Ethnicity and Security of India

A Case Study of North East

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Acknowledgement

For having made us the instrument of making this humble offering at His feet, we are eternally grateful to the one who is:

सहस्रशीर्षा पुरूषः सहस्रक्षः सहस्र्यात्
स भूमिं सर्वतः स्य त्वोत्यतिष्ठद्य शाड.गुलम्
पुरूषः एवेदं सर्वं यद्भूतं यच्च भाव्यम्
उताम तत्वस्योानो यदन्नेनातिरोहति
ओम्   शांतिः शांतिः शांतिः

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Preface

The thesis on "Ethnicity and Security of India with Special Reference to North-Eastern States" is the result of an intense desire to understand and analyse the problem of ethnicity effecting the North-Eastern region of India. The problem and issues were present in some form or the other, even much before the independence, during the British period. In fact, the inhabitants follow different religions and speak nearly 400 languages. They have such a multiplicity of historic, geographic, social, cultural, religious and linguistic activities that other States of India, perhaps may not have.

It is a fact that social, economic and cultural activities of any community depends to a large extent on its social and communal structure, the same way their cultural activities always have an impact on the race to which they belong-than specific qualities, ambitions, ethnic identity, self respect, etc. If we study these activities of North-Eastern region, we can come to a conclusion that the various communities in the region have some wonderful and extraordinary specialties that can hardly be seen in original course in rest of the country. It is truly amazing, how ignorant our people are about the security problem of the North-East - strategically the most important and sensitive part of our country. 98% borders of this region touch international boundaries, while only 2% are bordering the rest of the country. Physically remote from the corridor of power, the region has not attracted much attention even from the Government of India or from the so-called security experts

who tend to take a rather simplistic view of things. It is important to understand the complexities of the many security problems infesting the region of North-East, some of which have become even more complicated since the departure of the colonial rulers in 1947.The aspect of National security in the Indian context, assumes all the more significance today with the changed world order, a hostile external security environment, rising fissiparous tendencies among various sections of our society, all of which are trying to pull apart the very fabric of unity and integrity of the country. It is in this background, that an attempt has been made to discuss the challenges posed by ethnicity in the region of North-East. The topographical and geographical importance of the region, alongwith the ecological factors have also been discussed in the first chapter.

Before proceeding any further with the analysis or with other details, it becomes necessary that the meaning of the term 'ethnicity' is first understood. Keeping the above in mind, an attempt has been made to define the nature, scope and conceptual framework of ethnicity in the second chapter.

Today the situation in North-East has reached to a critical phase, which in fact, poses a grave threat to the unity and integrity of India. Terror, murder, kidnappings, blast and violence have become the hallmark of life in North-East. Once the bunkers now dot peaceful cities of the region guarded by the paramilitary force and the army. Every face is stricken with sorrow and terror. A line of distrust can be seen at the door of every house. Curfew and strikes alongwith kidnappings and murders have become the way of life. To understand the present situation, it becomes imperative for us to know about the various major ethnic conflicts taking place in the country. How and why it occurred, what were the factors which propagated ethnicity in the country have been discussed and analysed in the third chapter.

Our failures in responding properly to the various grave threats above, can be attributed largely to the poor understanding of the phenomenon of ethnicity and terrorism. We have either

procrastinated or at best indulged in some ethnic action. As a result, our counterinsurgency efforts have been utterly unproductive. The Government of India has been merely reacting to individual incidents and the various problems have never been addressed in its totality. Consequently, there are no sound tactical concepts either and solutions to specific situations are sought by trial and error. It is high time, that the Govt. of India realised that no nation is ever likely to posses enough resources to extinguish all fires and also new ones at the same time.

The social, political and economic costs of such blunderings have been enormous. Socially, the region has slipped to a stage where even fifty-nine years of independence, the government is still obliged to issue fervent appeals to the people of the region, almost everyday, for maintaining the unity and integrity of the nation.

Unbalanced views of the problem have invariably led to unbalanced solutions, and counterinsurgency is one field, where superficial knowledge is dangerous, the price of error being a costly defeat, as well as an expensive affair. This point needs extra emphasis become there are many people who, frustrated by our string of failures, are provoked into a theory, that we ought to give a 'free hand' to the security forces, to solve the problem of ethnicity and insurgency present in the region of North-East. At this juncture, it becomes imperative to mention that even the mightiest nation was never able to defeat the insurgents with the methods of regular war. The Americans learnt in the most painful way in Vietnam at the cost of 165 billion dollars and 3,61,305 causalities. In fact, fighting insurgency and tackling ethnicity is qualitatively a different affair from fighting a conventional war. The historical background, strategic importance, topography, religion, social norm, population and tribes have been dealt and taken into consideration in the fourth chapter. An attempt has been made to look at the dynamics of ethnic problem and various other issues persisting and present in North-Eastern region of India, a region known as the 'land of the seven sisters states, and which is also well known for continuing conflict.

The Indian government's policy has been conspicuous by failing to make any long term threat perception, right from its independence. It got into the habit of being overtaken by events,

whether it was the problem of population control or the erosion of social and political value system or for that matter, the tribal invasion of Kashmir in 1947-48, the 1962 Sino- Indian war, the Indo-Pak war of 1965, the 1971 Indo-Pak conflict, militancy in Punjab in the eighties and nineties, the 1999 Kargil conflict or the problem relating to ethnicity, refugees and insurgents in North-East, which is still continuing even today. Not that the various intelligence agencies did not warn the government of such coming events, in fact, regular reports and dossiers were sent to the various offices of the government. Such tragic failures could have been avoided had the Government of India formed the urgently needed National Security Council, which could have tackled these problems both appropriately and effectively. It is the impact of ethnicity and illegal immigrants on the security of India that has been dealt in the fifth chapter, which incidentally is the core issue of this research thesis.

But lack of democratic decentralisation is not the only problems that the North-Eastern States have faced. Over the years, these States have steadily fallen behind the national average, and the economy and economic opportunities have definitely shrunk for local residents. Unemployment in these areas, especially among the educated is high.

A more serious problem is the continuous migration from Bangladesh, that threatens to reduce the people of the region to minorities in their own lands. This is understandable a matter of great concern for the local people and the inaction of Govt. of India on this issue has alienated the people of the region even more. Another factor, which is affecting the region, is the 'foreign hand' in recent time and in the context of the North-East, it has come to mean Bangladesh, which is often acting as a proxy of Pakistan. Clearly, it appears, as if this is an area where China has relinquished its pride of place to Bangladesh. Apart from the above two, there are other important issues, which are affecting the region. What steps and measures have been taken in the past and present and what other measures are likely to be taken by the Government of India to solve the above complex issues, have been discussed and analysed and thrown light upon in the sixth Chapter.

With the emergence of nuclear weapons in the later decade

of the 20th century, there has been a marked change in the strategic thinking and nations now have started to accept the concept of "avoidance of war" to the place of "war is an instrument of national policy". Today, nations have avoided nuclear war because these wars are very de-structure and mass killings will occur, but then other forms like revolutionary and ethnic conflict have been frequently taking place. The world today is witnessing an alarming proliferation of conflicts, often categorised as low in intensity. Such conflicts are becoming extremely de-structure, increasingly difficult to contain and undoubtedly, provides an altogether new dimension to military strategy, which in its typical sense had hitherto focused largely on manoeuvre warfare. So what should the Government of India do, so as to tackle this complex problem, which has seen, several thousands and thousands of people perish. Although around six decades have passed, still apartment solution to the ethnic problem of North-East is now here to be seen. Nevertheless, an attempt has been made to analyse the above problem and also the possible remedies have been discussed in the concluding chapter. How can India tackle the ethnic problem in North-East and what policy and measures could be adopted by India to solve this problem have also been discussed? Besides, certain suggestions to solve these complex issues have been incorporated in the concluding chapter.

The methodology for examining the various issues will be that of *'Critical Historical Analysis'*, which in fact, is most suitable in the study of 'Ethnicity and Security of India with Special Reference to North-Eastern States'.

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1

Introduction

In the contemporary global reality, when concepts are getting redefined rather at a fast pace, how exactly do we understand ethnicity? In a multi-cultural society of the Indian state, how are we going to situate the numerous ethnic identities of the various tribes of the North-Eastern States? How are we going to strike a balance between ethnic multiplicities and the larger claims of all who are embracing Indian nationalism? These are some of the questions, to which answers have been attempted. Some scholars are of the view that the ethnic problems of North-East is really the problem of development, others see them as problem of cultural spacing and readjustment with the newly emerging consciousness of modernity and unity of India in the context of global transformation and globalization. But all said and done, all are unanimous in their opinion that a fresh understanding of India, as well as that of New Delhi, has to be arrived at for solving the complex ethnic problem allegedly peculiar to the region of North-East.

The entire North-East region of India consists of Seven States. They are Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh. The inhabitants of this area belong to more that 1500 castes and tribes. They speak more that 400 different languages and follow different religions. These North-Eastern states have such a multiplicity of historic, geographic, social, cultural, religious and linguistic activities that other state in India, perhaps, may not have.

