

Media and Human Rights: India's North East in National India Media

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Abstract

With the dawn of India's independence in 1947 and subsequent consolidation of its territory, and reorganisation of international borders with her neighbours, India's North East as a distinct geographical region is explicitly palpable. More than just a geographical region, culturally, socially and historically people from the region are different from mainland Indians. In due course of times, it leads to the emergence of complex problem and violent movements. To counter-balance the emergence of armed movements, Armed Forces (Special) Powers Act 1958 was enacted thereby making the region the bedrock of security forces. Today, with the exception of Sikkim no state in the region is free from some amount of conflicts that account for strain relationship between the state and the people. In spite of blatantly violated all norms of decency and democratic rights of the people, militarisation become a "way of life" in this part of the country. The subject related to this issue may be irregular but not uncommon in the national India media. Amidst this development, media become part of the public discourse only as a result of reaction to the events. National media coverage was largely focused on processes rather than causes/reasons of the issues. The paper has analyses media discourse of human rights with respect to India's North East in following discourse analysis method of three national English dailies for duration of twenty days.

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Introduction

The concept of human rights is relatively recent origin though the idea of rights may have long tradition. It was not before the Second World War that human rights become the subject of interest amongst the scholars and thinkers. The language of human rights can trace to the Western Enlightenment, which has found expression in two important documents that emerged from the revolutionary turmoil of the late eighteenth century- French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789) and American Bill of Rights (1791). The terminology of both documents can be still found in human rights law of the early twenty-first century. Yet, the rights they guaranteed were far from universal since they were limited on grounds of gender, colour or wealth, and they were hardly comprehensive, addressing only civil and political issues (ICHRP, 2002, p. 23). Given the scope and nature of human rights, “agreeing on a single, universally accepted understanding of the origins of human rights has also been impossible. International law and international statements about human rights are silent on this subject” (APF, 2012, p.5). Though the idea of rights was not new, modern understanding of human rights with “defining characteristics of universal, indivisible and enforceable” (ICHRP, 2002, p. 22) was the culmination of the post-Second World War. Primarily because “before the Second World War human rights were not a subject of international relations. The exceptions were very few, such as the nineteenth century efforts to end the slave trade and the twentieth century work on eradicating slavery” (Donnelly, 1999, p. 71). From every practical consideration thus, “natural rights, in terms of human rights, were revived in the sphere of international politics only during the Second World War” (Chandler, 2013, p. 111). Attempt was made “after World War I, the victorious powers discussed proceedings against the defeated Ottoman leadership for crimes against humanity as represented by deaths, deportation, and other atrocities inflicted on ethnic Armenians particularly during that war. But no institutionalised measures resulted as other concerns took priority...” (Forsythe, 2012, p. 63). In the long history of human civilisation thus other issues superseded human rights until the mid twentieth century.

Media Discourse of Human Rights and Region’s Movements

India’s North East as a distinct geographical region becomes fairly obvious with the dawn of India’s independence in 1947 and subsequent consolidation of her territory, followed by reorganisation of international borders with its neighbours. With this development, the region was territorially marginalised as it was left connected with the mainland India with just 22 kilometres popularly known as Siliguri Corridor.¹ Subsequently, on account of inherent historical, cultural and political factors have led to the birth of movements in the region demand ranging from statehood, autonomy to self-rule and issue of human rights is intrinsically linked with movements. To begin with, in Naga Hills—the then district of Assam, low-level conflict movement centering on the independence movement was started in 1952, although the seed of the movement was sown in 1918 with the formation of the Naga Club.² Today, various armed rebel groups in the region perceive the Naga independentist’s strategy of ethno-nation building as the role model however, the Government of India (GOI) considered the Nagas as the mother of all insurgencies. This was followed by Mizo rebellion in 1966.³ Proliferation of recent armed conflict movements include 1970’s in Assam⁴ and Tripura,⁵ 1980’s in Manipur followed by Meghalaya in 1990’s. Although in Arunachal Pradesh,⁶ the activities of the state’s militant organisation is relatively

inactive, Naga militants are active particularly in the districts of Changlang and Tirap, and Assam based militant groups such as ULFA and NDFB⁷ in border districts adjacent to Arunachal. With the exception of Sikkim, violent movements thus become a paradigm to describe the North East states leading to strain relationship between the state and the people. Far from prioritising them as national importance, often issues are relegated as 'law and order' whereby the Central Government would relieve its responsibility to resolve but allow the same to perpetuate. The perpetuation of violent movements and the approach to tackle the same with violent methods gave birth to issue of human rights violation. This vicious circle in turn creates a history of blamed and counter-blamed politics.

