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Non Inclusive Development and Insurgency: A Reality Check of Tamenglong District of Manipur and Strategy for Development

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About The Author



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Non Inclusive Development and Insurgency: A Reality Check of Tamenglong District of Manipur and Strategy for Development

Background

Non-inclusiveness in the process of development leads to unemployment, discontentment and frustration. These have been established as one of the root causes of insurgency in the Northeastern part of India in general and Manipur in particular. It has directly and indirectly led to the mushrooming of various socio-political and underground organizations who have worked towards increasing the ethnic divide in order to retain their relevance in the society. The study begins with the understanding of inter-say relations between Inclusive Development and Development. The endeavour is to focus on the non-inclusive development taking place in Manipur, with particular reference to the causes of growth deficiencies in Tamenglong district of Manipur. Tamenglong has been chosen for the study as it is the most backward district of Manipur. The major findings of the field survey conducted, to include interactions with important personalities from all walks of life and all spectrum of the society have been studied in depth, for suggesting a strategy for bringing around inclusiveness in growth, and development leading to harmony and lasting peace in Manipur.

Introduction

Non-inclusive development has been one of the root causes of insurgency in Northeast India. Non-inclusiveness in development leads to unemployment, under development and disenchantment amongst the people. It is one of the major contributing factors for continuing insurgency in the North East and other parts of our country for the last many decades. It has directly and indirectly led to mushrooming of various socio-political and underground organizations who have worked towards increasing the ethnic divide in order to retain their constituencies and relevance in the society.

The issue of non-inclusive nature of growth in Manipur has multiple facets and is characterized by a deep ethnic divide and allegations of bias

against the tribals by the Meitei dominated State Government. This study of such a complex and divisive problem, therefore, has been carried out with equal emphasis on varied data sources and also, with the author's own experiences. The recommendations for achieving inclusiveness in growth has been formulated with a view to facilitate blurring of ethnic divide and assisting the society in forgetting their troubled past and thence, to move ahead towards a better and bright tomorrow.

Ground Survey results clearly reveal major areas of developmental deficiencies reflecting the non-inclusive nature of development in the district. It is evident that the people of Tamenglong face a number of basic administrative difficulties and inadequacies. Their under-development and poverty is reflected in several forms - illiteracy, ill-health, unemployment, lack of basic facilities such as, drinking water, electricity, hospitals, communication, failure of commercial development and general under development. Absence of proper administration and police influence in the remote areas, have further compounded the problem.

The Study

The concept of 'inclusive approach' is not a new thing for the world in general and for India in particular. Actions of different institutions across the board such as state, market, and civil society organizations can decide inclusion and exclusion of population in various activities. Norms, values, religious and cultural beliefs can also determine the level of inclusion or exclusion. The state is an important agent which intervenes and influences directly or indirectly in many activities of the people. The policies and actions of the state in production and distribution are thus important for inclusion and exclusion. However, one has to distinguish between populism¹ and inclusive growth. Rapid and sustained poverty reduction requires inclusive growth that allows people to contribute to and benefit from economic growth².

Manipur too is facing the scourge of underground groups and insurgency

¹**Populism** has been viewed as a political ideology, political philosophy, or as a type of discourse. Generally, populists tend to claim that they side with "the people" against "the elites". While for much of the twentieth century populism was considered to be a political phenomenon mostly of Latin America and India, since the 1980s populist movements and parties have enjoyed degrees of success in First World democracies such as Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Scandinavian countries and the USA. *Wikipedia*.

²This statement is in line with the OECD Development Assistance Committee's policy statement on pro-poor growth. However, a difference between pro-poor and inclusive growth is that the pro-poor approach is mainly interested in the welfare of the poor while inclusive growth is concerned with opportunities for the majority of the labour force, poor and middle-class alike.

⁴Why do we need inclusive growth? Ashwini Deshpande, First Published: Fri, Oct 21 2011. 12 47 AM IST.

⁵*Reserve Bank of India Occasional Papers, Vol. 31, No. 3, Winter 2010, Inclusive Growth and its Regional Dimension.*

which has continued there for the last six decades. One of the root causes of insurgency continuing here has been the non-inclusive nature of governance and development particularly in the hilly regions. The issue of non-inclusive development in Tamenglong seems to be borne out of complex ethnic fault lines because of the remoteness of the area. Earlier, there has been no study on the state of growth and development in Tamenglong, a hill district. Thus, the claims of the government would throw light on the nature of inclusiveness as to how prevalent it is in matters of governance. The study would also highlight the developmental deficiencies in Tamenglong.

The study begins with the understanding of inter-se relations between Inclusive Growth and Development. The endeavour has been to focus on the non-inclusive development taking place in Manipur, with particular reference to the causes of growth deficiencies in Tamenglong district of Manipur. It brings out huge differences between the claims of the state administration regarding steady development of Tamenglong vis-a-vis the vast developmental deficits existing at the ground level.

Objectives

The main focus of, the study aims to understand the aspect of inclusive growth and development. The study is focussed on the non-inclusive growth taking place in Manipur, with particular reference to the causes of growth deficiencies in Tamenglong district of Manipur. The specific objectives of the study are to:-

- a. Understand the nuances of Non-inclusive development with reference to Manipur.
- b. To ascertain the nature of development deficit in Tamenglong in order to highlight the non-inclusive nature of development in Manipur.
- c. To suggest a strategy for bringing inclusiveness in growth and development thereby, blurring ethnic fault-lines and ushering in harmonization and peace in Manipur.