Studies deals with ethnic conflict at some level in one form or another and there is a range of theories about its causes. There can be distinguished several common aspects of ethnic conflict that cut across disciplines and levels. First, most ethnic conflicts are mixed-motive, meaning that the parties involved have both competitive and cooperative interests. Second, while ethnic conflicts can be destructive, they can also be constructive. Third, cooperative and competitive interests lead to two very different process of settlement. Fourth, how strong these cooperative and competitive interests are and will have a large effect on the outcome of the ethnic conflict, i.e., whether it will have a constructive or destructive outcome.

In seeking to understand the basic structure of conflict, it becomes pertinent for us to look and follow Mitchell's model.[4] This model separates ethnic conflicts into three components - situation, behaviour and attitude. An ethnic situation is one in which parties or groups perceive that they have mutually incompatible goals. Ethnic behaviour is activity by one group which carries the 'intention of making the government abandon or modify its goals'.[5] And lastly, ethnic conflict attitudes are psychological states or conditions of the people involved in the conflict, which interacts with the conflict situation and affects the conflict behaviour.

One fundamental driving force behind the dynamic processes of ethnic conflicts is social relationships. In fact, ethnic conflict theorists differ on the emphasis they place on social relationship or psychological aspects of the conflict. Those from realist frameworks tend to de-emphasise their importance focusing instead on specific tangible issues, which can be apportioned between different groups. Peace researchers who work on ethnic conflict theory, on the other hand, tend to argue that understanding the psychological factors involved in ethnic conflict processes are central to understanding and effectively managing ethnic conflicts at any level. In fact, the contingency theory rejects the notion that human beings are innately violent, although it is obvious that are capable of violence. Manifestations of violence are adaptations to environmental pressure and would disappear, if these environmental pressures were removed.

The region is divided by forming small states. But the administrators of these states could not stand to the expectations

of the people. They were totally unsuccessful in shouldering the heavy responsibility of public welfare, which was entrusted to them. On the other hand, they remained busy with self welfare rather than public welfare. Benefits of number of economic packages given by the Centre did not at all reach the people in general, for whom they were basically intended and the claims of development made by publicity agencies, in turn, proved to be false and futile. Naturally, the wave of ethnic conflicts and separation started blowing in this context.

There are generally three types of ethnic process in North-East India - dormant, calmed and active ethnicity. Dormant ethnicity is a "given" or "constant" among smaller tribes where ethnic consciousness does not go beyond ethnic quietism. The second stage or calmed ethnicity is generally marked with ethnic resentment but suppressed or calmed down by the establishment as in Meghalaya. Form ethnic quietism and ethnic resentment, we come to the most formidable stage in the ethnic process and that is ethnic militancy. The highest level of ethnic militancy leads to ethno-nationalism as among the insurgent groups of the region. Ethno-nationalism, which is based either on "tribalism" or "non-tribalism", may be either for separation or for secession.[6]

India's troubles in Kashmir have so far captured the nations and indeed the world's media. That this seventeen-year ethnicity has put to shade wounds festering in India's North-East ever since she achieved her independence. While we all know that this region supplies us with oil and tea, it is only sporadically realized by the 'mainstream' media that the ethnic conflicts that affect India's North-East have been around for far longer period, has effected far more people and has covered a larger area than that of Jammu and Kashmir. This lack of knowledge is most certainly a reflection of disinterest (if not neglect) that the nation has exhibited towards this region, so far, which is on the verge of great change. Curiosity, if not awareness, about this region has started to grow. Questions about the origins of the ethnic conflict that plague the North-East region have started to be asked.

Our failure in responding properly to these grave threats can be attributed largely to poor understanding of the phenomena of ethnic conflict and separatist movements. We

have either procrastinated or, at best, indulged in some ad hoc actions. As a result, our counter efforts in the above direction have been utterly unproductive. We have been merely reacting to individual incidents; the problems have never been addressed in its totality. We have, in fact, a very lamentable lack of comprehensive strategy of counter ethnicity operations. Consequently, there are no sound tactical concepts either and solutions to specific situations are sought by trial and error. It is about time we realized that no nation is ever likely to possess enough resources to extinguish all the fires and prevent new ones at the same time.

The social, political and economic costs of such blunderings have been enormous. Socially, we have slipped to a stage where, even fifty-nine years after independence, we are still obliged to issue fervent appeals to our people almost everyday for maintaining the unity and integrity of the nation. Politically, we have degraded ourselves to such depths that we go overboard in our eagerness to hold 'peace talks' with some terrorists whom we have been unable to defeat or even to persuade to lay down their arms. And then we suffer the ignominy of those terrorists coming to the 'talks' with their faces covered by masks. Further, as if that was not enough, they eventually walk out on us, making us appear utterly impotent. Economically, they have proved to be an unbearable burden with the untold billions of rupees that the Government of India has been forced to spend on the army, the para-military forces and the police in the ethnic affected areas. To take but one example, in Kashmir alone, we are spending about Rs. 3,634 crores per year on the para-military forces only. If we add to that the expenditure on the army, the police, the compensations, and several other indirectly related items, the total would be a stupendous figure. The position for the whole country, that is, including the North-Eastern States and Andhra Pradesh, etc. can be easily imagined. In fact, the government must also be spending an equal amount in the conflict effected area of North-East on the para-military forces. Add to this, the expenses incurred by the government on the regular forces and the police, the figure in all probability may increase than the expenditure incurred on Kashmir.[7]

Unbalanced views of a problem leads to unbalanced

solutions. And countering ethnicity and movements is one field where superficial knowledge is dangerous; the price of error being a costly and dissipating defeat. This point needs extra emphasis because there are many people who, frustrated by the governments string of failures, are provoked into advancing a simplistic theory that we ought to give a 'free hand' to the security forces and the problem would be solved in two weeks. This is a dangerous misconception. In the first place, we have already provided legal powers to the security forces. Secondly, there has been no nation in the world, which has ever been able to tackle ethnic problems and movements with the methods of a regular war. That is why our troops, who have been training and equipping themselves all along for a conventional war, had proved themselves to be very much incompetent in combating ethnicity. The habit of resorting to an overkill to solve every tactical problem has also resulted in a great amount of collateral damage to innocent lives and property. These things leave a deep scar on the psyche of the people and render them even more susceptible to insurgent propaganda. Unfortunately, we have yet to learn this lesson. Fighting ethnicity is qualitatively a different affair from fighting a conventional war.

One of the invariable answers of course that continues to be given is the 'foreign hand'. In recent time and in the context of the North-East, it has come to mean Bangladesh, which is often acting as a proxy of Pakistan. Clearly, this is area where China has lately relinquished its pride of place. Is Bangladesh fomenting ethnic movements/illegal immigration in the North-East? There are clearly two answers to this. There is one that holds that Bangladesh is only in part responsible for the current state of affairs of the North-East. The other holds that Bangladesh is at least in part responsible for the North-East. The two views indicate that there is at once a commonality, as well as a divergence in opinion on this subject.

To view the ethnicity in the North-East as a phenomenon being kept alive on Bangladeshi support alone is a gross violation of facts which cannot be supported by any interpretation of the events witnessed in the area. It has to be acknowledged that the origins and root causes of the ethnic movements - whether Naga, Mizo or the Assamese-are home grown. While the question of identity and nationhood forms the core of the

Naga issue, economic issues are an equally important component for the other ethnic movements.

But lack of democratic decentralization is not the only problems that the North-Eastern States have faced. Over the years, these states have steadily fallen behind the national average, especially when it comes to economy and consequently, economic opportunities have shrunk for local residents. Unemployment in these areas, especially among the educated is high. This state of affairs must be galling, particularly to the people of Assam. As activists complain, Assam has long contributed to the nation's development through the extraction of mineral oil, as well as tea exports for over a century, yet the dualistic nature of its economy ensures that its has remained backward and poor. Indeed, the only people who seem to do well in these regions are 'outsiders', i.e., persons from other states domiciled in these states who are into business. This only adds fuel to the 'antiforeigner' sentiment that prevails in this region. Popular attention and ire spreads from the rich outsider businessman to the menial labourers (of outside origin) very fast. In such a milieu, populist positions (such as 'expel all outsiders') are easily taken and only later do politicians realise how difficult it is back track from such ill conceived, but publicly stated positions.

A more serious problem is the continuous migration from Bangladesh that threatens to reduce the people of the region to minorities in their own lands. These are understandable as a matter of great concern for the local people and central governments inaction on this issue has alienated the people of this region even more. The people of this region fear that with their reduction to a minority, they will lose the power to safeguard their cultural identity, as well their economic and political interests. However, political expediency has so far prevented the central government to take up this issue. At the academic level, mainstream academicians too have deferred to political correctness and have denied the importance/significance of this problem. On the other hand, there are others that call for the immediate and total expulsion of all illegal settlers without any thought to the feasibility of the step or the likely economic catastrophe that awaits should such a step be taken.

