use of force in connection to these patterns. According to the typology, counterinsurgents utilize force in response to internal political dynamics, external insurgency environment dynamics, and threat perceptions to undermine, alter, and defend the status quo. During the time of World War Indian army fought successful battles in different parts of the world to further the interests of the British Empire. The Indian army was oriented towards handling and participating in a conventional war. The first experience of combat was in the Jammu and Kashmir conflicts, to push the Pakistani invaders and attack them. Following the

attack by the Chinese army in 1962, until 1963 the Insurgency term was not heard and only the British revolution was termed as Insurgency.

No insurgency can ever sustain itself without the support of the civil population, their support is the lifeline of Insurgent groups who want the legitimation for food, manpower, and information. Therefore, the state must always target the civilians to separate civilians from the Rebel groups. Intelligence or information is an important factor in Counter-insurgency operations. The Indians took their anti-Insurgency lessons from the British and Americans in Malaya and Vietnam respectively. While fighting one strategy adopted by General Briggs was Operation Starvation in June 1951. And it came to be known as the brainchild of accountant insurgency thinker Robert Thompson. Basically, the objective was to start the insurgent groups as a source of food and support and stop them from taking shelter in the villages.

When insurgency erupted in Nagaland Indian Army was employed there, who had served during the Second World War. So, with the eruption, it was natural to depend upon the experience of the Indian army, which served under the British. The other Insurgency in China, Malaya, Indochina Vietnam were inspired by the political and military ideologies of Mao according to lessons from Counterinsurgency.

The scenario of Naga's eruption of Insurgency was influenced by tribal affinity, Naga unity and religion, and exploitation of unawareness, lack of knowledge and vision among the Naga leaders. The situations and reasons behind this Insurgency were different and posed a challenge to the government on how to deal with it. Many of the political leaders in Assam and New Delhi participated in the freedom struggle through nonviolence, however, there was reluctance to accept the ground realities in Nagaland at that time. Indian authorities earlier failed to understand the value of means and or any medium other than the military to curb the rising insurgency during the initial stages when it began. The lack of awareness about political realities and ignorance among the Naga leaders blinded them. The great ideas and concepts in the sixth schedule of the constitution were unknown to the Naga tribes. And hence the reluctance to accept and respect the Indian constitution.

Due to limited military exposure and the success of the British in pushing Bank Japanese out of Nagaland and Myanmar, it convinced the leadership that foreign powers could not control Naga for fear of Naga might. In the initial phase, there was a lack of understanding, close linkages, and coordination between Political goals, military goals, and objectives in combating insurgency. There were mainly three phases of Indian counter-insurgency (a) Induction of SF (Security force) to counter armed rebellion/insurgency. Bringing the situation under manageable limits.

(b) Initiation of political activities and processes to meet reasonable aspirations and demands of Nagas people. Including giving status and powers of the state to the people of Nagaland, like other states of India.

(c) Consolidation of success through a combination of military, political, economic, academic, and other initiatives. This also includes dialogue/negotiations with the insurgent groups, giving them the opportunity to come out of jungles and experience the advantages of stability (staying in pre-designated camps along with their arms), witness closely the lifestyle of the young generation who keep themselves away from violence and gun culture.

Search for a Counter Insurgency Theory

Due to a lack of experience in combating insurgency use of military force was the only option available to security forces in the initial phases of insurgency. However, with time and experience, philosophy doctrine mechanism, and tactics have been evolved and implemented in the system. In lessons from Counterinsurgency, the use of military means alone is not capable enough to solve insurgencies in the long term. Those combating insurgency particularly the army who are geared, trained, and motivated to fight conventional war must learn and adapt their thinking to the problem of insurgency, or be defeated. The imposition of AFSPA in 1958, was implemented in many regions in Disturbed areas, the carrying out of operations and arrest without warrant, firing on suspicious people, and lastly, any forceful actions were deemed suitable, but with caution and certain conditions. The large-scale violence continued in the Naga hills earlier part of Assam leading to a loss of in faith towards Indian government.

Surrender and rehabilitation is another instance. Mr Laldenga who started the insurgency in Mizoram, remained in Pakistan for almost two decades, became Chief Minister after signing the Mizoram accord. Some of the other leaders have realized the futility of violence and destruction and rightly shunned violence. Under their leadership, Mizoram is one of the most peaceful and progressive states of NE. The nature of counter-insurgency plans and campaigns has proved to be effective in some cases such as Mizoram. Hence the proper mechanism behind counter-insurgency operations is very important.

There are similar cases in Nagaland too. Those Naga insurgents who gave up arms and violence are among prosperous people today. At the microscopic level in lessons from counter-insurgency, the counter-insurgency and Jungle warfare schools are an example of another military initiative supported by the Union government. It imparts military training and is among the pioneer military training institutions of India, it's responsible for providing counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism, Jungle warfare, unconventional warfare, and so on. Special

training with a focus on combating insurgency is given beginning with pre-induction and orientation training. Apart from the Indian army, paramilitary forces, state Armed police, and state police are also provided training. Such measures aim to initiate a duty towards your state that helps bind the citizens against insurgent groups and work for peace and tranquility in the society.

At the Naga level, a counter-insurgency philosophy was followed and is now applicable in the entire northeast, first and foremost is to respect the culture of the Society especially the clan ties of Nagaland Tribes both in Nagaland and Myanmar, Ill-treatment of surrendered Insurgents in the presence of the people send and observing human rights is crucial for sending the message of peace and order, and simultaneously avoiding the third-degree methods to extract information. Attempting to meet the popular aspirations of the citizens to gain trust, especially among the victims and vulnerable sections of society such as women and youth, creating a good favorable image of governance mechanism without any political leanings is required for a showing support to the aspirations of the people. The attitude of the government to resolve and determination for the upliftment of people is another aspect the Indian government needs to Focus on.

Psychological Campaigning

As part of the overall counter-insurgency philosophy systematic psychological operations are conducted. The basic aim required is to emphasize and educate people especially youth the futility of violence and separation from India. According to the accounts of the General, the media has always played a constructive role in the insurgency landscape of Nagaland. One striking feature mentioned by the Indian army is to never allow Insurgents to operate in large groups, no incident ever recorded seems to reflect the large group of insurgents around SF camps or any post. Such instances were witnessed in cases of Afghanistan, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and now again in Afghanistan, not providing opportunities to strongly operate together as it posed a bigger threat to the Army. The border counter-insurgency measures termed as anti-state activities are another area where these measures are implemented. Delving into these provides us insights into the international cooperation challenge between two countries over Insurgency, a recurring conflict.

Nagaland Myanmar Counterinsurgency Paradigms

Despite the close historical Ties between India and Myanmar countries, their relationship went through many hiccups, in the post-independence period they enjoyed friendly relations from

1948 to 1962 and India also provided Rangoon (Yangon) with military and economic resistance to fight Insurgents along the borders. During that time India's former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Premier of Burma, U Nu were active in eastern promoting political and diplomatic ties between India and Myanmar. Indian Myanmar has been trying to improve the bilateral relationship. Since 1995 India has been a dialogue partner of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations ASEAN and Myanmar has also become a full-fledged member of this regional Organization. In July when the government of India permitted tribes on both sides of the Indo-Myanmar border to cross the border up to 40 km, without the requirement of passports. The Indian rebels started to utilize this opportunity becoming a threat to the country. An adequate Approach to Counterinsurgency is crucial, modern state systems either democratic or not terms Insurgency as anti-state activities. Again, this way of sheer suppression is never accepted and ultimately peace and tranquility are important.

Peace talks

Given Insurgency problems and underdevelopment, both India and Myanmar engage in peace talks with Insurgent outfits and organizations. The mediation between the Naga Mothers Association, the Government of India, and NSCN IM was signed one on 25th July 1997, where both sides agreed to cease the offensive activities such as kidnapping, extortion, threatening, etc.

Additionally, according To Nandini, restoring normalcy is our prime focus. Both governments should follow some theory in the improvement of security and economic conditions that will be the ultimate solution. Responsibility of the government to make people understand that insurgency could not bring anything except distress.

Rule of law

Counter Insurgents are bound to operate under the rule of law according to Lt Col David Galula, he emphasizes on the argument of the legal mandate. And its conduct should meet the high legal standards. Operating under the law brings a necessary limitation against the use of disproportionate forces, which can lead to the alienation of the population. For instance, the UK mandates its counter-insurgency troops to operate within the jurisdiction of UK domestic law and international rules of engagement. Consequently, the forces have to be brief about the various rules of engagement regarding arrest-search interrogation technique intelligence by using a standard operating procedure. Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions of 1945 it talks about international laws relating to internal armed conflicts. So ultimately any fours

must always meet with the legitimate purpose of the conflict, conflict resolution, and defeat of the armed insurgency. This focus on rule of law is applicable to international borders as well as within Nagaland.

Fencing the border areas

Mr. Id Swami disclosed at Imphal that the government of India is considering cutting off supply channels of not this time in urgent groups from the eastern border, hence fencing the Indo-Myanmar border. The fencing proposal was aimed to counter cross-border insurgency by groups such as Nagaland-based NSCN IM and NSCN Khaplang, known for training cadres in camps based in Myanmar as well as smuggling narcotics and arms through porous borders. Fencing could be followed by the deployment of arms forces. This was based on the idea that porous borders were more prone to the challenges of insurgent groups using them for illegal activities.

According to Namrata Goswami⁵³ in her article in small war journals, she highlighted another crucial measure to work on a synchronized application of efforts from the sides of the leaders, the military economy, the NGO's paramilitary forces to be successful. There are at least four operational clarifications to deal with them. Firstly, a clear diagnosis of the insurgent's problem needs to be clear to forces, no room for ambiguity should be there. Secondly, conducting counter-insurgency operations within the classic ethos of adaptability and flexibility. This requires the support and initiatives from local leaders and lower-level commanders sharing the on-ground realities existing over the border's areas or within any Village or district. Thirdly for operational clarity, each force must be clear about its task allocation, and where an inter-agency force is required. The final operational clarity very important to implement is that the ultimate goal is to control and secure the population.

Operational Clarity

Operational clarity is a challenge in the Northeast, in the Northeast's insurgency-affected states, there are various levels of decision-making, with the state administration in charge of requesting army deployment to preserve law and order. However, ceasefires with armed organizations are orchestrated by the Union Home Ministry, with peace interlocutors drawn from All India-level bureaucracy rather than state bureaucracies. Non-involvement of the states

⁵³ Goswami Namrata. Counter Insurgency best applicable practices: Applicability to Northeast India Smallwars Journal 2012

involved in the ceasefire frameworks results in inefficient law enforcement mechanisms that fail to confront illegitimate extortion networks and parallel governments controlled by insurgency actors. This numerous decision-making processes also fails to prevent everyday rebel violence that results in the death of non-combatants.

Based on observations and reports, it is without a doubt that the visible Presence of counter-insurgency forces especially the military component has succeeded in keeping violence levels from escalating. According to the Indian Ministry of Home affairs, the level of violence has gone down in Northeast India. However, despite that one of the significant reasons for a thriving Insurgency in northeast India today is the inability of the state forces to secure the international border. The international border between Manipur, Nagaland, and Myanmar is porous and prone to insurgent activity. In Myanmar's border states, insurgent underground camps have grown. Furthermore, the people of states such as Nagaland and Manipur are afraid to speak out openly against rebels for fear of physical damage. Also, political corruption and a lack of steadfast leaders at the local level in the Northeast undermine a unity of effort fine-tuned to the national aim of constructing a unified nation.

