**Does Conflict Affect Educational Development?**
**Some Insights from Manipur**

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**Abstract**

Though conflict, violence and social upheaval have been the greatest threats to mankind since the dawn of civilisation, its place in the academic field is relatively a new one. Poorest communities, children and educational sector are among those severely affected by it, especially in the developing countries. This study found that despite the fact that the State of Manipur in India has been facing different forms of conflicts; its impact on educational growth was not reflected much. It might due to adopting different mechanisms of protecting educational environment. Some of the visible mechanisms that have been adopted by the State are sending children out of the State for their studies, spending more proportion of per capita consumption expenditure on education, and society's effort in keeping educational institutions away from different forms of conflicts.

**Key Words:** Conflict, Education, India, Manipur, Society.

**JEL Classifications:** D 74, I 124, I 125, O 15, Q 34

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1.  **INTRODUCTION**

Conflict, violence and social upheaval (conflict hereafter) have been the greatest threats to mankind since the dawn of civilisation. Poorest communities, children and the education sector are among the most severely affected by conflicts, especially in the developing countries. However, detail study on the relationship between conflict and education is a very recent phenomenon and limited research has been done on the issue, especially in India (Singha, 2013). Globally as well, Brendan O'Malley's work, '*Education under Attack'* published in 2007 was considered as the first ever detail study of its kind (UNESCO, 2010a), and revealed that conflict often leaves an unfortunate legacy for the affected generations, smaller shares of the population with formal schooling, fewer average years of education, and decreased literacy rates which persist over time. In many countries, the existing gap between marginalised groups, such as women and the rest of the population worsen during conflict (Bell & Huebler, 2010).

On the other hand, some studies (e.g. Phillips, 2013; Singha, 2012a; HSR, 2012) revealed that the conflicts are outcomes of development discourses created with the growth of education in a society. Without which, societies become quiescent, perform below the optimum level, but slowly, it resolves as the educational level of the society increases and reaches a certain level (Dupuy, 2008; Brahm, 2003). In this regard, the role of education cannot be overlooked. Education is the cornerstone of socio-economic and cultural development of a society/country, and its importance for human development, economic growth, etc., is analysed extensively in the seminal works of T. W. Schultz since early 1960s (Singha, 2013). Education has emerged as the most important single input in promoting human resource development, achieving rapid economic development and technological progress, creating a social order based on the virtues of freedom, social justice and equal opportunities (Singha, 2010; Reddy, 2008; Gill, Singh, & Brar, 2005).

Until today, the issue concerning the impact of conflict on education and vice versa is highly debated. Some studies (e.g. Lindquist, 2012; Boyden, 2006) have tried to estimate the linkage between educational outcomes and violence (conflict) through econometric analysis, but no clear causal direction of the two could be established. Also, no formal model in the issue has been developed yet (Lindquist, 2012; Barrera & Ibenez, 2004). In this context, Boyden (2006) opined that the theories of causality fail to account for understanding of the many ways in which young people's education and armed conflict may be linked. In the recent past, the analysis of "conflict in fragile states" has gained significant attention within the community of academia and policy makers (Gates & Strand, 2012). Having known these complex relationships among the variables, conflict, education and development, a concrete groundwork for safeguarding educational sector from different forms of conflict has become one of the priority initiatives in the present world.

## 1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Despite a number of affirmative actions, conflict resolution programmes and rehabilitation works undertaken by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), its anticipation for a peaceful world after the Cold War, or at least halving the conflict incidence by 2015 (Collier, 2004), have been shattered by ever increasing conflicts in the world (Singha, 2013). Several new threats and conflicts in varied forms have emerged in the world in the recent past. Most of them (almost 90%) are intra-national conflicts, occurring within the borders of states primarily ethnically-driven over self-determination, succession or political dominance (Yilmaz, 2008), and of the major armed conflicts, 68% has been the internal, mainly the ethnic conflicts (Savage, 2005).

Regarding the relationships between education and conflict, many scholars like Amamio (2004); Seitz (2004); Boyden, Berry, Feeny & Hart (2002) and others have opined that initially education often

leads to highly complex conflict situations in the world, and it is backed by ever growing spurts of conflicts across the globe. According to Bush & Saltarelli (2000), education can be a part of the problem not the solution, because it serves to divide and antagonise groups both intentionally and unintentionally. The study by Seitz (2004) explored that the formal education system contributes to exacerbating and escalating societal conflicts in particular when it produces and reproduces socioeconomic disparities and brings about social marginalisation or promotes the teaching of identity and citizenship concepts which deny the cultural plurality of society and which then lead to intolerance towards the others. For instance, the "Jihadi Terrorism" all over the world is an outcome of the greater effort made by the "Madrassa" system of education (Boyden, et al., 2002).

In a slightly different manner, study by Smith & Vaux (2003) found that education can be a part of the problem as well as the solution. Therefore, it is a factor to be considered in the strategic assessment of conflict. However, in the findings of Bird (2006), the access to formal schooling may often be jeopardised by the conflicts. Further, Patricia (2010) found that a relatively minor shock to educational access can lead to significant and long-lasting detrimental effects on individual human capital formation in terms of educational attainment, health outcomes and labour market opportunities. According to Smith (2010), though education may be a driver of conflict by fuelling grievances, stereotypes, xenophobia and other antagonisms, it can also be a way of contributing to conflict resolution and peace building. Conflict is a necessary and inevitable dynamic in all human relationships, while education gives awareness and opens up minds, and expands our horizon. Education spreads not only awareness but also informs us about our rights and the services that we can access. It also enables us to understand our duties as a citizen and encourages us to follow them (Mitchell, 2006).

Resolving conflict by sustainable dialogue in a society can be achieved after attaining a certain level of educational development, i.e., when the society is well convinced and aware of the

consequences of war and conflict (UNESCO, 2011; 2010a; 2010b; Amamio, 2004). Though education

creates some sort of conflicts and misunderstandings in the initial stage of the development trajectory, it

controls and resolves conflicts at the end as the educational level increases and reaches a certain level in

the society (Dupuy, 2008; Brahm, 2003). In the process, it looks like an inverted U shape, as provided in

Figure 1.