This is because a large section of the migrants have brought with them skills and have made themselves indispensable in several sectors of the economy. Clearly a new approach, is called for, whereby work permits are issued to migrants from Bangladesh, but not citizenship.[8]

Ethnicity and seperatist movements demand the utmost attention of a government and the people. An ethnic movement is like an open sore that annoys today, is a nuisance tomorrow, debilitates in month and can cause death eventually, if not treated properly. The above views can be substantiated by the classic case of the American involvement in Vietnam. This is a business in which even the mightiest army of the world was humbled in the jungles of Vietnam by those 'little yellow people' who were contemptuously called 'gooks' by the Americans. The impressive hardware of the American army and their elaborate tactics, which could have brought them laurels in the battlefields of Western Europe against any army having a similar mind-set, turned out to be utterly unsuitable against the guerrilla fighters. This shows that operations against ethnicity must differ materially from regular warfare for which armies specially train and equip themselves. It indeed took a very long time and an enormous expenditure for the American policy makers to realise that an ethnicity could not be defeated by the methods of conventional warfare. The Americans had committed as many as 550,000 troops in Vietnam at the height of the war. The strategy was to search and destroy the enemy through a variety of means which included, besides the regular infantry warfare, saturation bombing, chemical warfare and defoliation, etc. In these operations, they did succeed in killing over 444,000 Vietcong soldiers and 335,000 civilians. The American army operations left over 740,000 people injured and resulted in an exodus of over five million refugees from Vietnam to the neighbouring countries. And yet, in spite of killing so many of the opponents, the war was irrevocably lost. The cost of the war was tremendous. The American causalities were 57,605 dead and 303,700 injured. So forceful was the commitment that the bombing tonnage in the first two years of Nixon exceeded the total tonnage of the American bombings in the European and the Pacific theatres combined in the World War II. Officially, the cost of the war came to US$ 165 billion. However, a

Massachusetts Institute of Technology study had pointed out that the total cost of the war, including the direct as well as indirect expenditure, was around US $ 750 billion, that is, more that the entire budget of the U.S.A in 1971. The war was lost because all the bombing and the killing could not undo the fundamental mistakes in their approach to countering the guerillas. For the Americans, body count had become the sole criterion of success. [9]

Ethnic conflicts and separatist movements do not aim at taking on the military might of a nation on the terms of the adversary. To borrow from a beautiful aphorism of the great military thinker Sun Tzu, the guerillas primary target is the mind of the opponent; the victorious situation is the product of his creative imagination. His objective is to keep the nation under constant strain and gradually wear it down. The governments are intrinsically vulnerable against them because they are forced to maintain an appearance of normalcy despite having too such to defend and too small and ubiquitous and an elusive enemy to come to grip with. Ethnic and separatist movements engage the government on several fronts simultaneously. They fan the fires of sedition, discredit the government, isolate it, wreck its credit, undermine its economy, over-extend its resources and eventually create a 'climate of collapse'.

Ethnic conflicts are simply one of the several tools employed by the insurgents. The secret of the success of the ethnic perpetrators lies in the fact that they are able to create a climate of fear, panic, disorientation and capitulation out of all proportion to the actual military strength of their group and the popular support to it. They judge their success in terms of the political, psychological and propaganda impact of their actions rather than the traditional military criteria of casualties inflicted and damage caused. Thus, terrorism is a particularly potent tool against soft states, against regimes, which lack resolve and states, which lack the moral courage to admit some of the harsh unpalatable realities built in their socio-political system. Since unlike most of the countries of Europe and some of Asia which have gone through a horrific amount of human suffering and bloodshed in the wars of the twentieth century, this country

has not had its due share of it, the Indian society has develop a morbid fear of violence. In India, this is one of the reasons that most ethnic conflicters keeps on resorting to acts ethnicity, even when they are militarily capable of continuing the separatist movements.[10]

The origin of many of the fissiparous tendencies in the politics of this country may be traced to its unique socio-political legacy and history. Ethnic situation in the Indian context are essentially virulent manifestations of the identity crises of various small constituent groups, vis-à-vis, the large ensuing group, that is, the nation-state. These identity crises could be based on ethnicity, race, religion, language or any other factor. Some groups might argue that nations are created by consensus and their consent was not involved in the original process of nation building or that the process itself was farcical. In other words, we are facing ethnic conflicts because some of the constituents of the nation have development incongruities with respect to the unifying principles of nationalism. Theoretically one could think of several grounds for such incongruities. In practice, however, we find that most of the Indian ethnic groups have not bothered to develop a rational ideological framework for themselves. At an ideological level, they remain nothing but some ad hoc mélange of convenient, attractive and irrational notions. This makes any theoretical categorisation of the Indian ethnic conflicts a difficult job and necessitates that each one of them be analysed at length for its specific socio-political and historical background, as well as other unique causative factors. One should be extremely wary of over-simplifications in such matters, as the media and the intelligence agencies have done a great disservice to the nation in the context of ethnic movement. In the absence of consumers having developed critical faculties either among the people or in the administration, they have thoroughly exploited their penchant for forcing notions convenient to them, down the throats of the citizens of this country. One of the biggest tragedies of ethnic conflicts is that the people of the nation are very much unaware of the truth about ethnic problems.

The very fact that in spite of having killed and arrested thousands of perpetrators of ethnicity in various parts of the country over the years, we have not at all been able to cleanse

our system of its insurrectionary tendencies, which shows that there is something very fundamentally wrong with our approach to operations against ethnicity. Myopic as we are, we have persistently refused to admit that ethnicity is primarily a socio-political phenomenon and only secondary a police problem. It is not possible to successfully counter ethnicity without understanding their true nature. Ethnic conflicts are qualitatively different from the usual law and order problems or public order problems. Various manifestations of the ethnicity may be reminiscent of well-known law and order or public order problems; but they still demand an altogether different treatment. Instead of responding to each incident individually, as we generally do, we also must develop a comprehensive strategy for countering ethnicity. Thus, a regime that is given to seeking ad hoc solutions or one that is used to mere fire-fighting is doing nothing, but writing a sure recipe for ultimate and inevitable disaster.

Much innovation is required at the executionary level also. It should be very clear that in any endeavour involving organised conflict, the tactics employed must support the strategy. Unfortunately, the army and the paramilitary forces do not realise this and display a remarkable resistance to change their ways. In the first place, they take on an ethnic militia with their methods of conventional warfare and when it turns out to be unproductive, they say that they cannot do anything unless they are given a 'free hand' in dealing with them. Their superiority over the ethnic militia in terms of men and material has misled them into a habit of resorting to overkill in every tactical situation. This has two important side effects. Firstly, most of the operations result in a great amount of collateral damage to property and lives (for example, entire villages destroyed and many innocent people killed) which leave indelible scars on the psyche of the people and render them even more susceptible to the propaganda of ethnic militia. Secondly, the correct steamroller approach is imposing costs on the government, which may soon become unbearable.[11]

The term ethnic conflict is often used to describe a wide range of conflicts. Communities or groups that have ethnic character usually satisfy the following six criteria: [12]

- the members of the group must think of themselves as a group, in order to constitute an ethnic community;
- the group must subscribe to a collective identity, that is usually circumscribed by a name;
- people of the group must believe in a common ancestry and sometimes genetic ties;
- members of the group must share historic memories, myths, legends, etc;
- they must have shared common culture based on language, religion, customs, dress, even food;
- the group must feel attached to a specific piece of territory they may or may not actually occupy or inhabit.

A study on ethnic conflicts in India would necessitate clarification of certain basic concepts like ethnicity, ethnic conflict and race. Ethnicity is an intrinsic component of the socio-political realities of multi-ethnic states in North-East, as well as, in other parts of the country. The process of socio-economic change, the ethnic dimensions of the power structure and the policies adopted by the various governments in response to the urges and aspirations of different ethnic groups, provide a ground for a clear understanding of ethnicity and their dimensions. The concept of ethnicity has also become a critical variable in the formation and reformation of States.

Since its very birth, the country got embroiled in a severe crisis. The nation could hardly enjoy the seeds of freedom, when the Kashmir problem came in the forefront to be later followed by different wars with China and Pakistan and again followed by militancy and terrorism, not only in Punjab, but in other parts of country as well. Along with these and other problems, the issue of ethnicity and security in North-Eastern States continued to haunt New Delhi, for a permanent solution could not be found to it. In fact, the newspapers of past several years were flooded with news of terrorism in Kashmir and Punjab along with the ethnic problems and ethnicity in the North-Eastern region. Although, the issue of Kashmir holds an important place, both in the national as well as in the international arena and if escalated, can lead to a bitter war between India and Pakistan, nevertheless, the ethnic and

separatist problem engulfing the region of North-East is equally volatile and can take a violent shape, if not tackled in a proper and honourable manner.

Though today, there is peace in Punjab, but the Kashmir and the North-Eastern States are still burning under bloodshed and ethnicity. The entire nation is much worried about the changing situation and scenario of Kashmir, but at the same time, we are not aware about the ethnicity and separatist movements prevailing in the border states of the North-East which in fact, is very sensitive for the National Security of the country, as it touches several international borders. This is because of the fact that of all problems faced by the Government of India, the Kashmir problem remains in the forefront and is in the limelight. The Government of India is taking all sorts of precaution and actions to solve the problem of Kashmir, whereas, in the case of North-East, no positive steps have been taken by the Government to find out a peaceful solution of North-Eastern problem. In fact, everyone is aware that the Kashmir problem has been created wholly by Pakistan; the situation of North-Eastern States is quite different. So far, much has been written on Kashmir by many authors, academicians and researchers, where as, only a few have touched the problems of North-Eastern States.

