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Manipur Turmoil a Crisis of National Security and Constitutional Values

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Communal tensions flared up in a northeastern state of India, leading to clashes between different ethnic groups. Outbreaks of ethnic strife shattered the prevailing calm and serenity, upending the lives of residents in the region. This is another example of the failure of law and order resulting in a serious humanitarian crisis. The clashes became agitated from long-standing differences between the two communities, the nontribal Meitei (majority) group, and other tribal peoples. Primarily conflicts between these two communities are not only ethnic and political but also economic and geographical as the majority group (Meitei) has domination in the state's valley region and the Kuki group is a significant minority group cohabiting the hill areas.¹ The conflicts between these two communities were provoked after the All-Tribal Student Union Manipur (ATSUM) organized a 'tribal solidarity rally' opposing the Manipur High Court's order which states about granting scheduled tribe (ST) status to the Meitei community. This order was opposed by the Kuki and other tribal groups as they were intimidated to lose access to quotas in education and jobs and also afraid that it would dilute their land rights. Expeditionously such intimidation and tensions converted into prolific violence, with conflicts between armed militants from both sides and forceful dislocation of thousands of civilians. Many people have been killed so far in ethnic clashes. The state has witnessed a severe shortage of essential supplements, mass displacement of civilians facing violence, and also the blockades of highways. The Indian government has deployed paramilitary forces and army troops to

¹ 'Violence in Manipur' (Drishti IAS, 08 May 2023) <<https://www.drishtiiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-editorials/violence-in-manipur>> accessed 11 March 2024

restore order but the situation remains flammable and the same.² The main part of this paper talks about the background and cause of the conflict and how to become a voice of civilians of the state facing displacement and ethnic violence. This paper grabs attention to the crisis in Manipur and its permanent solution. The long-standing ethnic differences and demand for resources and autonomy in Manipur finding a long-lasting or Conscientious solution.

Keywords: *ethnic conflict, armed forces, constitutional values, political instability, humanitarian crisis, civil unrest.*

INTRODUCTION

India is a secular country where the spirit of unity, integrity, and brotherhood resides in the hearts of people or where people of all religions live together. Sometimes it seems that some clashes arise between the people due to unemployment, poverty, and misperception. In many states, tribal communities residing throughout the Country are still deprived and protesting for their rights, survival, and identity. Recently, the northeastern state of Manipur has been engulfed in a maelstrom of ethnic violence civil unrest, and political instability, which gives rise to challenges to national security and the constitutional fabric of India. The Manipur turmoil that broke out in May 2023 has its roots in past conflicts between the state's two predominant communities over the issues regarding identity, land rights, and representation. While debating on the preamble of the Constitution in the constituent assembly, Jaipal Singh stated by representing tribes, 'You cannot teach democracy to the tribal people, you have to learn democratic ways from them. They are the most democratic people on Earth. They require protection. We do not ask for any special protection. We want to be treated like every Indian.....' These are not only statements of Jaipal Singh Munda but these lines express the feelings of all the tribes.

The conflicts took numerous lives, displaced thousands of civilians, and disturbed the fragile social activity of the state. Beyond this immediate security threat, the Manipur turmoil has also

² Rajeev Bhattacharyya, 'Manipur in India's Northeast Remains in the Grip of Uncertainty and Fear' *The Diplomat* (13 March 2024) <<https://thediplomat.com/2024/03/manipur-in-indias-northeast-remains-in-the-grip-of-uncertainty-and-fear/>> accessed 15 March 2024

created a spotlight on the basic principles of secularism and the protection of minority rights given in the Constitution.

Such trouble in Manipur leads to discussions on the potency of existing laws and mechanisms, and the need for inclusive reforms or betterment. It has also lightened discussions on the exquisite balance between the state's volition or free will and the central government's responsibility toward maintaining law and order. Since the country is struggling with this sophisticated situation it is vitally important to find a long-lasting solution. The Manipur turmoil can be considered as a clock reminder towards the challenges that lie ahead in protecting national security, and unity, and safeguarding the rights of civilians irrespective of their ethnicity and religion.