**Fig. 1: Conflict Pyramid with the Growth of Education**
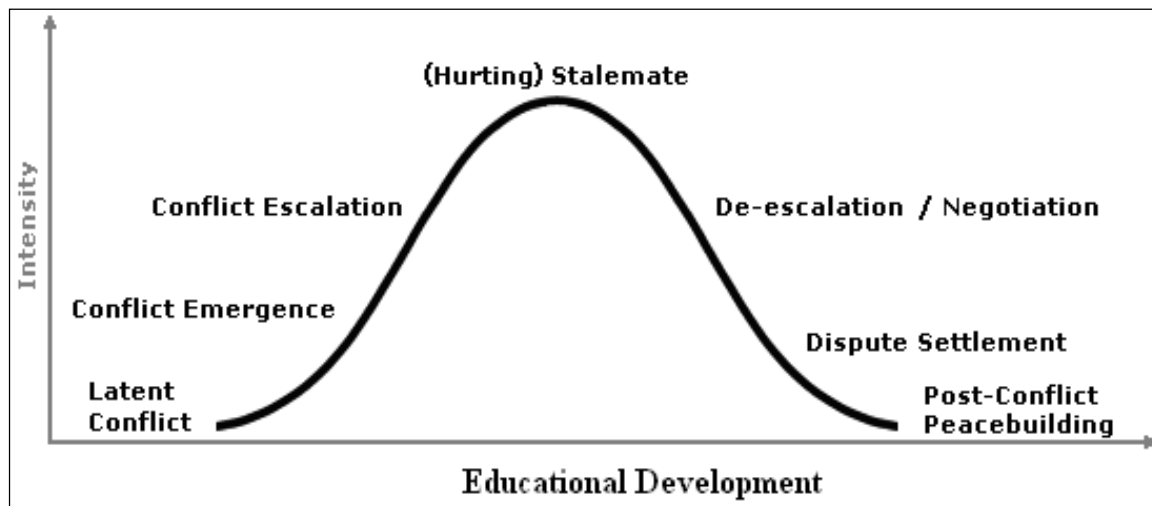


Source: Singha (2013); Brahm (2003)

        While conceptualising the impact of conflict on educational development, of course, it (conflict)

basically affects the children for those who have directly exposed on it, not all, and also, children's

educational environment can be protected from the forces of conflict situations if appropriate measures

are taken (Oyelere & Wharton, 2013; Shemyakina, 2011). As the conflict becomes one of the inevitable

dynamics in the modern world (Singha, 2012a), the region where the conflict has been continued for

long, societies of that region try to find alternative ways for avoiding conflict environment (HSR, 2012).

Therefore, finding appropriate alternatives for protecting the educational environment in the conflict

ridden region is an important policy for the modern world.

## 2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

As mentioned above, conflict is an inevitable process in a society's development trajectory; while, education gives awareness and opens up minds and expands our horizon, informs us about our rights and the services that we can access. Not delving into the causal direction between the two– conflict and education, the present study attempts to understand their complex relationships in Manipur– one of the conflict-affected states of India. Despite a prolonged armed conflict, social upheaval and violence, Manipur's educational development level was found to be higher than that of the national average (as per secondary data). How the state could excel in the educational sector by avoiding conflict environment is an important issue to be discussed in this study. Nevertheless, the specific objectives of the study are given below:

1. To assess the growth of conflict and educational development of Manipur vis-à-vis all India's levels;

2. To understand the impact of armed conflict on educational sector in Manipur;

3. To understand the strategies adopted by the society to protect the educational sector from different forms of conflicts in the state.

To achieve the above mentioned objectives, the study employed both primary and secondary data. The secondary data were mainly retrieved from the official website of Directorate of Economics and Statistics (DES), Registrar General and Census Commissioner (RGCC), and National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), etc. The data on literacy rate, enrolment rate, drop-out rate, etc. were collected from the NSS 50th Round (1993-94) Report No. 409, 55th Round (1999-00) Report No. 458, 61st Round (2004-05) Report No. 515 (1) and 66th (2009-10) Round Report No.537. To find a clear picture of

educational development in the State vis-à-vis the all India level, the collected secondary data were analysed by employing descriptive statistics. The proxy variables of armed conflict– insurgency related fatalities, list of conflicts, economic blockades, and forceful closures of market places in the State as well as the country were collected from the South Asia Terrorism Portal and local published journals and news papers. To understand the growth and development indicators of education, the state's data have been compared with the all India level.

As of the primary data, using semi-structured questionnaire, 107 households (35 rural and 72 urban households) were interviewed to understand the impact of the protected conflict situation on the children's education in the State. The questionnaires were collected randomly during the month of April and May 2013 from two districts of Manipur– Thoubal (one of the developed valley districts) and Senapati (one of the backward districts in the hill). The questionnaire included the variables– whether the children were sent outside the State for study or if they study within the State. If children were sent outside of the state, who were they? Rich or poor, rural or urban? What was the socio-economic status of the family, what was the number of regular income earners in the family, number of school/college goers in the family, and what was the place of residence– rural or urban? The collected primary data were analysed by employing cross tabulation to understand the factors that influenced in taking decision on children's education in the midst of conflict. After identifying the decision (from the cross-tabulation) of sending children outside the State for study, logistic regression was employed to identify the factors that influenced most in sending children outside the State for study.

## 4. CONFLICT AND EDUCATION IN MANIPUR

Manipur is one of the north eastern-most States of India, bordering Myanmar (Burma) in the east, and three Indian States – Nagaland, Assam and Mizoram in the north, west and south respectively. Manipur

was an independent kingdom, annexed[i] to the Indian union in 1949 and has a long history of geo-political development in South East Asia (Tensuba, 1993). Geographically, at present, the State consists of 9 districts, covers an area of 22, 327 sq. km, reduced from 30, 027 sq km (Mangang, 2013). The state can be divided into two regions– valley (4 districts) and hill (5 districts). The former occupies one-tenth (1/10th) of the State's geographical area and is lived by *Meitei community* which consists of around 65 per cent of State's population. Conversely, the latter region covers nine-tenths (9/10th) of the total area and is inhabited by different tribes, which consist of around 35 per cent of the state's population. The small valley area (1/10th) is ringed by the hills (9/10th) districts. Unfortunately, at present, the State is passing through different forms of conflicts, social turmoil, ethnic violence, etc, ranging from insurgency for secession to the movement for greater autonomy, from terrorism to ethnic clashes and the fight over resources (Sharma, 2011; Bohlken & Sergenti, 2010; Mentschel, 2007). Often, frequent eruption of violence due to conflicts of interest between the different ethnic communities in search of and to assert their identities, disturb the educational environment in the State. But whether it affects the educational development in the long run is the core of the study.