Power asymmetry is important in counter-insurgency operations. Protracted conflicts are waged by insurgencies not merely to inflict a psychological toll on counter-insurgency players, but also to locate recruits, create resources, and build base regions. It must be acknowledged that the insurgents' goal is not to kill counter-insurgency actors but to construct competitive parallel governance systems aimed at controlling the population. Counter-insurgency players must be successful in severing the financial, intellectual, and intimidation ties that exist between the populace and the insurgents. Popular legitimacy and population influence are required for counter-insurgency actors to succeed in this endeavor. The buzzwords for doing this are adaptation and flexibility.

Chapter-III: Understanding Internally Displaced Women Affected by Ethnic Violence in New Delhi – U. Sai Sruti

Introduction

The UNHRC's 'Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement', defines Internally Displaced Persons (or IDPs) as "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized border."⁵⁴ A refugee is someone who is forced to flee their country on account of war or persecution on account of race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, political orientation etc.⁵⁵ IDPs are those who are displaced from their homes but remain within the country, due to similar situations of war, persecution and violence. The government in India has refused to recognize the 'Guiding Principles on Internal Displacements' on the basis that it would infringe upon national sovereignty. Due to this, there is a lack of law or policy framework upholding the rights of IDPs in India.⁵⁶

Internally Displaced Women (or IDW) in a country are some of the worst affected people during times of violence or conflict. They are particularly vulnerable and are at high risk of gendered violence- physical and mental, lack of access to healthcare facilities and limited economic opportunities. Due to the underreporting of such instances of violence, the issue of the scale of them is largely unknown. This kind of violence has grave and often fatal consequences for women, who are left with their physical and emotional wounds for generations to come, including its impact on their family units. In times of ethnic conflict, violence against women is used as a weapon to subjugate marginalized or persecuted communities.

The sexual subjugation of the woman, who is seen as a conquest here, is used as a way to humiliate an entire community and attack its 'honour', which is placed in a woman's body in the larger heteronormative patriarchal structure. Rape has been used as a political tool historically, an example of this is rape and sexual torture used against the Albanian Kosovar

⁵⁴ OHCHR. *op. cit.*

⁵⁵ UNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency. "Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status Under the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees | UNHCR." *UNHCR*, www.unhcr.org/media/handbook-procedures-and-criteria-determining-refugee-status-under-1951-convention-and-1967.

⁵⁶Susanna G. Mitra. "Enabling access to healthcare for internally displaced persons." *The Times of India*, 6 September 2022.

women by the police, soldiers, and paramilitaries, when in 1989, the Serbian-controlled government in Belgrade suspended the autonomy guaranteed to Kosovo, replacing local Albanian police officers with special police units from the Serbian Ministry of the Interior, initiating a crackdown on human rights which continued throughout the 1990s.⁵⁷

Who are the Kukis?

The Kuki-Zo people are a transborder ethnic group including various tribes, inhabiting several northeastern states of India and also divided by the national borders with parts of Myanmar and Bangladesh. Though there are contestations in the nomenclature, this chapter will be referring to the Kuki-Zo-Chin-Mizo group as the largely accepted term ‘Kuki-Zo’. On 3rd May 2023, ethnic violence broke out in the state of Manipur, between the dominant Meitei (majorly inhabiting the valleys) and the tribal minorities Kuki-Zo (majorly inhabiting the hills). This was triggered after the Anglo-Kuki War Memorial Gate was attacked after a solidarity rally conducted by the All-Tribal Students Union in protest in Churachandpur District.⁵⁸ This rally was organized in protest to the demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status for the Meitei community, which forms the majority in Manipur. The ongoing violence quickly spread to the nearby villages and the entire state, with Kuki homes being attacked and burnt, Kuki churches desecrated, and Kuki women, especially, systematically attacked and subjected to rape, sexual violence.⁵⁹ The patterns in this violence can be seen as aptly fitting the concept of ‘institutionalized riot system’ by Paul Brass, where “riots are prepared, activated and sustained with explanatory justifications”, as explained by Prof. Kham Khan Suan Hausing.⁶⁰ In the following weeks, members of the Kuki community, due to the devastating violence inflicted upon them, were largely displaced and forced to flee Manipur. The background and context of the violence have been discussed more in detail later in the paper.

Ethnic Differences and Violence

Borderland states are susceptible to conflict due to various reasons, including the dynamic relations between not just the states but also the people. National politics therefore influences

⁵⁷ “Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: Kosovo - Gender Bases Violence Against Kosovar Albanian Women.” Human Rights Watch, https://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/2000/fry/Kosov003-02.htm#P114_16125.

⁵⁸ Ellis-Petersen, Hannah. “Manipur: Why Is There Conflict and How Is the Government Responding?” *The Guardian*, 24 July 2023, www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/21/manipur-india-why-is-there-conflict-and-how-is-the-government-responding.

⁵⁹ Lien Chongloi. “Dispelling Some Misleading Claims About the Violence in Manipur.” *The Wire*, 27th May. 2023.

⁶⁰ Kham Khan Suan Hausing, “Fault lines in Imphal.” *The Indian Express*, 6 May 2023.

state politics as well, in a different way. The North-East zone of India has been conflict-prone due to the immense number of ethnic differences present there and the identity assertion by different groups. Ethnicity is a sense of ethnic identity that unites and differentiates simultaneously. B. Anderson argued that a nation is an imagined political community for which people are willing to both kill and die. This sentiment is often exploited by societal elites and political leaders to intensify the divisions among various communities. V. Arora and N. Kipgen⁶¹ have also understood ethnicity as the “opium deflecting both attention and resources from human development in Manipur”. The violence in the state has reached to the point of war with irreversible damage being done to land, life, community belonging and the very sense of a home for the Kuki-Zo people of Manipur.

This chapter will attempt to study the issue of IDPs and the lack of legal social protection for them in India, through understanding the IDW of the Kuki-Zo community in New Delhi, exploring the aspect of gendered violence in such conflict. The paper attempts to view the issue of Manipur in the larger context of borderland states as conflict-prone zones and aims to address the need for a strong framework for the protection of IDPs by the state, especially for the relief of IDW and children who are much more susceptible to become targets of conquest in such violence.

Internally Displaced Persons and Their Rights

The rising number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) globally is an immediate matter of international concern and intervention. The United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) defines IDPs as “persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border”.⁶² They are people whose lives are uprooted and are forced to migrate, often losing their voices in the process. The idea behind building protective structures, resources and legislation for IDPs is also to locate these voices and make them count.

IDPs are often in need of humanitarian assistance (food, shelter, and healthcare) which can be better understood through the 3 R's- Rehabilitation, Relief and Resettlement. The United

⁶¹ Vibha Arora & Ngamjahao Kipgen. “The Politics of Identifying with and Distancing from Kuki Identity in Manipur. Sociological Bulletin,” September-December 2012, p.445.

⁶² Handbook, UNHCR Emergency. “IDP Definition.” UNHCR, 18 May 2020.

Nations and other organizations work to help IDPs in countries around the world, providing aid and advocating for their rights. In their estimate for the total number of IDPs in 2021, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre or IDMC (leading source of data and analysis on internal displacement) has shown 59.1 million due to armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations, and disasters.⁶³ Regardless of the growing importance of issue of IDPs in the international political discourse, they remain marginalized in peacebuilding processes.⁶⁴

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was founded to help refugees displaced by war or persecution and a range of other coerced movements leading to forced migration. However, the question of IDPs and their protection remained unattended until recently. The plight of IDPs is often considered mainly as a humanitarian problem, and the real protection problem of IDPs has been relegated to the background due to the critique of containment policies of forced migration⁶⁵ and the misuse of humanitarian and development aid for international security purposes⁶⁶. However, achieving sustainable peace and ending internal displacement are interlinked. In this sense, supporting durable solutions to internal displacement can not only address the root causes of conflicts but also help prevent further displacement. IDPs have an array of different access issues and healthcare, food, and shelter deprivation. The trauma, fear and adverse mental health impacts carried in their bodies live on for generations to come or are “intergenerational trauma” that the displaced persons face while trying to build their lives and livelihoods from scratch again.

In her writing “Developing an International System for Internally Displaced Persons”, Roberta Cohen talks about the main reasons that made the development of an international system for IDPs urgent. She points towards the drastic increase in IDPs after the explosion of civil wars following the end of the Cold War. In the 1990s, the number of internally displaced was found to be 20-25 million in more than 40 countries, as compared to the 1.2 million in 11 countries in 1982.⁶⁷ Another reason was the conditions of the IDPs raised the need for international response, in relation to the high mortality rates, food/shelter/education deprivation, vulnerability to assault and ethnic cleansing even at the hands of government measures like counter-insurgency operations. Stability of countries, regional and international security and the need for effective reintegration of displaced persons for peace and

⁶³ “Global Report on Internal Displacement 2022.” Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2022/>.

⁶⁴ Churruca Muruguza, Cristina & Garcia, Patricia. *op.cit.*, p.317.

⁶⁵ Stephen Castles. *op.cit.*

⁶⁶ Mark Duffield. “Security, Development and Unending Wars”. London: Polity, 2007; Duffield, Mark. *Global Governance and the New Wars: the Merging of Development and Security*. Zed Books, 2001.

⁶⁷ Roberta Cohen. *op.cit.* pp.87-101.

reconstruction in war-torn countries, also compelled the development of an international system to address the issues of internal displacement.

Internal Displacement on the International Agenda

It is from the 1990s, internal displacement was put on the international agenda and occupied space in the discourse of peacebuilding, security and development. Since then, internal displacement has been documented and recognized as an issue of global concern and the international community has adopted legal frameworks to protect internally displaced people (IDPs). International initiatives such as the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement have been created to ensure IDPs are protected and their rights are respected. Muguruza and Amado in their work discuss how Francis M. Deng and Roberta Cohen, redefined the issue of IDPs by developing a unique conceptual approach centered around the idea of “sovereignty as responsibility.”

They say within this framework, Deng and Cohen highlighted that state sovereignty comes with enduring commitments to two main groups: a state's own citizens and the community of states that adhere to human rights and humanitarian responsibilities. This more comprehensive perspective establishes that sovereignty is not fixed but rather dependent on circumstances. When a state fulfills its essential duties for ensuring protection and upholding fundamental human rights, concerns about unwanted external interference become less relevant. Consequently, the primary duty of states to safeguard their citizens emerged as the central and paramount role of sovereignty.⁶⁸

The states have hidden behind the curtain of sovereignty to use violence, and force against its own citizens arbitrarily, often in the form of ethnic cleansing throughout history. Internally Displaced Women in such situations become even more vulnerable to violence as their bodies often become political war zones to be conquered. They are subjected to assault, rape, trafficking and other heinous violence along with deprivation (education, food, healthcare etc.) Though civil society organizations and international organizations play an important role in the sphere of IDP rights, the onus is always on the state to protect its citizens and viewing human security as a multifaceted policy framework.

⁶⁸ Churruca Muruguza, Cristina & Garcia, Patricia. op.cit. p.319.

Internally Displaced Persons and their Rights in India

Let us now understand the issue of IDPs in India, their rights and provisions by the government. India does not officially recognize the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.⁶⁹ The fear expressed has been that such intervention would result in a violation of state sovereignty and that ‘humanitarian aid’ would become a justification for the interference of powerful states in the affairs of weaker states. The government has also placed restrictions on staff from humanitarian relief agencies in Assam, Nagaland and Manipur. In a crisis situation, refugees (who cross international borders) have protection from the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law. The same is not true for IDPs as they are completely reliant on the state’s aid. Internal displacement cannot be studied just as a domestic matter and needs to be understood in the context of human rights violations. IDPs pose a threat to security and stability in a nation, region and the international system.⁷⁰ It is under the guise of protecting sovereignty that many states have violated the human rights of the IDPs and blocked international assistance or intervention.