The hatred between people at its peak and confrontation is so cruel or horrific that a tribal woman was chased naked on the road in Thoubal district. Considering the intensity and brutality of the conflict, the Supreme Court takes *Suo Motu* cognizance of sexual assault. After all such things tribal groups demand 'self-rule', separate CM dominated by tribal communities, and many other demands arise by both communities. In the current turmoil, 175 official deaths and 169 bodies are identified out of which only 81 bodies have been claimed.³

ROOTS (ORIGIN) OF THE CONFLICT

There are a total of 16 districts in Manipur but the state is mainly divided into 2 parts 'valley' and 'hill'. The valley districts are governed by the erstwhile kingdom of Kangleipak. In the past, rulers of the valley districts tried to extend their rule into the entire hill area and valley area of Manipur. But the Naga tribe in the hills opposed them as they considered themselves independent and free from any governance. In a book named 'The Art of Not Being Governed', 'An anarchist history of Upland Southeast Asia' written by the anthropologist James C. Scott 'In this book, James explained whenever a state was formed in the valley whether the state was an empire or a government there was always a 'nonstate' in the hills. The distinction between the

³ Padmakshi Sharma, 'Can't Keep The Pot Boiling Over Dead Bodies': Supreme Court Issues Directions For Dignified Cremation/Burial Of Manipur Violence Victims' *Live Law* (28 November 2023) <<https://www.livelaw-in.cdn.ampproject.org/v/s/www.livelaw.in/amp/top-stories>> accessed 15 March 2024

state and non-state was called 'Surplus' which means 'extra' there were rivers in the valley region which means permanent settlement. People used to farm and trade but life in the hills was quite different. There was minimalism in the hills.⁴ The rise of conflict begins with three brothers Marjit Singh, Choruajit Singh, and Gambhir Singh who were Meitei royals from the Ningthouja dynasty there is a game of thrones between them, one brother takes the help of the neighbourhood king, and the second brother takes help he of the Burmese. Several alliances formed and broke with the Britishers and Burmese. In 1824 An army was raised by Meitei royal Gambhir Singh with the help of Britishers which was named 'The Manipur Levy' and the first Anglo-Burmese war fought between these two forces. During this war, Manipur Valley was recaptured by the Manipur levy. At that time the hilly people (Naga tribe) were living semi-nomadic lives and shifting cultivation was practised by those people. They had food for their survival only sometimes it was insufficient for their requirements when any natural calamity occurred in the state. Due to this hill people raid the valley people's farms for their survival. Troubled by this and to protect the valley from the plunder, the British political agent in Manipur brought kuki-zomi from the kuki chin hills of Burma. To act as a shield for the Imphal valley the emperor provided them land along the ridges as they were fierce headhunting warriors like the Nangas.

In 1917, The great Kuki rebellion took place between the Kuki tribe and Britishers while the Britishers asked the Manipur king for 2,000 labour corps during World War -1. It took around 2 years to suppress the war. The behaviour of Britishers was not so good towards the tribes, they declared hilly regions as 'ungovernable areas', and due to this, they made an inner line in Assam that separates the hilly areas from their farms in the valley. Hilly people fall under the 'administered areas' which were also known as 'backward tracts, partially excluded areas, etc. In 1891 Britishers imposed such rules in Manipur as well. Historian Ram Chandra Guha in his essay 'Savaging the civilized', tells us how the British never thought of bringing these hill regions into the Indian legislature, because they felt that it would not be fit for democracy. Through the

⁴ Michael Aung-Thwin et al., 'James C. Scott, The art of not being governed: An anarchist history of upland Southeast Asia' (2011) 167(1) *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia and Oceania* 86-99 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/22134379-90003603>> accessed 15 March 2024

Naga independence movement in the 1950s Guerrilla warfare began among Meitei and Kuki-zomi as they were demanding a separate state within India named 'Kukiland'.⁵

INCITING INCIDENT FOR THE RECENT UNREST

Manipur High Court's Judgment: The March 2023 order of the Manipur High Court is the main cause behind the agitation spilt over into violence. The order instructed the Manipur government to consider the inclusion of Meiteis in the list of Scheduled Tribes. Later, the Manipur High Court modified its order, ordering the removal of paragraph 17(3).⁶

Issue of Fair Representation in the State Assembly: It was alleged by Meitei that the census figures used in the delimitation process are not fair and also the ratio of the population in the state is unequal. On the other hand, the tribal groups (Kuki-Nagas) also alleged that they were underrepresented in the Assembly.

