

INSURGENCY IN NORTHEAST INDIA AND THE PRESENT SCENARIO: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ASSAM

Santana Saikia

Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, Assam University

Email- santanasaikia1995@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

India's Northeast is the most volatile and insurgency affected place in the country. The Northeast comprises many tribes, each have their own different cultures. The Northeast region of India is of immense geopolitical importance to the subcontinent due to its location, demographic dynamics. The Northeast is one of the most challenging region to govern. The Northeast India has been in turmoil since independence. All these areas face violence rebellion in different forms and for different reasons. Various insurgent groups of Northeast are –

NAGALAND

- NSCN-IM
- NSCN-K

MANIPUR

- Peoples Liberation Army
- PREPAK

ASSAM

- ULFA
- NDFB
- KLNLF
- UPDS

TRIPURA

- National Liberation Front of Tripura
- All Tripura Tiger Force

MEGHALAYA

- ANVC
- HNLC

In Assam the problem began in 1979, the indigenous people of Assam demanded that illegal immigrants who had emigrated from Bangladesh to Assam to be detected. The ULFA was formed in 1979 marked the beginning of insurgency in Assam. This main aim of ULFA was to liberate Assam through armed struggle and establish a sovereign independent Assam. Various insurgent groups and organizations have emerged and are active in Assam due to fear of imposition of cultural and geographical imperialism and domination. The insurgent outfits began to grow in the region on the ground of

ethnicity, religious and cultural split. As many as 34 insurgent groups active in the state. Amongst the groups ULFA, National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), United People Democratic Solidarity (UPDS), Dima Halim Daoga (DHD), Muslim United Liberation Tiger Of Assam (MULTA), Muslim United Front of Assam (MLUFA) are the major insurgent groups. So are the largest plains tribes of Assam started an armed struggle for a separate state in the mid 1980. Bodoland movement for an independent state of Bodoland started on March 1987. NDFB (S), is the another insurgent group in Assam. Dimas people demanding a separate state called Dimaland. Govt. had created Dima Hasao Autonomous Council in response to the demands. Some districts of west Bengal districts of Assam demanded separate Kamatapur district.

INSURGENCY IN ASSAM

In 1947 the newly independent India faced the problem of integrating different princely states across the country. Since 1947 the problem of insurgency has been deeply rooted in Northeast India. To combine different NE Indian cultures into mainstream was faced lots of hesitation. The NNC declared independence from India in 1947 under the leadership of Phizo. The GOI was fail to reach a political settlement despite various efforts. As a result GOI declared Naga Hills a disturbed area in 1956. Following that several regions in the country started their demands for autonomy and launched insurgency groups. Various factors were responsible for the emergence of insurgencies in Northeast. Assam as a Northeastern state is no exception in this regard. Each ethnic group in NE disagrees with being combined with India because fear of losing their unique identity, that gave rise to insurgency. Assam's demography was greatly changed by issue of migration of refugees from Bangladesh. This resulted in dissatisfaction among the inhabitants of the region & insurgency in Assam with the emergence of ULFA. Though the situation of Assam has improved still the insurgency groups are active in the region. The changing scenario has reflected in the activities of terror outfits in the state. Hence it's very important to study the insurgency in Assam & the present status.

North-East India has great significance due to its boundary lines with China, Bhutan, Myanmar and Bangladesh. Its history remained under the dark shadow of mysteries for long, till it got a jolt from the British. Both the plains and hill areas of northeast are divided into many tribes and sub-tribes. Moreover, the international boundary lines touching the region has always remained controversial. Today the Northeastern region is prone to insurgency and various militant and anti-national organizations, which are causing serious threat to national security and integrity of the country. Their acts of violence have created a chaotic and anarchic situation in the region. The influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh has altered Assam's demography over the past few decades to the chagrin of local populace. Another irritant for the local masses has been the outsider domination of Assam's wealth of natural resources, tea-estates and business sector. The United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) that grew in 1979 soon emerged as a powerful militant organisation in the state of Assam. The covert inflow of funds and weapons from China boosted the morale and potential of such organization's even

further. 'The ULFA Insurgency in Assam' is the most revealing story of the ULFA terror that overshadowed the state power in Assam during the late 1980s. The orchestration of their operations – kidnapping, killing or extortion – was always creating chaotic situation in the state. That was Assam in November 1990 when the Army arrived and launched 'Operation BAJRANG' followed by 'Operation RHINO'. In today's changing scenario, the main objective of national security of the country is not only to save from external aggression but also maintain peace & harmony in the country. To maintain law and order, peace and harmony, the Government should carry out the process of assimilation effectively without any delay and discrimination. However, the present situation in North East region of India is a logical culmination of negligence by the State as well as Central Government since independence.

