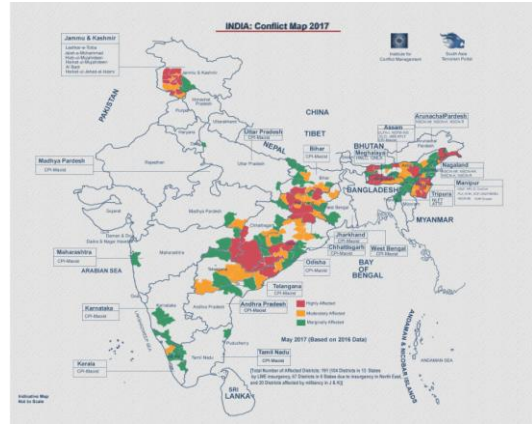


## Conflict and Violence in Northeast India The Role of Youth and Mother Torch Bearers in Peace Building Process

**YEW Summer School,2017  
University of Groningen  
17-21<sup>st</sup> July,2017**

**Jeebanlata Salam  
National Institute of Advanced Studies. India**



### Communal and Caste Violence

- Communal violence prone cities for 20 percent in India. (Roshni:2005)
- The 1992 communal riot by Hindu terrorist.
- The 1993 Mumbai serial bomb blast committed by the underground Muslim terrorists killed 257 civilians, while injuring 713 people. The serial blast was the first ever terrorist attack in the world where RDX was used on a large scale after World War 11.
- Gujarat Pogrom 2002, Ahmedabad city, Gujarat.



Above Picture: Babri Masjid Demolition- December 6,1992  
Below Picture: Smoke billows from a building set alight by rioters Gujarat. February 28, 2002



A Muslim surrounded by Hindu rioters begs police to rescue. March 1, 2002. REUTERS/Arko Datta

- Today Muslims begin to face intimidation on a new scale.
- "Beef-eaters" as "anti-nationals"
- 24 out of the 28 people killed in the name of cow protection by Gau Rakshas since 2010 to 2017 were Muslims (Times of India)
- Casteism: enduring form of social apartheid
- 19% rise in crimes and violence against Dalits.(National Crime Statistics ,2017)



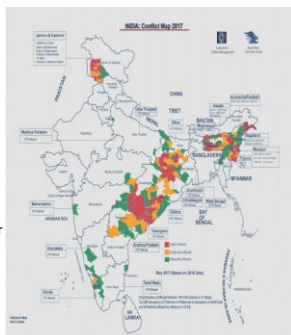
22 June. 17 yr old boy Junaid killed, followed by nationwide protest



August 2005, Sonapat, Haryana July 1996 Bhojpur, Bihar

### Violence in Naxal Affected Areas

- 1960s: Naxalism-encompasses a range of left wing revolutionary groups. The Communist Party of India (CPI-Maoist) is the largest among all Maoist organisations.
- Tribal belts of ten states of India, with the worst violence in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.
- Around 750 people- security, Maoist insurgents and civilians were killed in 2006(Asian Centre for Human Rights ).
- In Chhattisgarh, camps, sheltering around 50,000 people mainly of tribal population were established to provide temporary shelter

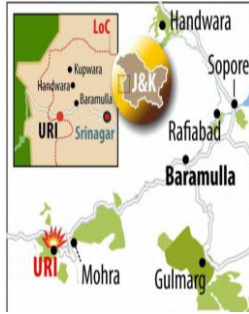


### Recruitment of Child Soldiers

- Chhattisgarh:** Special Police Officers, including children under 18 age groups - recruited and trained by state police and security forces. Children are used as informers and combatants
- Andhra Pradesh:** children as old as 14 and 15 at the Bal Mandal ( Children Home) were provided with military training.
- Jammu and Kashmir:** Around 200 children in the age group of 13-14 were found missing since 2004. Children caught were armed and had been trained in Pakistan based terrorists such as Jaish-e-Mohammed, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and Hizbul Mujahideen. Children indoctrinated from schools and mosques.
- Use of children by armed militants put them at increased risk from security forces. In 2005 and 2006, there were two major incidents in which security forces opened fire on children.
- Northeastern states:** NSCN ( Nagaland), ULF and PLA ( Manipur) recruited children openly recruited children as the smallest boys as the most fearless. In Assam, UNLF used teenagers to ferry explosives and throw grenades.
- In majority of these cases, poverty, illiteracy, lack of education and employment opportunity for children and young people are major factors in the recruitment of child soldiers.