Data Sources, Methodology and Scope

To ascertain the veracity of the claims of the state administration regarding adequate funding and development being initiated across Manipur, including the hill districts, it is felt that the study must have inputs from the local population of such areas belonging to various strata

of the society. Therefore, the study is primarily based on a field survey conducted in all the four sub divisions of Tamenglong district. Extensive interaction was carried out with the local Youth, Women Organisations, Civil administration and common villagers to gauge their individual aspirations from the government. The findings of the Baseline Survey of Minority Concentrated Districts (MDCs) – Manipur, by the Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development, a Research Institute of Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi and Government of Assam has also been studied and included in the paper.

Inclusive Development and Relative Deprivation

Inclusion

Inclusion means ‘the action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure’³. Miller and Katz (2002) present a common definition of an inclusive value system where they say, “Inclusion is a sense of belonging: feeling respected, valued for who you are; feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that you can do your best work”⁴. The process of inclusion engages each individual and makes them feel valued with the success of the organization.

Inclusive Growth

Inclusive growth is a broader concept covering economic, social and cultural aspects of development. In his book⁵, S. Mahendra Dev treats ‘inclusive growth’ as synonymous with ‘equitable development’. Inclusive growth allows people to “contribute to and benefit from economic growth”⁶. Inclusive Growth adopts a long-term perspective and is concerned with sustained growth. For growth to be sustained in the long run, it should be broad-based across sectors. Issues of structural transformation for economic diversification therefore takes a front stage. Inclusive Growth focuses on both the pace and pattern of growth⁷.

Inclusive Development

Development can be inclusive only if people of all the groups contributes

³Oxford Dictionaries, available at <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/inclusion>, Accessed on December 05, 2013.

⁴Miller, Frederick A. and Katz, Judith H. 2002. *The Inclusion Breakthrough: Unleashing the Real Power of Diversity*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

⁵Inclusive Growth in India, Agriculture Poverty & Human Development, Oxford University Press, Third Impressions 2012.

⁶K. C. Chakrabarty “mostly economics” <http://mostlyeconomics.wordpress.com/2010/12/23/what-is-inclusive-growth/> Accessed on 05 December 2013.

⁷Gangmumei Kamei “The Ethno-Nationalism in Manipur : Lectures of History of Manipur”, Akansha Publishing House, 2012.

in creation of opportunities, share the benefits of development and participate in decision-making. Many elements are to be considered by a nation to pursue inclusive development. A vital one is, how to create productive and gainful employment. Effective and efficient social safety environment to protect those who cannot work or who earn too little, is essential. Many people are excluded from development because of their gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, disability or poverty. The effects of such exclusion are staggering, deepening inequality leading to discontentment and insurgencies⁸.

Relative Deprivation

Non-inclusive development is leading to conflict in the minds of the locals, conforming to the theory of Relative Deprivation. Relative deprivation is the experience of being deprived of something to which one believes oneself to be entitled to⁹. It refers to the discontent people feel when they compare their positions to others and realize that they have less of what they believe themselves to be entitled to than those around them¹⁰. The concept of relative deprivation has important consequences for both behavior and attitudes, including feelings of stress, political attitudes and participation in collective action. This theory is relevant to the Insurgency in the Northeast India where the feeling of relative deprivation is prevalent in Northeastern States as compared to the rest of India. It also exists within the States among the various tribes like in Manipur it is between hill tribes and valley folk. The feeling of lack of inclusive development within the State and between the States is one of the major cause for insurgency in Northeast India.

Non-Inclusive Development in Manipur

Manipur has gone through certain phases of administrative changes ranging from village polity to constitutional monarchy like many ancient countries of Europe and Asia. Ethnicity was first introduced in the governance of Manipur during the colonial rule when the British separated the administration of the hill tribes from that of Manipur valley.

⁸“ Inclusive Development” United Nations Development Programme, available at http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/povertyreduction/focus_areas/focus_inclusive_development.html Accessed on May 21, 2017.

⁹Iain Walker, Heather J. Smith, *Relative Deprivation: Specification, Development, and Integration*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, February 2011.

¹⁰Kurt Bayertz, *Philosophical Studies in Contemporary Culture, 1999*, available at, http://download.springer.com/static/pdf/712/bfm%253A978-94-015-9245-1%252F1.pdf?auth66=1413039485_bdb49e4d9c41642ba36af89c5f0ed13e&ext=.pdf, Accessed on 05 December 2013, Accessed on December 15, 2015.

The issue of ethnic polarisation of the Manipuri society has been a topic of debate and discussion for long, however, the resultant deprivation of growth in the hill districts of Manipur has not attracted much research. The communalisation of the society, administration and polity of the state has given rise to allegations and counter allegations by tribals and non-tribals inhabiting the hills and plains respectively against each other¹¹. The issue of non-inclusive development in Tamenglong seems to be borne out of complex ethnic fault lines because of remoteness of the area. Such area of research has remained unaddressed. The claims of the state government and administration has made out in the economic reviews every year seldom match ground realities.

Brief Profile of Tamenglong District¹²

Area and Location

Tamenglong is a tribal populated district located in the Western part of Manipur. The District has a geographical area of 4,391 sq kms with a total population of 1,40,143 as per the 2011 census. The District has five sub divisions namely Tamei, Tousem, Tamenglong, Nungba, Khopum, Noney and Haochong (with the creation of seven new districts on December 8, 2016, Tamenglong and Noney Districts have been bifurcated now. Tamenglong district will have Tamenglong, Tamei, Tousem and Nungba sub-divisions while Noney district will have Noney, Khoupum and Haochong sub-divisions). It is one of the most socio-economically backward districts of the State. The district is predominantly inhabited by Zeliangrong Nagas and other tribes and sub-tribes such as Kuki, Hmar, Khasi and Chiru. However, due to poor means of transport and communication, most of the villages are not accessible and the villages are scattered far apart from one another, major means of transportation is by foot¹³.

