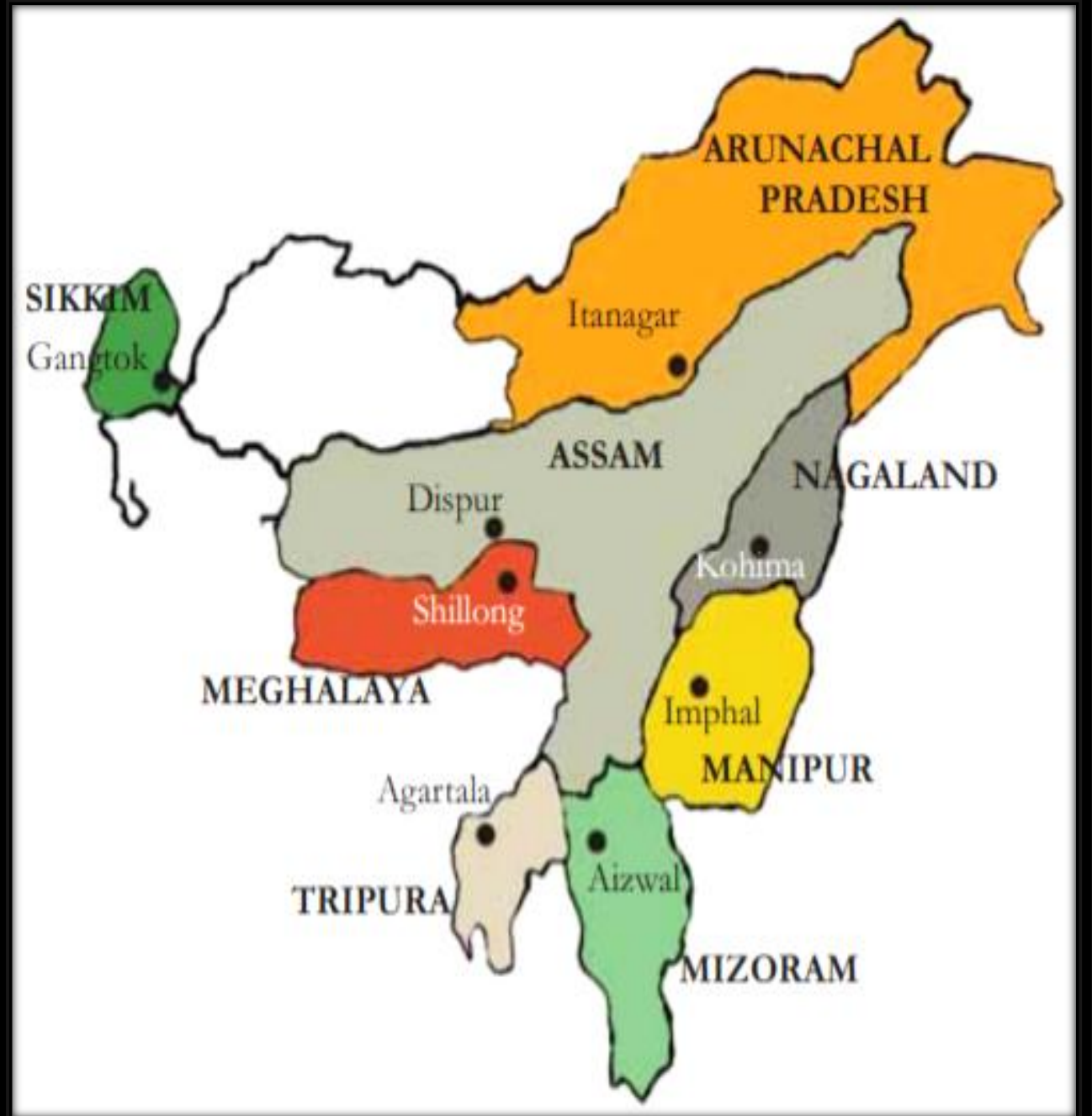


NORTH-EAST INSURGENCY IN INDIA: REASONS AND REMEDIES



Introduction

The North-Eastern region of India, comprising eight states (Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Sikkim), has been plagued by insurgency for decades. This unrest stems from historical neglect, ethnic tensions, and demands for autonomy or secession. Although efforts by the Indian government have led to some improvement, the region still experiences periodic violence and socio-political unrest.