**4.1: Conflict in Manipur**

As the paper looks into the relationship between education and conflict in Manipur, causes of conflict are not studied, but the type and structure of conflict in the state is analysed briefly. Broadly, the types of conflict that have been haunting the State can be divided into two: 1) Internal conflict which includes inter-community and intra-community conflict for resource dominance, power and identity reconciliation, or for greater autonomy of a particular region; 2) Conflict between state and non-state actors, which implies conflict between insurgent groups and state for secession of Manipur. Both types of conflict affect greatly normal life and the educational environment in the State.

**4.1.1: Internal Conflict in Manipur**

Internal conflict in this paper refers to the conflicts that arise within and among the ethnic groups in the State. The State of Manipur is home to thirty-three (33) recognised tribes and many other non-recognised tribes living in the hills and the 'Meitei', the dominant (non-tribe) community living in the valley districts. As a consequence of dominance over economic and political power by the dominant valley community– the *Meiteis* since 33 AD, hill communities have started movement against the former. After getting statehood in 1972, the processes of polarisation of different tribes of hills into two broader groups as– 'Naga[ii]' and 'Kuki[iii]' have intensified in the State to safeguard their respective economic and political interests (Singha, 2012a; Oinam, 2003). Of course, the grouping of the hill tribes was been made during the colonial period[iv], for convenience of their administration. At the same time, the dominant community 'Meitei' living in the valley started two main movements: 1) a revivalist movement to preserve traditional religion (Sanamahi), Meitei script, culture and tradition[v], and 2) revolutionary movement to revive pre-merger status of the State. Within the State, the number of internal conflicts among the ethnic communities has increased significantly in the recent past, especially since 1980s in search of identity as also economic and political power. As a consequence, many insurgent groups have been formed by different communities in the State and now, most of the major communities in the State have fielded their own armed groups.

Unfortunately, with the varying ideologies of the armed groups; there is little room for working all the communities in unison in the state, and most of them have got blurred ideology. Theoretically as well, the lines of distinction between ideological and non-ideological confrontation have gradually blurred with non-state armed groups (insurgent groups) arising from organised criminal activities and looting public and private resources (ICRC, 2011). Most of the armed groups are acting independently for their own benefit without taking into consideration others' interest (Singha, 2013). A few of them

have been fighting for sovereignty (e.g. mainly Meitei/valley based insurgent groups), preservation of

identity, religion and culture and some are negotiating with the government for a separate State or

greater autonomy within the State (e.g. hill-based insurgent groups) and some other smaller

groups/fractions have been struggling for their survival, accumulating wealth by joining hands with the

politicians, bureaucrats and contractors (Singha, 2012a). On the other side, this condition of

disintegration of the different non-state armed groups is preferred by the state (government) for their

convenient administration and control over the groups (Ravi, 2012, Sharma, 2011). Still, many groups

and fractions have been continuing their policy of grouping and re-grouping for their political and

economic benefits.

**Table 1: Internal Conflict and Population Displacement in Manipur**

| Year of Conflict (Inter &Intra Community) | Conflict Between the Communities | Approx. Population Displaced | % of total Population Displaced* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1992 | Kuki–Naga ethnic | 11,000 | 2.6 |
| 1993-1997 | Kuki–Zomi conflict | 15,000 | 5.8 |
| -do- | Thadou–Paite conflict | 7500 | 3.5 |
| -do- | Meitei–Pangal (Meitei Muslim) | 1000 | 1.0 |
| 2001 | Naga Ceasefire Extension | 7000 | 2.4 |
| **Total** | -- | **41,500** | **3.1** |

* Share of population of the respective communities displaced by conflicts

Source: Singha (2013); Kumar, Kamei, Singh & Thangjam (2011)


Collier & Hoeffler (2002) also hinted that this ethnic/group polarisation of communities

(dominance of one group makes up 45% and more population) is likely to experience more conflict. In

the post-statehood period, especially in 1980s and 1990s, a greater impetus of grouping and re-grouping of the communities has intensified in the State, not based on the ethnic line, but on the political interest (Thirumalai, 2009). As an outcome, many ethnic violence/cleansing, inter and intra-community violence took place in the 1990s in the State (e.g. Kuki-Naga ethnic cleansing, Kuki-Paite conflict, etc). Some of the visible internal conflicts that have crippled the State since 1990s are given in Table 1. One can find that approximately 2 to 3 per cent of State's population (almost 42 thousand people out of the 22 lakh population of the State) or about 20 per cent in the State's hill region have been displaced by internal conflicts in 1990s. However, if we take into account the communities that were directly involved in the conflict only, the share of population displaced by internal or ethnic conflicts turns out to be 3.1 per cent. But in reality, who suffered from the conflicts is much more than the figures shown and that could not be estimated by any statistics.

Barring the fourth incidence (Meitei-Pangal conflict) listed in Table 1, all the ethnic clashes took place in the thinly populated tribal/hill districts. According to Singha (2013), altogether 800 people were killed, 480 wounded and 5713 families displaced during the bloody Kuki-Naga conflict in the 1990s. As per the report of Hussain & Phanjoubam (2007), in 1997, in the Kuki-Paite clash, altogether 162 people were killed, 93 injured, 71 were kidnapped and 3521 houses were burnt. Though these numbers look very small, it matters a lot for numerically small ethnic groups. There were a number of other indirect effects of internal conflict as well, that led to displacement of many people in the State. Srikanth & Ngaihte (2011), in their study maintains that education did contribute to the birth of an educated elite that played an important role in giving shape to ethnic identities of the respective communities, and it in turn, led to ethnic movement in the State.