Resource Base¹⁴

Population

As per the census data of 2011, the demographic profile of the districts

¹¹Gangmumei Kamei “The Ethno-Nationalism in Manipur : Lectures of History of Manipur”, Akansha Publishing House, 2012.

¹²Omeo Kumar Das, Baseline Survey of Minority Concentrated Districts - Manipur, Institute of Social Change and Development, A Research Institute of Indian Council of Social Science, available at, <http://www.icssr.org/executive%20summary%20Tamenglong.pdf>, Accessed on December 15, 2014.

¹³Executive Summary-NRHM Manipur, available at, nrhmmanipur.org/wp-content/uploads/.../EXECUTIVE_SUMMARY.doc..., Accessed on October, 10, 2014.

¹⁴Omeo Kumar Das, Ibid 8.

show that 97 percent of the total population in the district belongs to the minority community of which Christians comprise 98 percent. The population density is 32 persons per sq km which is lowest among all the districts¹⁵. The four districts of the valley of Manipur have a very high density of population, ranging between 485 persons per sq km in Bishnupur district to 992 persons per sq km in Imphal West district, whereas the five hill districts have a skewed density of population ranging between 32 persons per square km in Tamenglong district to 122 persons per sq km in Chandel district. At 1,40,143 its population is also the least amongst all the districts and has registered the least growth in absolute terms in all these years.

Literacy Rate and Education

The literacy rate in the district according to the 2011 census is of 70.40 percent, which is the lowest amongst all the nine districts of Manipur. The male literacy rate is 76.74 percent and female literacy rate is 63.76 percent. The low literacy rate among the females vis-à-vis the males indicates that education of women has less priority among the communities living in Tamenglong district¹⁶. As per the 2011 census, the district has 98,661 literates (70.40 percent as against an average of 79.85 percent for the entire State of Manipur). The entire district has only one Government College amongst 76 colleges in the entire State of Manipur. This college has only an arts stream and no science department. There are handful of high schools, mostly primary and middle schools. Hence the dropout rate after primary and middle school is pretty high. Almost the entire population consists of Scheduled Tribes and hence majority of the students quit education after eight standard or matriculation, the minimum qualification required by Scheduled Tribes (STs) persons vying for government jobs and recruitment in security forces is now matriculation. The percentage of literate population having educational attainment of matriculation, higher secondary or diploma is just 26.57 percent and the proportion of graduates and above is just 4.42 percent.

Workforce

The percentage of main workers among the male workers is 83.3 percent

¹⁵Districts-wise Population Manipur, Census, 2011, available at <http://gbpihedennis.nic.in/Districts%20wise%20Population%20Manipur.%20Census-2011.html>. Accessed on October, 10, 2014.

¹⁶Tamenglong District : Census 2011 data, available at <http://www.census2011.co.in/census/district/371-tamenglong.html>. Accessed on October, 10, 2014.

and female workers 60.9 percent. The percentage of male main workers has increased from 81.6 percent to 83.3 percent in the Census of 2011. On the other hand, the percentage of female main workers has increased from 54.8 percent to 60.9 percent in the Census of 2011. Tamenglong has reported the highest percentage of main workers (79.2 per cent) as per Census 2011 and reflected the minimum growth of 68.3 percent in Thoubal. For the first time in Census 2011, the marginal workers, i.e. workers who worked for less than six months in the reference year, have been subdivided into two categories, namely, those working for less than three months and those who worked for three months or more but less than six months. Tamenglong has reported the highest percent of marginal workers 84.7 per cent in the three to six months category and Chandel reported the lowest at 70.5 percent. For persons working for less than three months, it is obvious that these districts hold the reverse positions.

Natural Resources

Land and its Utilization

Climatically, Tamenglong belongs to the sub-tropical zone. Because of the higher altitude, summers are mild with maximum temperature of 27° Celsius and minimum temperature of 5° Celsius. The gross cropped area in the district is 37.91 percent of the total area and average area under *jhum* is 0.0265 lakh hectares¹⁷.

Forest

The total geographical area of Tamenglong district is 4391 sq km where dense forest cover is 279 sq km, moderate dense forest cover is 1784 sq km, open forest area is 1839 sq km and the total forest cover of Tamenglong District is 3902 sq km. which is 88.86 percent of the District Area. The geographical area of the Western Forest Division is 3166.22 sq km and the total forest cover is 3046.56 sq km which accounts for 96.22 percent of the geographical area, while the remaining 119.66 sq km is non-forest area¹⁸.

Economy

The economy of the districts is basically agrarian with paddy as its major

¹⁷ Agriculture Contingency Plan for District: Tamenglong State, available at http://agricoop.nic.in/Agriculture%20contingency%20Plan/manipur/MPUR%205_Tamenglong_20.09.13.pdf. Accessed on October 11, 2014.

¹⁸ Office of the District Forest Office Tamenglong, available at <http://tamenglong.nic.in/departments/forest.html>. Accessed on October 11, 2014.

crop. The total area under paddy cultivation is 8.52 thousand hectares. 76 percent of the total area under paddy cultivation in the district. While under Jhum cultivation per man occupies 6.0 percent. The economic status of the households in the district, as per the latest records of the Food and Civil Supplies Department, Government of Manipur, reveals that 30.56 percent of the households are Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and there are 119 Public Distribution System (PDS) in the district to cater to these households.

Basic Amenities

As per the 2011 census, Tamenglong district has 16,149 households. There are only 1.8 percent households who have permanent houses, 26.8 percent have semi-permanent houses and 71.4 percent have temporary houses. Safe drinking water facilities and electricity are available in 43.86 percent villages. While 92 percent of the villages have a primary school, middle level schools are available in only 40 percent of the villages.