**Conflict and violence: Kashmir Valley**

- **August 1947:**The genesis of conflict and violence in Kashmir dates from August 1947 when partition of the Indian sub-continent along religious lines led to the formation of India and Pakistan.
- **August 5, 1965** -Pakistan invades Indian-held Kashmir, but the fighting produces little territorial gain for Pakistan.
- **1971** - Fighting erupts again as part of the Indo-Pak war.
- **July 1972** - The Simla Agreement establishes the Line of Control between Indian-controlled Kashmir and Pakistan-controlled Kashmir.
- **1989** -Uprising of violent separatist struggle by Islamic terrorists in Indian-controlled Kashmir
- Terrorists outfits operating in Kashmir Valley: Jaish-e-Mohammed,Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Harkat-ul-Jahad-al-Islam, Hizbul Mujahideen, Lashker-e-Taiba and Al Badr.



- Kashmir has witnessed a great deal of death and destruction in the last three decades .
- **Summer 2010** - More than 100 people were killed in violent eruption- the worst bloodshed in a decade.
- **October 2016** -India relocates more than 10,000 people from around the disputed border area of Kashmir as tensions continue to escalate with Pakistan.
- **Fake Encounters** :Endless number of killings in fake encounters.
- **Disappearances and Mass Graves**: The extent of male disappearances has been so large that a new term "half-widows" has been created for the wives who end up with no information of their husbands' whereabouts. There are thousands of bullet-ridden bodies buried in unmarked graves in Jammu and Kashmir. ( State Human Rights Commission,2011).
- **Sexual Violence**: Hundreds of women raped, security forces use rape as a method of retaliation against Kashmiri civilians during reprisal attacks after terrorist ambushes ( Human Rights Watch).
- **Suicide and Psychological Trauma**:Kashmiri women are highly prone to suicidal tendencies owing to fear, stress, tension and uncertainty . 17,000 people, mostly women committed suicide in the past 20 years ( Reports from a survey study,2012)
- Indian Army comprising of different battalions, Border Security Forces, Central Reserve Police Forces, Special Operations Group, Armed Forces Special Powers Act,1958, while terrorists groups are Jaish-e-Mohammed,Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Harkat-ul-Jahad-al Islam, Hizbul Mujahideen, Lashker-e-Taiba and Al Badr.

- Civil war of sorts erupted in Kashmir over June month as people watch the horror unfold. 40 people killed in June violent uprising. ( TOI)
- Army convoy attacked by surrounded by stone pelters in April, 2017
- To avert civilian violence, a youth was used as human shield by tying him to the army jeep.
- National outrage for endangering the life and dignity of a human being.
- 7 civilians on pilgrimage on return from sacred Amarnath cave killed by terrorist on July 8.(TOI)
- 6 people-2 security officials and 3 Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists killed on July 13.
- Indian security in aggressive strike killed over 100 terrorist in 2017.
- PMO statement: Militancy in Kashmir in its final phase.
- Kashmiri youths begin to assert for Islamic Caliphate
- Blood and Tears to continue to flow in Himalayan Valley.



**Conflict and Violence in Northeast India**

- Ethnically, the most diverse region, with 400 odd numbers of languages and dialects.
- **Clan** → **Tribe** → **Ethnicity** → **Nationality**
- Mostly mountains, hills and plateaus, rich in fauna and flora, mineral resources and forest products
- Hill areas of NE- Excluded and partially excluded
- Connected to Indian mainland through a narrow strip- chicken neck in West Bengal
- Located in a complex geo-political position.
- Shares more than 98% of its borders with China, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar.
- A gateway for trade and culture and linking Indian civilization to Southeast Asia
- Industrially backward
- Militarily secured frontier zone on grounds of national security.
- Sino-India War,1962 heightened India's security over the region.
- Arms and weapons across the porous boundary between India, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Bhutan.
- Trafficking of finest opium from the infamous golden triangle -Myanmar, Thailand and Laos

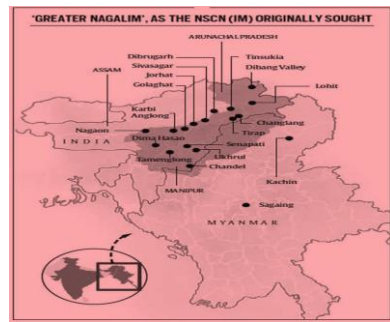


**Ethnic Insurgency Movements in Northeast India**



- All the Northeastern states, except Sikkim confront long standing conflicts and violence with differing degrees of intensity.
- Number of lives lost for the period 1992- July 2017 – 21,514, 10,272 civilians, 8,499 insurgents and 2743 security forces (Institute of Conflict Management and South Asia Terrorism Portal).
- Longest lasting insurgency emerges from the state of Nagaland, where separatist violence commenced as early as 1952.
- Naga Insurgent's demand: Recognition of Naga unique history; never been colonised, has always lived in their own land and unification of all Naga inhabited areas of NEI and Myanmar
- Take Everything NOT Sovereignty KEEP Everything NOT Sovereignty
- Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), 1958 was passed and imposed for several decades.
- Nagaland in 1950s was converted almost into prison cell. Rape, killing, torture , extra-judicial execution during combing operation and hunting down of villagers by the Indian security forces were regular atrocities.
- The Indo-Naga conflict cost both the sides dearly.