Issue of Illegal Migrants from Neighboring Areas: It was alleged by the Meitei leaders that there was a sudden increase in migrants in the Churachandpur district due to the 2021 military coup in Myanmar.

Drugs-related Issues: Allegedly, illegal settlers from Tribal groups are growing drugs in the hills, out of greed for some money. 'War on drugs ' was Started by the state government to stop drug cartels in the state. But the problem arises when hatred against only one community is fostered by repeatedly blaming for the drugs and a conspiracy theory gets popular among Meitei that the drug cartel is a Kuki tribe conspiracy against Meitei. Also stated that this is the case of 'Narco terrorism ' and there is a spread of propaganda about the hee hin-Kuki narco-terrorism proxy war.

Encroachment of Residents of Kuki Villages: Around 38 villages of Churachandpur-Khoupum are declared protected areas through which many Kuki people become homeless.

⁵ 'Kuki Tribes Insurgency in Manipur' (BYJUS) <<https://byjus.com/current-affairs/kuki-insurgency-in-manipur/>> accessed 11 March 2024

⁶Abhinay Lakshman, 'ST Tag for Meitei's Manipur High Court withdraws contentious part of its order' *The Hindu* (20 February 2024) <<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/manipur-hc-modifies-contentious-order-on-st-status-for-meiteis/article67871656.ece>> accessed 14 March 2024

Manipur Hill Area District Council's 6th and 7th Amendment Bill: This bill was passed in 2022 to fulfil the demands of tribal groups but they were disappointed because the bill was passed without discussing the Hill Area committee. They started to protest against the government, being pressured by the protests, the government signed an MOU with protestors and assured them that they would consult with the hill area committee.⁷

Removal of AFSPA Act: In 2022 armed forces were set aside by the government especially from the valley region as they believed that peace remained in the state and the ceasefire was successful due to 25 insurgents having signed a peace treaty of suspension of operations agreement in 2008 between centre government, state government, and Manipur government. But later this agreement was withdrawn, by alleging that insurgents were encroaching and ageing violence in the hills.

Redraws the Boundary of the District: The state government added some land into valley districts that previously belonged to hill areas, without consulting with tribals. This land became government land and now they have to pay land taxes.

Eviction Drive by the Government: Around 38 villages of Churachandpur district were classified as illegal legal settlements and villagers were declared encroachers. Many people were dislocated in the terms of the government survey in K. Songjiang village. It was also alleged that these forced evictions were conducted to enforce 3 bills passed in Rajya Sabha, one was the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2023 which permits 6 out of 12 atomic minerals can be mined by private companies, second Jan Vishwas (Amendment of provisions) bill, 2023 through which 183 provisions were decriminalized from 42 existing acts which include Major acts such as Environment (protection) act, The Indian forest act, the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act and the third was Oil Palm Project which replaces the Jhum cultivation and Poppy cultivation and the MOU was signed between the government and

⁷ 'Amid protest, House passes Manipur HADC (Sixth Amendment) Bill, 2022' *Imphal Free Press* (06 August 2022) <<https://www.ifp.co.in/manipur/amid-protest-house-passes-manipur-hadc-sixth-amendment-bill-2022>> accessed date 14 March 2024

Private company to provide land for the project. 39 other mining-related MOUs were signed in 2017.⁸

Imposition of Section 144: A peaceful rally was conducted to protest against the forceful evictions by the Kuki Students Organisation and the Indigenous Tribal Leaders Forum on 9th March 2023.⁹

Seeds of Hatred: Words like ‘outsiders’, ‘Encroachers’, ‘Anti-Nationals’ and illegal immigrants declared by the Meitei people and political leaders sow seeds of hatred among the people of Manipur.

Spillover of Armed Militants: There are various militant groups in the state which were spreading the violence such as the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), People’s Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK), Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP), and Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL) and others.

Revenge Attacks: Fake and manipulated news and information on social media was the trigger point of the conflict and used as an instrument of spreading violence. In a viral video, A woman belonging to the Kuki tribe was gang raped and sexually assaulted as revenge, fake news was spread among people that a Meitei woman was raped by Kuki militiamen.