Irrespective of its objectives, the Meitei revivalist movement, especially the Meetei Erol Eyek Loinasillon Apunba Lup (MEELAL) has indeed been creating several conflict situations and consequent

violence in the valley districts of the State. They have made their best effort to revive traditional *Meitei* religion (Sanamahi), script (started in school education) and cultural ethos. To expedite their movement, numbers of strikes, agitations and protests against the government have been made and numbers of public properties have been destroyed in protest against the deeply rooted *Aryanisation* system (Singha, 2013). It disturbed public life to a great extent, even burned down the oldest central library in Imphal (State capital) into ashes, alleging that the library has got collection of only Bengali literatures and books written in Bengali script, which in turn have been the deterring factor in their revivalist movement. This impact has been felt directly or indirectly in the hill communities as well, and reacted in different forms. For instance, the initiative of MEELAL to introduce Meitei-Mayek (Manipuri script) at least at the school education/level in 1980s and 1990s was felt as an autocratic imposition of Meitei rule (dominant community) over the hill communities (Shimray, 2007). Consequently, more than 2000 (two thousand) Naga students from Manipur were directed by the Naga armed group (NSCN-IM) to appear at the matriculation examination in the neighbouring State of Nagaland in 2007. Whatsoever the reason, the majority of the displaced victims were women and children, and noticeably, the educational environment was greatly affected by the conflicts in the State. In the vicious cycle of movements and counter movements by various ethnic communities in the State, for whatever agenda they might have, the helpless populace are caught in the cross-fire between the warring groups.

Table 2 depicts the nature and degree of bandh (forceful closure) and economic blockades in Manipur. Economic blockades[vi] (road blocks) are generally called on by different tribal organizations along the National Highways (NH), passing through hill regions, while the bandhs[vii] are organised by the valley organisations (Meiteis). Most of the *Bandhs* in the valley areas were called on mainly by the civil organisations against the atrocities of the armed groups, either state or non-state, and in protest against the flawed policies of the government. The year 2011 recorded the highest number of days ever,

to have witnessed economic blockades in the State (135 days of economic blockades in Mao-Imphal section of the National Highway No. 39).

**Table 2: Bandh/Forceful Closure, Blockade & Economic Loss in Manipur** (Rs in Cr)

| Year | Days of Bandh | Economic Loss of Bandh | Days of Economic Blockade | Economic Loss of Economic Blockade | Total Loss# | NSDP* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2004-05 | 20 | 111.4 (2.43) | 60 | 130.2 (2.85) | 241.6 (5.28) | 4575 (100) |
| 2005-06 | 48 | 306.24 (5.98) | 97 | 236.68 (4.62) | 542.92 (10.60) | 5120 (100) |
| 2006-07 | 94 | 642.96 (11.71) | 77 | 201.74 (3.67) | 844.7 (15.38) | 5493 (100) |
| 2007-08 | 52 | 382.2 (6.28) | 43 | 122.12 (2.01) | 504.32 (8.29) | 6087 (100) |
| 2008-09 | 56 | 442.4 (6.46) | 63 | 178.91 (2.61) | 621.31 (9.07) | 6851 (100) |
| 2010-11 | 27 | 229.5 (2.58) | 135 | 415.8 (4.67) | 645.3 (7.25) | 8896 (100) |

*Net State Domestic Product at current 2004-05 prices; # Total loss is the summation of 3rd and fifth column; Figures in parenthesis are the % of NSDP

Source: Singha (2013); GoI (2012)

As shown in Table 2, in 2004-05, the State experienced 20 days State-wide bandh which led to a loss of Rs 22 per head per day, totalling to a loss of Rs 5.34 crores per day of the State. In the same year, the State faced 60 days of National Highways (NH) blockade (economic blockade), which led to a loss of Rs 9 per head per day, totalling to a loss of Rs 2.32 crores per day (DES, 2010). In 2005-06, state-wide bandhs led to a loss of Rs 24 per head per day, totalling to a loss of Rs 6.13 crores per day while the loss was Rs 11 per head per day, totalling to Rs 2.67 crores per day on account of National Highway blockade. In 2006-07, State-wide bandhs led to a loss of Rs 6.44 crores per day in the state (Singha, 2009). On an average, 9 to 10 percent of the State's NSDP was lost due to bandh and blockades in the last six years. Fortunately, in 2013, almost all the valley-base insurgent groups have agreed to desist

themselves from fractional clashes and at the same time hill-base insurgent groups have also entered into cease-fire agreements with the government. The number of conflict incidences has gone down now.

**4.1.2: Conflict between State and non-state Armed Groups in Manipur**

Here, the conflict is directed against the state by armed groups. The Indian army, including the Assam Rifles, the Border Security Force, the Central Reserve Police Force and the Manipur Police, are currently engaged in fighting against armed rebels in Manipur. With the growth of the separatist movement, Manipur was declared as a 'disturbed area' in 1980 and subsequently the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act 1958 was also imposed (Harriss, 2002). Unfortunately, there are allegations that the very Act (AFSPA) is being misused by the members of the state forces, as the Act allows the armed forces to shoot anybody on mere suspicion of being an insurgent. The Act also empowers even the lowest rank security functionaries (e.g. Sepoy) to shoot anybody on mere suspicion of being an insurgent and also protects them against any criminal liability in this regard. Besides killing, there have been innumerable cases of enforced disappearances of young children by the state forces (Manoharan, 2012).

Table 3 provides statistics of the fatalities of the conflict between state (state forces) and non-state actors in the State. It shows the magnitude of violence or insurgency related fatalities such as the share of State's fatalities in the total of eight North Eastern Region (NER) [viii] states and in the national total. About 34 per cent of the region's total fatalities have been recorded from Manipur in the last ten years, as a result large sections of Manipur people are living in a vicious web of insecurity. Often, common people of the State are being caught in the cross-fire between the forces– state and insurgent groups, diverse insurgent groups, conflicting ethnic communities, etc.