CAUSES OF INSURGENCY :

1. Feelings of isolation, deprivation, exploitation- The distance of New Delhi lack of representation in the Lok Sabha has created the feelings of isolation among the people of Assam.
2. Ethnic tensions- Northeast India is the home of more than 50 ethnic rebel groups. Some ethnic groups demanding complete separation from India, some fighting for ethnic identities, separate homeland for them. For these reasons ethnic groups running insurgency for fulfilling their demands.
3. Lack of economic development- In Northeast India the economic development & infrastructure has been gradual. The development process of Northeast has slowed, thereby resulting lack of employment opportunities. Because of this the youth are attracted by various insurgent groups in order to earn easy money.
4. Demographic changes- The influx of refugees from Bangladesh into Assam led to a change in the demographic landscape of the region. This resulted into discontent amongst the people of the region, thereby giving rise to insurgency in Assam. As a result ULFA was formed in 1979 leading the mass anti-immigrant agitation.
5. External support- The insurgencies in Northeast have been supported by erstwhile Pakistan, in the late 1950's and early 1960's. They gave training of personnel of Naga Army & gave them weapons later. Later on China also provided weapons & moral support. This moral support was high from 1967-75, when China's foreign policy advocated for spread of revolution around the world.

THE PRESENT SCENARIO OF INSURGENCY IN ASSAM :

Insurgency in north-eastern India is rather low at present, due to synergized efforts of the state police forces, army, central armed police forces, the state governments and the central government. Insurgency in north-eastern India is rather low at present, due to synergized efforts of the state police forces, army, central armed police forces, the state governments and the central government. In the past five years, 16 small and big outfits have laid down arms and joined the mainstream. Only the United Liberation Front of Asom-Independent (ULFA-I) and Kamatapur Liberation Organisation (KLO) remain active. In February, 2011, ULFA split into two groups—one group led by chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa that decided to give up arms and agreed to sit for peace talks with the centre but the other group led by commander-in-chief

Paresh Boruah, which was against talks and renamed as ULFA-Independent. "NDFB came under ceasefire in 2005 and another faction gave up arms in 2010. One of the most dreaded and wanted militant leaders of Assam, Ingti Kathar Songbijit, who headed the Peoples' Democratic Council of Karbi Longri (PDCK), a militant outfit from the Karbi Anglong also laid down arms in last year. Various violent crimes, activities, those perpetrated by insurgent outfits, have come down in past few years. The situation of the region now developed to a great extent. The security scenario in the state of Assam is much better than what it was till few years back,"

SUGGESTION

- Through the help of education, scientific outlook, we can stop terrorism.
- Govt. should improve law & order situation, stringent law and fast justice system should be implemented for quick disposal of insurgent attack cases.
- The cultures, customs, traditions, religions of the indigenous languages, people should be protected.
- The govt. should take effective measures to solve the problem of illegal immigration. The foreigners issue should be given topmost priority in Assam.
- Integration of the region with the mainland can solve the problem of insurgency. Enhance communication, connectivity, infrastructural improvement for better integration of the region with mainland can help to solve the problem of insurgency.
- There should be a commission of Assamese, other ethnic people, with political scientist, leading jurist, economist to solve all aspects of problems & questions.

CONCLUSION

Northeast India has been facing insurgencies since its first gained independence. These regions have been ignored, neglected, face discrimination from rest of India. It is very important to address these issues in order to establish unity and create an equal nation. The fruit of development along with winning the trust and building the confidence of people of the Northeast is the key to bring peace, prosperity in the region.

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