Medical facilities are available in only 25 percent of the villages and one Primary Health Sub Centre (PHSC) in the district covers a population of 4129 people, which clearly indicates the status of health infrastructure in the district. The connectivity status in the district reveals that only 21 percent of the villages have bus connectivity while 38.6 percent of the villages have no roads.

Reality Check of Development in Tamenglong

Developmental Deficiencies in Tamenglong District

In order to arrive at the root causes perceived by the people of Tamenglong for the lack of inclusive development in Manipur, an extensive survey was carried out covering the entire district. The brief profile of Tamenglong district and the Ground Survey results clearly reveal major areas of developmental deficiencies reflecting the non-inclusive nature of development in the district. Even a casual analysis reveals major deficits in the areas of education, health, industry, tertiary sector employment and basic connectivity.

Education Infrastructure and Facilities

The state of education in the district is in a terrible state. Government primary schools are available in only 135 villages out of the total 213 villages in the district and they lack basic infrastructure and facilities. The

disadvantage of location in respect of the tribal habitats in the hills is another impediment for the education of tribals in the district as well as in the state. Since the villages in the hills are scattered it takes long hours to travel in the difficult terrain for the young children to reach schools.

There are hardly any private school in the villages (as many of these private schools are centred at the district headquarters) and hence children are dependent on the government schools that are unreliable for students to gain education and excel in life. The existing structure and content of education do not do much to attract these tribal children to the schools. The education imparted in the school is not linked to job opportunities and is also poor in its quality, lending no chance to the educated tribal boys and girls to stand in competition. Consequently, whatever skills are acquired from education and training is not adequate to earn a living. The medium of instruction is a constraint as the children who speak only tribal native dialects find it difficult to comprehend the subject being taught along with the medium of learning. The textbooks used in the schools are largely the same as in other areas. The content of education does not take into account the socio-cultural environment of the area and the people. The students are not attracted to the curriculum as it is not as per their life orientation. It has been very difficult to find teachers with suitable backgrounds to serve in the schools of tribal dominated areas. The vast majority of teachers posted in tribal areas come from the Imphal valley and can neither speak nor understand the local tribal dialect. Consequently, there is little communication between teachers and students outside the classroom.

State of Schools & Colleges in Tamenglong District¹⁹

S. No	Particulars	Nos.
1	Pre-Primary/Primary/JB/UJB School	
	a. Government	135
	b. Aided	26
2	Middle/Sr. Basic/Jr. High School	
	a. Government	21

¹⁹Statistical Year Book 2016, Tamenglong District, Page 13.

	b. Aided	-
3	High/Higher Secondary School a. Government b. Aided c. Private Recognised School	33 1 19
4	College a. Government b. Aided c. Private Recognised College	1 - 1

Often the non-tribal teachers serving in such areas remain busy in pulling strings to get themselves transferred to urban places²⁰. They are out of tune with the tribal language and culture which they often denigrate with impunity; and usually possess a very negative attitude towards their tribal students. The communication gap between the teachers and the taught alienates the tribal children from these schools also. The residential facilities for the teachers in these tribal areas are very poor. Often, they find it difficult to keep their families with them. Consequently, they remain homebound and are generally not found at their place of duty. The schools are seldom visited by inspecting staff. Further, many primary schools in these tribal areas have a single teacher in the school where neither the teachers nor the students are regular in attendance. There are many instances where educational incentives meant for these tribal children do not reach them. There is also a considerable delay in the sanction and disbursement of scholarships. Further, in view of the rapid escalation of prices in recent years, the quantum of scholarships is rendered inadequate. It is seen that a large share of the scholarships goes to such sections thereof, which are already educationally advanced. The skill levels of the teaching staff are yet another area of concern. Gross deficiency of teachers in the government schools in Tamenglong is another reason for mushrooming of private schools especially in the

²⁰Wangdibou, 'Education and the problems of the tribals in the hill districts of Manipur', available at, http://e-pao.net/epPageExtractor.asp?src=education.Education_and_problems_of_tribals_in_hill_districts_of_Manipur_By_Wangdibou.html, accessed on December 18, 2016.

District and Sub-Division Headquarters. Therefore, anyone desirous of pursuing studies beyond the High School Level is forced to avail hostel facilities in far off places like Senapati, Tamenglong, Imphal or even in other states of India, which is possible only if the family can afford the cost of education.

Another grey area is the state of colleges. The district has only two colleges out of the total 86 colleges available in the State. There is only one Government College in the district Headquarter and it offers only arts stream for education. Students desirous of pursuing science stream are forced to go to the Imphal Valley or discontinue if they cannot afford travelling out. This situation of poor educational facilities is ripe for development to stagnate as well as give these ill-equipped children enough reasons to be swayed by insurgent groups to join them. A private college called Jadonnang Memorial College was started in 2013 at Noney. However, the college is in its initial years and is yet to establish itself. Moreover, Noney is located in the western edge of the district and students from the interiors find it difficult to access it unless they subscribe to hostel residences around the college. The district is also a victim of proxy employment, especially in the teaching sector where government appointed teachers from the valley areas are unwilling to work in remote parts of the district and appoint local teachers with questionable qualifications, to carry out proxy teaching on their behalf instead. This is also called as surrogacy teaching. A percentage of the pay earned by the government appointed teacher is paid to the proxy teacher as remuneration²¹.

Health Facilities

The state of health facilities can be gauged by the fact that more than 90 percent deliveries take place in the homes out of which 68 percent women deliver their babies assisted by untrained *Dais* and other family members. Therefore, the overall access to health facilities in Tamenglong remains extremely weak. Tamenglong District which is the most difficult and underdeveloped district in Manipur has one District Hospital, one Community Health Centre (CHC), six Primary Health Centres (PHC) and 30 Primary Health Sub Centres (PHSC). There is only one District Hospital situated in the District Headquarter and is the only first referral unit.