**Table 3: Number of Insurgency related Fatalities in Manipur vis-à-vis India**

| Year | Civilian | Security | Terrorist | Total | % of NER# | Total NER | % of India# |
|------|----------|----------|-----------|-------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| 2000 | 93 | 51 | 102 | 246 | 18 | 1367 | 5 |
| 2001 | 70 | 25 | 161 | 256 | 24 | 1067 | 4 |
| 2002 | 36 | 53 | 101 | 190 | 26 | 731 | 5 |
| 2003 | 27 | 23 | 148 | 198 | 22 | 900 | 5 |
| 2004 | 40 | 41 | 127 | 208 | 34 | 612 | 8 |
| 2005 | 138 | 50 | 143 | 331 | 46 | 720 | 10 |
| 2006 | 107 | 37 | 141 | 285 | 45 | 633 | 10 |
| 2007 | 150 | 40 | 218 | 408 | 39 | 1046 | 16 |
| 2008 | 131 | 13 | 341 | 485 | 46 | 1054 | 19 |
| 2009 | 77 | 18 | 321 | 416 | 49 | 849 | 19 |
| 2010 | 26 | 8 | 104 | 138 | 43 | 321 | 7 |
| 2011 | 25 | 10 | 30 | 65 | 26 | 250 | 6 |

#Author's estimation from SATP (2012); NER = North Eastern Region

Source: SATP (2012)

Though all the major incidences of conflicts that had happened in the valley area were not documented here in this paper, the impact of it was largely felt by the valley people. Some of the regular incidences which were not documented have been the issues of the Armed Forces Special Power Act and mushrooming of insurgent factions in 1980s and 1990s due to their ideological differences. In the early 2000s, major inter-ethnic conflicts that heightened between the hill (tribes) and valley (Meitei) communities were mainly the issue of greater autonomy or separate States demanded by the former. It was further compounded by the flawed policies of the government– 1) to appease major insurgent

groups of hill who have been demanding greater autonomy and to settle within the Indian constitutional framework; and 2) to weaken by force the valley based insurgency groups who have been demanding sovereignty for long (Oinam, 2013).

**4.2: Education in Manipur vis-à-vis India**

In Manipur, despite the continued cycle of violence and conflict, the rate of literacy has increased substantially for both males and females across the regions (districts) over the last two decades (Srikanth & Ngaihte, 2011). As compared to the national trend, growth trend of literacy rate in the last two decades, particularly for the rural area is highly appreciable. Despite poor road and communication infrastructure, people of Manipur have shown great enthusiasm in acquiring education and knowledge (Singha, 2013). Also, the score of women in this regard especially in the rural areas was found to be very significant and much higher than that of national average (refer Table 5).

**Table 4: Decadal Literacy Rate in Manipur and India**

| Year | Manipur | India |
|------|---------|-------|
| 1951 | 12.57 | 18.33 |
| 1961 | 36.04 | 28.30 |
| 1971 | 38.47 | 34.45 |
| 1981 | 49.66 | 43.57 |
| 1991 | 59.89 | 52.21 |
| 2001 | 70.53 | 64.84 |
| 2011 | 79.85 | 74.04 |

Source: GoI (2012)

As can be seen from Table 4, the literacy rate in Manipur on the eve of the country's independence was much lower than that of national average, but thereafter it has increased constantly from 13 per cent (13 literates per 100 persons) in 1951 to 80 per cent in 2011. The growth of the literacy rate in the State was also much higher than that of the national average. Within the State, educational growth in the rural and tribal districts has improved significantly in recent years; its credit goes to the English education imparted by the Christian Missionaries (Singha, 2010).

**Table 5: Percentage Distribution of Literate Persons by General Educational Level**

| Stat/ India | Area | Year | Male | | | Female | | | Person | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | upto primary | upto middle | seconda ry & above | upto primary | upto middle | seconda ry & above | upto primary | upto middle | seconda ry & above |
| Manipur | Rural | 2009-10 | 30.8 | 26.3 | 42.9 | 39.1 | 29.3 | 31.6 | 34.6 | 27.7 | 37.7 |
| | | 2004-05 | 45.1 | 26.8 | 28.1 | 54.1 | 24.8 | 21.1 | 49.1 | 25.9 | 25.0 |
| | | 1999-00 | 39.9 | 28.5 | 31.7 | 50.9 | 26.7 | 22.4 | 44.6 | 27.7 | 27.7 |
| | | 1993-94 | 46.5 | 24.8 | 28.8 | 59.7 | 19.8 | 20.5 | 52.2 | 22.7 | 25.2 |
| | Urban | 2009-10 | 26.9 | 17.7 | 55.4 | 28.5 | 24.0 | 47.5 | 27.6 | 20.6 | 51.8 |
| | | 2004-05 | 33.8 | 17.6 | 48.6 | 38.9 | 21.3 | 39.8 | 36.2 | 19.3 | 44.5 |
| | | 1999-00 | 31.3 | 18.4 | 50.3 | 36.4 | 23.9 | 39.7 | 33.5 | 20.9 | 45.6 |
| | | 1993-94 | 38.4 | 18.4 | 43.2 | 44.6 | 23.2 | 32.3 | 41.2 | 20.5 | 38.3 |
| India | Rural | 2009-10 | 50.6 | 22.7 | 26.7 | 59.8 | 20.9 | 19.4 | 54.4 | 21.9 | 23.7 |
| | | 2004-05 | 56.9 | 22.0 | 21.1 | 65.3 | 19.8 | 14.9 | 60.2 | 21.1 | 18.7 |
| | | 1999-00 | 58.5 | 21.5 | 20.0 | 67.5 | 19.5 | 13.0 | 62.1 | 20.8 | 17.1 |
| | | 1993-94 | 61.9 | 20.0 | 18.0 | 71.9 | 17.5 | 10.6 | 65.5 | 19.1 | 15.4 |
| | Urban | 2009-10 | 32.8 | 18.0 | 49.2 | 36.8 | 18.5 | 44.7 | 34.6 | 18.2 | 47.2 |
| | | 2004-05 | 37.3 | 19.9 | 42.9 | 42.4 | 20.8 | 36.8 | 39.5 | 20.2 | 40.2 |

| | 1999-00 | 39.5 | 19.9 | 40.5 | 45.6 | 20.1 | 34.3 | 41.9 | 20.1 | 37.9 |
| | 1993-94 | 43.8 | 19.1 | 37.1 | 50.4 | 19.2 | 30.4 | 46.7 | 19.1 | 34.2 |

*Note*: Literates/1000 of persons, then each level is divided by the total literate in percentage term.

Source: NSS 55th (1999-00); NSS 60th (2004); NSS 64th (2007-08) and NSS 66th Round (2007-08)

Over the years, with the growth of government expenditure on education and enthusiasm of formal employment in the society, eventually the rate of secondary and above level of education (higher education) in the State have risen significantly. For instance, the State has reached about 38 percent of literate people attaining higher secondary and above level, against 24 per cent at the national level in rural areas during 2009-10. Further, from Table 5 we can clearly see that compared to the national level, a larger proportion of men than women have attained secondary and above level of education in Manipur than that of national level. For example, about 43 and 32 percent of males and females respectively attained higher education out of the total literate population in Manipur, against about 27 and 19 per cent for male and female respectively in the national level in rural areas in 2009-10. The same holds true for the overall growth of higher education in the State.