Reasons for Insurgency

1. Historical and Political Factors

- **Colonial legacy:** British policies isolated the region, leading to socio-economic backwardness.
- **Integration issues:** Post-independence, many tribes opposed integration with India (e.g., Naga National Council, Mizo National Front).
- **State reorganization:** Arbitrary borders disrupted ethnic balances.

2. Ethnic Diversity and Identity Assertion

- Over 200 ethnic groups and tribes, many with distinct languages, customs, and identities.
- Demands for autonomy, separate states, or even sovereign nations (e.g., Greater Nagalim, Kukiland).
- Frequent inter-ethnic clashes and demands for Scheduled Tribe status.

**POLITICAL
PULSE**

PEACE IN MANIPUR
SHOULD NOT BE AT
THE COST OF
OUR SURVIVAL.

IS THIS
MINIST
SOME CALL
PEACEFUL
RALLY

MEETEI'S ST STATUS OF
ASSAM IS DELAYED DUE
TO DELAY OF MANIPUR
GOVT'S RECOMMENDATION.

**SAVE INDIGENOUS
PEOPLE FROM
IMMIGRANTS (KUKI)**

WE DEMAND IMMEDIATE
RECOMMENDATION OF
MANIPUR GOVT FOR ST
STATUS OF MEETEIS TO
SAFEGUARD OUR
ETHNIC IDENTITY.

3. Economic Underdevelopment

- Poor infrastructure, low industrialization, and unemployment.
- Perception of economic exploitation by the "mainland".
- Limited connectivity with the rest of India.

4. Illegal Migration and Demographic Imbalance

- Infiltration from Bangladesh has altered the demography, especially in Assam and Tripura.
- Fear of cultural dilution and competition for resources.
- Led to movements like the Assam Agitation (1979–85).

5. Lack of Governance and Alienation

- Weak governance, corruption, and lack of political representation.
- AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act) led to allegations of human rights violations, deepening alienation.

6. External Support and Cross-Border Issues

- Safe havens and logistical support from Myanmar, China, and Bangladesh in the past.
- Funding from narcotics trade and arms smuggling.



AFSPA – Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act



Introduction

The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, commonly known as AFSPA, is a law that grants special powers to the Indian armed forces in "disturbed areas". It was originally enacted to address insurgency and maintain public order, especially in regions like the North-East, Jammu & Kashmir, and Punjab (historically).



Historical Background

- Enacted first in **1958** for the **North-Eastern states**.
- Based on **AFSPA, 1942**, passed by the British during the Quit India Movement.
- Extended to **Punjab (1983–1997)** and **Jammu & Kashmir (1990–present)**.



Key Provisions of AFSPA

Under Section 4 of AFSPA, security forces have the authority to:

1. **Use force or fire upon** anyone violating laws or carrying weapons.
2. **Arrest without warrant** anyone suspected of a cognizable offense.
3. **Enter and search** premises without warrant to make arrests or recover weapons.
4. Provide **legal immunity** to armed forces personnel acting under the law (prosecution requires sanction from the Central Government).

What is a 'Disturbed Area'?

- Declared under **Section 3** of AFSPA.
- An area is deemed disturbed if the use of armed forces is necessary to maintain public order.
- The **Governor or Central Government** can declare any area as disturbed.

Arguments in Favor of AFSPA

- Essential for combating **militancy and insurgency**.
- Provides legal cover to armed forces in hostile and high-risk operations.
- Used to maintain **territorial integrity and national security**.
- Needed where **civil administration is ineffective** or overwhelmed.