2001:Ceasefire between GOI and NSCN (I-M) on integration of all Naga inhabited areas of Manipur, Assam , Nagaland and parts of Myanmar



### Peace Accords in Northeast India-The Naga Accords

- Naga-Akbar Hydari Accord 1947: Nine point agreement between the govt. of Assam and NNC-the rights of the Nagas to develop themselves as per their wishes.(10 years period). Nagas assumed they are free to decide about their destiny by the end of the period.
- A small section of NNC declared Naga independence one year before 1947.
- GOI began two strategy - counterinsurgency and dialogue with moderates.
- Sixteen-Point Agreement, 1960: drafted by Naga Peoples' Convention. Nagaland was granted statehood.
- Claim for self determinism continues by the underground NNC insurgents
- 1964 ceasefire between GOI and Govt. of Nagaland-independence/integration and army atrocities
- Shillong Accord 1975: GOI and underground insurgents: all leaders of underground to surrender
- 1980 :Formation of NSCN
- 1997: Unilateral ceasefire by NSCN-Isaak Muivah
- 2000: Unilateral ceasefire followed by NSCN-khaplang



Historical Peace Accord between GOI and NSCN-IM  
August 2015



- Decades old violence hit Assam, displacing thousands of people during 1979-1985 and 1996-97 began by youths and sustained by high level of cross-ethnic participation. First statewide agitation- university students(AASU) culminated into the formation of All Assam Gana Sangam Parishad.
- Ethnic and religious hostility- Bangladeshi Muslim migrants of Bengal origin
- People's curfew, civil disobedience movements and oil blockage crippled the state machinery.
- Massacre of over 1,600 Muslims in Nellie by AASU indelible.
- Out of this political chaos, United Liberation Front of Assam was born, drawing a large number of left radical members from other organisations.
- ULFA built up huge war chest by systematic extortion mainly from tea companies and thousands of ULFA guerilla fighters were trained by the Kachin Independence Army in Burma and NSCN
- Indian Govt. pumped huge money by using SULFA to attack ULFA leaders and their relatives, crushed ULFA backbone through BAJRANG and RHINO.
- Lost popular support when it responded by resorting to terror tactics by bombing public places and schools
- Bodos, originally the largest tribal population gripped by fear of reducing to minority status in their own homeland
- National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB)- agitation in 1987 for a separate homeland.NDFB born out of All Bodo Students Union (ABSU)
- Bodo movement marked by widespread violence including bombing, blowing up of buses and trains and block the gateway to the Northeast

- 2001: Ceasefire to extend to all Naga inhabited areas in Northeast, followed by violent eruptions
- 80 rounds of agreement framework between GOI and NSCN over 18 years.
- August 3, 2015 Framework Agreement: "The pact had set the political parameters of the final solution"
- Men folk unable to take (peace) messages from one group to the other .
- Naga Mother's Association was formed in 1984.
- Women Played active role in identifying 'unidentified dead bodies' in early 1990s.
- Formation of Naga Mother's Association with the motto "SHED NO MORE BLOOD" "No to Drugs"
- Sensitize citizens towards more responsible living and human development.
- Nurture human resources , focusing on youth-men and women
- Mediated between the Indian state and the NSCN ( IM) to facilitate ceasefire from 1997 onwards
- Mediate between NSCN insurgent factions
- Bridge gap between Nagaland and Myanmar
- Network with Naga Women's Union of Manipur that closely works in ushering peace in Naga inhabited areas

- Formation of Territorial Council for the Bodos granted by central govt. To ABSU and Bodo Peoples Action Committee
- Refusal by the state govt.led to intensification of armed movements by NDFB targeting all non-Bodo communities-Oraons, Santhals and Munda tribes brought by the British.
- Cobra Force and Birs Commando Force were set up to resist Bodo attacks.
- A quarter of a million of people were internally displaced and nearly 10,000 people killed
- Bodo Accord was signed in 2003. Almost two thirds of the displaced people came back home.
- Delay in rehabilitation owing to lack of funds and conflict of authority.
- Current violent eruptions- Dima Halam Dago of the Dimasa tribes demanding for 'homeland' initially supported by NSCN insurgents is against DHD as their demand includes an important town of Nagaland, Dimapur
- The Karbi tribes of Karbi Anglong through their organisation United People's Democratic Solidarity is demanding separate homeland.
- Grant of autonomy of the karbis and Dimasa appears crucial to counter insurgency in Assam.