As for total enrolment in post graduate courses and its percentage in the total population, (see Table 6), Manipur's score was found to be much higher than that of the national average. Especially, the enrolment percentage of MPhil/PhD, General Arts and Sciences, Agriculture and Management courses in the State were found to be much higher than the national average. This shows that the overall higher education level in the State is much higher than the national average, especially for the conventional courses available in the State.

**Table 6: Enrolment and % of Total Population (PG Courses, a**s on 30th Sept., 2007)

| | MPhil/PhD | | | Arts | | | Commerce | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Boys | Girls | Total | Boys | Girls | Total | Boys | Girls | Total |
| Manipur | 1304 | 940 | 2244 | 823 | 845 | 1668 | 61 | 75 | 136 |
| | (0.84) | (0.61) | (0.72) | (21.20) | (21.36) | (21.28) | (0.11) | (0.13) | (0.12) |
| India | 45740 | 30487 | 76227 | 339798 | 311833 | 651631 | 104341 | 82383 | 186724 |
| | (0.07) | (0.05) | (0.06) | (3.08) | (3.15) | (3.11) | (2.10) | (1.64) | (1.87) |

| | Science | | | Engineering/ Tech/Architect/Design | | | Medicine | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Manipur | 424 | 656 | 1080 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 52 | 32 | 84 |
| | (0.27) | (0.43) | (0.35) | (0.00) | (0.00) | (0.00) | (0.09) | (0.06) | (0.07) |
| India | 220553 | 167989 | 388542 | 53046 | 21441 | 74487 | 14336 | 7970 | 22306 |
| | (0.32) | (0.27) | (0.29) | (0.48) | (0.22) | (0.36) | (0.29) | (0.16) | (0.22) |

| | Agriculture & Allied | | | Mgt/ Hotel/ Travel/Tourism Mgt | | | Educati/Teacher Training | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Manipur | 45 | 29 | 74 | 104 | 22 | 126 | 18 | 66 | 84 |
| | (0.03) | (0.02) | (0.02) | (2.68) | (0.56) | (1.61) | (0.03) | (0.12) | (0.07) |
| India | 9330 | 2514 | 11844 | 71678 | 33040 | 104718 | 9681 | 9573 | 19254 |
| | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.65) | (0.33) | (0.50) | (0.20) | (0.19) | (0.19) |

| | Law | | | Others | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Manipur | 25 | 0 | 25 | 35 | 69 | 104 |
| | (0.02) | (0.00) | (0.01) | (0.90) | (1.74) | (1.33) |
| India | 7364 | 3679 | 11043 | 26221 | 17345 | 43566 |
| | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.24) | (0.18) | (0.21) |

Note: Excluding Open Universities; PG implies Post Graduate; Figures in the Parentheses are Per cent of State/Country Population

Source: GoI (2011); GoI (2012)

As can be seen from Table 7, the quality of education and the performance of children at the school level in Manipur are much higher than that of national level. For instance, 51 percent of Manipuri students (rural) of Class V standard can perform the basic arithmetic task of division compared to 38 percent at the all India level, while 70 percent of standard III and 84.4 percent of standard IV students in the State were able to perform the arithmetic task of subtraction. In contrast, at the most, 39 percent and 59 percent of standard III and IV children respectively could perform the above task at the all India level. Similarly, the ability to identify English alphabets at the primary level and the degree of English language proficiency at the upper primary level were also found to be much higher among the Manipuri students than that of national level. Despite prolonged conflicts, the above evidences clearly highlight the higher score of Manipur's educational system over that of the national system both in terms of educational quality and quantity in the recent past.

**Table 7: Performance of Rural School Children in 2009-10**

| Parameter | | Standard | Manipur | India |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| % of Children who can read English... | Capital Letters or More | I | 94.0 | 43.8 |
| | Capital Letters or More | II | 98.4 | 66.2 |
| | Words or More | III | 82.4 | 28.6 |
| | Words or More | IV | 90.2 | 44.1 |
| | Sentences | V | 66.6 | 25.7 |
| % of Children who can read… | Letters or more | I | 96.4 | 68.8 |
| | Words or more | II | 84.4 | 55.2 |
| | Std. I level Text or More | III | 64.1 | 46.6 |
| | Std. I Level Text or More | IV | 80.2 | 67.4 |
| | Std. II Level Text or More | V | 53.9 | 52.8 |
| % of Children who can….. | Recognize Nos. 1-9 or do more | I | 96.8 | 69.3 |
| | Recognize Nos. 11-99 or do more | II | 87.9 | 54.6 |
| | Subtract or do more | III | 69.8 | 39.0 |
| | Subtract or do more | IV | 84.4 | 58.8 |
| | Do Division | V | 51.0 | 38.0 |

Source: GoI (2012); NSS 55th Round (1999-00); NSS 60th Round (2004); NSS 64th Round (2007-08); NSS 66th Round (2007-08).

One need not to delve deep into the causes of conflict, to recognize that the State of Manipur is passing through social turmoil in various fields, ranging from insurgency for secession to greater autonomy, from terrorism to ethnic clashes and the fight over resources (Singha, 2012b; Sharma, 2011; Mentschel, 2007). In the past, violence in the State came mainly from the revolutionary groups and the state or security forces. In the 1980s and 1990s, the situation has turned more violent with the result to

the common people (CICS, 2005). In the midst of conflict, education in Manipur has been developing at a faster rate than that of the national level. What is the driving force behind this paradox?

## 5. STRATEGIES ADOPTED TO SAVE EDUCATION

Armed conflict affects public life to a great extent in Manipur. But, the educational sector is given the highest priority in Manipuri society, whether it is in rural or urban, rich or poor (Singha, 2013). Available literature on the topic and the field data showed that violent conflicts have a negative impact on human capital formation particularly among women and children, due to their higher vulnerability (Patricia, 2010). Conflicts and resultant violence are disruptive by definition, and may affect the level and distribution of returns to education considerably; it results in deaths, injuries, disability and psychological trauma to a physical body and also may have an adverse effect on economic and social well-being apart from political stability. But, the claims made by the past literatures which say very conservatively that conflict affects education, do not hold true in Manipur, especially in terms of education and educational development, compared to India (Singha, 2009; Harriss, 2002).