Though the significance of the GPID is being acknowledged by some states, they are not legally obligated to follow them. This is supplemented by the fact that there is no formal legal framework on an international level for the rights of the IDPs, even its inclusion in the law of the states has remained limited. For instance, there is no legal obligation for India in its Protection of Human Rights Act to safeguard IDP rights.⁷¹ This has severe consequences for the people suffering through political, ethnic, and religious conflict in the country. This vulnerability of IDPs can be seen in the recent ethnic violence-induced displacement of Kuki-Zo IDPs in Manipur, where the lack of protection provided by the state and the larger problem of the lack of legal framework and legal obligations of the state to protect its displaced citizens has been forced into the limelight. The severe consequences faced by the persons such as the loss of lives, homes, livelihoods and the hope of a future brimming with opportunities highlight this glaring lack in the protection of rights and the larger sphere of human rights and the right to have a quality peaceful life. It highlights the deprivation of hope, dreams and dignity of the affected persons.

This Chapter aims to understand the conditions of the Kuki-Zo women in the recent ethnic violence-induced internal displacement with special reference to Kuki-Zo women in

⁶⁹ IDP definition | UNHCR. *UNHCR / Emergency Handbook*, UNHCR, 9 March 2023, <https://emergency.unhcr.org/protection/legal-framework/idp-definition>.

⁷⁰ Tanushree Rao. “Protecting Internally Displaced Persons in India.” *E-International Relations*, July 2013.

⁷¹ *ibid.* p.2.

New Delhi and the gendered aspect of violence. It also tries to understand how ethnicity can take the form of gender violence where not just men but women also use rape as a political tool of control and crime.

Internally Displaced Women and Violence on Women During Conflict

When discussing the rights and protection of displaced persons, it is imperative to focus on the aspect of gendered violence in conflict and the protection of Internally Displaced Women (IDWs). According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, over 41 million people worldwide were IDPs at the end of 2018 as a result of conflict and violence. More than half, or nearly 21 million, were women and girls, these statistics would have been higher if the ones displaced by disasters and climate change were included. Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest number of IDWs, making up 8.2 million or 40 per cent of the global figure. IDW and children are always at the risk of losing their basic rights and being abused.⁷²

Displaced women face a disproportionate amount of violence during situations of internal displacement and become vulnerable to gender violence as well. Displaced women are at a higher risk of gender violence like rape, abduction, trafficking etc. Lack of access to reproductive and maternal healthcare along with access to shelter and sanitation for women is another imperative issue. Several women and girls face interrupted education due to displacement and enough emphasis is not given to continue their education. Displaced women are also at a much higher risk of financial insecurity and instability, making them more vulnerable to violence. These issues along with the psychological impact and social well-being of displaced women are distinctive problems that IDW are more vulnerable to owing to the gender divide. Appropriate legislation and legal framework are urgently required to tackle these in different areas worldwide, the lack of these continues to cause irreversible damage to IDW across different countries even today.

Women's Bodies as War Zones During Conflict

During any kind of political conflict/war/pogrom or turmoil, we see how women's bodies become the "battlefields" or the "war zones", with rape being used as a form of political violence and authority to subjugate. The partition of the undivided land of now India and Pakistan is an example through which this can be understood in the Indian context. In her book 'The Other Side of Silence', Urvashi Butalia states the number of 75,000 women being

⁷² Christelle Cazabat. et al. *op.cit.* p.5.

abducted from both sides of the border. However, this number is expected to be way higher as many incidents went unreported and unnoticed due to stigma, tumultuousness etc.⁷³ The violence against women during the partition took the forms of rape, genital mutilation, trafficking, sexual torture and public humiliation at the hands of different communities to mark their symbol of “conquering” the bodies (a showcase of their own strength), shaming the other communities and marking their “victory” over the other. The state also has been responsible in many cases for inflicting violence against women during conflict situations. An example of this is the reported brutal rapes of the women of the villages Kunan and Poshpora⁷⁴ (in Kashmir which was a conflict-prone zone) by army soldiers of the Fourth Rajputana Rifles on February 23, 1991.

Violence Against Women in Recent Violence in Manipur

In the context of the violence in Manipur, reports and testimonies have come out indicating that women of the dominant community have not only been complacent but also have enabled violence against women of the tribal minorities (Kuki-Zo), showing how rape as a political tool of control and crime is used not only by men but also by women of the dominant communities.⁷⁵ This can be understood even by drawing a parallel to caste rapes or the rape of black women by white men (considering these are very different issues in completely varied contexts- this is a vague generalization) where the women of the oppressor classes have historically been not only complicit but also supportive in the rape of the women from oppressed classes/castes by their own men. Women cannot be looked at as a homogenous group, and have to be seen at the intersections of their various identities be it caste, religion, race or ethnicity, in this case. Just as how it is necessary to view the rapes of Dalit women through the lens of Brahmanical Patriarchy, similarly, it is important to view the rapes of women in ethnic violence through the context of pre-existing power dynamics amidst the communities. While masculinities are constructed and rape is a form of imposing those masculinities of power and control, it is the women from the same community who can be the perpetrators of gendered violence against other women.

⁷³ Faisal Fareed and Shah Alam. “Gendered Violence and the Horrors of Partition: The Price Paid by Women.” *The Wire*, 15 August 2021.

⁷⁴ “Rape in Kashmir.” Asia Watch and Physicians for Human Rights, *Human Rights Watch*, Vol.5, Issue 9, p.7.

⁷⁵ Manorama Sharma. “Meira Paibis: How Manipur’s Peace-keepers Became Agents Provocateur.” *Frontline*, 7 Sept. 2023. Chinggelniang & Valte, Tawna & Hlingbiakhoih. “From Guardians to Perpetrators of Violence: Role of the Meira Paibis in Manipur.” *The Quint*, 19 July 2023.

Manipur: Women Inflicting Violence Against Women

When talking about social movements led by women or witnessing their significant participation in Manipur, the first Nupi Lan in 1904 as an anti-colonial rebellion (against forced labour) and the second Nupi Lan against trade monopoly of rice in 1939 are noted along with the movement of the Nisha Bandhis in the mid-1970s which was an anti-liquor (locally called “yoo”) movement fighting alcoholism and drug addiction. The movement of the Meitei women-Meira Paibis (loosely translating to “torch bearers”) also known as the “mothers of Manipur”, followed these in the 1980s and gained recognition as a strong women vigilante movement against human rights violations including sexual violence committed by the state, especially the excesses of the security forces under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. This movement has also been known as the third Nupi Lan. One of the most significant demonstrations by the Meira Paibis was the Naked Protest of 2004 which was held to protest the heinous rape and murder of Thangjam Manorama by the Assam Rifles.⁷⁶

In her article for the Frontline, Manorama Sharma asks why Meira Paibis turned against the Kuki-Zo women in recent times of violence. She states that their “alleged” role in the sexual attacks on Kuki-Zo women from May 4 onwards in the violence in Manipur will remain a blot on Meitei women for the times to come, whether its women were bystanders or participants in the atrocities. She writes:

“Without condoning the insensitivity and cruelty of the Meira Paibis in the mob violence in Manipur, we need to factor in the oppressive and dominating patriarchal norms within which the Meira Paibis live and operate. Without the facility of being exposed to newer ideas of feminism and gender sensitisation, they have totally internalised the patriarchal domination and its values and norms. Even their maternal instincts, which have been lauded, can be patriarchal. They will, therefore, justify their actions as being right just as most men would under similar circumstances. Such internalisation of the patriarchy by women is seen not only in Manipur but in all places of uncriticqued patriarchy. It allows women to be weaponised by men during times of strife and war.”⁷⁷

We can understand from this situation how ethnic violence can take the form of gender violence too where not just men but women from the dominant community also become perpetrators of such gendered violence against other women or the oppressed. The imposition

⁷⁶ Ratika Yumnam. “Women’s Protest Mobilisations in Manipur: A View Through a Feminist Lens.”, Aug. 2016, pp.14-18.

⁷⁷ Manorama Sharma. “Meira Paibis: How Manipur’s peace-keepers became agents’ provocateur,” *Frontline*, 24th August, 2023.

of masculinities of power and control thus takes place through women as well. Gender violence like rape and assault (against Kuki-Zo women here) has to therefore be understood by looking at the intersection of gender and ethnicity, where the hatred and vitriol against a community has surpassed any kind of consideration or sensitivity towards other women and the hatred takes the front seat, giving way to the complicity and encouragement of such violence. We can say that gender and any scope for solidarity between women of different communities is here surpassed by ethnicity.

Violence in Manipur - Context

“You think you won the war? No, the moment you touch a woman’s body that is the moment you are already defeated.”

These were the words from a powerful and gutting speech by Lhing DOUNGEL, a Kuki woman who was forced out of her home in Manipur and sought refuge in Delhi, in front of a banner that read “Separate Administration the Only Solution, Justice Delayed is Justice Denied” at a protest held at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi on 28th July’ 2023 which was organized by Kuki-Zo Women’s Forum, Delhi.

Immediate Triggers

The brutal violence unleashed on 3rd May 2023 in the state of Manipur has led to huge irreversible loss of life, safety, homes and most of all, hope, for the people of Manipur. Many have come out to call this an “ethnic cleansing”, “genocide” and “civil war” situation. Violence broke out in Churachandpur (or Lamka, as the Kukis call it) after tensions between the dominant valley community, Meiteis, and the tribal hill minorities, Kuki-Zo people, following an All Tribals Students Union Manipur (ATSUM) organized peaceful tribal solidarity march against the recent Manipur High Court order which asked the state government to send a recommendation to the Centre regarding the demand to include the Meitei community in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list. News soon broke out that the Anglo-Kuki Centenary Gate at Leisang-Monglenphai was set on fire by unidentified Meitei miscreants.

The tensions between the people of the valley and the hills have been years in the making and said to have been aggravated under Chief Minister N Biren Singh’s term (who is a Meitei) owing to his divisive politics playing on the fault lines of ethnicity in Manipur. The Kukis have been recently labelled as “illegal immigrants”, “narco-terrorists”, “poppy cultivators” and “militants” by many Meitei leaders and members of the community. An article by The Quint includes a statement by independent researcher Sangmuang Hangsing who presents the views

of the people on the CM and his agenda referring to the allegations of the CM of pushing an anti-tribal agenda since his appointment.⁷⁸ He is also accused of expelling tribes from their villages, demolishing churches in Imphal, and classifying a majority of tribal settlements as reserved forests, which deems settlers as illegal immigrants. Though we will not be discussing the causes of the eruption of violence in Manipur, it is important to note that land and resources are the main issues here.

Land Issue and Power Dynamics

According to an article in *The Hindu*, “The valley, which comprises about 10% of Manipur’s landmass, is dominated by the non-tribal Meitei who account for more than 64% of the population of the State and yields 40 of the State’s 60 MLAs. The hills comprising 90% of the geographical area are inhabited by more than 35% recognised tribes but send only 20 MLAs to the Assembly.”⁷⁹ Granting the Meiteis ST status would allow them to buy land in the hills which currently only the STs are allowed. It is however important to look at the nuances of this complex issue in terms of land pressure in both the hills and the valleys due to the natural terrain of the state making most of the land uninhabitable, and also the power dynamics that exist within the state. Along with the land argument, the Meiteis also argue that ST status is necessary for them to “preserve” the community and “save the ancestral land, tradition, culture, and language” of the Meiteis.

The tribal minorities argue that the Meitei have social, political, economic and academic advantages over them. As most of the academic institutions and medical infrastructure along with resources are concentrated in the valley and police, government and civil service is dominated by the dominant group, the tribal minorities feel that granting the ST status would mean a loss of job opportunities for the community and will push them out of their lands. The issues fueling the violence in Manipur are therefore complex and varied which need to be understood in their socio-political context. The violence has taken place in the forms of brutal murders, arson- burning of homes, churches, vehicles, rape and public humiliation, sexual torture, looting and driving people out of their houses.