#### Peace Accords :

- Assam Accord,1985: Immigration problems and issues
- Bodo Memorandum of Settlement,1993: Formation of Bodoland Autonomous Council
- Creation of Autonomous councils, 1995-Rabha Hasong, Karbi Anglong, Tiwa and Mishing Tribes

Manipur Valley: The macabre acts of warlords & beneficiaries of hate & violence have distorted this splendid scenic valley to a killing field & every soul with a glut of commodified violence from womb to tomb.



### Armed Forces Special Power Act,1958 & Insurgency Conundrum

- Three major ethnic groups: Meiteis( Hindus), Nagas and Kukis ( Christians)
- 42 underground ethnic insurgent groups make up the landscape of insurgency in Manipur ( South Asia Terrorism portal)
- Currently Manipur identified as the most heavily militarised state with more than 60,000 military and security personnel, with more than 300 security check points spanning the state. ( Ban Hayes)
- Living under AFSPA, one often encounters military and para-military forces with deadly weapons such as knives, guns patrolling towns and villages, conducting random combing operations.





**Growing Up in the Unquiet Valley: Childhood Reminiscence**

- Fake encounters kill much more number more number of innocents than open combat with actual insurgents.
- Uniformed men with guns at every cross roads, army commandos cruise in their bullet convoys , the barrels of their rifles , protruding out from the windows of their gun proof vehicles, with his finger on the trigger of his gun pointed to the direction of the marching vehicles while occasional bomb blasts make people run into frenzy.
- Schools , university, sacred places, historical sites, churches, children's playground and grazing grounds converted to army barracks



**Revisiting Violent Moments: Early 1990s**

- Kuki-Naga Conflict & Kuki-Paite Feuds: Control over 'Moreh' in Indo-Myanmar border
- 17,000 deaths, destruction of property , nearly 10,000 houses were destroyed.
- 22,000 persons displaced
- Meitei-Muslim clash-More than 100 persons killed, 196 houses in 9 villages destroyed.



Homeless kuki villagers stranded

Kuki (Bachkay) (video)

**Revisiting violent Moments: Children and Youth Under Crossfire (2000-2015)**

- In the winter of 2000, 10 civilians including 2 young students while at a bus stand shot down in cold blood by the Assam Rifles Army.
- Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela, observed fast for 16years to restore peace.
- In the summer of 2001, Manipur valley plunged into endless flames after NSCN(IM)insurgents signed ceasefire extension with the NDA government.
- Against the ceasefire extension, thousands of young students protested.
- During the protest 18 young students died in police repression



A youth, Sharmila from begins fast against AFSPA



School children protesting against ceasefire

- In the mid night of summer 2004
- A youth Manorama was raped and killed by Assam Rifles Army
- Mother Torch Bearers protested naked against the brutal incident and AFSPA.
- Thousands of students carried forward the protest
- A young student, Chitaranjan as shown below committed self immolation with an emotional appeal to end AFSPA .



- In the spring of 2009, Indian Army conducted Operation Summer Storm at Keibul lamjao, loktak lake
- More than 1,168 school children shunted out of school
- Displaced school community and parents.
- Stripped of livelihood options-farming & fishing
- In the summer of 2009, the cold blood murder of a youth, Sanjit in fake encounter and a bystander pregnant woman, Rabina in broad day light was followed by widespread condemnation and protest, resulted to educational deadlock, shutting out over 3,000,00 students from education for more than three months.
- Confession of the killer cop, one of India's most seasoned extra-judicial killers, *The Guardian*, 01/8/2016



Largest fresh water lake in NEI



- In the summer of 2015, 1 student and 9 people killed during protest in Inner Line Permit related issued. Mothers Torch Bearers protested against the incident in large number



**Peoples' Resurgence and Justice Alliance (PRJA): Youth4change (PRJA)**

- Transparency, accountability and humane governance.
- Fostering a generation of youths and prioritizing paths for them to contribute in their communities
- Quality education and youth employment
- Address regional disparity in development
- Bring government and people closer the between leadership and the peoples
- Build resurgence of a collective consciousness
- Resist and fight unjust state instruments that colonize humanity, thrive on hateful narratives that divide Manipur.
- Engage all ethnic groups in governing their own lives

It demands a bold but a bloodless revolution.



**PRJA: Breaking barriers, and bringing all ethnic groups together in Manipur**