²¹Development Issues in hill Districts of Manipur with special reference to Tamenglong', Dissertation submitted by Col V Vidyashankar at Army War College.

Since there is no Medical Superintendent posted, the Chief Medical Officer is overall in charge of the hospital affairs. The District Hospital has 36 beds with four wards (male, female, child & maternity). Presently, the District Hospital at Tamenglong is posted with 11 Allopathic Doctors (MOs), four Dental Surgeons and two Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) (earlier known as the Department of Indian System of Medicine and Homeopathy) Medical Officers. There is no specialist doctor, hospital superintendent or nursing sister in charge posted with the District Hospital. Such is the state of affairs that the hospital requires at least 14 specialist doctors whereas none are posted²². This forces the patients to travel 150 km to reach Imphal in order to get better medical facilities. The road condition is so poor that the journey takes seven to eight hours to reach Imphal. The conditions in the CHC, PHCs and PHSCs are equally deplorable with hardly any of these centers posted with the full complement of its staff. There is no private hospital in the entire district to cater as an alternative to the common man. Even though the district medical setup is working very hard to mitigate their constraints, the fact remains that the development in the district will remain singularly affected by lack of quality medical services.

Another issue allied to the problem is that the State itself is facing an acute shortage of medical specialists. In Manipur, the specialist seats are primarily secured through all India competition as the number of State Government reserved seats is only available at Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) hospital, Imphal which is quite meager at about four or so clinical specialties per year. The deficit of specialists has been a big problem due to their migration from Government service to the private sector as well as for service outside the State. Another issue is that no specialists belonging to other States is willing to serve in Manipur. As such, there is an acute shortage of specialists in the State for deployment in the district hospitals and CHCs. The deficit in specialist doctors is to remain for quite some time even though the number of posts for specialist doctors has been increased. The recent mushrooming of private hospitals in and around Imphal is also one of the major causes for migration of specialists from State Service²³.

²² 'Medical State, Tamenglong, available at, <http://tamenglong.nic.in/departments/health.html/>, Health and Family Welfare Services, Accessed on November 11, 2016. Accessed on May 10, 2017.

²³ Draft Government of Manipur Annual Plan (2012-13) And 12th Five Year Plan (2012-17) Proposals, Page 162.

Power and Rural Electrification

The total installed capacity of power in the district is 0.744 Megawatt (MW) and the percentage of villages electrified till March 2007 stands at 81.87 percent. However, the power supply is very erratic, especially during the rainy seasons. As per data of 2010, 79 villages were electrified under the Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY)²⁴ in Tamenglong district, 45 villages were de-electrified, eight villages remain un-electrified and 19 were habitation villages²⁵. Till date, the district enjoys only four-five hours of electricity supply per day on an average during non-monsoon months. There is a 33 KVA power sub-station at Rengpang village in Tamenglong district which caters for the limited electric supply to the district and is often found nonfunctional due to disruptions during monsoons every year. There are plans to upgrade this substation to 132 KVA capacity in the next five years.

The proportion of households using electricity for domestic lighting in rural areas is indicative of the economic status of these households. The village survey data shows that, about 90 percent households in the electrified sample villages have electricity connections. The electricity supply is highly erratic and was available for an average duration of four hours in a day over the period from October 2014 to January 2015. Considering the electricity supply available in Imphal Valley, the electricity availability in Tamenglong is comparatively very low.

Roads and Communications

The road connectivity in Tamenglong district is highly underdeveloped. The Imphal - Tamenglong road which is the main state highway, connecting the District Headquarters to Imphal, is in a pitiable state. It takes over eight hours to cover a distance of 150 km from Imphal to Tamenglong via National Highway (NH) - 37 and Khongsang - Tamenglong road. Roads in interiors of the district are still in a very poor state with virtually no black topping, having deep pits, dangerous bends and susceptible to heavy disruptions during monsoons, virtually cutting off the villages in these areas for months. A case in point is the condition of the 39.5 km long Khongsang - Tamenglong road, a state highway which

²⁴Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY) was launched in April 2005 by merging all ongoing schemes. Under the programme, 90% grant is provided by Government of India and 10% as loan by Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) to the State Governments. Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) is the nodal agency for the programme.

²⁵ E-Pao, Electrification of unelectrified Tamenglong villages set for 2010, July, 24, 2009, available at <http://www.e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=11..220709.jul09>. Accessed on October 11, 2014.

connects the NH-37 to Tamenglong district headquarters. The road has been awaiting major reconstruction for the past 10 years now and is yet to see the light of the day. National Highway Infrastructure Development Cooperation Limited (NHIDCL), the agency entrusted with construction of this road with a budget of Rupees Twelve crore²⁶ had issued the work order for construction of the road to a Ghaziabad based company, Woodhills; but the bank guarantee furnished by the company was found to be a forged one. The upgradation of Khongsang – Tamenglong road to National Highway status and sanctioning of Rs 19.1 crore for carrying out the temporary restoration of the road is a positive step. However, the pace of work is very slow and more so with the onset of the monsoons the repair work is likely to get hampered. The communications infrastructure in the district comprises of mobile connectivity being provided by the public-sector Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Airtel which has an area coverage of only 20 percent of the district as ascertained during the ground survey.

Absence of Modern Methods of Cultivation and Technology

For centuries the tribals are depended on their simple mode of cultivation. There has been no modernisation in the method of cultivation including use of fertilizers. The old method of cultivation still continues. Forest products are not enough now. Besides, the forests have been destroyed indiscriminately by a few sections of tribal businessmen for petty financial profits at the expense of the ignorant villagers²⁷. Tamenglong district is the highest producer of oranges in the entire state of Manipur. In addition, there is encouraging potential for horticulture and sericulture. However, there is lack of governmental support for encouraging productive and profitable agricultural practices.