UN experts have raised alarms against reports of grave human rights violations and abuses in Manipur including “alleged acts of sexual violence, extrajudicial killings, home destruction, forced displacement, torture and ill-treatment.” They have condemned the gender-

⁷⁸ Goswami, Madhusree. “‘CM Biren Singh Pushing Anti-Tribal Agenda’: Why Is Manipur on the Boil?” *The Quint*, 3 May 2023.

⁷⁹ Karmakar, Rahul. “Explained | What Is Behind Manipur’s Widespread Unrest?” *The Hindu*, 2 June 2023.

based violence targeting women and girls “predominantly of the Kuki ethnic minority.” They have also raised serious concerns about the “misuse of counterterrorism measures to legitimise acts of violence and repression against ethnic and religious minorities”, “the slow and inadequate response of the Government of India” and the “reports of criminalization and harassment of human rights defenders documenting the cases”.⁸⁰

Accounts of Violence Against Kuki-Zo Women, Forced to Flee to Delhi

“What else can we do?”

Though as of now there are no official consolidated numbers of the number of people subjected to forced migration or sexual violence, it is clear that many Kuki-Zo people have been driven out of their homes and much violence has been unleashed on women. On 19th July’ 2023, a video of two Kuki-Zo women paraded naked on the street (on 4th May) by a mob of Meitei miscreants and being sexually assaulted went viral. People across the country held their breaths as the Kuki-Zo community mourned and begged for justice. This video was able to garner the attention of many across the country and the world, and brought to the limelight the issue of sexual violence against Kuki-Zo women, after continuous cries of the community to bring attention to the same. Prof. Kham Khan Suan Hausing talks about this weaponization or rape in conflicts and the damaging effect of fake news and disinformation campaigns which vilify and frame the Kuki-Zomi people as the antagonistic tribal “others”.

With physical violence, it is imperative to note the trauma and the sheer psychological violence inflicted upon people and their long-lasting effects. Here, we will look at some of the accounts of Kuki-Zo women who have faced violence and are fighting with its aftermath after being displaced to Delhi. For many, it is a displacement or rather disappearance of their voices and faith along with their lives. To locate their voice and find peace is a conversation that is important to have but is still incredibly difficult with the fresh wounds. Through the conversations and interviews that I have been able to have with some victims and also from other sources, this section tries to bring to light accounts of violence faced by some of the women.

⁸⁰ OHCHR. “India: UN Experts Alarmed by Continuing Abuses in Manipur.” *OHCHR*, 4th Sept 2023. www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/09/india-un-experts-alarmed-continuing-abuses-manipur.

Account 1

...The men came to our hostel. My friend (also Kuki) and I were geared with chilli powder and if that (didn't) work out, we would just jump out of the balcony”

Grace* (name changed) is a 30-year-old Manipur University, Research Scholar living in Delhi with her friend. She was there in the girls' hostel on the night of 3rd May when a mob of Meitei men barged into the hostel, looking for Kuki-Zo women. The university was one of the first places to be attacked on 3rd May. Not only students but Kuki-Zo faculty was also attacked and their academic material, and books were all destroyed.

“I was there at the university the night of the violence. Mobs of men came to the girls' hostel with sticks and stones, batons also, they were looking for Kuki women in particular. We were literally running for our lives, hiding around in rooms where we feel safe enough....The men came to our hostel. My friend (also Kuki) and I were geared with chilli powder and if that (didn't) work out, we would just jump out of the balcony...I wouldn't mind giving up my life rather than falling at the hands of men who came to attack... I'll die I don't mind, so long as I don't fall into their hands.”

On the matter of whether any help was available to her to get out of that situation safely and be rescued, she shared:

“We were shaking and crying and were asking those who are already in the relief camp in the university...to send help because we (were) under attack but because of the less manpower and because our community was the one directed (at), we cannot go around rescuing each other. It will be a suicide mission. The Assam Rifles were not well-manned to rescue each one of us at the same time. We had to bear throughout that ordeal.”

During the interview, I asked her if any students of the other community offered her any help or if she knew of any of their involvement in the violence in any form. To this, she responded:

“What really broke my heart was, I have very close acquaintances from the dominant community and they were also complicit in the attack on women in the university. They were...the radical people who were very much ecstatic about what was going on and burning the documents, vandalizing things and chasing the Kuki-Zo community out of the university”

It was after this that Grace* went to see her family in Churachandpur (Lamka) before coming to Delhi. On the journey of escaping from MU to going home and then to Delhi:

“I was there in the relief camp for approximately a week and then by hook or crook, we got some tickets to get out of Imphal. The priority at the time was to just get out of Imphal...it's very nearby but we cannot go there because of the largely populated villages (of the dominant community) on the roadside. There was no way to go (by) the road, there was no air help either.”

“Prices were shooting up. Went from Guwahati to Aizawl and then by road to home (Lamka).

Once I got home safe and sound, I showed them that I was well and good too but I wasn't at all. The fear psychosis was so high that nightmares were a regular occurrence like you're being chased, by you don't know what but you're running for your life. You just wake up crying in the middle of the night or even when you take a nap.”

“Getting back to academics is a challenge to me personally...there are times when I go back to my research, open my laptop and my books and I cry. Because the future is so bleak, you're not sure if the university that is walking hand in hand with the govt is going to be cooperative. We are neither here nor there.”

After coming to Delhi to continue her academic pursuit as it was not possible anymore to go back to MU (in Imphal), there is a lot of uncertainty for all displaced people but the one thing people, including Grace*, were sure about was not going back to Imphal. On the question of going back to the university:

“I don't think that is possible for us because going back would mean courting death for us because we have seen the Kuki-Zo community be lynched publicly and even the women were not spared. Even the women were given away by the women of the dominant community to be raped and killed by men. Our professors were not spared, our people working in the administrative blocks were not spared so who am I to have the courage to go back there?”

The glaring lack of aid provided by the government in situations of conflict and displacement such as the case of Manipur, IDPs are put at the risk of being pushed into unemployment and the vicious cycle of poverty. Grace* denied receiving or hearing about any kind of aid provided by the government.

“...Most of the relief camps are run by philanthropic organizations or the church. In Delhi, there were three, but I believe there is only one now... I haven't heard of any call for distributing or giving aid to the displaced people from the govt at all...Majority of us are seeking asylum here.”

After going through brutal violence and having one's safety be compromised and violated as an individual as well as a community, the imprint of trauma and the psychological impact one faces is immense. Though in conditions like these, it might be too soon to think

about finding peace as a community, the question of finding peace for the survival and functioning of oneself remains important. On finding peace and coping, Grace* stated:

“Honestly, if I bare my soul to you, I’m finding peace in ignorance. If you don’t ignore it, it just comes to haunt you. If I’m not in peace, I do not have the right to disrupt other people’s peace. I have gone through a lot myself and I don’t want anybody else to go through that. The traumatic experience is such that you have to bare your soul to get that peace. You have to bear (your) wounded soul and you’re in a place where you don’t know people much so you become much quiet. Even if you do see people giving sympathy and pity, I receive it with grace. What else can we do?”

Account 2

“My mother wants to die in her homeland.”

In a video by The Quint interviewing Kuki-Zo IDPs in a makeshift shelter home in New Delhi, two women, Dr. Tara Manchin Hangzo and V Rosalind shared their accounts of facing violence and being driven out of their homes and homeland.⁸¹

Dr. Tara Manchin Hangzo is a 58-year-old Kuki woman who fled Imphal with her 87-year-old mother.

Tara came to Delhi with her mother, sister who has Down Syndrome and three kids. She recounts her gruesome experience of escaping from her home in Manipur.

“Huge crowds coming in the colony with (sticks and fire torches) screaming “Kuki Hatlo, Hao Hatlo” (translates to “Kill the Kukis”). We were not able to take anything with us...only with the clothes we had on our backs, we had to rush out...My 87-year-old mother could barely walk.”

“We saw our neighbours in the mob...One man I knew, we made eye contact and then for a moment he stopped.”

Tara narrates the experience of being forced to flee to Delhi and the problems there.

“We came without any clothes. We were not aware of the surroundings...Many people (who came to Delhi) don’t know the language and can’t speak in English and Hindi. They need to be assisted.

We have been chased away from our own homes...we have been thrown out saying don’t come back, we don’t want you, you all are foreigners...I have lived there for 60 years (all my life)”

⁸¹ “Manipur Violence: Escaping the Conflict, Kuki Families Find Safe Haven in Delhi.” the Quint.” *YouTube*, 31 May 2023.

“My mother wants to die in her homeland.”

Account 3

“The gas cylinder which was inside the kitchen exploded. They clapped their hands in victory.”

V Rosalind is a 58-year-old (teacher) Kuki woman fled to Delhi and fractured her leg while escaping.

Recollecting the traumatic incident where she lost everything and had to flee with her son, she says:

“The gas cylinder which was inside the kitchen exploded. They clapped their hands in victory.”

“My son had to carry me piggyback...it was quite a distance. He had to carry me everywhere in the army camp also he had to carry me for my nature calls, everything. It’s a trauma, it’s a nightmare.”

On being in Delhi she says:

“I’m happy to be alive. At least I am safe here. What more can I ask for?”

Account 4

“He was pulled out from home, put inside the sack and then he was beaten. He was slaughtered...the one who saw them, they thought they were carrying a dog or something but it was our uncle.”

In a video interview by India Today capturing the traumatic experiences of two, both Kuki and Meitei displaced persons in Delhi, Hoihching, a 29-year-old displaced Kuki woman who was forced to seek refuge in a Kuki camp (set up by the Evangelical Fellowship of India) in New Delhi, shares the gut-wrenching details of her uncle’s brutal murder and the looting of his house in Manipur.⁸² She says-

“He was pulled out from home, put inside the sack and then he was beaten. He was slaughtered...the one who saw them, they thought they were carrying a dog or something but it was our uncle.”

In the interview, she also shows a video of her uncle’s house being looted on camera.

⁸² India Today. “At Least 98 Killed, 310 Injured: Displaced Kukis and Meiteis Reveal How They Escaped Manipur Violence.” *YouTube*, 3 June 2023.

“The neighbours who we thought would be helping us, were the ones pointing out our houses telling them that these are the houses.”

They also shared how it was difficult to escape and the living and food conditions were very poor in the CRPF camp they were staying at.

Account 5

“My mom could hear the mob and she bid me farewell.”

In an interview with NewsLaundry, Kuki-Zo students of Manipur University who fled and were forced to seek asylum in Delhi shared their accounts of the violence they faced that drove them out of their homes.⁸³

A student recounts how the hostel gate was held together by a shoelace and there was no protection for the mobs who entered the girls' hostel. Another student recounted hearing the war-cry-like slogans of “Kuki macha ne hat lo” meaning “It’s Kukis kill them”. They even started a fire to kill the Kuki students, threats were made by the mobs of sexual violence. Labelling an entire community as “narco-terrorists”, “illegal immigrants” and “refugees” demonizes a whole people and legitimizes the violence against them. She was on call with her parents when she was trapped in the hostel with the mobs approaching. “My mom could hear the mob and she bid me farewell.”

She narrates the harrowing ordeal that took place.

“We were warned by fellow Kuki students that mobs of men had gathered outside the university gate, who were checking for Kuki students. Mobs reached the gate, the security guards tried to hide us in the water tanks that were 4m tall. There were 4 Kuki girls in my hostel. We asked to be locked inside our rooms to be safe, we were later rescued by the Assam Rifles after three and half hours. We were ambushed on our way to the camp, the mobs of hundreds surrounded our truck in no time. Our IDs were checked and on confirming we are Kukis, they tried to overturn our truck. They had iron rods, sticks and even knives. They broke into the truck, hit many of us badly. After there was blank firing by the police towards the crowd, we were able to escape.”

Another student recounted when their girls hostel was broken into, they only had two options of defence- one was the chilli powder they had and the second was to jump off of the balcony.