Human Rights and Media

Media and human rights cannot exist in isolation. When media is considered as the "watchdog of democracy", it is expected to watch among others the violation of human rights as a result of coercive state's action and state excessiveness (Jenifer, 2009, pp.596-97). In the event of the media failing to underline the issue of human rights violations by whatever forces, the very independent media will be at stake. Healthy human rights environment is essential for the growth of effective media. The triangular links of media, human rights and democracy is so close that it is just not possible to talk in isolation. To examine the media health of a nation is to study the health of its democracy and human rights. However, in a democratic India, its national media is yet to make its mark in India's North East. It may sound strange but "the extreme indifference of the mainstream media makes the region invisible to the outside world" (Sen, 2014, p. 93). Media discourse of human rights from the region is of recent origin though India is a signatory to the International Bill of Human Rights consists of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights since 1979 (Jaswal, 1996, p.49). Though initially there was some coverage on the region's turbulent situation from Calcutta based press, "it was not until Oinam (Operation Bluebird) happened in 1987 in Manipur that the human rights violation actually became news" (Kashyap, 2015, p. 59). While following security centric approach in the round up to violent movements, "in the past decades, particularly since the mid 80's Indian state was charged for having committed many human rights violation on the Nagas. All this happened without being known to the outside world because of inaccessibility of the region and backwardness particularly in the media world. In fact, there had been wide-scale abuses of human rights including killing, torture and extra-judicial execution during the combine operation. No social workers, human rights activists nor pressmen were allowed to go to the area" (Phukon, 2006, p. 159). Even though there was blatant violation of human rights, it was hardly known to the outside world. Such actions were all done in the name of "law and order" as violent movements threatened national integrity they need to tackle in a most violent form. However, issues of human rights violation should not be leaked out as it is internal matter, best that media does not get coverage. In following security centric approach, "when bad news from Northeast India reaches the global media or international human rights forums, Indians in the rest of the country find the reports to be a source of embarrassment rather than an occasion for moral anguish about the health of Indian democracy" (Baruah, 2007, p. 4).

This may sound unbelievable but “from 1955 to 1960 the press had been blacked out in the Naga hills. So while people knew a war was on, very few knew just what was happening, who was fighting whom, and where or why” (Sen, 2011, p.1). The withdrawal of British with the dawn of India’s independence led to the wrapping up of White colonisation, but for the Nagas the worse is yet to come. The newly independent nation-state of Indian Government has isolated the Nagas from outside and media observers and gradually deployed security forces with an orgy of killings, torture, rapes, force public groupings, burning villages and granaries (Bendangjungshi, 2011, p. 92). The situation has not changed much even after fifty-five years. When Wooldridge and his team arrived in Kohima in November 1997 after the cease-fire agreement between the Government of India and National Socialist Council of Nagaland–Isak Muivah (NSCN-IM) in July 1997, to find the ground realities by themselves, while interacting with the Naga elders, this is what they said, “our BBC team were the first representatives of the international media to meet them in fifty years” (Wooldridge, 1997). This reflects how both national and international media has ignored the Naga movement.

The issue is not of low coverage or invisibility but on how the media painted the region. More than invisibility, controlled reporting is an indication of the crisis of media representation. Even after six decades of India’s independence, “the engagement of mainstream India media with Northeast remains marginal. Furthermore, the coverage that the Northeast does receive remains trapped in stereotypes” (Sen, 2014, p.89). As a results of such manipulated coverage, “whole areas of cultural, social and political experience that do not fit neatly into hard and soft news agendas are never becoming part of public memory” (Hasan, 2004, p.126). Media fascination with violence has led to deepen the perception that the region means anything but ‘terror’, ‘undemocratic’ and the likes. Such deep preoccupation is the possible reason why foreign journalists are not welcome to give coverage on region’s movements (Baruah, 2007, p.4). The media, in turn, is feeding the audience with full of half-baked information.

Not to mention of human rights violation, the very existence of Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (*AFSPA*) violates core aspects of human rights as enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which India is a signatory. Though *AFSPA* could amounts to international scrutiny due to violation of human rights, India is able to respond by saying that violent movements in the region is not just internal security threat but also exceptional. So, under normal circumstances *AFSPA* would not be there but given the exceptional circumstances such law is essential (Bordolio, 2014). Another convenient justification is that since the region shared over ninety-nine percent international border with neighbouring countries, such law is required. A further tactic has been to attribute blame for insurgency on foreign hands, located in Bangladesh, China, and Pakistan (Duncan, 2009, pp. 260-61). Human rights violation is far from considered as detrimental to democracy, at least for the region. Besides, the region is constructed as a violent borderland, a distant and disturbed periphery of “undifferentiated” and “nameless insurgencies” (Baruah, 2005, p. vii), which justified the use of extreme law.