Lack of Civil Administration

The accessibility to civil administration by the people in the entire district is very weak. The civil administrative functionaries largely remain stationed in the district headquarters citing security reasons. The numerous governmental welfare schemes are mostly implemented only on papers thus lacking mass utilisation and benefit. Dubbed as one of the most backward districts of the State, Tamenglong has been reeling under

²⁶Tamenglong- Khongsang Road, CM reviews- retender held', available at, <http://www.thesangaiexpress.com/tamenglong-khongsang-road-cm-reviews-re-tender-held>, accessed on 02 Dec 2016.

²⁷Prof M Horam, The Rising Manipur, , Manas Publications, p 86-87.

a non-functioning Mini Secretariat resulting in a serious impediment to economic growth and development. The District Secretariat Complex located at Farmlane, Tamenglong was inaugurated on November 3, 2011 by the then, Union Home Minister P Chidambaram in the presence of then Chief Minister Okram Ibobi, Cabinet Ministers, MLAs and high ranking State officials.

It was built with an estimated cost of Rs 36 crore and was to house various District Level Officers (DLOs) of the State Government from where the entire administrative affairs of the district could be run and monitored²⁸. While the Deputy Commissioner of the district has also served notices to the DLOs of various departments to relocate to the Mini Secretariat complex, the DLOs have raised objection to the notices due to lack of basic infrastructure such as incomplete buildings, broken window glasses, water leaking from roof, lack of drinking water, incomplete electric wiring, etc. The state of apathy is such that no accountability has been attributed till date by the concerned authority for this inordinate delay in occupation of the Mini Secretariat²⁹.

Policing

The police force is limited and inadequately equipped in the district. Policing is almost non-existent in the entire district. The Army and Central Armed Police Forces have been requisitioned in aid to civil authority for ensuring law and order. The table below indicates the strength of the police force in Tamenglong District. Posted with only 437 policemen, the force is inadequate for a population of over 1,40,000 plus in the district. The problem here is that apart from law and order, the police have to contend with a constant threat from the insurgent groups operating in the district who often clash amongst themselves or kidnap people for ransom and revenge. Added to it is the lack of additional policemen available through recruitment. The Tousem Police Station (PS) does not have any police personnel to man the PS due to shortage of manpower.

²⁸ 'Mini Secretariat, available at, <http://www.thesangaexpress.com/tamenglong-reels-defunct-mini-secretariat/>, 02 Aug 2016, Sangai Express Headlines, Accessed on November 11, 2016.

²⁹ 'Development Issues in hill Districts of Manipur with special reference to Tamenglong', Dissertation submitted by Col V Vidyashankar at Army War College.

Strength Of Police Force In Tamenglong District, 2009-10 To 2015-16³⁰

S. No.	Sub-Division/District	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
		(In Numbers)					
1.	Tamenglong	28	36	35	39	3	33
2.	Tamei	14	15	15	18	1	19
3.	Tousem	9	10	9	12	1	14
4.	Nungba	106	101	106	115	1	117
	Total	310	364	355	355	3	437

The recent police recruitment case highlights the woes in the state. In October 2016, there were widespread protest by candidates who had appeared for the Police Constable (Male) 2013 recruitment tests³¹, decrying that the order to recruit 2000 fresh police constables issued by the Director General of Police (DGP) be quashed. The agitators who had participated in the recruitment rally back in 2013 had reportedly cleared their physical efficiency test, written and viva voce before an order was issued on 20 August 2016 by the DGP Manipur, cancelling the earlier recruitment process leaving thousands of aspirants high and dry. Based on a petition placed in the Manipur High Court by disgruntled aspirants, the case is now sub judice³².

Banking

There is only one branch of a Nationalised bank in the entire district of Tamenglong, ie. one United bank of India (UBI) branch (with an ATM) at district Headquarter Tamenglong. One State Bank of India (SBI) branch (with an ATM) is at the newly carved out Noney district which was earlier

³⁰ Statistical Year Book 2016, Tamenglong, Page 5.

³¹ 'Scam in 2016 Police recruitment', 21 October 2016, available at, <http://kanglaonline.com/2016/10/scam-in-2016-police-recruitment/>. Accessed on 20 Nov 2016.

³² 'Development Issues in hill Districts of Manipur with special reference to Tamenglong', Dissertation submitted by Col V Vidyashankar at Army War College.

part of Tamenglong. The burden of providing banking services in the entire district is shouldered by these two banks only. The money to replenish the ATM at UBI, Tamenglong is brought in a helicopter by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Guwahati, two to three times a year, under heavy protection, due to fear of robbery and attacks by various insurgent groups if transported by road. Hence the ATM dries up soon and people are left at the mercy of travelling long distances to either Imphal or to Jiribam to access a nearby ATM.

Absence of Industries³³

In Tamenglong there are no industries worth mentioning. The old practice of cottage industries such as weaving and handicrafts fading off. There are two reasons for this is lack of capital and uneconomical mode of production. Besides, the tribal's who live in the hill areas cannot take loans from banks as they do not have land 'patta'. This may seem illogical in knowing that all other tribals living in North-East India, except for the Manipuri tribals, can take loans. There are also, no large scale Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) units in the district. There are no medium sized industry either. Fruit products, handloom and handicraft items, cane and bamboo products, wood craft items are the major exportable items. The trend of industrial growth in the district is declining and there are no industry association in the district. Since, there is no large or medium units and PSU, there is no scope for vendorisation. However, the issues that concern industries are³⁴:

- Lack of access of credit to existing and prospective entrepreneurs.
- Lack of support from the state Government/other agencies for industrial development.
- Lack of skilled manpower and trained hands.
- Unavailability of power.
- Transportation and communication problem.
- Used of obsolete technology.