The aim of this work is to look at problems, threat to security due to ethnicity in India in general and of North-East in particular. Much has been written about the North-East and there are number of scholarly works dealing with its history and contemporary issues. This research is not intended to duplicate these writings. It is not a history, nor a treatise on economic development, nor yet an account of the many ethnic and separatist movements that have punctuated the life of region. It is not an ethnographic or cultural survey. It will touch on all of these as there can be no understanding of the North-East, without some essential back grounding of these closely interrelated factors.

Ethnicity in the North-East is a growing reality. Somewhere it is taking the form of a low-key revival; elsewhere it is already touching explosive heights. While hostile neighbours could easily cash in on this dilemma of a nation, it would be wrong to think that this ethnic resurgence is wholly the result of foreign

propaganda or the handiwork of international intelligence agencies like the CIA or the KGB or for that matter the ISI. In fact, multi-ethnic countries like India will have to continue struggling with the knotty problems of old ethnic groups, like the Nagas and the Mizos demanding objective conditions in which their respective cultures should not only be preserved, but will be assisted by the larger groups, aided by the administration to advance economically and backed by the Central Government so that their native land be granted a relative degree of autonomy.

For, there is much valid reasons behind·the rising tide of ethnic assertion in the 1980's that a multi-ethnic nation such as India will have to grasp and grapple with in the days to come. Many fundamental questions, embarrassing though they may be, will have to be asked. What does a Government owe to the distinctive ethnic groups that exist within its territory? Will it be right to impose an artificial identity on old ethnic groups like the Nagas or the Apatanis who reject it, though they have opted for peaceful co-existence with the larger non-Mongoloid group? On their part, the ethnic minorities in the North-East will have to ultimately, decide how much of that national identity they can absorb, hopefully to build a strong society, a new, integrated and rejuvenated India.

Early warning from the older generation of leaders keep echoing loud and clear, across the Brahmaputra – words of wisdom which may not have been heard in the subcontinent. "A war to end war is a contradiction; a conflict to end conflict is an absurdity", declared the Naga leader, A. Kevichusa, at the height of the guerrilla war in his native hills. Indeed, a government can make the people obey it, but it cannot make them love it.

According to a Naga research scholar, the nature of ethnicity and ethnic groups has to be understood in terms of the subjective experiences and understanding of the people involved. This is because the factors by which they emerge as entities vary from place to place and from time to time. In the context of the volatile North East India, an ethnic group can be designated as a social group, which is differentiated from other groups on account of an assumed blood tie, cultural traits and phenotypical physical features of its people. This group is

characterised by an awareness of its rights over the land and resources it controls.

North-East India, with it picturesque landscape has attracted the attention of people since time immemorial. As a result, waves after waves of people came to this region from different point of time beginning from the prehistoric era. Ecologically this region is somewhat unique in comparison to other parts of India. High mountain, snow bound region, deep forest, undulated terrain, network of rivers and rivulets, plateau and plain land with high rainfall and moist weather have given this region a unique feature. People, living here, belong to different ethnic groups with different biogenetic make up. They bear different livelihood patterns, different social organisations, different methods of social control and different worldview. They profess different religions, speak in different languages and love to live in different types of settlements. Their peculiar dress and ornaments, their dances and music and their festivities have made their lives very colourful. The ethnic and cultural diversities have marked their life unique since prehistoric age. Though, diversity is the basic feature among the people of North-East India, yet an undercurrent of unity and similarity is found, if one goes deep into their culture.

India is a vast country. She shows diversity in every sphere, in her geographical features, her ethnic situations, her culture and traditions, her economy, her religions, her languages, her eating habits, her worldviews - everywhere the point of diversity is visible. The diversity of India is tremendous, it is obvious, it lies on the surface and anybody can see it. It concerns itself with the physical appearances, as well as certain mental habits and traits.

The North-East India, which consists of the seven States, has housed a total of 31,547,314 people, according to 1991 census, covering 3.75 per cent of the total population (838,583,988) of India. The population of this region includes 16,387,229 males and 15,160,085 females. Arunachal Pradesh has an area of (83,743.00sq. km.) which covers 2.47 per cent, Assam (78,438.00sq.km.) 71.05 per cent, Manipur (22,327.00sq. km.) 5.82 per cent, Meghalaya (22,429.00sq. km.) 5.63 per cent, Mizoram (21,327.00sq. km.) 2.19 per cent, Nagaland (16,579.00sq. km.) 3.83 per cent and Tripura with its 10, 486.00sq. km. area has

given shelter to 8.74 per cent of the total population of North-East India.[13]

In this region, a total of 81,42,624 population belonging to Scheduled Tribes live with 4,129,111 males and 4,013,513 females according to 1991 census. They are distributed in all these seven states in varied numbers. While Assam has the highest number of the Schedule Tribe population (35.30 per cent), Meghalaya shares the next higher number (18.64 per cent), followed by Nagaland (13.03 per cent). Next to Nagaland comes Tripura (10.48 per cent), followed by Mizoram (8.03 per cent), Manipur (7.76 per cent) and Arunachal Pradesh, the latter has the lowest number of the Scheduled Tribe population (6.76 per cent).

Again a total of 2,161,448 Scheduled Caste people live in the region covered by North – East India with 1,123,008 males and 1,038,440 females. Of these Scheduled Caste populations, the highest number (76.77 per cent) live in Assam followed by Tripura where 20.87 per cent of the Scheduled Castes live. Manipur (1.72 per cent) comes next. Both Meghalaya (0.42 per cent) and Arunachal Pradesh (0.19 per cent) have very low concentration of the Scheduled Castes. Mizoram shares the lowest strength of the Scheduled Castes (0.03 per cent), whereas Nagaland has the distinction of not having any Scheduled Caste at all.[14]

The people of North-East India are undoubtedly very colourful, simple and trustworthy people. Possibly the very environment they live, are responsible for these features of the people.[15] The natural geographical compactness coupled with the economic contact under compelling circumstances contributed in no small measures to the evolution of such a colourful mosaic, whose beauty lies in its diversity alone.

A feature of the North-East situation has been the rise of ethnic identities in recent years, more sharply and vividly than ever before. Old tribal communities have assumed new names and sought not only a cross-regional, but also a trans-national identity. A number of small ethnic groups have merged with bigger ethnic groups and in some cases bigger tribes have broken up into several groups. Many factors such as the development process, the democratic system of administration and politics, rise of Christianity, influx of outsiders, illegal migration has added to identity consciousness. Ethnicity has

been an underlying principle in the formation of states in the North-East since 1960's. The political situation therefore is vibrant, which occasionally causes misgivings elsewhere, but Indian democratic system has proved itself resilient enough to absorb and accommodate ethnic aspirations of diverse group in its frontier regions.

Poverty, inequality and stratification have emerged as yet another area of study in the North-East. On the one hand, the North-East states are on top in terms of per capita investment by the Centre. So much flow of money has created problems in tribal societies. Polarisation is in evidence in societies, which were once considered egalitarian. Exploitation of tribals by tribals has emerged as a crucial issue, and yet intra-tribe contradictions are overshadowed by the tribe non-tribe confrontation. Moreover, nothing is more assuring than the emergence of a professional, confident middle class consisting of members of tribal community who are looking at their problems in twin terms of modernity and tradition.

The North-East India features various forms of land relief's. The eastern Great Himalayan Mountain lies in the whole Arunachal Pradesh, which bends into Patkoi, Naga hills, Manipur hills in the direction of North-East to South-West in Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur States respectively. The ranges also extend up to Mizoram hills and Tripura hills. The extension of the Deccan plateau of peninsular India also finds a place in this region, such as Garo, Khasi and Jaintia hills and Mikir/Rengma hills. The part of the North India plains is also in existence here, as Brahmaputra valley in whole of Assam State and in the South and West foothills of Meghalaya.

The plain area having a height of less than 200m, occupies the whole of the Brahmaputra valley in Assam. It is a fertile and leveled valley formed by Brahmaputra river. It is a rice, tea, jute and cotton producing area, but invariably it experiences hazards of flood during rainy season. Its soil is rich and the entire area is covered with thick forests, which is present through out the year.

Imphal valley in Manipur, although located at the height of between 500 and 1000m, is also a fertile river valley. Garo, Khasi and Jaintia hills form the Meghalaya plateau and lie

between the height of 500 and 2000 m. Both, wet rice cultivation and *Jhuming*, are done depending on altitudes.

In Arunachal Pradesh, the Great Himalaya lies from west to the east in the State. Kangto Peak is located at the height of 7089 m which is the highest peak in North-East India. "Sela Pass" is situated at the height of 4740m. The height gradually decreases down to 2300m, when the Himalayan range comes to the eastern most point. Arunachal Pradesh thus, consists of snow peaks in the north and rugged mountains and valleys in the south.