### 5.1: Expenditure on Education in Manipur

According to Singh (2011), there is a bilateral relationship between the expenditure on education and development of the economy. In Manipur, despite the simmering conflict in the last two to three decades, the development pace of education has been quite appreciable (Please see Tables 4 to 7 for detail). Also, the growth rate of women's education and education in rural Manipur has been relatively higher than that of national level. Its credit should go to the parents' quest for better and higher education for their wards, ably complemented by the English medium education, especially in the hill districts, imparted in schools run by Christian Missionaries (Singha, 2010). This increasing quest for education in the State is evident in the level of per capita spending on education.

**Table 8: Average Annual Expenditure per Student in 2007-08** (Rural + Urban)

| Stage | | General Education | | | | Technical | Vocational | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| -- | Primary | Middle | Secondary/ Hr. Sec. | Above Hr. Sec. | All | -- | -- | -- |
| **Manipur** | 3285 | 4087 | 6171 | 6915 | 4242 | 29287 | - | 4372 |
| **India** | 1413 | 2088 | 4351 | 7360 | 2461 | 32112 | 14881 | 3058 |

Note: Amount in Rs and Student age group between 5 to 25 years.

Source: NSS 55th Round (1999-00); NSS 60th Round (2004); NSS 64th Round (2007-08); NSS 66th Round (2007-08)

From Table 8, one can see that annual expenditure per student in Manipur as of 2007-08 was much higher than that of national level, stood at Rs 4372 compared to Rs 3058 at the national level. Though the expenditure per student for technical education was slightly lower than that of the national level, the per capita expenditure spent on the rest of the courses/levels (overall) of education was found to be much higher than that of the national level– almost double the national average. This implies that the parents in Manipur lay much emphasis on education.

From Table 9, it can also be seen that the monthly per capita expenditure on education (MPCE) according to the 55th NSS round (1999-00) in rural Manipur was 3.76 percent of the total spending by an individual, compared to 1.93 percent at all India level. MPCE in Urban Manipur was significantly higher than that of national level during the same period, stood at 6.49 per cent of Manipur compared to 4.33 percent of all India level. Over the years, the educational scenario in Manipur has changed for the better. For example, in 2007-08 (64th NSS round), the MPCE on education in rural Manipur was 7.24 percent against 3.7 percent at the all India level.

**Table 9: Monthly per Capita Expenditure (in %) on Education (MPCE)**

| Year | NSS Round | Manipur | | India | |
|------|-----------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| | | **Rural** | **Urban** | **Rural** | **Urban** |
| **1999-00** | **55th** | **3.76** | **6.49** | **1.93** | **4.33** |
| **2004- 05** | **60th** | **6.39** | **8.93** | **2.86** | **6.52** |
| **2007-08** | **64th** | **7.24** | **9.04S** | **3.70** | **7.11** |

Source: NSS 55th Round (1999-00); NSS 60th Round (2004); NSS 64th Round (2007-08); NSS 66th Round (2007-08)

During the same period, MPCE on education in urban Manipur was 9.04 percent compared to 7.11 per cent at the all India level. This clearly shows higher emphasis on education in the tiny State of Manipur. However, expenditure indicator is not sufficient to measure the outcome level of the sector; the performance parameter also needs to be looked into for understanding a fuller picture of the sector (Singha, 2013).

**5.2: Societal role to save Education**

From the evidences of Manipur shown above, educational development was not affected much by the conflicts and to justify the claim, what strategies have been adopted by Manipuri society is analysed by employing primary field data. For the purpose, a total of 107 households were interviewed randomly, asking questions like: What are the alternative arrangements that have been made by the parents for their children's education at the time of conflict? What are the most disturbing factors in educating their children? Do socio-economic factors influence in sending their children outside the State for study? Does the place of residence matter in this context?

**Table 10: Number of Household Sending their Children outside the State for Study**

|  | **Rural** | **Urban** | **Grand Total** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sending Out (at least one) | 22 *(25.58)* | 64 *(74.42)* | **86** *(100)* |
| Not Sending Out | 13 *(61.90)* | 8 *(38.10)* | **21** *(100)* |
| **Total** | 35 | 72 | **107** |

Note: Figures given in the parentheses are the percents of the total.

Source: Field Survey

By using cross tabulation of the primary data, Table 10 reveals that altogether 86 out of 107 households sent out their children (at least one in the family) to other States for their studies, accounts for 80.37 per cent of sample households. The remaining 21 families' children remained in state due to one or the other reason, accounting for 19.63 percent of the sample households. Of the total households that have sent out their children for study, 74.42 percent were from urban and remaining 25.58 per cent were from rural Manipur. Also, of the total households who did not send their children outside the State for study, almost 62 percent of households were from rural areas.

Of the rural sample households, 63 percent of the sample had sent out their children to other States and the remaining 37 per cent of rural households did not send. In the case of urban sample households, 88.90 percent of them had sent and 11.10 percent did not. As expected, urban families get more access to education, spending proportionately more consumption expenditure on education and sending their children out of the State for their studies. Further, to satisfy the argument, logistic regression was employed (refer Table 11). The dependent variable used in this regression is a binomial (dichotomous) one– whether the household sends their children outside the State (at least one) or not.

Seven independent variables have been included. The logit model was employed, based on its convenience and simplicity. The equation is presented as:

$$\text{Ln}[p/(1-p)] = b_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5 + b_6X_6 + b_7X_7 + \varepsilon_i \quad \ldots\ldots(1)$$

Where, $[p/(1-p)]$ = Sending children outside the State for study (Yes =1; Otherwise 0);

$b_0$ = Constant

$b_i$ = Coefficient of $i^{th}$ independent variables (i= 1-7 );

$X_1$ = Number of children (student) in the family

$X_2$ = Number of employee (regular income earned) in the family

$X_3$ = Place of residence (1 urban; Otherwise 0)

$X_4$ = Sending out because of conflict in the State (Yes =1; Otherwise 0);

$X_5$ = Sending out because of quality of education (Yes =1; Otherwise 0);

$X_6$ = Sending out due to infrastructures including availability of seats (Yes =1; Otherwise 0);

$X_7$ = Sending out due to family problems other than economic condition (Yes=1; Otherwise 0)