MAJOR DEMANDS OF MEITEI GROUP

Demand for ST Status - Before the merger of the state with the Union of India in,1949 Meiteis were recognized as a tribe but later rejected twice by the office of Registrar General of India in 1982 by stating that, it found that, based on available information the Meitei community does not appear to possess tribal characteristics and said it was not in favour of inclusion. Second, in 2001, the Manipur government stated that the Meitei community was the dominant group in Manipur and need not be included in the ST list. It noted that the Meitei people were Hindus

⁸ Dhruv Rathee, ‘The Real Story of Manipur | Who is Responsible?’ (YouTube, 06 August 2023) <<https://youtu.be/a9OswjzEbWQ?si=8TtA0RY79TmoEVL6>> accessed 05 March 2024

⁹ ‘Section 144 imposed in Manipur's Churachandpur district following fresh violence’ *The Economic Times* (19 December 2023) <<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/section-144-imposed-in-manipurs-churachandpur-district-following-fresh-violence/articleshow/106118289.cms?from=mdr#>> accessed 10 March 2024

and assumed the status of Kshatriya Caste in the ladder of Hindu Castes, adding that they had already been listed as Other Backward Classes.

Protection of Ancestral Land and Territorial Integrity - The Scheduled Tribe Demand Committee of Manipur (STDCM) is raising its voice in the demand of Meitei's ST status to 'Preserve' the community and their 'ancestral land, tradition, and culture' as they are afraid of outsiders and demand for Constitutional safeguards. and they are opposing the discriminant right provided to tribal as they can buy land in Imphal Valley but nontribal people cannot buy land in the hill areas Meiteis believe that they are marginalized in their ancestral land and afraid of Greater Nagalim, as per the Census of 2011 Meiteis' population is reduced and only 44% while in 1951 their population was 59%.

Safeguarding Mei's Interests - Their community was demanding to protect their interest and rights in representation in the state and not to be governed by new policies and legislatures.

Demand for Implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) - To identify the illegal immigrants within the state from neighbourhood areas primarily from Myanmar and to disable them they were demanding the enforcement of NRC.

Separate Administration System for Valley Areas - In Meitei populated areas they were demanding separate administration or Union territory status.¹⁰

Opposition to Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Bills - The proposed bill is mainly concerned with providing more autonomy to the hill areas but by being afraid of the domination of tribal groups, they want the withdrawal of the said bill.

Demand for Neutral Security Forces - MEITEis alleged that the state security forces are biased and have more officers from the other tribal groups because they have the advantage of reservation. So, they want neutral security forces from the other states. As they were facing perceived threats from other ethnic groups and proposed administrative changes.

¹⁰ 'Violence in Manipur' (*Drishti IAS*, 08 May 2023) <<https://www.drishtiiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-editorials/violence>> accessed 10 March 2024

DEMANDS RAISED BY TRIBAL GROUPS

Demand for the Enforcement of the 6th Schedule - In the words of Justice M.Hidayatullah, the 6th schedule is a 'Mini-Constitution'. Under this, there is a separate scheme for the administration of the tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram for the development of District Councils and Regional Councils which are empowered with legislative, administrative, and judicial powers as well as other welfare services like land, revenue, forests, education, public health, etc. Now tribals are demanding a separate 'Kukiland' or the implementation of the 6th schedule for the autonomous administrative powers in the tribal-dominated hill areas under articles 244(2) and 275(1) of the Indian Constitution or if can't be done then at least pass the ADC(Amendment) bill, 2021.

Rehabilitation and Compensation - Being aggrieved by the forceful dislocation and destruction of property and lives they demand compensation from the government due to this recent ethnic violence.

Disarmament of Militant Groups - Throughout the violence, both communities faced threats and loss from armed militants so they demanded disarmament and peace in the state.

Development and Political Representation - As per the data, Meiteis have representation of 40 MLAs in the state's assembly and tribals have only 20 MLAs in the assembly, such an imbalance is opposed by the tribal groups.

Deployment of Neutral Security Forces - In the unrest situation Police officials and people from other service sectors were also becoming biased and supporting their community, both communities demanded the deployment of security forces from other states so that conflict could be suppressed.

Opposition to Consideration of ST Status to Meiteis - Tribal groups argued that the Meiteis group is more advanced and has a political advantage, by providing ST status they get more advantage in the Jobs and they are afraid of loss of Job opportunities Meiteis will also be eligible to buy land in the hills which would ultimately push the tribals out. All Tribal Students' Union

of Manipur stated that Meitei already enjoying the benefits related to backward classes and the Meitei language is included in the Eighth schedule of the Constitution.