The Brahmaputra has the dominant control over the drainage system of North-East India. Brahmaputra is an antecedent river, which enters into the Indian territory in Siyang d istrict of Arunachal Pradesh crossing the Himalaya. The river flows in North-South direction up to North-East corner of Assam and thence flowing from North-East to South-West direction in Assam, it receives a number of tributaries coming from North-East and South directions and thus, makes a dendrite pattern of drainage system. Besides, two other small systems also exist : (1) The Barak system of Cachar plains comprising Barak river and the tributaries originating from North Cachar hills, west Manipur hills and North Mizo hills, (2) Few small rivers originating from Mizo hills and Manipur hills and flowing in the southward direction have their small drainage system exclusively in Mizoram.

The climate of the North-East India varies from tropical to alpine snow-clad Tundra types. The tropical climatic zone occupies up to the height of 800 m in Assam valley, Cachar plains and Mizo hill. The sub-tropical climatic zone falls in between the contours of 800 m and 1200m in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya plateau. The southern slopes of Meghalaya plateau emerges as the first barrier in the way of Bay of Bengal branch of North-West monsoon, hence, the area between Cherrapunji and Mawsynram receives the highest rainfall in the world. (*i.e.,* around 1300mm).

The average annual rainfall in Assam, Manipur and Tripura is 2990cm. (1961 Census). The temperature in Arunachal Pradesh varies from freezing point in winter to 26.7°C in summer. In Nagaland, the temperature sometimes rises up to 27°C in hot

seasons. In Manipur, it varies from 33°C to 40°C and in the same way, tropical climate also prevails in Tripura.

The forest in North-East India varies from tropical evergreen (up to 1200m) in Assam valley and Cachar plains; to mountains sub-tropical in the hills of Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Garo Hills of Meghalaya. Soils are rich in humus content in North-East India. The Brahmaputra plain, Cachar plain, Tripura State and Imphal valley consist of alluvial soil bodied by the rivers. Same type of soil is also present in the flat valleys of Apatani, Kaya, Sangta Chhug, etc., in Arunachal Pradesh. In Manipur, clay to clayey loam soil is found. In the Meghalaya plateau, Karbi hills and in some parts of Manipur hills, lateristic soil is found, but sandy loam is predominant in rest of the hills areas.

Thus, from the above we get a brief, if not a fairly clear account of the region of North-East, the core issue of this research work. But one thing is rather clear from the above that the prevailing ethnic problem has had also a deep impact on the security of the nation. Nation is a concept based on region rather than race. Membership of a 'race' is natural, that is, nationality may be acquired. Love for the nation, in the ultimate analysis, is love for the people of the country. Nations are communities, which desire to posses political sovereignty. The characteristic of a nation distinguishes it from various ethnic groups.

Nations, nationality and nationalism are cognate concepts, which are intrinsically related to one another. Our nation is multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-religious. Pluralism of different sorts is a reality and it is constitutive of our nationalism. This goes to show that there is no ethnicity nor the language nor the religion of our nation, for; there are many ethnic groups, a variety of languages and an array of religions. Therefore, it would be wrong to identify our nation and nationalism with any particular ethnic group, however, dominant it may be, or with any particular language, however common it may be or with any particular religion, however powerful it may be. This goes to show that the concept of one nation, one race, one language and one religion becomes suspect. We must have one nation with multiplicity of race, language and religion. One

should not try to have one nation with one language, one race and one religion. If we do so, then surely, it will lead to disastrous consequences as it happened, when New Delhi tried to impose Hindi as the main language in South in 1960's.

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2

Ethnicity: A Conceptual Framework

At the very outset, I would like to mention that 'ethnicity' is a polymorphous concept. This means that it is not used in one sense at all. In fact, it is used in different senses at different occasions. Consequently, we have such expressions as 'ethnic Indians', 'ethnic Asians', 'ethnic Oriyas', 'ethnic Biharis', 'ethnic Hindus', 'ethnic Muslims' and so on. A closer look at these expressions reveals that they do not stand for any unitary meaning. While 'ethnic Asians', 'ethnic Indians' and 'ethnic Biharis' stand for people living in particular geographical territories, 'ethnic Hindus' and 'ethnic Muslims' stand for religious groups. In short, the criterion of determining the ethnicity of a particular group is vague and unclear. Neither the social scientist nor the politician, including the common man are clear at all as to what do they mean by 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic group', when they use such terms. The ambiguity is due to the fact that most of the fundamental concepts used in talking about man and society are not clearly defined. Such unclarity is uncalled for in respect of concepts used in natural sciences that are so clearly defined that one cannot afford to use them in different senses within the system, without the risk of contradicting oneself. Of course, the basic concept of natural sciences particularly, those of physics do undergo change and modification, but such modification and overhauling do

not take place frequently and at one's sweet will only when there are experimental evidences pointing to the contrary and conceptual contradictions within the system, the existing scientific theory undergoes a radical change and the fundamental concepts are thoroughly revised. Such type of revolution has taken place in physics. But the revision of the so called basic concepts of social sciences like 'ethnicity', 'nationalism', etc, do not spring from specific social and cultural motives. Again, the politicians, statesmen and the laymen do not only use by the specialists, but such concepts, unlike those of physical sciences also alike. In fact, for some reason or other, everybody thinks that he or she is competent to talk about man and society, whereas, this is not the situation in the case of talking about matter, energy and motion, etc.[1]

The explanatory inadequacy of the existing literature on the subject is to a great extent rooted in the ambiguities regarding the meaning and content of terms like ethnic, ethnicity and nation. This ambivalence reflects fluidities and flexibilities in their usage over time and space. Consequently, it is not surprising that there has been a gesture to clearly define these terms which has brought to the fore an ongoing definitional debate.

In physical anthropology, the term ethnic has been in use for a long time. Its introduction into the literature of social cultural anthropology is a relatively recent affair. In the former it has two connotations. First, whenever "population was not large enough to be called a race it was called an 'ethnic group' or a sub-race. The second meaning was sought to be given soon after the end of the second world war, when a group of scientists favoured the abolition of the term 'race'. They recommended the use of the term 'ethnic group' not in the sense of a sub-race or mini race, but a substitute for race itself. It is obvious that they failed.

Origin of Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a term derived from the word ethnic. The word ethnic is derived from the Greek word 'ethnikos', refers to: (a) 'nations not converted to Christianity (b) races or large groups of people having common traits and customs, or (c) group's

in an exotic primitive culture. The historical context of the usage and coinage of this term needs to be kept in mind. This is particularly important, when a word like 'ethnicity', 'nation', 'secular', or 'secularism; first applied to situation, groups and peoples in Euro-American countries is sought to be transferred to cover different conditions prevailing in Asia and Africa.[2]

As pointed out above, the term ethnic has been used for racial groups. In the United States of America, especially in the southern states, the Negroes suffered from racial discrimination, which was backed by the love till very recently. In the ghettos of the northern big cities like Boston, Chicago and New York, discrimination took very subtle forms. Adoption of the white majority's way of life and dreaming, white man's kind of dream did not elevate the black minority's status. If best, it created some uncle who was disliked by both the communities. The weed for and the desire to assent themselves to win a respectable place in the society compelled the Negroes to regroup themselves and to adopt more than one mode of expressing their discontent. Some like Malcolm X and the Black Moslems believed in adopting strong and aggressive postures and others, under the leadership of Martin Luther King, adopted non-violent means of protest against discrimination.[3]

Definition of Ethnicity

Norman E. Whitten[4] defines ethnicity as "patterns of human interaction" which form the basis for categorical social relations with observable, or projected economic consequences. Categorical social relationships are characterised by stereotypic criteria, as distinct from structural relationships and which are emphasised by membership or network relationships, which are characterised by extant exchange patterns between interacting individuals.

Concept of Ethnicity

The concept of ethnicity is a much-debated concept. Ethnicity is a sense of ethnic identity. De Vos[5] defines it as the "subjective symbolic or emblematic views by a group of people.... of any aspect of culture, in order to differentiate themselves from other groups'. Brass[4] accepts this definition for the analytic purpose

with the addition in the last sentence: 'in order to create internal cohesion and differentiate themselves from other groups.' Brass[5] defines the concept in items of objective cultural markers such as language or dialect, distinctive dress or diet or custom, religion or race. Thus, in the opinion of Brass,[6] ethnicity or ethnic identity involves :

(i) Subject self-consciousness;
(ii) A claim to status and recognition either as a superior group or as an equal group;
(iii) Objective cultural markers such as kinship, descent, birth, endogamy and exogamy, religion or race, language, customs, etc.

Ethnicity is to ethnic category what class-consciousness is to class. Ethnic groups work as interest groups for political and socio-economic gains. Paul Brass[7] propounds" three hypotheses regarding ethnicity:

(i) Ethnicity and nationalism are not 'givens', but are social and political constructs, that are creations of elites who manipulate ethnic groups to protect their well-being, but in fact, the aim is to gain political and economic advantages;
(ii) Ethnicity and nationalism are modern phenomenon and are separately connected with the modern centralizing state. Brass further believes that ethnic identity and modern nationalism are products of interaction between leadership of centralizing state and elites from non-dominant ethnic group and their interactions may be in the nature of conflict, cooperation and state action;
(iii) Elite competition and their interaction with leaders lead to ethnic mobilization towards cultural, socio-economic and political gains. At the lowest side of the scale may be placed educational and cultural facilities, while at the end of the scale may be placed secession or a separate State. The central point of this

scale is autonomy within the federal structure of the State.