Sample and Methodology

To examine media discourse of human rights with respect to India's North East, three national English dailies (The Times of India,⁸ The Hindu⁹ and The Indian Express,¹⁰ Delhi Edition) were selected for duration of twenty days (5th -24th June, 2015). The duration was purposively chosen to examine conflict reportage of the attack on 6 Dogra Regiment in Manipur's Chandel district, on June 4, 2015 by joint forces of Naga Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khapang (NSCN-K), Kanglei Yawol Kunna Lup (KYKL) and Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP). In the attack, at least 18 Indian soldiers were killed and over a dozen injured. All the news stories related to the attack were collected from three national dailies.

All together eighty-five news stories were collected. Out of the total news stories, five were in the nature of articles, there were seven editorials, one was interview and the rest were news reporting. Out of the three dailies, the *Times of India* had maximum news stories with forty-one in all, which include thirty-seven news reporting, two editorials, one article and an interview. The next was the *Indian Express* with twenty-eight news stories that consist of twenty-five news reporting, two editorials and an article. The least number of news stories was in the *Hindu* with sixteen, which comprise of twelve news reporting, one editorial and three articles. The analysis followed the method of discourse analysis. Broadly, the analysis is categories into attack reaction, action plan and respond, and operation and human rights.

Attack Reaction

Besides any other things, the conflict reportage provide minutes of how the attack would have been planned and executed. The sequence of the attack was constructed as "the attack, which started with an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) blast, took place when the convoy reached a hilly area between Paraolol and Larong along the New Samtal road, about 125 km from Imphal city and around 15 km from the Myanmar border. The attackers then fired down from a hillside nearby using rocket-propelled grenades and heavy automatic weapons" (Roy, 2015a, p.1). The ambush was the "deadliest attack in the last 33 years" and "the biggest militant attack on the army in recent years" of militancy history in India's North East, which was partly as the result of negligence due to region's geographical distance from New Delhi. There is lack of serious engagement to tackle the region's issue as compare to Kashmir. Not just the media but equally those in power concentrated more on matter related to Kashmir as compare to region's problem. Unfortunate but the hard reality was that "the ambush rudely brought the Indian security establishment's focus back to the northeast, often neglected due to its geographical distance from New Delhi — as compared to terrorism-hit Kashmir — despite its long porous borders with Myanmar and Bangladesh" (TNN, 2015, p. 1). As typical national India media was, the focus was again on 'security establishment' rather than stressing for political engagement. Though the scale and size of the region's issues is in no way less than Kashmir, the latter got far better attention, be it from the policy makers or from the media.

There was detailed account of the reaction from Indian authorities. Prime Minister condemned the attack as "mindless and "distressing", President while condemning call it as "random attack", Defence Minister condemned as "cowardly attack", Minister of State for Home described as "extremely unfortunate", and Manipur's

Home Minister calling it as “most unfortunate”. Urgency of the meetings on how to response the attack and actions need to be executed was highlighted. A glimpse of what the reporting was, “hours after the attack, Home Minister Rajnath Singh chaired a high-level meeting that was attended by Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar, Army chief Dalbir Singh and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, apart from senior officials, to evaluate the situation” (Express News Service, 2015, p.1). There were hectic meetings of the need to take strong action as “Thursday's attack was the worst on security forces under the NDA¹¹ regime, which rode to power with a tough posture on security matters” (TNN, 2015a, p.13). Well planned and executed by joint forces of NSCN (K), KYKL and KCP after the former unilaterally withdrawn the cease-fire in March 2015 was seen as aiming to derail the ongoing Naga peace process. Interestingly, junior Minister of Home noted that “some people want to disrupt peace process” and Defence Minister stressed that “army will continue to work towards bringing peace” (Express News Service, 2015, p. 2), when army has had a history of blatant human rights violations. More disturbing was the words “will continue” as it perceives that the army had worked for peace in the past. The trade record of the army would show that large scale deployment of security forces gave birth to militarisation and institutionalisation of violence.