⁸³ NewsLaundry. “Escaping Mobs, Uncertain Futures, No Way Home: Manipur Students Who Fled to Delhi | Manipur Violence.” *YouTube*, 15 August. 2023.

A student shared that approximately 100 Kuki-Zo students of MU have fled to Delhi out of the roughly 400 Kuki-Zo students of MU who have been displaced. Their education has been halted and one of their demands is to be absorbed in any of the different Central Universities.

One of the students stated that they heard that even the students inside the university were in on the violence. This was supported by the fact that the violence was systematic, with the mobs having the information about which hostels and which rooms the Kukis were allotted.

On being asked whether they can ever picture themselves going back to the university, the question for them, as they responded, was the same as “Do I want to die?”

Account 6

Another research scholar from MU, Kimjolly Thouthang, who sought refuge in Delhi, recounted the trauma she faced when one of the hostels (girls hostel) was attacked and she had to contact the Major at the Assam Rifles Camp to bring her to safety.⁸⁴ The bleak or complete lack of hope of being able to go back to MU safely was echoed by her as well.

Account 7

“...The mental trauma that I go in, who is going to pay the price of that?”

Lhing DOUNGEL, a displaced Kuki woman, delivered a gutting speech at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi in the protest organized by the Kuki-Zo Women’s Forum, Delhi on 28th July’ 2023.⁸⁵ Forced to flee from her home, Lhing sought refuge in Delhi. In her jolting speech she talked about the trauma she went through and questioned the ineffectiveness of the government.

“I’m shivering not because I am scared, I am shivering because I have seen the pain. I have seen the murderers. I have seen that every time I close my eyes, the mental trauma that I go in, who is going to pay the price of that?”

“For me to come here, to stand here in Delhi all the way from Manipur, though I am from Manipur, I cannot access the airport in Manipur.”

“What is the central government doing? I have to come here to express my pain. The state govt has failed us so miserably. We went knocking, begging. Why do we have to beg when we are citizens of India?”

⁸⁴ MTFD. “Ms. Kimjolly Thouthang, Manipur University: Victim of Atrocities Against Tribals in Manipur, India.” *YouTube*, 7 June 2023, www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntgSPtp5TTk.

⁸⁵ RB MEDIA Robert Lalboi. “Most Powerful Speech From Lhing DOUNGEL.” *YouTube*, 28 July 2023, www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXNgAeVxmyc.

On the violence against women, the rapes of Kuki women during the violence by men of the other community, she says:

“You think you won the war? No, the moment you touch a woman’s body that is the moment you are already defeated.”

In almost all these interviews, the fear and horror of even the thought of going back is the common thread. Victims of the harrowing violence are grieving not only the ones lost but also their hope and their homeland. The displacement of home and voice has led to a lack of faith in the functioning of the government and has fostered the growth of distrust for the other community. The sheer brutal violence, the historically accumulated grievances and the denial of justice that the victims have been subjected to has caused an immense amount of pain, psychological impact and trauma which inevitably will be intergenerational trauma and cause irreversible damage to the community which will take generations to heal. Addressing mental violence, therefore, is imperative to be noted for any conversation of healing to happen.

Chapter-IV: The Chin Refugee Crisis in India – *Tanvi Sharma*

The Chin Refugee Crisis is a multifaceted issue deeply rooted in the global context of forced displacement. It began with the Chin people, predominantly of Sino-Tibetan origin and practicing Christianity, residing in Myanmar's Chin State, which shares borders with the Indian states of Manipur and Mizoram. However, their lives took a dire turn starting in 1990 when they faced severe persecution and gross human rights violations at the hands of Myanmar's military junta, the Tatmadaw. The situation escalated dramatically following the 2021 military coup in Myanmar, prompting many Chin people to seek refuge in India.

Their journey was not merely a quest for physical safety but a desperate pursuit of fundamental rights, justice, and dignity-rights that are often taken for granted. This research paper delves into the various dimensions of the Chin refugee crisis in India. It begins by providing historical context, examining the root causes, and exploring the experiences of Chin refugees as they navigate the intricate landscape of forced displacement.

The contentious issue of whether the Indian Constitution effectively protects the rights of refugees under Article 14 and Article 21 is addressed. The government's inconsistent policies and fluctuating stance towards refugees are found to unquestionably contradict both Article 14 and Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. Furthermore, the paper shines a light on the existing legal and humanitarian frameworks at both the national and international levels, which significantly influence the lives of these refugees. It raises critical questions, including the extent of legal protections available to refugees in India and the ways in which Chin people adapt to their new lives in India, given the unique challenges they face as refugees.

Ultimately, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Chin refugee crisis, offering insights into potential policy solutions and humanitarian interventions that can enhance the lives and well-being of this displaced population in India. It covers a range of topics, from the impact of India's non-signatory status to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention on Chin refugees to the challenges faced by Chin refugees in Delhi during the COVID-19 pandemic. In doing so, it addresses the legal frameworks and often-overlooked aspects of refugee life in India.

Chin State in Myanmar and Its Woes

The British first conquered Burma in 1824, established rule in 1886, and remained in power until Burma's independence in 1948.⁸⁶ One great advantage the Chins had during the British

⁸⁶ EthnoMed. "Chin - EthnoMed." EthnoMed, ethnomed.org/culture/chin.

regime was the enactment of the Chin Hills Regulation Act of 1886 by the British in Burma. The 1886 Chin Hills Regulation Act stated that the British would govern the Chins separately from the rest of Burma, allowing traditional Chin chiefs to remain in power while Britain was still allotted power via indirect rule. Although the act established the authority of British law, it also permitted the ongoing observance of local traditional laws and customs in areas that were not addressed by British legal regulations.⁸⁷

Burma gained independence from the British in 1948 marking nearly 100 years of British Colonial Rule in Burma. The country's new government was established under Ang Saan- who was assassinated shortly after Independence.⁸⁸ In 1962, Burma witnessed the overthrow of its democratically elected government through a military coup. Since then, a series of military leaders have maintained oppressive control over the country, subjecting its citizens to harsh rule. In Chin State, the rapid militarization and pervasive ethnic and religious discrimination have given rise to a plethora of human rights violations perpetrated by the Burma Army.⁸⁹ The mountainous terrain of Chin State inherently suffers from inadequate infrastructure. Furthermore, Chin State ranks among Myanmar's most impoverished regions, as evidenced by a 2015 survey indicating that nearly 80% of households experienced precarious food security.⁹⁰

Prior to 1990, the Chin people enjoyed relatively unhindered freedom to practice their non-Buddhist faiths. However, since that time, the military regime has seemingly engaged in efforts to compel certain Chin individuals to embrace Buddhism while simultaneously curbing Christian proselytization. These measures include the destruction of churches, the harassment and arrest of pastors, and even instances of abuse.⁹¹

“The army has called me many times to porter, more than 10 times. When I cannot carry their bags, they beat me. [The soldiers] get angry and slap us and kick us. They tell us to go faster. When I tried to refuse, they beat me. They said, “You are living under our authority. You have no choice. You must do what we say.” - Chin woman from Thantlang township, Chin State, Burma

⁸⁷“Chin Hills Regulations, 1896.” *Bareactslive.com*, bareactslive.com/MEG/meg053.htm?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1#:~:text=%2D%20Where%20the%20Superinten dent%20or%20the. Accessed 21 Sept. 2023.

⁸⁸ Lindsay Maizland, “Myanmar’s Troubled History: Coups, Military Rule, and Ethnic Conflict.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, 31 Jan. 2022.

⁸⁹ Maina Sharma. *REFUGEES in DELHI*. 2009.

⁹⁰ “Chin State.” *Www.unicef.org*, www.unicef.org/myanmar/chin-state

⁹¹ “Chin.” *Minority Rights Group*, 19 June 2015.

The Chin appears to have been particularly targeted for severe measures because most of them are Christians. Churches were closed and religious symbols such as crosses were removed from the top of mountains near Chin communities; church services were disrupted by soldiers and there were physical attacks on pastors. Women suffer the greatest burden of these systematic attacks as they are oppressed on the basis of their gender as well as their ethnicity. There is also a direct connection between rape and migration: some women flee Burma because they have been raped, others do so to escape being raped. Sexual violence by the army is widespread in Chin State; women experience rape as soldiers patrol villages, during forced labour, whilst farming and as retaliation when family members are suspected of anti-government activities. In most cases, victims have received no legal recourse as most were afraid to report abuses for fear of further abuse in military-controlled villages which makes these cases difficult to document⁹²

It has also been reported that Chin Opposition groups, such as Chin National Front, go to the extent of extorting money and abusing, harassing chin nationals.⁹³ Two years have passed since the arbitrary seizure of power by the Myanmar Military back in February of 2021. “Two years after launching a coup, the military has brought the country into a perpetual human rights crisis through continuous use of violence, including killing, arbitrarily arresting, torturing, forcibly disappearing, prosecuting, and sentencing anti-coup opponents. Urgent, concrete actions are needed to ensure that all people in Myanmar enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms” reported an OHCHR Report on 3rd March 2023.⁹⁴

When people took to the streets to protest the 2021 Military Coup, The State Administration Council (SAC) fired real guns at its citizens and also used heavy bombs and weapons. The results of such gross and violent actions were the death of almost 383 innocent Chin People within 2 years.⁹⁵ The escalation of militarization in Chin State, which commenced in 1988 following a nationwide uprising against the military government that led to thousands

⁹² Kumari, Sheena. “Burmese Refugee Women in India: Victims and Agents of Empowerment.” *Peace Prints: South Asian Journal of Peacebuilding*, vol. 4, pp. 3–5.

⁹³ “WE ARE like FORGOTTEN PEOPLE” *the Chin People of Burma: Unsafe in Burma, Unprotected in India*. Human Rights Watch, 2009.

⁹⁴ “A/HRC/52/21: Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar since 1 February 2022 - Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.” *OHCHR*, www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc5221-situation-human-rights-myanmar-1-february-2022-report-united.

⁹⁵ “Human Rights Violations and Crimes against the Chin People: A Two-Year Assessment (February 2021-March 2023).” *Institute of Chin Affairs*, 21 May 2023.

being killed and imprisoned, has led to an increase in human rights abuses. Consequently, a significant number of Chin people have been compelled to seek refuge outside of Burma.⁹⁶

Chin Refugee Experience in Delhi, India

With the onset of the 2021 coup in Myanmar, anxiety within the existing Myanmar refugee community in New Delhi heightened. By the close of 2021, the UNHCR had registered over 22,000 refugees from Myanmar, including approximately 3,200 Chin refugees (Rights and Risks Analysis Group, 2021). The predominantly Christian Chin community primarily resides in densely populated areas such as Vikaspuri, Chanakya Place, and Uttam Nagar.⁹⁷

Due to India's lack of any refugee policy, the treatment of refugees in India is governed by India's Registration of Foreigners Act of 1939, the Foreigners Act of 1946, and the Foreigners Order of 1948. None of these Acts differentiate between undocumented migrants and refugees. Consequently, India lacks an established procedural mechanism to officially safeguard refugees residing within its territory. Instead, refugees in India are subject to ad hoc policies that vary significantly based on their nationality.⁹⁸

Historically, the Indian government has exhibited a positive reception towards refugees from Burma. For instance, in 1988, following a nationwide uprising in Burma, a significant number of refugees sought sanctuary in India to escape the severe reprisals imposed by the military regime. During this period, the Indian government openly criticized the actions of Burma's military regime and warmly embraced the incoming refugees. Narasimha Rao, then the Indian External Affairs Minister, issued directives to protect refugees from Burma, and the Indian government extended support to refugee camps established along the border.

However, India's hospitality towards refugees from Burma underwent a shift in the early 1990s as political and economic relations between the two countries took precedence. By 1995, the Indian government had withdrawn its support for camps housing refugees from Burma, and the Mizoram government issued directives for the closure of these camps.