Criticism of AFSPA

- **Human rights violations:** Allegations of fake encounters, custodial deaths, torture (e.g., Manipur fake encounter cases).
- **Impunity:** Legal immunity often leads to **lack of accountability**.
- **Alienation of local population**, fueling more resentment and militancy.
- Protests by civil society (e.g., **Irom Sharmila's** 16-year hunger strike against AFSPA in Manipur).

Judicial & Committee Recommendations

Justice Jeevan Reddy Committee (2005)

- Recommended **repeal of AFSPA**.
- Suggested incorporating necessary provisions into the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act**.

Second Administrative Reforms Commission

- Called AFSPA "too harsh", recommended review and modification.

Supreme Court (2016)

- Ruled that armed forces cannot use excessive force and should be accountable.
- Fake encounters must be investigated even in disturbed areas.

Recent Developments

- AFSPA withdrawn partially from many parts of:
 - Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh (since 2022).
- Indicates improved law and order situation in parts of the North-East.
- AFSPA still remains in parts of Nagaland, Manipur, and J&K.



Remedies and Government Measures

1. Political Engagement and Peace Accords

- Peace talks with insurgent groups (e.g., NSCN (IM), ULFA).
- Signing of peace accords like:
 - Mizo Accord (1986)
 - Bodo Accord (2020)
 - Tripura Accord (1988)
 - Naga Framework Agreement (2015)
- Formation of autonomous councils (e.g., Bodoland Territorial Council).

2. Socio-Economic Development

- Act East Policy and North-East Industrial Development Scheme (NEIDS) to promote trade and investment.
- Improved connectivity through roads, railways, and digital infrastructure.
- Creation of North Eastern Council (NEC) and Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER).

3. Ethnic Reconciliation and Inclusive Governance

- Promotion of inter-tribal harmony through civil society engagement and cultural integration.
- Inclusive policies for tribal representation in governance and employment.

4. Controlled Use of Force and AFSPA Reforms

- Gradual withdrawal or dilution of AFSPA in peaceful areas (e.g., Nagaland and Assam partially in 2022).
- Shift from military-led operations to community-based policing.

5. Cross-Border Cooperation

- Border fencing and improved monitoring to prevent infiltration.
- Bilateral cooperation with Myanmar, Bhutan, and Bangladesh to curb cross-border insurgency.

6. Youth Engagement and Skill Development

- Expansion of education and skill training.
- Promotion of sports and entrepreneurship through schemes like **Startup India**.

Conclusion

Insurgency in the North-East is rooted in complex historical, ethnic, and political issues. While military operations may control violence temporarily, long-term peace can only be achieved through **dialogue, development, inclusion, and respect for regional identity**. Sustainable peace lies in balancing **national integration** with **regional aspirations**.



INSURGENT GROUPS IN NORTH-EAST INDIA



1. Assam



ULFA (United Liberation Front of Asom)

- Founded: 1979
- Objective: Sovereign Assam, free from Indian control
- Status: Split into pro-talk and anti-talk factions; peace talks ongoing with ULFA (pro-talk) group

▲ **NDFB (National Democratic Front of Bodoland)**

- Objective: Separate Bodoland for Bodo people
- Status: Signed peace accord in 2020; most factions now disbanded

▲ **AANLA, KLO, MULTA**

- Smaller groups representing ethnic or Islamist interests (e.g., Adivasi, Koch-Rajbongshi, etc.)