MEASURES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT

Deployment of Military - To enforce law and order in the state government deployed para-military forces to relocate the displaced people and to suppress the recent conflict. In 1980, the government deployed the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) by declaring the entire Manipur as a 'disturbed area'. Which performed a major role in maintaining peace till recent unrest. Assam Rifles in collaboration with the army had conducted an 'Operation All Clear' through which various militant groups were disarmed and neutralized.

Suspension of Operations Agreement - In 2008 the tripartite Suspension of Operation (SoO) was signed by the Government of India and two Kuki umbrella groups Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and United People's Front (UPF).

Relief and Rehabilitation Camps - To support the affected and displaced people in the unrest relief camps have been organized by the government to provide food, shelter, and other essentials.

Temporary Internet Shutdowns and Imposition of Curfews - To stop fake and hateful news temporary Internet shutdowns were imposed and with the help of paramilitary forces curfew was declared within a state.

Dialogue and Steps towards Peace Talks - To maintain law and order the government tried to convince and fulfil their demands, and also take essential measures to reconcile both communities through peace talks with the representatives of their communities but the trust is still to be won.

Three-pronged Approach - This initiative was declared by the Union Home Minister Amit Shah, this emphasized mainly three objectives which include dialogue and peace talks with aggrieved people, relocation and rehabilitation of the displaced people and disarming insurgent groups, and punishing those who are involved in the present unrest.

SUPREME COURT JUDGEMENTS AND VIEWS

The Supreme Court appointed an All-women (Judicial) committee which was headed by three former High Court judges of Justices Gita Mittal, Shalini Phansalkar Joshi, and Asha Menon. To add 'one more layer of security' the Court appointed one more (officers) committee, which works to report back to the court and consists of Mr Dattatray Padsalgikar IPS, former Maharashtra DGP, and Mumbai Police Commissioner, as the investigation monitoring officers. The Judicial Committee in its one report suggests a 'Victim Compensation Scheme' jointly with the National Legal Services Authority. In its second report, the committee suggested reconstructing important documents that were lost in the insurgency so that the amount of the Compensation scheme may be linked with Aadhar. In its third report, the committee suggested constituting a domain experts committee to facilitate its work. The committee also emphasized on 'speedy investigation' of 'actually responsible persons' so that they get punishment for inciting and being involved in violence.¹¹

The bench headed by CJI D. Y. Chandrachud reprimanded the Police by stating 'The investigation is so lethargic, FIRs are registered after so long, arrests not made, statements not recorded...There is a complete breakdown of law and order and constitutional machinery in the state'.

The Honourable Court also directed that the provisions mentioned in Article 371¹², which protects the interest of northeastern states, will remain unchanged. Article 371(c)¹³ confers special powers to Manipur, in which the President has the power to elect some MLAs from the hills and is also authorized to establish a hill area committee and to direct the Governor to ensure proper functioning or to monitor its workings and should submit an annual report on it.

¹¹ Shruti Kakkar, 'SC constitutes panel of three former women judges to oversee humanitarian measures in Manipur' *The New Indian Express* (07 August 2023)

<<https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2023/Aug/07/sc-constitutespanel-of-threeformer-women-judges-to-oversee-humanitarian-measures-in-manipur-2602869.html>> accessed 11 March 2024

¹² Constitution of India 1950, art 371

¹³ Constitution of India 1950, art 371(c)

CJI Chandrachud referred to a decision contended in the State of Maharashtra v Milind & Ors¹⁴, in this case, it was stated that state government, Courts, Tribunals, or any other authority cannot modify, alter, or amend the list of Scheduled Tribes under Article 342(1)¹⁵ and the order of the Manipur High court relating to consideration for the inclusion of Meitei community in Scheduled Tribe list is an exception to this.

In Dinganglung Gangmei v Mutum Churamani Meetei & Ors¹⁶, the Court directed the Union Government and the State of Manipur to make sufficient arrangements to ensure the protection of lives and properties of all the citizens and residents of the State of Manipur.¹⁷

CHALLENGES IN RESTORING PEACE IN MANIPUR

According to an intelligence report, 19590 insurgents were operating both in valley and hill areas of Manipur by 2001.