⁹⁶ "We Are like Forgotten People" the Chin People of Burma: Unsafe in Burma, Unprotected in India. *Human Rights Watch*, 2009.

⁹⁷ Priyanca Mathur. et al. "The World Perspective Post-Coup Myanmar and Its Refugee Burden in India: Tales from New Delhi." *Jain University*, Vol. 3.

⁹⁸ "Waiting on the Margins, an Assessment of the Situation of the Chin Community in Delhi, India." *Chin Human Rights Organization*, 2009.

In the present policy framework, India restricts UNHCR from conducting operations within Mizoram, which still hosts a significant refugee population from Burma. Despite India's reluctance to openly accept refugees from Burma, it does permit UNHCR to maintain a presence in the national capital, Delhi. Furthermore, the Indian Government generally acknowledges documentation issued by UNHCR, as evidenced by its practice of granting residential permits, facilitated by the Ministry of Home Affairs, to refugees from Burma who have received recognition from UNHCR.

The living conditions for the Chin community in Delhi are notably challenging. Accommodations tend to be congested, lacking in hygiene, and devoid of essential amenities. Employment prospects are primarily confined to the informal sector, frequently characterized by low wages, strenuous labor, and safety hazards. The overall state of community health is subpar, with restricted access to medical services. Owing to disparities in culture, language, and religion, achieving integration within the local community presents formidable difficulties.

According to India's Foreigners Act, refugees from Burma who have received recognition from UNHCR are allowed to request a residential permit, a crucial document that grants legal residency status in Delhi as a foreign national. Afghan and Chin refugees, in particular, need a residential permit to access specific services in Delhi. Additionally, having a residential permit is a prerequisite for obtaining an exit permit to leave the country. The procedure for obtaining a residential permit, on the other hand, is made complex by the FRRO's requirements, which necessitate an excessive number of documents to establish one's residency in Delhi. This includes documentation from landlords and property owners. Given the informal housing arrangements typically found among refugees and asylum seekers in Delhi, landlords and property owners frequently exhibit reluctance in furnishing evidence of residency for refugees. Their concerns often revolve around potential legal and tax repercussions associated with housing foreign individuals.

Upon a refugee being approved for resettlement in a third country, the Indian government mandates the refugee to initiate the process of applying for an exit permit from the FRRO, as stipulated by the 1948 Foreigners Order. However, the entire procedure to secure an exit permit is marked by an intricate bureaucratic process that can be both exhausting and time-consuming. Consequently, individuals who did not receive their exit permits promptly found themselves unable to depart for resettlement as originally planned.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Sharma, Maina. *REFUGEES in DELHI*. 2009.

The woes of the Informal Sector

Refugees in India encounter a dual obstacle when seeking employment in the informal sector. Firstly, the informal sector lacks the legal safeguards found in formal employment. Secondly, the absence of a specific legal framework for refugee protection in India exacerbates their vulnerability in the workforce. For example, when we talk about Chin Refugee Women working at Indian weddings, the instructions given to the women were explicit, requiring them to don short skirts and revealing attire. Work typically commenced at approximately 6 p.m., occasionally starting even earlier, and concluded around 2 or 3 a.m. In cases of sexual harassment, the women found themselves unable to voice complaints since the employers were either absent or displayed indifference to their concerns.

“If a man touches me at the wedding party, the other guests laugh at me. They laugh at me and I feel very shy and upset, but I have no choice but to work there. There are other jobs around here, but the pay is much less. So, if they phone me, I have to work for the survival of my family. I have no choice”¹⁰⁰

- Anonymous, Chin Refugee Woman in Delhi

On January 10, 2023, the Burmese Refugee Women Delhi organization issued a call to the Indian government to reverse recent modifications in its procedures for granting refugees residential permits, long-term visas, and exit permits.¹⁰¹ This appeal was conveyed through a formal letter addressed to the Minister of External Affairs, S. Jaishankar. According to the contents of the letter, the Indian government has allegedly ceased the issuance of exit permits to refugees, even when they have obtained permission to resettle in a third country. The Burmese Refugee Women Delhi also submitted a list containing the names of 38 Burmese refugees residing in India who are unable to leave the country, despite being granted refuge in Australia, Canada, and the USA, due to their lack of an exit permit.

Conducting a comprehensive analysis of the healthcare system and its alignment with the needs of refugees, it is instructive to cite the COVID-19 pandemic as a salient example. This crisis not only underscores the importance of inclusive healthcare for vulnerable populations but also reveals the challenges and opportunities in ensuring equitable access to healthcare services, particularly for refugees and displaced communities.

¹⁰⁰ Tops, Paula, et al. *A Context of Risk: Uncovering the Lived Experiences of Chin Refugee Women Negotiating a Livelihood in Delhi*. www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/48648663.

¹⁰¹ “Burmese Women Refugees Call on India to Reverse Refugee Rule Changes.” *Burma News International*, www.bnionline.net/en/news/burmese-women-refugees-call-india-reverse-refugee-rule-changes. Accessed 21 Sept. 2023.

The pandemic inflicted severe devastation upon India, resulting in a somber death toll exceeding 532,023 fatalities¹⁰². Among those most profoundly affected are marginalized communities and one of the most overlooked and oppressed groups within the Indian context is the refugee community, notably the Chin community residing in New Delhi. The community's primary hope for ending the outbreak lay in achieving full vaccination. However, India's vaccine distribution system managed through the government's CoWIN app, necessitated the use of identity cards such as Aadhar cards, passports, PAN cards, or voter IDs, all of which are unavailable to Chin refugees. Many refugees possess only one form of identification-the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees card, commonly known as the UN card. Refugees lacking these documents are indirectly barred from getting vaccinated at the registration stage itself, as the refugee cards provided by UNHCR are unacceptable. The possession of a UNHCR card has often created complications for refugees when they sought medical care during the pandemic¹⁰³. In July 2020, Vijay Rajkumar, a development consultant based in Delhi, collaborated with the Chin Refugee Committee to release a study titled "Rapid Situation Assessment of the Impact of the COVID-19 Epidemic-Related Lockdown on the Burmese Refugee Community in Delhi." This study highlighted that "Harassment and delays in obtaining COVID-19 testing and treatment at healthcare facilities have resulted in significant hardships for refugee families who tested positive for the virus. This indirect denial of vaccine to the Chin Refugees by the Government can be seen as a breach of Article 21 of the Indian Constitution-which safeguards the 'fundamental right to life and liberty'¹⁰⁴. It is regrettable that India, being one of the world's largest producers and distributors of vaccines, did not adequately address the vaccination needs of the refugee community.¹⁰⁵

Legal Protection and Rights

A Human Rights Watch report dated 2009 describes the Chin People of Burma as Unsafe in Burma, Unprotected in India. But what exactly preceded this comment? The World Refugee Day, which is celebrated on 20th June every year- is to celebrate the strength and courage of people who are forced to flee their home country to escape conflict or persecution. With India- being home to almost 46000

¹⁰² WHO. "India: WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard." *Covid19.Who.int*, 2022, covid19.who.int/region/searo/country/in.

¹⁰³ Colney, Kimi. "How India and the UNHCR Failed to Provide Healthcare and Vaccination for Chin Refugees." *The Caravan*, caravanmagazine.in/health/how-india-and-the-unhcr-failed-to-provide-healthcare-and-vaccination-for-chin-refugees. Accessed 21 Sept. 2023.

¹⁰⁴ "Denying Refugees' Access to COVID-19 Vaccines: Probing through Constitutional Perspective." *Constitutional Law Society, NUJS*, 21 Nov. 2021, wbnjucls.wordpress.com/2021/11/21/denying-refugees-access-to-covid-19-vaccines-probing-through-constitutional-perspective/#_ftn1. Accessed 21 Sept. 2023.

¹⁰⁵ "Serum Institute of India to Produce Up to An Additional 100 million Covid19 Vaccine Doses for India and Low- and Middle-Income Countries In 2021." *Serum Institute of India*, 2021.

registered UN refugees, one would think that these refugees were welcomed with compassion and treated in a brotherly manner. However, this proves to be untrue with the one daunting fact- that India is not a signatory to the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention,¹⁰⁶ which is the cornerstone of refugee protection. The 1951 UN Refugee Convention has only been amended once in 1967- when the Convention removed geographical barriers and henceforth gave itself universal coverage. Hence the 1951 UN Refugee Convention defined the term ‘refugee’, and also outlined their rights and the international standard of treatment for their protection.

But how come India, one of the leading powers in the world- known for its values like ‘Atithi Devo Bhava’- a guest is akin to god which highlights the host-guest relationship, proves to be unsafe for the Chin Refugees of Myanmar? India not being a signatory to the UN Refugee Convention insinuates how there is no proper refugee law that will protect the rights and dignity of Refugees. The Indian government has frequently played a prominent role in the management of refugees in South Asia, consistently providing refuge to individuals from both within the region and from various Asian and African nations throughout its history.¹⁰⁷ While India continues granting asylum to a large number of refugees- mainly from Afghanistan and Myanmar, the treatment and attitude towards each refugee group differs on various aspects. The legal uncertainty brought on by India’s legislation means that those who seek refuge and asylum are susceptible to the geopolitical stance and policy considerations of the ruling government. However, India is bound to and respects the principle of non-refoulement¹⁰⁸ for holders of UNHCR Documentation.¹⁰⁹ Since India does not have a specific law dealing with legislation the refugees, hence at present- refugees are treated under the following acts-

Registration of Foreigners Act 1939

According to this provision, it is obligatory for all foreign nationals (excluding overseas citizens of India) who arrive in India on a long-term visa (exceeding 180 days) to complete their registration with a designated Registration Officer within 14 days of their entry into India. Section 4 of the act places the responsibility of proving one's status as a foreigner on the individual in question. This particular section poses significant challenges when applied to refugees and asylum seekers. The documentation requirements and the burden of proof often exacerbate their difficulties. Ideally, it should be the

¹⁰⁶ *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*. UNHCR Communications and Public Information Service.

¹⁰⁷ Sharma, Maina. *Refugees In Delhi*. 2009

¹⁰⁸ Lauterpacht, sir elihu, and daniel bethlehem. *The Scope and Content of the Principle of Non-Refoulement: Opinion*.

¹⁰⁹ *Human Rights of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in India: Issues and Challenges*. National Human Rights Commission of India, 2022.

designated authorities' role to assess the credibility of applicants such as refugees and asylum seekers, taking into account their unique circumstances.

Foreigners Act 1946¹¹⁰

The primary legislation governing the treatment of non-citizens in India is the 1946 Foreigners Act. Nevertheless, this law lacks a dedicated 'refugee' category that would outline distinct rights and handle refugee matters at the political and administrative levels, rather than strictly within the legal and judicial framework. As a result, refugees are often treated similarly to undocumented migrants, tourists, and other foreign individuals under this law. In cases where the government violates constitutional rights, there is limited and inadequate judicial intervention, emphasizing the need for well-defined legal distinctions.

The legal blending of refugees with 'illegal migrants' becomes even more concerning, particularly in the context of growing xenophobia and national political discourse against migration.

Foreigners Act 1948

This directive was enacted by the Central Government, exercising the authority vested in it by Section 3 of the Foreigners Act, 1946. It delineates the criteria for permitting or denying entry into India. When applied to refugees, there is a risk that they could be classified as illegal migrants, potentially leading to their detention at transit areas. Authorities ought to take into account their unique circumstances and exercise compassion, as refugees often find themselves in markedly different situations that warrant special consideration.

Passport Act 1920

This legislation controls how people enter and leave the nation, requiring that all visitors to India possess legal passports. This law allows the Central government to create regulations managing these requirements. The Passport (Entry into India) Rules were consequently created in 1950 by the Central government.¹¹¹ However, it is important to understand that refugees are not included in the ban on admission without a passport. This exception is based on the concept of "non-refoulement," which protects those seeking asylum from being forcibly sent back to a country where they might risk persecutory treatment or other harm. So, when entering India, refugees are exempt from the need for a passport.