Taxation and Extortion by Undergrounds

Illegal taxation and extortion by underground groups is rampant in the district. Police is present only in the district headquarters and sub division headquarters but lack the strength to enforce the rule of law. The common

³³Ibid, p 87.

³⁴Industry at a Glance, Brief Industrial Profile of Tamenglong District (Manipur), Government Of India MSME, Page 10-12.

people are therefore burdened with illegal and illegitimate demands of the insurgent groups. All developmental works are illegally taxed and therefore the work either remains incomplete or is sub-standard, further giving rise to the perception of bias and non-inclusive policies of the government.

Overall Assessment

The skewed and non-inclusive nature of growth in Manipur and Tamenglong in particular is evident from the issues highlighted in the previous sections. The developmental deficiencies are glaring and require to be addressed on priority being basic needs sectors. It is evident that the people of Tamenglong face a number of basic problems. Their under development and poverty is reflected in several forms - illiteracy, ill health, unemployment, failure of commercial development, lack of basic facilities such as, drinking water, electricity, hospitals, communication, and general development. Absence of proper administration and police influence in the remote areas, further have compounded the problem. Fundamentally these problem areas include:

- Absence of infrastructural communication system like good roads, transport and postal service and mass media;
- Uncertain tribal land ownership system;
- Un-productivity of agriculture;
- Lack of power supply;
- Lack of marketing facilities;
- Absence of adequate social services like medical and health, water supply and housing;
- The absence of well organised bodies for people's direct participation in the developmental works³⁵.

Strategy for Development

Strategy

Having highlighted relevant facts through this study, it would be pertinent to say that this beautiful state in general and Tamenglong district in particular has immense potential for development. The creative genius of the people are reflected in their daily lives. It may be clothes, jewellery, the arts, the handicrafts, the music, the dances and the

³⁵Ibid, p 68.

affectionate and caring way of living their family life. We all know that in a developing country like India, money plays a vital role. However, the difference lies in how the money should be utilized for development. It is very difficult to get loans in Manipur from the Government or other financial institutions without greasing the palms of the functionaries concerned. And more often than that, the beneficiaries are persons who do not deserve to get loans in the first place. Genuine entrepreneurs are trapped in a vicious circle as financial institutions are very reluctant to advance further loans. According to the official Manipur website, Tamenglong district is claimed to be a major tourist hub with many tourist spots. However, the situation on ground reveals a totally different picture. There is no lodge which is worth a decent stay and the condition of roads is well known. This reveals the stark contrast between the claims made by the government and the existing reality.

Some Thoughts on Developmental Strategy³⁶

The United Nations Declaration on social progress envisages the following:

- Effective participation of all sections of society in the preparation and execution of national plans;
- Equitable distribution of national income;
- Acceleration of the process of industrialisation with due regard to social aspects;
- Legislative and administrative measures to ensure political and civil rights and full utilisation of economic, social and cultural rights;
- Democratically based institutional reforms including land reforms; and
- Protection and improvement of the human environment.

The strategy therefore must comprehensively address the grass roots level in a broad based manner so that the benefits of growth and development reach each strata of the society without any discrimination based on ethnic or religious lines.

Need for Grass-Root Planning³⁷

Planning is a complex and technical exercise; it involves several stages such as identification of problems, formulation of objectives,

³⁶Prof M Horam, *The Rising Manipur*, Manas Publications, p 71.

³⁷Ibid p 89.

determination of strategy and priorities, taxation of targets, allocation of resources, formulation of programmes and projects and their evaluation. National leaders have attempted several times to introduce planning at the district levels. But this practice is non-existent in the tribal areas of Manipur. The planning at district and block levels is totally non-existent.

Thus progress and development in the tribal areas is slow and funds allocated for the tribals do not percolate down to them. For inclusive development, there is therefore a need for decentralising the planning and implementation of developmental projects down to districts, block and even village levels. The Local Village Authorities and Various Socio-Political Organisations have a very strong hold and influence in the society especially in the Hills within the tribal community.

Therefore, any developmental activity being undertaken with the concurrence of such bodies is relatively convenient to implement. Moreover, such works are also generally exempted from heavy illegal taxation and therefore easier to implement.

Encourage and Exploit Tribal System of Governance³⁸

There must be people's participation and involvement in implementing tribal schemes and projects. All developmental work must be rooted through the village level and village authorities, the beneficiaries must belong to a deserving family after being decided by the villagers. The State and the District planning body should include members from local bodies and the existing system should be recast. Before finalising any programme or project of the area, views of the local people, village councilors, professional experts, women and youth must be taken. People's participation should be there at every stage of planning, right from identification of problems, formulation of schemes, strategy setting, monitoring and review, and not only at the time of plan finalisation. For an effective result in Tamenglong, there is a need to exploit the extremely efficient and functional tribal system of governance in the rural areas by formally co-joining it with the existing state administration at block level. This will enhance the effectiveness of the social welfare schemes and make the expenditure of Central and State funds more accountable.

Presence of Civil Administration in Remote Areas

The absence of civil administration functionaries at the block, tehsil or

³⁸Ibid p 88-90.

sub-division levels has contributed towards general apathy and feeling of helplessness amongst the tribal people of the hills. There is an urgent need for concerted efforts on the part of the political establishment to ensure presence of civil administration officials down to the grass roots level so that effective implementation of numerous social sector welfare schemes can be ensured. With the creation of seven new districts in December 2016 by the State Government, the total number of districts in Manipur has risen to 16. As a result, the erstwhile sub divisions have now become districts and have been posted with the relevant administrative heads by the State Government (ie. Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police etc). This move should boost the development process as the administrative interventions will be more focused over a limited area now. The civil administration needs to capitalise and deliver better and reach farther. It now remains to be seen whether the move will be a catalyst to bring out speedier reforms and development for the state and in the same vein, an equitable development to the hill districts as well. The decision for the creation of these seven districts was generally welcomed by the Meitiei and Kuki communities, however, it was vehemently protested against by the majority of Naga tribal Community led by United Naga Council (UNC), the apex Naga Civil Organization. It highlights the necessity to address the apprehensions and aspirations of the Nagas of Manipur for larger peace and prosperity in the state. Provision of Basic Amenities to the locals is another important aspect in which the civil administration can contribute. The civil administration will have to ensure provision of basic amenities to the people from remote areas. Such steps will go a long way in addressing the allegations of preferential treatment to the people in the Valley region and help in assuaging the ever increasing sense of deprivation and neglect amongst the tribals.