Smith[8] and Armstrong believe that ethnic identity and nationalism are reflections of primordial identities and their evidences can be traced back in the past history. This stand separates Smith and Armstrong from Brass. Smith believes that modern nations are the offspring of two types of ethnic groups:

(i) Aristocratic lateral ethnic groups, and
(ii) Democratic vertical ethnic groups.

In his opinion, ethnics have their myths of common descent, common memories, culture and solidarity and association with the homeland. There is definitely an ethnic substratum behind many modem nations. These ethnics are non-national elements of an explosive power and tenacity in the structure of nations. He opines,[9] that 'the conflicts that embitters the geo-politics of our planet often betray deeper roots than a clash of economic interests and political calculations would suggest and many of these conflicts, and perhaps the most bitter and protracted stern from these underlying non-rational elements'. He forecasts, 'their persistence and intensification in modem era, if we fail to address the real issues in the formation of nations and spread of nationalism.[10]

Yinger[11] defines ethnicity as, 'an ethnic group. . . is a segment of a larger society whose members are taught by themselves and/or others to have a common origin and to share important segments of a common culture and who, in addition, participate in shared activities in which the common origin and culture are significant ingredients'. He finds distinctiveness and lack of power characterize the fate of these ethnics and in order to achieve social change towards greater ethnic equality and more power, it is imperative that the whole system must be modified. This will involve violent conflicts.

Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups, defines ethnicity as possessing one or more of the following features[12] common geographic origin, migratory status, race, language or dialect; religion, faith or faiths, ties that transcend kinship, neighbourhood and community boundaries; shared traditions, values, symbols; literature, folk lore and music; food preferences;

settlement and employment patterns; special interests in regard to politics in the homeland institutions that specifically serve and maintain the group; an internal sense of distinctive-ness and an internal perception of distinctiveness. The above Encyclopedia has fixed four concurrent features of ethnicity:

(i) belief in of their unique identity;
(ii) belief in their shared or common descent;
(iii) belief in their cultural distinctiveness;
(iv) the fact that outsiders perceive and aggregate its members in these terms whether truly or not.

Themstrum, et al. suggests[13] that ethnic groups have the following four major components:

(i) A subjective belief in real or historical antecedents;
(ii) Cultural emblems such as race, language, religion, region, etc. or a combination of some of them which, though varied and flexible, provide the overt basis of ethnic identity;
(iii) Self-ascribed awareness of distinctiveness and belonging to a group;
(iv) Recognition of the group difference by others.

Ethnicity or ethno-nationalism is a device for the pursuit of collective goals of educational and cultural rights, autonomy and secession through interaction, competi-tion and conflict with the larger entity known as the State. The conflict is inherent in the concept of ethno-nationalism, vis-à-vis, the State because it is at the cost of the State that demands of the ethnics are met whether we believe in primordial or modernist statist view. There is bound to be at some stage or the other, competition and conflict resulting in tensions for the State system as well as for International order.

Theories of Ethno-Nationalism

We will analyse the various theories regarding ethnicity/ ethno-nationalism, as that will give us an insight into a realistic appraisal of ethnic conflicts. Generally, ethnic conflicts do not

find a place at the theoretical level in the analytical models of conflict studies or the sociology of change and development. So there is a marked neglect of ethno-nationalism in the theories or modern times.[14] Nevertheless, some prominent theories of modem times may be analysed here with a view to finding out the real status of ethnicity or ethno-nationalism in the state system as well as in the international order.

Karl Marx and his contemporaries advocated the theory of class struggle, proletarian internationalism and ultimately withering away of the State. He developed a theory of historical materialism, which propounded economic determinism in the progress of history. Primordial loyalties like ethnic groups were regarded as passing phases of the capitalist society.[15] Marxist theory side-tracks ethnic conflicts as simply a passing phase not to be taken seriously. But, subsequent events of history have disproved the stand of Marx in many spheres including ethno-nationalism. Mature transformations as dreamt by Marx never occurred inspite of the sound and fury of communism led by the former Soviet Union. The nation-states did not wither away and there was no emergence of cosmopolitan order as predicted by Marx.[16] Recent events in Soviet Union, consequent upon Peres-troika and Glasnost led to the collapse of communism and dismemberment of Soviet Union into many ethnic and racial states. It led to opening of pandora box as Marxism communism and the whole communist world is in turmoil due to ethno-nationalism. It is trite-truism to review cases of Baltic Republics, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Yugoslavia, Romania, Poland, etc. The rise of intense ethno-nationalism on the ruins of communist bloc is a pointer to the fallacy of Marxian theory and is a justification of the thesis that ethno-nationalism is on the road to march for eventual victory.[17]

The paradigm of modernization dominated the field of social sciences for decades. It envisaged for social change from the traditional to the modern; from the simple to the complex, from 'particularism' to 'universalism', as it has been developed by Parsons in the Weberian tradition. Within this framework, ethnic conflicts or ethnicity belongs to the particularistic or pre-modern world and are swept aside by the modernization process. If they arise they are seen as 'obstacles to change or as the results of incomplete modernization.'[18] In this paradigm of

modernisation, ethnic issues are of minor importance to the theorists. These theorists are known as modernisationist and the 'melting pot' theorists because, in their opinion, ethnicity, which is primordial and pre-rational, would 'melt' away with the completion of the modernization process.[19]

This theory of modernization was developed in the 1950's, when it was believed that nationalism was the carrier of historical progress in the wake of science and technology and material advancement for which modern-ization was the panacea[20] and thus, ethnic factors were side-tracked. The environment all over the world is presently dominated by the ideology of development and modernization. The mobilization of the blacks in the United States has not been neutralized. In Europe, states were formed to coincide with nations by the end of the Second World War. Asia and Africa were down with anti-colonial struggles and everything was secondary for them. The partition of India has been in the wake of mobilised communalism,[21] but such episodes are like patches in the vast territory of anti-colonialism. The British policy of divide and rule and personal ambition of Nehru and Jinnah were more responsible for the partition of the Indian subcontinent rather than a mass based communalism.[22] Thus, the theory of modernization gained ascendancy and it was believed that ethnicity had been dumped in the dust bin of history.

Smith's contention[23] that modem nations are woven out of ethnics and their rise cannot be ruled out appears to be correct in the light of theories of ethno-nationalism all over the world during the last three decades. If this paradigm of modernisation and development were the panacea for such ills as ethno-nationalism, the more advanced and industrialised societies would not have seen the rise of ethno-nationalism. For example, the Basque and Catalans in Spain, South Tyrolean's in Italy, Britons and Corsicans in France, Walloons and Aemish in Belgium, Quebec's in Canada are some cases of the rise of ethno-nationalism in advanced and developed countries.[24]

Ethnic mobilisation has not been diffused and dissolved; it has been on the increase. Ethnic pluralism in the United States, the Ulster crisis in the United Kingdom, the issue of auto-nomy versus self-determination in Canada, the Cyprus conflicts and many other cases of ethnicity in developed countries

have falsified the hypothesis of the first set of modernisationalists and the 'melting pot' theorists. In South Asia, ethnic mobilisation has come from relatively advanced and modernised societies such as Sikhs of India or Tamils of Sri Lanka. In a similar fashion, the theories of nation building plead for transformation of sub-national units and loyalties into a wider polity. These theories regard ethnic issues as stumbling blocks in a more general process of change. [25].

Another theory was developed by Nairn, Rechter, Casanova and Stavenhagen in late 60's and 70's. It visualized that minority nationalism is the product of uneven development within the States. The core communities with their superior political and economic status, are prone to exploit the peripheral communities, who have inferior political and economic status. This theory is also known as the core-periphery theory as well as the theory of neo-Marxian that is Marxist of the second generation. It has been specifically applied to America, UK and more recently to the South Asia.

Allied to this is another group within the neo-Marxists which argues that due to capitalist world economy and imperialist State expansion there has been differential distribution of state resources among various ethnic groups. This has made ethnic conflicts more dominant than class struggles.

There has been no great difference between develop-ment of Norway and Sweden or between Finland and Russia at a time, when nationalist movements became prominent in these States. The Spanish Basque province is heavily industrialized region of the State, but ethno-nationalism has arisen there. In the third world countries, the internal colonial model (differential distribution of States resources) has a limited validity. Biafra and Katanga were helped in their ethno-nationalism by their relative prosperity and not poverty of the regions. The rise of Tamil ethno-nationalism in Sri Lanka and the Sikh militancy in Pubjab[26] cannot be explained on the ground of uneven distribution of wealth, as these sections of society are economically better and more advanced than other ethnic groups. There are some examples of ethnicity in economically less developed regions, but ethno-nationalism could not develop there. These examples are of Nepal dominated Southern Bhutan and of Arunachal Pradesh.[27] However, the theory of international

colonialism finds some support in the case of Bangladesh, Baluchistan, Assam and even Afghanistan.