¹¹⁰“The Foreigners Act 1946.” *Ministry of Home Affairs*, 23 Nov. 1946.

¹¹¹ “The Passport (Entry into India) Act 1920.” *Ministry of Home Affairs*, 9 Sept. 1920.

Passport Act 1967¹¹²

This law governs the granting of passports and other travel documents to Indian citizens and other nationals, as well as when they can leave the country. It describes numerous passport categories that are issued to distinct types of persons. Additionally, it outlines the possibility of arresting anyone found trying to obtain a passport using fraudulent information. In accordance with Article 20 of the act, the Central Government may grant passports to people who are not Indian nationals if doing so is required for the good of society. In the public interest, this clause enables the government to grant passports to refugees and asylum seekers so they can freely travel abroad.

Article 21¹¹³

No person can be denied the right to life and liberty unless instructed so by legally established procedures

Article 14

The State within the territory of India must ensure that it does not withhold from any individual the right to equality before the law or equal protection under the laws. Equality before the law functions as a prohibition against discrimination and is essentially a negative notion. In contrast, the concept of 'equal protection of the laws' mandates that the State must provide unique treatment to individuals in diverse circumstances to foster equality for all, making it a positive concept. Consequently, the logical consequence of this is that individuals who are equals should receive equal treatment, while those who are not equals may need to be treated unequally¹¹⁴. However, how true this is for refugees in the Indian Context is the elephant in the room. With no refugee policy and legal framework protecting and uplifting the rights of refugees, it is hard to see how equality is thereby achieved.

Case Study

Nandita Haskar vs State of Manipur, 2021¹¹⁵

¹¹² *The Passports Act, 1967*. Passport India, 24 June 1967.

¹¹³ "Article 21 of the Constitution of India – Right to Life and Personal Liberty." *Legalserviceindia.com*, www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-1235-article-21-of-the-constitution-of-india-right-to-life-and-personal-liberty.html.

¹¹⁴ *Equality Rights (Articles 14 18)*.

¹¹⁵ Parichayteam. "Nandita Haksar v. State of Manipur, W.P.(CrI.) No. 6 of 2021." *Parichay - the Blog*, 22 Jan. 2022.2021. Accessed 21 Sept. 2023.

After the infamous military coup of 2021 in Myanmar, the atrocities against minority communities of Myanmar committed by the Tatmadaw (Military of Myanmar) rose to a heinous, shocking level. This led to people fleeing and seeking refuge in neighboring countries of Myanmar (India and Malaysia mostly).

The case originated from a writ petition submitted by the petitioner on behalf of seven Myanmar citizens to the Manipur High Court, who fled to India after the 2021 Military coup. Upon their arrival in India, they found refuge in Moreh, located in the Tengnoupal district of Manipur. They reached out to the petitioner for assistance, expressing concerns that their inadequate travel documentation might lead to their deportation to Myanmar. The writ petition was submitted on behalf of the seven Myanmar nationals, who were seeking permission to travel to New Delhi to request protection from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

On March 10, 2021, the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of India issued a directive to the authorities in the Northeastern border states to monitor and prevent the influx of undocumented migrants from Myanmar into India. However, on March 29, 2021, the Government of Manipur issued a letter expressing its willingness to provide assistance to Myanmar nationals who had entered the state illegally. In its order dated April 17, 2021, the Manipur High Court postponed the case to allow both the State and Central Governments to present their positions. Subsequently, in its order dated April 20, 2021, the Court instructed the State authorities to facilitate the secure transportation of these seven individuals from Moreh to Imphal, where they would reside at the petitioner's local residence. Regarding the argument presented by the petitioner, it was contended that the letter from the Ministry of Home Affairs failed to distinguish between a 'migrant' and a 'refugee.' The petitioner asserted that the seven Myanmar citizens qualified as refugees and sought their safe passage to approach the UNHCR in New Delhi for protection.

The Manipur High Court, however, ruled that the Myanmar citizens could not be classified as migrants, and sought the clear-cut difference between migrants and refugees. The High Court also authorized their secure journey to New Delhi, allowing them to access appropriate protection from the UNHCR. This ruling was grounded in the court's determination that Article 21 of the Indian Constitution includes the principle of 'non-refoulement' within its purview.

What to infer from this case

Due to India's lack of establishing a proper refugee law, there was a moment of slight conflict as the Supreme Court at one point ordered a strict check on the inflow of illegal immigrants (refugees included), whereas the Manipur HC differed by claiming the stark difference between migrants and refugees. Another stance to be noted is how the border communities of India-Myanmar borderlands share similar language, culture, and traditions, but were divided when India gained independence. Because of their shared historical, ethnic, cultural, and religious connections, India and Myanmar have cultivated strong and enduring relations that resonate with people across borders and generations.¹¹⁶ It thereby becomes a tricky affair to not have a refugee policy and judge one of the ruling party's personal discretions. Although in this particular case, the refugees were duly helped and provided the support to travel to New Delhi's office of the UNHCR, such is not the case in all refugee cases.

Humanitarian Aid and Assistance to Refugees

Via Indian Authorities

Refugees are not a burden, but an opportunity. Refugees have the potential to make significant economic contributions to the host societies that embrace them. They can do so by participating as employees, visionaries, business founders, taxpayers, consumers, and investors. Their endeavors can have a positive impact, generating employment opportunities, increasing the efficiency and incomes of local workers, enhancing returns on capital, fostering international trade and investments, and promoting innovation, entrepreneurial spirit, and overall economic expansion.¹¹⁷

Hence, it becomes extremely pertinent and essential for India- in the Chin Refugee context, to also extend a hand and help support such communities, who have faced not only social and economic mishaps but are also burdened by mental and psychological trauma from having to flee their mother countries.

The state of Mizoram in a remarkable display of humanitarian commitment has enrolled over 8000 refugee children from Myanmar in its schools. Mizoram's Chief Minister, Pu Zoramthanga, has consistently urged the central government to extend support by offering refuge, sustenance, and housing to those in need within his state. Additionally, the state government has proactively provided

¹¹⁶ *India-Myanmar Relations Looking from the Border Conference Report*. 2015.

¹¹⁷ Philippe Legrain. "Refugees Are Not a Burden but an Opportunity - OECD." *Www.oecd.org*, 2016, www.oecd.org/migration/refugees-are-not-a-burden-but-an-opportunity.htm.

healthcare and access to public education to the Chin community, allowing them to lease accommodations and participate in the local labor market.¹¹⁸

Describing the Chins as ethnic relatives and "brothers," both the state government and non-governmental organizations have affirmed their resolve to accommodate the refugees and have actively rallied local backing for this cause.

On April 17, 2023, the Young Mizo Association (YMA) declared its commitment to offering humanitarian aid totaling Rs 3.24 lakh to refugees hailing from both Myanmar and Bangladesh who have settled in the state. This resolution was reached during a gathering of the central committee's office bearers of the YMA on the same date.

YMA stands as one of the largest and most long-standing voluntary organizations in Mizoram. Its inception dates back to June 15, 1935, when it was established in Aizawl under the name "Young Lushai Association" (YLA). The YMA appears to have been conceived as a potential successor to the traditional Zawlbuk institution. Zawlbuk, a customary dormitory for young men, played a pivotal role in shaping the character of youth and instilling moral values¹¹⁹

BOSCO, Delhi

Bosco Organisation for Social Concern and Operation is a refugee assistance project. BOSCO employs a range of initiatives to extend assistance to disadvantaged individuals, including the impoverished, disabled, vulnerable youth, street children, child laborers, refugees, underprivileged youth, women, and marginalized communities. This support is offered without any discrimination based on caste, creed, ethnicity, or religion, with the aim of empowering them to progress in their personal development journeys. In collaboration with Don Bosco Ashalayam, the refugee training program was initiated thanks to the assistance provided by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). BOSCO has over 14 offices in New Delhi with over a staff of 50% refugees.¹²⁰

The Migration and Asylum Project (MAP), Delhi¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Fishbein, Frontier, Emily. "In India's Mizoram, Ethnic Ties Drive Response to Chin Conflict." *Frontier Myanmar*, 15 Mar. 2023, www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/in-indias-mizoram-ethnic-ties-drive-response-to-chin-conflict/. Accessed 21 Sept. 2023.

¹¹⁹ Ralte, Laldinpuii. "Towards Understanding Civil Society-Government Relationship: The Study of Young Mizo Association (YMA) in Mizoram." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. Vol. 22, no. 7, 2017, pp. 24-32.

¹²⁰ "BOSCO Delhi." *Boscodelhi.org*, boscodelhi.org/about.php. Accessed 21 Sept. 2023.

¹²¹ "Assistance." *Migration and Asylum Project*, www.migrationandasylumproject.org/assistance. Accessed 21 Sept. 2023.

The Migration and Asylum Project is India's inaugural legal institution focused on forced migration and displacement issues. Established in 2013, its primary goal is to combat the marginalization of one of the world's most vulnerable populations, migrants and refugees. MAP achieves this by prioritizing the Rule of Law as a fundamental element in addressing human rights issues and ensuring equitable access to justice at the grassroots level. MAP holds the distinction of being the sole organization in South Asia with a Letter of Understanding from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), allowing it to advocate for asylum claims before the agency that originally introduced the concept of legal representation in the asylum procedure. As the primary point of contact for UNHCR-mandated refugees in India, MAP offers comprehensive assistance throughout the UNHCR's Refugee Status Determination (RSD) process. Back in 2018, M.A.P. played a leading role in the regional campaign against UNHCR's decision to terminate the refugee designation for the Chin community. M.A.P. provided legal representation for more than 1,000 Chin refugees in their dealings with UNHCR. Concurrently, the organization engaged in advocacy efforts with various UNHCR offices to bring attention to the community's issues, ultimately leading to the reversal of the policy. M.A.P. also partners with Umeed Ki Kiran, the round-the-clock clinic managed by Doctors Without Borders (MSF)¹²², to provide survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) with complimentary, high-quality medical and psychological assistance.

Via Non-State Actors

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Delhi

UNHCR, working alongside other UN agencies and humanitarian organizations, plays a pivotal role in delivering essential aid, legal support, and education to displaced populations around the world. This collaborative effort aims to alleviate suffering, restore dignity, and promote self-reliance among refugees and forcibly displaced individuals. Life as a refugee can be traumatic, but intervention and aid of international organizations like UNCHR, in a country like India where no refugee law exists, often helps to a great extent.

In the absence of a comprehensive national legal and administrative framework, UNHCR, situated in New Delhi, carries out the process of refugee status determination (RSD) for individuals seeking asylum from countries that are not neighboring India, as well as from Myanmar.¹²³

¹²² MSF. "Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) International." *Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) International*, 2018, www.msf.org/.

¹²³"India." *United National High Commissioner for Refugees*, chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/4cd96e919.pdf.

UNHCR coordinates and collaborates with the following agents for protection and assistance for refugees:

Government of India: Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Home Affairs

Formal partnership with 8 Indian NGOs: Gandhi National Memorial Society (GNMS), Bosco Organisation for Social Concern and Operation (BOSCO), Socio-Legal Information Centre (SLIC), Bal Raksha Bharat (Save the Children), Development and Justice Initiative (DAJI), Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) and Fair Trade Forum India (FTF-I).