2. Manipur

UNLF (United National Liberation Front)

- **Founded:** 1964
- **Objective:** Independent Manipur
- **Status:** Still active; engages in occasional armed conflict

PLA (People's Liberation Army)

- **Objective:** Secession from India and establishment of a socialist state
- **Status:** Active; allegedly receives support from foreign groups

PREPAK, KYKL, KCP

- Meitei groups demanding independence or autonomy; involved in extortion, arms smuggling

3. Nagaland

NSCN (National Socialist Council of Nagaland)

- Founded: 1980
- Split into two main factions:
 - **NSCN-IM (Isak-Muivah):** Demands Greater Nagalim (integration of all Naga-inhabited areas)
 - **NSCN-K (Khaplang):** More militant, had foreign linkages
- **Status:** NSCN-IM signed a **Framework Agreement** with Gol in 2015; talks ongoing

4. Tripura

NLFT (National Liberation Front of Tripura)

- Objective: Separate state for Tripuri tribes
- Status: Weak and fragmented; many cadres surrendered

ATTF (All Tripura Tiger Force)

- Objective: Expulsion of Bengali settlers and tribal rights
- Status: Largely inactive after peace efforts

5. Meghalaya

HNLC (Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council)

- Objective: Sovereign state for Khasi tribe
- Status: Recently showed willingness for talks with Govt

GNLA (Garo National Liberation Army)

- Objective: Garo state
- Status: Leader killed in 2017; outfit nearly dismantled

6. Mizoram

MNF (Mizo National Front)

- Objective (historical): Independence from India
- Status: Signed peace accord in 1986; now a mainstream political party

7. Arunachal Pradesh

- No major insurgent group native to the state
- NSCN factions sometimes operate in Tirap, Changlang, and Longding districts



MANIPUR VIOLENCE – REASONS AND CONTEXT



Background

Manipur, a North-Eastern state of India, has a **diverse ethnic composition**, mainly:

- **Meiteis** (majority, mostly Hindu) – dominant in the **Imphal Valley**.
- **Kukis and Nagas** (mostly Christian tribes) – inhabit the **hill districts**.

Despite coexisting for decades, **deep-rooted ethnic, political, and economic tensions** have periodically flared into violence.

🔥 Immediate Trigger – May 3, 2023

- A "Tribal Solidarity March" was organized by the All Tribal Students' Union Manipur (ATSUM) in hill areas to protest the Meitei community's demand for ST (Scheduled Tribe) status.
- Clashes broke out between Kuki tribes and Meitei groups, rapidly escalating into large-scale ethnic violence.



Key Reasons for Violence

1. **Scheduled Tribe (ST) Demand by Meiteis**

- Meiteis demanded ST status to gain reservation benefits.
- Kukis and Nagas opposed this, fearing:
 - **Loss of land rights in hill areas**, which are currently protected.
 - **Diminishing of tribal identity and autonomy.**

2. **Land, Identity & Demographic Anxiety**

- Meiteis feel encircled and demographically threatened.
- Kukis and other tribes fear **political and economic domination** by the Meiteis if ST status is granted.

3. 🔥 **Encroachment and Eviction Drives**

- Government launched anti-encroachment operations in reserved forest lands in Kuki-dominated areas.
- Kukis saw it as **targeted harassment**; government claimed it was environmental protection.

4. 🛡️ **Militarization and Armed Groups**

- Both communities have **armed groups** and **village defense forces**.
- Violence escalated with reports of **looted police arms**, **gunfights**, and **arson**.

5. **Weak Law and Order Response**

- Delayed and ineffective response by state police and administration.
- Accusations of bias in security response added fuel to the fire.

6. **Ethno-Political Power Struggle**

- Meitei-majority government seen as unresponsive to tribal grievances.
- Kuki groups demand a separate administrative arrangement, further intensifying the divide.

7. **Misinformation & Social Media**

- Circulation of fake videos, inflammatory posts, and hate speech deepened mistrust and panic.
- Social media bans were imposed, but violence had already spread.

Consequences of the Violence

- Over 200+ killed, 60,000+ displaced (as of early 2024).
- Destruction of homes, churches, temples, and government property.
- Ethnic segregation: Kukis fled valley areas, Meiteis left hill areas.
- Schools and normal life disrupted for months.