The second generation of the modernisationists drew attention to the strength and persistence of ethnic and cultural loyalties. Glazer and Moyanham, Connor, Enloce and Gellner are the protagonists of this school of thought. Their works appeared in late 60's and early 70's. This theory propounds the thesis that politics and political organizations play a crucial role in the modification and manipulation of group identities. This theory gets support from the primodialists also.[28] For example, Smith[29] believes that the persistence and intensification of ethno-nationalism has deeper roots than mere economic base. Paul Brass also subscribes to the view that political leadership and their interaction with the elite exploits it and manipulates this deeper base for mobilization of ethnics. He propounds the theory of elite competition as the basic dynamic, which precipitates ethnic conflicts under specific conditions. This theory of the second generation of the modernisationists contains a great deal of truth, because without political manipulation of ethnicity, ethnic mobilization is not possible. The Sikhs of Punjab were manipulated by the political leadership of India and so is the case with the Tamils of Sri Lanka. A review of these theories with the exception of Elite Competition theory leaves no room for doubt that 'so-called development science has practically ironed the ethnic question and has not yet been able to integrate it meaningfully into their analytical framework'.

Stavenhagen[30] points out that there are various theories in the social sciences which try to explain inter-ethnic relations, but none of these explores the state-ethnic relationship which is required for a 'better understanding of the nature, causes and dynamics of ethnic conflict around the world. It may be argued that nationalism and ethno-nationalism are contradictory and cannot co-exist. There is bound to be conflict within the framework of reference set up by the ideology of nationalism. Nation-state and national minorities are incompatible. Lord Action[31] writes that the great adversary of the rights of nationality is itself the modern theory of nationality. The theories discussed above could not explain all the varieties and patterns of ethno-nationalism, vis-à-vis, the State-system and the international order. No theory can be singled out as exhausting all the aspects

for the rise and intensification of ethno-nationalism.

In view of the above, it is desirable to analyse critically, the factors responsible for the rise and intensification of ethnicity or ethno-nationalism in the world during the last three decades. This may be ascribed to a factor, which may be called as threat perception. If there is a threat- perceived or real either to the relative status or to the very existence of its identity, the ethnic group assumes an ethno-national character. Modernization and nation-building have led to Statism in harmony with the ideal of welfare State. The nation-state has increased its activity and penetrated into the realm of tribal and ethnic societies by means of a number of welfare schemes and program-me. There has been an increase in the means of com-munication and transport and a conspicuous emphasis on tribal and ethnic culture in national programmes and audio-visual means of communication have increased the cultural distinctiveness of tribes and ethnics. On one hand, the tribes and ethnics have come out of their isolation and civilization process is being imposed upon them. Most of the tribes or ethnics have now materially advanced. All these events, penetration of State into tribal realm, improved means of communication and transport, material advancement, impact of civilization process on tribes and ethnics have awakened the distinctiveness of their culture and increased the consciousness of their inferior status in socio-economic and political terms and have led to a perception that their identity is in danger. All these factors have led to the evolution of ethno-nationalism. Whether it is a problem of Gorkhaland or the problem of Bodoland or the Naga problem in Assam, all these circumstances may be traced in their cases. Similarly, the Tamils in Sri Lanka have also perceived a threat to their identity when Sinhalese and Buddhism were given official status against Tamils and Hinduism respectively in Sri Lanka. Tamils thought that they have not been given position and power in the political set-up and have been denied proportional share in the wealth of the country. When there is a perception of threat to the identity of any community, there is bound to be an outburst of violent ethno-nationalism.[32]

The discrimination, inequality and neglect by the nation-state may also lead to the rise of ethno-nationalism.[33] The discrimination practiced by the State and by the dominant elite

towards the minority ethnics may take various forms. It may be on the basis of race, such as in the USA or South Africa and is generally known as apartheid. It is also practiced against the foreign im-migrants as against Indians in Germany and Indian immigrants in New Jersey in the United States. There is a new kind of racism directed towards foreign workers and refugees from other countries, especially, the second-generation migrants from other continents and cultures. In Latin America, indigenous peoples have been discriminated against for centuries, which have given rise to many movements of Indians in Latin America. Stavenhagen has rightly pointed out that 'a subordinate minority or majority may react to years, decades or centuries of discrimination or oppression and stand up and say that is enough'. Sometimes, the discriminatory attitude of the State of other ethnics and tribes becomes so apparent that other communities feel that the State is agent of a dominant community and not the well-wisher of all its sub-units. The attitude of Pakistan to Bengali Muslims of former East Pakistan represents this discrimination. It ultimately led to the creation of a new State, called Bangladesh, in 1972. *The* Punjabi-dominated Pakistan State has a very discriminatory attitude towards Sindhi and Pakhtoon—Baluch ethnic group of Sindh. Sri Lanka also adopted discriminatory and high handed attitude towards the Hindu Tamils. It is also alleged that India has not given a fair deal to Sikhs, Gorkhas and Nagas.[34]

The examples of discrimination may be multiplied from other regions of the world. The United States attitude towards the Blacks in South Africa is well known. Coupled with discrimination there is a neglect or mishandling of ethnic demands for linguistic accommodation, equity and educ-ational freedom for cultural rights or more employment avenues, regional autonomy, etc.[35] In such cases of neglect and mishandling of initial demands, self-consciousness of ethnic group may turn into an active ethno-national movement against the State itself. The linguistic issue[36] is a particularly sensitive issue in most of the polytechnic States of South Asia. Each ethnic group is fully aware of its internationally sanctioned human rights[37] to establish its own schools, receive education in mother tongue, use of its own language in official business and to develop its culture in print. India has been wise enough

to solve its linguistic problem by creating linguistic States and adopting three-language formula though South Indians allege that Hindi is being imposed on them. Many States do not recognize the rights of ethnic groups which causes resentment and ultimately conflict. For example, Sri Lanka has declared Sinhalese as the official language, but this has been resented by Tamils. The mishandling of the language problem is definitely a potent factor in the rise of ethno-nationalism. [38] The dominant ethnics may attempt to impose their norms and standards of model of society over weaker and under-privileged minority. [39] This will evoke resistance and there is every likelihood that ethnic conflict may be generated.

Modernisation and nation-building, with all its emphasis on materialism, technology and industrial-isation and too much urbanization have been responsible for alienation among workers of the world. In develop-ed societies, in particular, this becomes so acute that it gives rise to a search for identity. The revival of ethnicism is a by-product of the reaction against this alienation born out of modern civilisation.

The concept of nationalism, so popular from the nineteenth century onwards contains within itself a lever for the rise of ethnic-nationalism. Europe had been successful in carving out one State-one nation system, but this could not be possible for the Third World Countries[40] because they are poly-ethnic or multi-ethnic societies. At the time of their liberation movements against colonialism, the Third World Countries, by and large, presented a united front forgetting tribal and ethnic differences, but after the independence, they followed the European model, which was not in harmony with multi-ethnic character of these countries. For example, India under Nehru became a secular democratic nation-state, but the vice of communalism and ethnicism could not be subsumed into this wider entity known as the nation-state. Hindu and Muslim communalism, Sikhs, Nagas, Assamese, Bodos, Mizos, Jharkhandis, have also raised the banner of ethnic revolt for autonomy or separatism. Such examples can be traced in the case of Sri Lanka, Pakistan and other Asian countries.

The Post-World War II scenario has witnessed the rise of micro-states. The existence of small States may inspire many small ethnic groups to clamour for Statehood. The presence of

microstates has also worked as an inspiring motivation for rise of ethno-nationalism. There is no danger to sovereignty of even a very small State under the present circumstances. The case of Kuwait, which was taken over by Iraq and subsequently returned under the global pressure, is a pointer to this direction.

The right to self-determination has emerged as a sacrosanct principle of modem times. Ethno-nationalist movements derived legitimacy from this principle. [41] This principle gives right to the people to choose their own destiny. It emerged in the eighteenth century in the wake of the French and American Revolution. It got official recognition under the UN. It was on this principle that State boundaries within Western Europe were refixed, after the World War I. This principle was responsible for the emergence of Afro-Asian nation-states by the end of colonialism and imperialism. It has led many minority ethnic groups in Europe, North America, Africa, Asia and Latin America to question the validity of the present political boundaries. The creation of Bangladesh in 1972 was due to this principle. Every ethnic group bases its demand and justifies its movements on the principle of right to self-determination.

Ethno-national movements get international support also which may be taken as an accentuating factor for intensification of ethnic conflicts. For example, Irish people in US and Australia support the IRA in Northern Ireland. The Tamils of Sri Lanka get support from the Tamils of India. Sikhs in Britain, Canada and the US support Sikh secessionist movement in Punjab. [42] The Kachins of Burma get support from their kings in China. Thus, the external support to ethno-national movements accentuates the pace of the movement though it may not be the main cause.

The theory of ethno-development has also given impetus to the development of ethno-nationalism. Ethno development means that indigenous and other ethnics have a right to decide their own affairs, participate in the decision-making bodies and processes where their future is discussed and decided, to political representation and participation, respect for their traditions and culture, to have the freedom to choose the type of development they want[43] It means that an ethnic maintains control over its own land, resources, social organization and culture and is free

to negotiate with the State about the kind of relationship it wishes to have. Thus ethno-development has given life and blood to ethno-nationalism. The recognition of minority rights, human rights and sanctions against genocides by international agencies, have also strengthened the cause of ethno nationalism.