**Table 11: Factors influencing in sending children outside the State for study**

| **Logistic Regression** | | | | | Number of obs. = | | 107 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Wald $chi^2(7)$ = | | 23.54 |
| | | | | | Prob. $> chi^2$ = | | 0.0014 |
| Log pseudo likelihood = -34.968628 | | | | | Pseudo $R^2$ = | | 0.3400 |
| **Send_Children** | **Odds Ratio** | **Robust Std. Err.** | **z** | **P> $\|Z\|$ Conf.** | **[95%** | | **Interval ]** |
| No._Child | .8440 | .2493 | -0.57 | 0.566 | .4730 | | 1.5060 |
| No._Empl | 2.2136 | 1.0859 | 1.62 | 0.105 | .8463 | | 5.7902 |
| Place_res | 6.8946 | 4.4374 | 3.00 | 0.003 | 1.9528 | | 24.3416 |
| Conflict | 13.4440 | 11.9109 | 2.93 | 0.003 | 2.3680 | | 76.3245 |
| Quality | 2.6831 | 2.1644 | 1.22 | 0.221 | .5520 | | 13.0404 |
| Infra | 3.8215 | 3.7862 | 1.35 | 0.176 | .5481 | | 26.6427 |
| Family_probl | .6301 | .5255 | -0.55 | 0.580 | .1228 | | 3.2316 |

From the Table 11 we can further verify that the variables– $X^3$ (place of residence) and $X^4$ (sending children outside for study because of the conflict in the State) were found to be statistically significant at 5% level. It implies that the place of residence– urban households have more probability of sending out (to other States) for their children's education. Similarly, the conflict environment within the State pushes the children out of the State for their studies. As depicted by the odds ratio, urban families have relatively around 9 per cent more probability of sending their children outside the State(s) for studies compared to their rural counterpart. Similarly, conflict environment made relatively around 13 per cent more probability of sending their children outside the State(s) for studies compared to a perceived non-conflict environment. But other socio-economic variables are not found to be statistically significant, or do not have influence on their decision of sending outside.

## 6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The mainstream narrative on conflict and education depicts the low educational outcomes in conflict-affected zones, as being caused by the disruption and destruction of conflict. But, the present study has explored a very different picture. Though the State of Manipur is raven with the different forms of conflict. Public life is very much affected by it. The growth of the educational sector is found to be very impressive; much higher than that of the all India level. In other words, despite the uncertainties faced by Manipur, the pace of educational development has been increasing at a faster rate than that of national level. However, within the State, the growth trend of higher education has been slightly lower than school education, but much higher than that of national level. Higher expenditure of private higher education and limited higher educational infrastructure within the State may probably be the reason for the relatively slower growth of higher education.

From the above analysis, not delving into the causal direction, one thing is clear that conflict has reached to a saturated stage in Manipur and at the same time, education has been developing uninterruptedly. Conflict and violence do not affect overall educational growth in the State, but it makes children to out-migrate for their studies. Though conflict has made education costlier for *Manipuris* the former did not retard the growth/development of the latter. It implies that conflicts and violence could disrupt educational environment in the State, but not stop its onward march (development).

Society has realised that violence makes no dividend and almost all major insurgent groups (excepting one or two) in the State have blurred objectives, and some have already entered into ceasefire peace agreement with the government of India; some are working as agents of state forces and still others are engaged in accumulating wealth. Besides, the majority of the educated people do not prefer to go for violent means for their demands in the State. Though the growth of higher education is slightly lower than that of school education due to the higher cost of private higher education and limited

educational infrastructure within the State, the overall development of education has been very impressive.

In a nutshell, the growth of the educational sector in Manipur is being maintained by spending a proportionately greater share of consumption expenditure on education (compared to national level) and sending the children out of the conflict zone. Sending the children out of the State was found to be one of the preferred options in the State and it was mainly compelled by different forms of conflicts in the State. Also, the place of residence (urban area has more probability of sending out) had the greater role on the decision of sending children out of the state for study. If Brahm's inverted U shaped conflict hypothesis holds true, the State of Manipur is expected to return to normalcy and enjoy a peaceful life very shortly. As of the necessary steps in the State, employment opportunity should be created for those educated youths who have returned home after attaining education from outside. As the State lies on the corridors to many international boundaries, these frustrated youths can be easily lured by the insurgent groups. Besides, the state is handicapped by its physical infrastructure and geography.  Greater emphasis should be given on the large scale infrastructure development. Economic development in the State is a spontaneous process provided the basic infrastructure is laid down.

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**End Notes:**

[i] The newly formed independent India and its Government in New Delhi pressured the King of Manipur (Kangleipak, earlier name) to sign a merger agreement with India under very unusual circumstances. King of Manipur signed the documents on 21st September 1949 AD at Shillong without prior consideration and approval from elected members of the Manipur Assembly. Thereafter, on October 15, 1949 AD, Major General Rawal Amar announced the annexation of Manipur.

[ii] Naga (of Manipur) mentioned in this paper does not imply the community (Naga) of Nagaland (neighbouring State of Manipur); it is only an encompassing political identity of different communities or different hill tribes of Manipur, coined by British, creation in the 1880s. Detail of Naga identity of Manipur can be seen from Oinam (2003) and also Singh (2013).

[iii] The Kuki (originally known as Chin-Kuki) tribes were of comparatively late migrants (as late as the 18th-19th century) to Manipur from the *Chin State of Burma* compared to other communities in the north and central Manipur. It is also a confederation of different tribal communities, mainly settled in the border areas of Myanmar.

[iv] Manipur came under the British rule as Princely State in 1891

[v] Manipur's (Kangleipak, earlier name) original/traditional religion (Sanamahi) and script (Meitei script) have been replaced by Hinduism and Bengali script respectively in 33 AD when King Pamheiba got converted himself into Hinduism.

[vi] Economic Blockade refers in this paper is the blockade on the National Highways which are passing through hill areas of Manipur. Often National Highways are being blocked by different tribal organisations as a means to put pressure on to the government or Meitei (valley's dominant community) to redress their grievances. It is the common strategy for the hill organisations.

[vii] In this paper, Bandhs (forceful closures) refer to the complete closure of the area, market, city or valley districts of Manipur. Often, the civil organisations of valley districts of Manipur (Meitei) call on bandh to put pressure on to the government to redress their grievances.

[viii] NER consists of eight states of India's North Eastern Region– Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.

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