Well noted the strategic location of Chandel, Manipur's Southeast district where various armed rebel groups have setup their bases. Indeed, Chandel is a place of struggle for dominance by different militant groups. Yet there was failure of the government to notice the warning signs and took it for granted the situation in Manipur just because there was appeared to be certain tranquility in recent years (Routray, 2015, p. 9). It also noted of the lack of understanding between the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) led NDA of present regime and Congress led UPA¹² in dealing with the Myanmar. In the wake of the attack, in addition of asking the Myanmar government to not let the militants operating from its soil target India, it plans to enhance “intelligence network” to monitor the porous 1,643 Km land border with Myanmar (Pandit, 2015, p.15). There was perception within the establishment that the NSCN (K) unilaterally abrogation of cease-fire and subsequent attack was not free from the foreign hands particularly the PLA¹³ although the Chinese intelligentsia and academicians ruled out such possibility (Aneja, 2015, p. 10). It is not uncommon that any turbulent situation in the region will somehow lead to blame the hands of neighbouring countries. Experts are of the view that dragging foreign hands on region's issue is another way to perpetuate the problems.

Action Plan and Respond

The detail reportage on how government plan to response the attacked by not ruling out “strongest action” and “gearing up for a coordinated action” with neighbouring counterpart was given. Besides, the plan to go with “hot pursuit” and how it was executed with precision was widely noted. Of course, “hot pursuit”, which turn out to be cross-border operation in which the government has for the first time owned publicly although this was not the first of its kind. Though the government admitted that cross-border operation was part of the “hot pursuit” to target the militant camps, the exact number of militant casualties was far from cleared. It comes to light that cross-border attack was not just revenge but to restrain from further attack. It was more of pre-emptive action rather than merely retaliatory in nature (Parashar, 2015, p.7). After the attack, government is also weighing option as to whether BSF should

allowed to man the border and install fencing, in which it would affect people to people movements and border trade as well, which the government is promoting as part of its Look/Act East Policy¹⁴ (Tiwary, 2015, p.7). However, the government has in mind that crack down of militant networks and bases will not be one-off affairs but will pursue more rigorously.

Fair reportage was also given that Indian authority has got the assent of Myanmar counterpart for “surgical strike” attack. The action was not surprised as “in 2010 when the Home Ministry’s joint secretary S. Singh and Myanmar Army commander for Chin state, U. Nay Wing, signed an agreement that Indian forces could pursue insurgents across the border” (Swami, 2015, p.7). However, while appreciating the bold step that the PM has taken, there are concerned that unless Myanmar is taken into task, the game is far from over. “Hot pursuit” should not be alternative to government to government level talk, which would only leads to hamper diplomatic relationship. Besides, immature statement of junior Information & Broadcasting Minister was condemned and cautions him to refrain in future (“Inside Myanmar, in Hot Pursuit”, 2015; “Success, Sobriety”, 2015). They also noted that the attack should not hamper peace process even though issue of human rights is left out.

Another editorial (“Myanmar Strike”, 2015) states that the government was ready to do anything to tackle insurgency even it means crossing the border, when the situation demands. But, it admits that the government must have communicated in advance, and in any case, the Indian army and Myanmar counterpart are coordinating on security related matters for years. So, over acting was not required and exercising the same strategy to northwestern border (Pakistan) is a “different ball game” altogether. It further reminds that to cultivate lasting peace, to builds a strong diplomatic relation is the best option. Similarly, there was concerned of such action in dealing with the neighbour. Immature handling with sensitive issue with the neighbours can backfire, which would be costly (Narayanan, 2015, p.8).

Operations and Human Rights

In the wake of the attack, “the Leimakong-based 57 Mountain Division launched one of the biggest combine operations in the hilly terrain of Manipur” (“Two Meitei groups own up”, 2015). It will be heartening to know the outcome of combine operations, yet there was no follow-up reporting anywhere and the experience will be remembered only in the minds and hearts of those who face the music of operations. The words “alleged high handedness” by army was noted only once in the entire reporting and that was also referred to 6 Dogra Regiment (Roy, 2015, p.12). This was an indication of human rights violation though implicitly. Usually, the army does not have a good relation with the locals, who were posted supposedly for the citizens’ security. Rarely, the locals had seen the army as means of security but considered them more as agent of harassment. Interestingly, though the national dailies were apprehensive of using human rights violations, PM Narendra Modi's task force proposal notes that “New Delhi hopes the plan, by addressing local resentment against alleged human rights violations by the army” (Swami, 2015, p.1). The proposal further noted that the NSCN (K) is a good friend of other militant groups operating in India’s North East and suggested that Khaplang may be feeling dejected with the Naga peace process.