This review of the causes for the rise and intensification of the ethno-national movements leaves no room for any doubt that there are other interlinked factors for the rise of ethnicity. It may be due to differential treatment by the State, inequality imposed by the society, revival of primordialism, ambition of the elite of the minority group for political power, manipulation by the leadership of the State, external support, nationalism itself, uneven distribution of power and resources and neglect of the ethnic group. Not one factor can be singled out as the primary factor. It is the interplay of all these factors, which may be held responsible for the rise of ethno-nationalism and thereby, ethnic conflicts.[41]

Generally, ethnic conflicts, whether it is with other ethnic group or it is against the State is taken as internal matter within the State. As such, the international community till recently used to dismiss this domestic matter of the state-system as of no significance and validity for international order. The respect for the sovereignty of the State has been the sacrosanct principle and the UN has guaranteed for non-intervention in the internal affairs of a State. Relatively little attention has been paid over the years to ethnic conflicts by specialists of peace and conflicts research and of international relations. This seems to be a thing of the past, when the international community would sit over ethnic conflicts as silent spectator on the ground that they are internal matter of States. In 1990, Stavenhagen assessed the situation correctly that the time is long past, when international community would smugly consider that ethnic conflicts were purely domestic matter of state. Recent history has shown that ethnic question usually has international ramifications.' The idea of an ethnic conflict being a purely internal or domestic matter of State is simply a statistician's myth. Ethnic conflict has a tendency towards internationalization. Hanson has rightly said, 'It would be futile. . . to attempt to work out lasting mechanisms for conflict resolution, without taking external factors into consideration.' Ethnic conflicts cannot be divorced from what

Durrel once called 'the stock market of international affair.' History is full of examples of outside interest and interference in ethnic issues of other countries. For example, European state was concerned about the protection of Christians in the Ottoman Empire. In the post-world war I period, several treaties were signed between the States regarding the protection of each other's national minorities. The League of Nations guaranteed the protection of minorities, but it could not be successful. In between the two world wars, a number of bilateral treaties were signed between States on the treatment of national, religious and linguistic minorities. The UN and the international agencies[45] have guaranteed against genocide and have given to protect human rights. Thus, historical instances, the UN charters on self-determin-ation, human rights, genocide, minority rights, etc. and NGOs clearly demonstrate that ethnic conflicts cannot remain within the shell of the nation-state system. They have to come out of it for support, solution, containment or escalation, whatever the case may be. It would be no exaggeration if we remark that ethnic issues have international bearings and international environment has bearings on the ethnic issues. Thus, there is internationalization of ethnicity and there is ethnisation of international relations. Ethnic conflicts have several significant qualities and characteristics which influence international relation, as well as leave their marks on international security.

Ethnic groups have close affective ethnic links in other States also. The presence of these ethnic kins abroad helps in the internationalization of the ethnic issues. It has rightly been said that the ethnic links cut across State boundaries and therefore, ethnic conflicts in one State have implications in other States, where, ethnic kins are located and affect official and non-official transactions between these States. These international ethnic links constitute the most obvious structure connecting domestic ethnic conflicts with the external environment. Under the international law, States are supposed to operate in the inter-state system in accordance with the norms of non--intervention, but this norm is often flouted. Connor is not off the mark when he says that many governments hold trans-border causes in more esteem, than the tradition of international law. Mackey suggests that while protecting

themselves from the charge of interference in the internal affairs of the other sovereign States, these States use force from within in the form of support to ethnic conflicts. These ethnic kins abroad feel sympathy for their kin-groups in their neighbouring States, beside helping them with arms and ammunitions and sometimes make an irredentist claim over part or whole of that State. Sometimes calls are made for control over the lost territory also. In the nineteenth century, Greece made an attempt to revive the medieval Greek orthodox empire on the basis of the Megalo idea. [46] Similarly, in post-war Europe, the nationalist socialists in Germany used the idea of the Volgemeinschaft to gain sympathy for their expansionist policies. Similarly, Somalia wanted to obtain territory from neighbouring States in the Horn of Africa, [47] where the ethnic Somalis are a significant group. The Republic of Ireland in its constitution claims sovereignty over the whole of the island of Ireland and likewise few other cases may be noted here to strengthen this point. When the conflict between the Miskitos and the revolutionary Nicaraguan government was at its peak, many international and indigenous organizations suggested that the indigenous people have the responsibility to come to the aid of their brethrens. [48] Similarly, Muslims of Pakistan have sympathy for Kashmiri Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir. Tamils in South India give support to Tamils of Sri Lanka. Jews all over the world support the cause of Israel. [49] Sikhs all over the world have support for the Sikhs of the Punjab. [50] Such instances may be multiplied as it is an universal phenomenon. In a recent study Stavenhagen [51] has summarised cases of ethnic conflict as follows:

> Thus, Sri Lankan Tamils, the Kurds, the Basques, the Sikhs, the Miskitos, the Ulster Catholics, the Turks in Cyprus and Bulgaria, the Albanians in Yugoslavia, the Hungarians in Romania among others, have ethnic kin groups in other, generally-but not always, neighbouring countries where they seek and often obtain political and material support. The Tamil insurgency finds support in Tamilnadu, across the Palk Strait; Basques in Southern Guzkudi find refuge in the ays Basque in France and so do the members of the IRA in the Republic of Ireland. Sikh community in Great Britain and Canada support the struggle of the Sikhs in

the Punjab, Kurdish nationalist militants in Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria have found support in neighbouring countries. Miskito refugees from Nicaragua were harboured by the Miskito communities in neighbouring Honduras, before returning home as circumstances changed. Thus, ethnic kins abroad may be a potent and important factor in the evolution of an apparently purely domestic ethnic conflict.

Many ethnic conflicts are carry-overs from earlier periods of State formations. They carry with them international implication of these processes. The classic case is of the Baltic Republics, which were annexed by the former Soviet Union in 1940, by a secret deal between Hitler and Stalin. After half a century of suppression, nemesis of history smiled on Baltic Republics and once again these Republics became independent nations in 1990. [52]

Many ethnic groups in India, such as tribes of Sikkim and tribal peoples of Bihar and Assam might have chosen an independent destiny if they were given a chance. Such are the cases of other tribes-the Karan and Shan in Burma, East Time and West Papua. Thus, many ethnic conflicts are infact, burden of history.[53]

Migrations of foreign peoples change demographic equilibrium of many countries. In these cases, the home country of the migrants may express some concern at the international or bilateral level for the well being of its offspring. For instance, India is concerned about the fate of Indians in West Africa (Uganda) or the Pacific (Fiji). China has sympathy for millions of overseas Chinese in South Asia and elsewhere. Turkey and Algeria have signed agreements with the Western European governments regarding welfare of their migrant workers in these countries.

Direct intervention by a neighbouring State into the internal matters of another State on humanitarian grounds or due to geo-politics or as pacifier, may also be consider-ed as factors for the internationalization of domestic ethnic conflicts. Two cases of South Asia may be mentioned here. The direct intervention by India into former East Pakistan in the name of protection of human rights provides a classic example of the inter-nationalization of domestic ethnic issues. The Muslim

Bengalis were helped in their struggle for self determ-ination and liberation by the Indian army. The whole world had watched this event with great anxiety. The movement of the Seventh Fleet of the US in the Indian Ocean at that time led to the counter-movement of the former Soviet navy in the Arabian Sea. It appeared, as if the Muslim-Bengali ethno struggle will ultimately lead to another World War. But the swift work done by the Indian army in former East Pakistan, led to the creation of a separate State known as Bangladesh, on the ruins of East Pakistan. India's intervention in East Pakistan has been inspired by geo-politics also.

The second instance is of India's direct intervention into Sri Lanka. It was a case of a regional power's intervention in a domestic conflict of a neighbouring State. It was motivated by the geo-political implications of instability on its southern flank. Initially, India offered its good offices to mediate between the Tamils insurgents and Sri Lankan government, which was to recognize some legitimate demands of the Tamils. The IPKF tried to suppress many Tamil factions, which led to great loss of human lives and bloodshed. However, IPKF's presence in Sri Lanka was seen both by the Tamils and Singhalese as a new occupation force. In 1990, IPKF was withdrawn. The whole affair appeared to be a failure.[54] There was a great reaction among the Tamil Tigers, which ultimately resulted in the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. The Singhalese were equally hostile to India. This shows the typical pattern of foreign interest in a domestic ethnic conflict-first, affective sympathy with the Tamils, their mediation, their militancy and their intervention in the role of a pacifier, but with concealed instrumental motives of geo-political significance and lastly, accusation of regional hegemony by other States of Asia and finally, the rejection by all parties concerned.

Thus, we see that ethnic conflicts, which characterize and influence the majority of States in the contemporary world, are liable to increase hostility to already existing acrimonious relationships among States. Therefore, ethnic groups, rather than State nationalism forms a more valid variable in the analysis of international security problems. Practically, there is no worthwhile model on theoretical framework so far for research on international dimensions of ethnic conflicts. Thus, we make

our own framework for enquiry into ethnic conflicts and their inter-relationship with peace and security not only at the national, but also at the international level.

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