The availability of weapons in both communities, whether stolen from the Manipur police armoury or obtained from Myanmar, continues to pose a challenge. We have to ensure that society remains free of all kinds of weapons, as stated by the Chief of Army's Eastern Command Lt General Rana Pratap Kalita. Also, the problem of illegal migrants was pointed out by Lt Gen Kalita in his words, 'But this continuous influx and movement of population across the borders causes some anxiety in terms of contraband and weapons smuggling,¹⁸ which is an area of concern and also a challenge in maintaining peace within the state.

There is another challenge in terms of 'conflicting demands' raised by both communities, implementation of those is nearly impossible. Implementation Of the demands of one group may lead to incitement among people. Insurgents play a major role in inciting the conflict as some outfits have joined hands with politicians to get advantage of the vote bank and some

¹⁴ *State of Maharashtra v Milind & Ors* AIR 2001 SC 393

¹⁵ Constitution of India 1950, art 342(1)

¹⁶ *Dinganglung Gangmei v Mutum Churamani Meetei & Ors* SLP (C) 19206/2023

¹⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁸ 'Myanmar instability, weapons with Manipur warring groups have grave implications for State: Kalita' *The Hindu* (16 December 2023) <<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/myanmar-instability-weapons-with-manipur-warring-groups-have-grave-implications-for-state-kalita/article67644796.ece>> accessed 10 March 2024

other outfits operate with gangsters, the region is vast in forests and also a border area through which the exchange of arms and logistics may get easier and it is also very easy to hide in forests or to move beyond border after committing crimes, so the area is rich in mushrooming insurgent groups. After a visit to Manipur's disturbed areas, the women's wing of CPI criticized the government's incapability by stating that the ongoing disturbance in the northeastern state is not communal but state-sponsored as the government has been acting as an onlooker and has not done enough to quell the violence a commission named, National Federation of Indian Women.

PATH AHEAD TOWARD RECONCILIATION

To resolve the issue, demands for the ST status must be solved in which legislature may take the reference of the recommendations made by various committees which are-

The Lokur Committee (1965) Recommendations - Said committee suggested five criteria to consider ST status namely, Primitive traits, distinct culture, geographical isolation, shyness to contact with the community at large, and backwardness.

Bhuria Commission (2002-2004) - This is also known as the Scheduled Tribes Commission which recommends that tribal areas may be considered when 40% or more of the population reside in the area according to the Census of 1951. Other criteria such as dense tribal population in an area, and economic and social backwardness in comparison to surrounding areas are also key measures. The President also has the power to notify tribal areas and States and to constitute the Tribal Advisory Council to assist the Governor in the matters of tribals.

Xaxa Committee (2013) - A high-level committee was constituted by the PM office headed by Prof. Virginius Xaxa to advise and examine the socioeconomic, and health status of tribal communities. Five major objectives raised by the committee are - (1) livelihood and employment, (2) education, (3) health, (4) involuntary displacement and migration, (5) and legal and constitutional matters have been studied by the Xaxa Committee. The committee also states how the massive development may cause a loss of livelihoods of the tribes which may cause involuntary displacement and migration thus, we can say that massive development is inversely

proportional to the displacement of tribes.¹⁹ Given Surjeet Singh (2004), 'Insurgency is a political problem but the government handles it as a problem of law and order.'

Conflict may also be resolved by trust-building initiatives done by the government; we can see that there is a lack of trust between the government and the people. Somehow, they believe and hold the government responsible for the recent unrest. The government also negligence towards the needs of the people and maintaining law and order within the state as instead of protecting a woman and her dignity, Police officials themselves handed them to insurgents, women who were assaulted and paraded naked by the crowd. This is the perfect example of the reason behind the lack of trust. HOD of the Law Department of Manipur University, Dr. Y Premananda stated that 'utilizing the army in resolving the internal matters of the state for too long, been violating the recommendations of the Justice Jeevan Reddy committee, 2005 mentioned that deploying the army or paramilitary forces may degrade the morale of the armed personnel and caused interference that diverted the personnel from their primary task.'²⁰ It's been too long since the beginning of the conflict in Manipur and it's been almost 9-10 months, paramilitary forces still trying to suppress the conflict and to maintain peace. Salwa Judum is an example of the long-time deployment of armed forces, it was a 2005s government initiative in Bastar to counter Naxalites, which resulted in civil strife through which many people were displaced, and cases of rape murders, etc. occurred.