Having to forcibly migrate and flee one's mother country, to seek refugee in another, is always a psychologically jarring event- regardless of gender or origin. However, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against women is a hidden aspect of the refugee crisis. Amongst the violence, chaos, and confusion of the refugee crisis- the brutalization of women is a deplorable and persistent trend. Apart from the threats posed by conflicting armed groups, women also face the peril of being subjected to violence by human traffickers or even border security personnel while in transit from conflict zones. Even after leaving the conflict zone, safety remains elusive: residing in a refugee camp within the home country or seeking protection elsewhere exposes women to grave risks to their safety, freedom, and well-being.¹²⁴

Women's Protection Clinic, Delhi¹²⁵: In an endeavor to combat the above-mentioned SGBV against refugee women and to provide them with a safe, free space- The UNCHR runs a Women's Protection Clinic In a nondescript house down a winding lane in western New Delhi- especially for the refugee women of the Chin community from Myanmar. The WPC was established in 2005 and has been primarily funded by the Australian government for the majority of its existence. In late July 2009, Senator Chris Evans, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship in Australia, reaffirmed their commitment to providing ongoing financial support for the clinic during a visit to the facility. More than 1,250 women and girls from the ethnic Chin community in Myanmar have undergone counseling at the clinic, where a policy of absolute confidentiality is upheld. However, the clinic's primary role is to emphasize areas where protection is lacking and to discover resolutions for urgent requirements. It assists UNHCR in pinpointing the women who are exceptionally vulnerable and require resettlement to a third country. In addition to engaging with UNHCR personnel, the women from

¹²⁴ "Protecting Female Refugees against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Camps - Institute on Globalization, Culture and Mobility." *Gcm.unu.edu*, gcm.unu.edu/publications/articles/protecting-female-refugees-against-sexual-and-gender-based-violence-in-camps.html.

¹²⁵ Bose, Nayana. *Chin Women from Myanmar Find Help down a Winding Lane in Delhi*. United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees, 2009.

Myanmar's refugee community residing in the Indian capital utilize the WPC as a platform for deliberating on matters of common significance, including healthcare and education.

India's glaring need for Refugee Policy and other recommendations

Although Jawaharlal Nehru's government never gave an official reason for not signing the 1951 UNHCR Refugee Convention- the reasons have been popularly speculated- the most prominent one being how the Refugee Convention was euro-centric. Analyzing how the convention was claimed to be Eurocentric-¹²⁶ it was Formulated during an era when the United Nations membership predominantly comprised nations from the global north. Moreover, significant portions of the global south were still under European colonial domination. Also, the convention primarily focused on providing aid to Europeans displaced during World War II. Its interpretation of the term 'refugee' was all-encompassing, devoid of specific limitations pertaining to any particular demographic group. Geographically, its scope was limited solely to individuals displaced from European regions. Consequently, it provided no assistance to the numerous people displaced by the partition of British India in 1947. In a parallel effort, a distinct UN agency known as UNRWA: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, provided support to the 700,000 Palestinians who were displaced following the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. The Convention's provisions were primarily oriented toward assisting Europeans displaced during World War II. While it defined the term 'refugee' in universal terms, it did not provide the same level of support and protection to refugees from other parts of the world. This selective approach is seen as Eurocentric because it prioritizes the needs of European refugees over those from other regions.

Nevertheless, India's decision to neither become a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention nor establish a comprehensive domestic framework for refugee legislation has resulted in the persisting problem of deteriorating protection standards for refugees and a diminishment of their dignity. Lacking formal legislation, India's approach to handling successive waves of refugees has been influenced by the interplay of political realism and prescriptive ethnonationalism.¹²⁷ The absence of a structured refugee policy sets in motion a cascade of events and challenges that disrupt the lives of refugees in the host country where they seek refuge and solace. These challenges encompass a wide spectrum, spanning from societal dynamics like xenophobia¹²⁸ and racism to practical everyday needs

¹²⁶ "How Eurocentric Is the 1951 UN Refugee Convention." *Refugee History.*, 14 Jan. 2021, refugeehistory.org/blog/2021/1/14/how-eurocentric-is-the-1951-un-refugee-convention-and-why-does-it-matter#:~:text=There%20are%20plenty%20of%20reasons. Accessed 21 Sept. 2023.

¹²⁷ Mahika Khosla. "The Geopolitics of India's Refugee Policy." *South Asian Voices*, 22 Sept. 2022, southasianvoices.org/the-geopolitics-of-indias-refugee-policy/. Accessed 21 Sept. 2023.

¹²⁸ E. Tendayi Achiume. "Beyond Prejudice: Structural Xenophobic Discrimination against Refugees." *Georgetown Journal of International Law*, Vol.45, No.2, 12 June 2016, p. 323. Accessed 21 Sept. 2023.

such as obtaining residential permits, exit permits, access to medical facilities, and maintaining minimal living standards. Reports of harassment, discrimination, and sexual and gender-based violence against refugees often carry less weight due to the absence of specific policies and legal frameworks. India, by not aligning itself with the UN's principles outlined in the refugee convention, believes it is not legally bound to adhere to them¹²⁹. As a result, there is an indirect infringement on refugees' rights, as they are not consistently treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Another significant objection to refugee policy stems from concerns about potential threats to national security, particularly within the context of complex South Asian geopolitics and the permeable nature of international borders. However, it's important to note that refugee law offers certain advantages. The enactment of refugee protection legislation can provide the foundation for establishing a framework to assess refugee status using agreed-upon criteria for determining refugee status, ensuring protection, and outlining the treatment of refugees.¹³⁰

India's ad hoc and selective policies towards various refugee groups, influenced by geopolitical considerations in a matter as sensitive and crucial as the refugee crisis, raise significant concerns. Such an approach may not align with the principles of fairness, consistency, and humanitarianism that should ideally guide refugee management

Furthermore, these policies have often been criticized for being inconsistent and lacking a comprehensive and inclusive framework for addressing the complex and varied needs of different refugee populations. This raises questions about India's commitment to upholding human rights and international standards in managing refugee situations, which should prioritize the welfare and protection of vulnerable individuals and communities.

Ensuring the right to work and livelihood

In lieu of a refugee policy, the government should enable the refugees to work in formal sectors by creating appropriate legal mechanisms to establish their identity. This would ensure that refugees do not fall into the shadows of informal labor markets. By integrating refugees into the formal employment sector, the government would also be helping them gain financial stability and security. This would furthermore ensure that workplace discrimination and harassment are also kept at bay, as these things go unnoticed and unattended in the informal sector.

¹²⁹ “Why India Needs a Refugee Law | Lowy Institute.” *Www.lowyinstitute.org*, www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/why-india-needs-refugee-law

¹³⁰ *Human Rights of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in India: Issues and Challenges*. National Human Rights Commission of India, 2022.

Chapter-V: Conclusion

The India-Myanmar border, centered around Manipur, presents a complex mosaic of geopolitical, historical, and security dynamics that challenge traditional boundaries. This border region converges geography, culture, economy, security, psychology, and anthropology, demanding skilled borderland management and international cooperation. As the global landscape evolves, the India-Myanmar border remains a realm of both promise and difficulties, necessitating thorough research and prudent policy development.

- Manipur emerges as a central point that encapsulates the historical intricacies of the India-Myanmar border, spanning the terrain of previous agreements. While these agreements aim to provide clarity, they also cast a shadow over border management.
- The interplay of literature, scholarly works, and research papers acts as a lens through which we interpret the multifaceted issues defining Manipur's borders. Transportation difficulties persist due to the absence of a border fence, and the border remains a crucial conduit for cross-border movements, often linked to narcotics and arms trafficking. Concerns about collaboration between the Myanmar government and insurgents in India's northeastern regions have long troubled Indian authorities.
- In this intricate border region, alternative approaches to border management provide optimism. Soft diplomacy, cultural connections, and interpersonal interactions have the potential to cultivate trust and cooperation, transcending the complexities of geopolitics. Border management now encompasses interpersonal relationships and shared experiences alongside military and security concerns. Manipur, at the core of the India-Myanmar border, extends a warm welcome to travelers, embodying the spirit of cooperation and shared aspirations.
- Manipur represents a nexus of historical agreements, contemporary border challenges, fencing considerations, and evolving management strategies. Its significance transcends geographical boundaries, underscoring the necessity for collaborative endeavors to address security challenges and harness the region's potential for mutual benefit. As we navigate the complexities of this border region, nurturing cultural ties and promoting soft diplomacy become increasingly crucial in forging enduring bonds of peace and prosperity.

Nagaland is a beautiful scenic place, and a state full of rich customs and traditions, celebrated in the entire northeastern India, making it a special region of our nation. According to various studies, wiping out Insurgency through military means is never the only option.

- At present situations of Insurgency like these require political problems to be addressed with political solutions and a proper mechanism, and equal importance to be granted through psychological Campaigning. The role of the army is limited to a certain acceptable level where normal civil administration can function properly; however, it does result in the elimination of Insurgency completely.
- Understanding the border linkages is another striking feature that needs to be resolved especially with Myanmar. The impact of Insurgency has deeply imprinted itself on the society, culture, and politics hence it becomes a difficult task for the Union government. The dependency culture and corruption Intertwined have seeped in the Nagaland society helping it to sustain itself, hence a need for more wise leaders and transparent institutions and systems are required.
- However, the day Nagaland people decided they wanted to bring peace, prosperity, and progress, Insurgency came to a grinding halt. For instance, the decline of Insurgency in Mizoram is an inspiration to other Northeastern states. The reality needed to be understood, achieving quick results is impossible and won't lead to an overnight wipeout of separatists, militants, and Insurgents. The Naga story is proof of the failure of AFSPA and the greater effectiveness of civil power, including formal and informal talks and the growing role of non-governmental civil society groups.
- The state has shown patience in Nagaland so far and can deliberately work through peace talks and agreements with the insurgent groups. The shadowy groups can be challenged with a strong mobilization of civil society, across the spectrum of media, to raise people's voices by state and non-state actors. National security comes from ensuring human security.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) who are made to forcibly migrate due to war, violence and persecution are one of the most vulnerable groups that lack legal, social and economic protection. Internally Displaced Women (IDWs) amongst them face the brunt of gendered violence as well as sexual, physical and cognitive violence.

- Studying borderland states and their socio-political context occupies a significant position in borderland studies and understanding the India-Myanmar borderlands, in this context. Placing in the larger discussion of internal displacement, this research has focused on the ongoing ethnic violence in the India-Myanmar borderland state of

Manipur and the displaced Kuki-Zo women who were forced to flee and take refuge in New Delhi.

- Under the pretext of “protecting” their sovereignty and disallowing international intervention, many states across the world have committed grave human rights violations. The lack of domestic laws for IDPs remains a burning issue in India.
- Communities at the peripheries or borderlands face increased instability and are more prone to violence. The ethnic communities (tribal communities- Kuki-Zo) in the violence have been pushed to the very margins with mass rapes and various kinds of violence against women taking place. The historically accumulated grievances of these communities at the peripheries need to be addressed at a national and an international level in terms of governance, law and justice for peace to be reinstated in these war-torn areas on the border.

The Chin refugee crisis hence presents a profound and intricate humanitarian dilemma that requires urgent consideration and ongoing dedication. This research has shed light on the multifaceted issues faced by Chin refugees, including their legal status, housing conditions, access to basic services, and vulnerability to gender-based violence.

- While India has somehow provided sanctuary to almost 2,42,835 refugees, it has failed to uphold their dignity and provide appropriate humanitarian assistance that would prove fruitful and is required for basic sustenance for the refugees.
- To move forward effectively, both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders must collaborate to devise comprehensive solutions. Chin refugees deserve to be legally labeled as Refugees- and not as “illegal immigrants” as stated under the Foreigners Act 1946. In its entirety - this research paper states the immediate need for India to frame a Refugee Law.
- The dire situation faced by the population of Myanmar's Chin State is deplorable and constitutes a grave violation of human rights. Nevertheless, when these individuals seek refuge in India, it becomes our shared duty to offer assistance, champion their rights, and strive for a future where Chin refugees can reconstruct their lives with dignity, safety, and hope.

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