There was only one news story, where the villager sense what the consequent of the ambush will be and indeed send a precautionary note was, “I hadn’t heard of the incident. It’s most unusual since there is no militant movement at all in our village” (Roy, 2015b, p.1). Otherwise, there is no voice from human rights and social activists, academicians and civil society in the entire reporting. It was common experience that whenever there was operation, villagers usually bear the brunt of security force’s atrocities. When there were already massive combine operations to nab the attackers, it was unlikely that the civilians were unaffected. There was high possibility that the lone villager was sounding a precautionary note because he had already experienced of how the villagers were harassed in the name of asking/seeking information about militants’ movement.

When there were series of attacks after the NSCN (K) unilaterally abrogated cease-fire, the attack was not unexpected. The attack was done by newly floated umbrella militant organisation called United Liberation Front of Western South East Asia (UNLFW) comprised of United Liberation Front of Assam (Independent)- ULFA (I), NSCN (K), Kamatapur Liberation Organisation (KLO) and National Democratic Front of Boroland (Songbijit). The same umbrella organisation had earlier attack Indian army in Mon (Nagaland) and Tirap (Arunachal Pradesh). Resurgence of violence is what at least the region’s experts are concerned. With no concrete and tangible outcome to be reckoned, they “fear an uneasy truce in the region, largely the result of ceasefire agreements signed between the Centre and several insurgent outfits over years, seems to be now unraveling” (TNN, 2015b, p.13). There was a fear that violence in the region was on the rise since 2014 as compare to past few years although the region was hardly free from violent situation with the onset of militarisation in the form of *AFSPA* since 1958 essentially, to curb the Naga movement.

Interestingly, the army projected as peace maker where “Lt. Col. Bipin Rawat, commander of 3 Corps, said the Army had come to Manipur to maintain peace” (Laithangbam, 2015, p.11) Such gesture contradicts the ground situation and people’s experience since the army was part of perpetuating violence. Counter-insurgency operations were already in full-swim and in such a situation maintaining peace is a distance possibility. Whenever there was counter-insurgency operation, human rights violations cannot be ruled out. Even more likely since the area is within the purview of *AFSPA*, which is one of the most inhuman laws that Indian parliamentary democracy had passed. However, the only place where *AFSPA* was considered as “draconian provision” in the entire reportage was found in an editorial (“Turning the Tide”, 2015). Of course, black law of this sort should not have a place in a democratic regime. Myanmar co-operation was essential to tame the region’s militants. It also notes that “region’s woes stem from a combination of its remote geographical location, poor governance infrastructure and lack of jobs for its youth” and the need for better infrastructural connectivity and economic growth, which have the potential of “degrading the militants’ support base”.

As stated, combine operations was started to nab the militants and the NIA (national investigation agency) has taken over the case from Manipur police, and conducted a thorough search of the area, five days after the attack (TNN, 2015a, p.7). When there was such a thorough operation what about the fate of the villagers? In anyway, combine operation affect the daily lives of the villagers? There is not reporting at all

on this aspect. The word *AFSPA* did figure again where “Lt. Gen. Bipin Rawat, GOC, 3 Corps, underscored the need for the law to remain for smooth counter-insurgency operations” (TNN, 2015b, p.7). It means to say that without *AFSPA* counter-insurgency operation will be ineffective as the Act provide unaccounted power to operate once the place is declared as “disturbed area”. Further, the operation “focus is also on a cluster of villages along the India-Myanmar border” (Roy, 2015, p.7). What was the consequent of the operation to the villagers was not mentioned anywhere. This meant to say that “thorough search” and “combine operations” were villagers friendly? Given the past record, this is unlikely.

In constructing the nature of the attack, NIA was of the opinion that such well-planned and execution was not possible without “local sympathisers”. It was planned that local sympathisers will be brought to Imphal (capital of Manipur) and interrogated to find out the details (Chauhan, 2015, p. 14). What sort of interrogation was done to those considered as sympathisers, no one will know except those who were interrogated. The media is least bother to find out. The role of the media is not just reacting but also to proactively engage in order to provide fair, just and balanced information. It may be noted that cross-border operation was first done in 1987 after the Oinam attack under the code name operation “Bluebird” (Sarma, 2015, p.15) and that was where notion of human rights violation become popular. In entire reportage, security of the citizen was mentioned only once. It raises the logic of deployed army against Naga rebels, which represent a sign of political failure and ultimately democracy, as “some of the world’s oldest active violent movements are today in the northeast, and the army has been deployed against Naga rebels for six decades now” (Joseph, 2015). There are possible villages that the attackers may have used as a passage but what sort of treatments is meted to the villagers are not reported at all. Without noting the issue of human rights, the coverage did offers olive gesture of the need for peace talk and tries to juggle certain historical factors of the Naga movement and the complexities involved in it (Roy, 2015. p.8). Another editorial (“Next in Nagaland”, 2015), deals with historical background of the Naga movement and the need to involve various stakeholders in the peace process for acceptable lasting solution.