There is a high need to change the ideology of the people who believe in Left Wing extremism (LWE), which is a combination of political ideologies and ideologies regarding political and social change through revolutionary means, such ideologies have a great impact on the people who are uneducated, deprived, displaced and migrants they use revolutionary methods to fulfill their demands and also takes the support of immoral and illegal methods. Today approximately 90 districts in 10 states are affected by LWE²¹, according to data from the Ministry of Home

¹⁹ 'Xaxa Committee on Tribal Communities of India' (*Drishti IAS*, 10 April 2019)

<<https://www.drishtiiias.com/summary-of-important-reports/xaxa-committee-on-tribal-communities-of-india>> accessed 14 March 2024

²⁰ 'Public meeting discusses Manipur crisis' *Imphal Free Press* (11 August 2023)

<<https://www.ifp.co.in/manipur/public-meeting-discusses-manipur-crisis>> accessed 12 March 2024

²¹ 'Unmasking Left Wing Extremism in India' (*Drishti IAS*, 19 December 2023)

<<https://www.drishtiiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-editorials/unmasking-left-wing-extremism-in-india>> accessed 14 March 2024

Affairs. There is a dire need to concern and take steps for the poverty in the state as per the Multidimensional Poverty Index of NITI AAYOG, Manipur is 14th no. from the bottom. According to another report of NITI AAYOG, 'Decent work and economic growth' Manipur got the last rank. Through this we can say that unemployment is the real problem behind the conflicts, people have no source for better livelihood in the valley and people who live in hill areas can only grow so much that they can survive. The PLFS report of 2021-22, states that unemployment in Manipur is about 9% which is twice the national average. The government must take measures to eradicate poverty and take initiatives like agro-based training institutes, labour-intensive processing industries, skill development programs, and Micro-watershed development projects that must be introduced in both hills and valley areas. Land acquired under FRA, 2006, may be used for forestry instead of cultivation which gives commercial support to the farmers. Fair and transparent methods are used to fill the vacancies in government jobs, so that people cannot blame reservations in the services and demand for the ST status may be resolved.

CONCLUSION

A Scholar I.L. Singh, 1981 states that, 'as the insurgency in Manipur is directly linked with the problems of educated, unemployed youth, channelling their energies by creating employment opportunities will go a long way in weaning them away from the path of violence.'²² The above statement is correct in the sense of Manipur as there is a lack of skill development and other innovative ideas in the Indian education system, students are learning theory and there is great emphasis on passing schools with higher percentages and getting government jobs by the parents, society and education system as well. Today's education system is not about the personality development of children so they create their livelihoods by their ideas and innovations. Unrest in Manipur was a decades-old conflict that needed a permanent solution and people needed much better leadership to reconcile and develop in the state. The Indian legal system cannot maintain peace in the state. There is an equal responsibility of three pillars, judiciary, executive, and administration. Both communities cannot be blamed for the unrest

²² M. Romesh Singh, 'Problems of Insurgency: A Holistic Understanding from Manipur, India' (2015) 5(1) Journal of Northeast India Studies <<https://www.jneis.com/?s=M.+Romesh+Singh>> accessed 14 March 2024

because both have their problems and demands which arose out of various circumstances. Presidents of both communities also tried to reconcile people in the hard times. Our country should know that the tribals are still in isolation and far from meeting with the mainstream, for them, the forest is everything where they live in harmony with nature, they are not against development but they want to save their lives and forest, forests and oxygen both are essential for every human being but not only for the tribes. In **SAMATHA v State of Andhra Pradesh**²³ page 136, The three bench judges of the Supreme Court held that the tribals were the first settlers in the country but were gradually pushed back into the forests and hills by subsequent settlers who later came to be known as the plainsmen. The forests and hills provided natural barriers and isolated the tribals from people living in the plains. They remained uneducated, illiterate, unsophisticated, and poor and developed their society where they allowed themselves to be governed by their own primitive and customary laws.²⁴ Apart from this, Meiteis also need protection and other advantages and job opportunities, they are settled in the valley in comparison to tribes but are not so rich. So, there is a high requirement for quality education, employment, implementation of programs, and better leadership. Without all such things reforms and reconciliation are not possible. Manipur needs special attention and reforms such alarming situations are a reflection of the nonperformance of policies and lack of development.

²³ *SAMATHA v State of Andhra Pradesh* (1997) 8 SCC 191

²⁴ *Ibid*