Conclusion

To conclude, in the entire conflict reportage of twenty days in three national dailies, there was nowhere the words human right violations was mentioned other than on PM’s task force proposal. Whatever was reported, they were mostly reaction of the attack without rigorously going into causes and consequences of it. Besides detailing the formal voices and their reactions of the attack, there was hardly any voice from the common people. Overall, the national dailies have nothing much to offer on issue of human rights, the need to engage in political dialogue and evolvement of comprehensive people’s approach to solve the issue. It just represents the statist’s view and was not investigative in nature. As by media own admission, the region’s become part of the national discourse on account of chilling ambush. Not that the region was left out from the national India media, but whatever was represented were mostly violent driven, otherwise the region is relegated to footnote.

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- ¹ Himalayan state of Sikkim was made part of India's North East recently though territorially the state is outside the region's states.
- ² Around 2,000 Nagas from various tribes joined the 'Labour Corps' during the World War I to assist the Allied Forces. After they came back some concerned Naga Labour Corps together with their fellow Nagas formed the 'Naga Club' in 1918, which was the first socio-political organisation in the Naga society.
- ³ In those days, present Mizoram state is known as Lushai Hill – a district of Assam, in erstwhile unified Assam.
- ⁴ Unabated migrant of Hindi-speaking people from central India besides influx of Bengali speaking Muslims from across the border has led the Assamese to launch Assam Movement, popularly known as 'anti-foreigner uprising' spearheaded by the All Assam Students' Union (AASU). Refer, Hussian, M. (2000). State, Identity Movements and Internal Displacement in the North-East. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 35 (51), p. 4520. ULFA (United Liberation Front of Asom) when established in 1979 was started more as a militant wing of the Assam movement, today declared its objective is to struggle for 'sovereign socialist Assam'. See, Das, S. K. (1994). United liberation front of Assam (ULFA): A political analysis. Delhi: Ajanta Publications, p.51.
- ⁵ The growth of insurgency in Tripura is unique in a sense that this is the only state in modern India where the indigenous tribal has been reduced to minority in their own land. The genesis of insurgency in Tripura therefore lies in the demographic destabilisation.
- ⁶ Formerly called North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA) and was directly managed by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, was upgraded to a state in 1987.
- ⁷ Non-recognition of people's demand by the government led to secessionist movement, of which Bodoland is an instance as led by National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB). See, Misra, A. (2001). The politics of secessionist conflict management in India. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 22 (2), p.52.
- ⁸ *The Times of India* is one of the most popular national dailies, which is the most read English in India, and the world also as per the IRS (Indian Readership Survey), 2015.
- ⁹ *The Hindu* is seen as a critical and focused national daily and less friendly with the establishment, and often prescribed for competitive examinations.
- ¹⁰ *The Indian Express* is seemed to be ideological apart with *The Times of India*, which does not easily swept by the regime and articulative in nature.
- ¹¹ NDA (National Democratic Alliance) led by BJP formed the government at the Centre in May 2014 after the last general election where BJP emerged as the single largest party.
- ¹² UPA (United Progressive Alliance) led by Congress formed the government at the Centre after 15th Lok Sabha election conducted in April-May 2009.
- ¹³ Pandey Devesh K. & Dinakar Peri. (2015, June 9). NSCN (K) move at behest of elements in China? *The Hindu*, p. 10; Vijai Singh. (2015, June 9). Chinese Army officials in touch with NSCN (K) leaders. *The Indian Express*, p. 11 & TNN. (2015, June 8). China hand in NE insurgency?. *The Times of India*, p. 13.
- ¹⁴ Prime Minister, Narendra Modi in his address to East Asia Summit in Naypyidaw, capital of Myanmar told the world leaders to turn India's "Look East" policy into "Act East" policy. Look East Policy was introduced in the early 1990s by PV Narasimha Rao, the then Congress led prime minister and was endorsed by successive prime ministers, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh. It hopes to bring better connectivity the region with the rest of India by way of linking the South East Asian countries.

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