Equitable Allocation of Funds³⁹

Only a meagre share of the State funds is allocated for the hill areas. Of the total state yearly budget outlay, a mere 27 percent goes to the development of the tribal areas, supposedly keeping in mind the density of population. 73 percent of the Annual State Budget outlay is spent entirely on the valley people who live in around 10 square miles. This perception needs to be urgently addressed by having transparent allocation policies of funds, based on available and existing infrastructure

³⁹Ibid p 90.

so that equitable development of remote areas is undertaken. Keeping in mind the geographical realities and remoteness of area, there is a case for more allotment of fund to Hill Areas particularly Tamenglong districts.

Awareness Campaign

No serious effort to create awareness among tribal people has ever been conducted. Mass education and awareness camps in the tribal areas are urgently needed, especially in the interior parts of the villages. More educational institutions if established, especially colleges, including those offering science and professional streams, will ensure higher percentage of locally educated manpower. Such programmes in the form of seminars, awareness camps and education need to percolate down into the tribal villages. Security forces deployed in the remote areas can contribute in awareness campaigns immensely. Such people friendly activities by the security forces, will also help in waning away people's support to the militants thereby facilitating peace and prosperity.

Industrialization and Encouraging Trade of Local Produces

The Industrial and Investment Policy of Manipur, 2013⁴⁰ (IIPM) as notified by the Commerce and Industries Department, Government of Manipur, lays down the roadmap for pushing the small, medium and large scale industries in the state with focus on all round economic development, improve living standards, create employment opportunities, skill development, generate self-employment opportunities and optimal utilisation of both natural and physical resources. The policy also states the various subsidies for setting up industries in Manipur. Though the state government has spelt out its strategy in the IIPM, the same is required to be translated on ground with time bound implementation and requires reiteration since its relevance is all the more essential in the present context of development in hill districts⁴¹.

The local economy of Tamenglong is primarily agrarian. However, there is adequate scope of commerce in the fields of horticulture and handicraft. Focused initiative to encourage small scale food processing facilities and handicraft marketing avenues will tremendously bolster the local economy and reduce its dependence on grants and subsidies. This shall

⁴⁰The Industrial and Investment Policy of Manipur, 2013 (IIPM), Commerce and Industries Department, Government of Manipur, available at, <http://dcimanipur.gov.in/MSME/Industrial%20Policy%202013%20with%20Notification.pdf>, Accessed on November 20, 2016.

⁴¹ 'Development Issues in hill Districts of Manipur with special reference to Tamenglong', Dissertation submitted by Col V Vidyashankar at Army War College.

not only address the concern of unemployment but also facilitate the overall growth of the society. At least one bank each must be established in each sub division with multiple Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) to cater to the banking needs of the remote areas.

Direct Buying from Farmers

The recent push by Niti Aayog for a legislation to allow direct buying of agriculture produce from farmers, a move meant to help farmers and buyers better prices and do away with middlemen is a step in the right direction. Accordingly, the Government of India is planning to introduce the model Agriculture Produce and Livestock marketing (Promotion and Facilitation) Act 2017. This act has been designed for farmers to sell their produce under the single tender license, single levy of taxes and electronic auctioning of crops produces⁴². This act will certainly help the farmers in the inaccessible areas of Manipur. Climatic conditions in Tamenglong are favorable for horticulture and it is known as the ‘Orange Bowl’ of the state. It hosts an annual festival to demonstrate the variety of oranges it produces. During this time of the year, farmers celebrate their harvest by organizing the Orange festival. Over 300 orange cultivators exhibited different varieties of oranges to attract the visitors, including foreign tourists⁴³. Direct purchase of these oranges and facilitation of transportation will benefit farmers immensely.

Extension of Skill Development to Hill Areas

“The Northeast youth are blessed with natural talent and their unique feature is that they have the capacity to excel both in academic curriculum as well as activities requiring physical attributes. While some of the best faculty in leading Universities of Delhi and other metropolis comprise of young scholars from the Northeast, some of the best international-level sportsmen and medalists also hail from the same region”, stated Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State (MoS), Prime Minister’s Office (PMO).⁴⁴ This is also true in case of Manipur in both the hills and valley areas. There is an urgent need to tap this unique talent and prevent them from joining militant outfits. Skill India is an initiative of

⁴² “Niti Back Direct Buying From Farmers No Plan to Tax Agri income, Says Jaitley, Pressreaders, April 27, 2017, available at <https://www.pressreader.com/india/economic-times/20170427/282226600615342>, Accessed on May 20, 2017.

⁴³ “Manipur's potential in horticulture showcased at Orange Festival” Business Standard, December 18, 2015, available at http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/manipur-s-potential-in-horticulture-showcased-at-orange-festival-115121800512_1.html. Accessed on November 20, 2016

⁴⁴ “Northeast Youth Blessed With Natural Talents, Dr Jitendera” Daily Excelsior.com March 01, 2017 available at <http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/northeast-youth-blessed-natural-talent-dr-jitendra/> Accessed on December 15, 2016.

the Government of India which has been launched to empower the youth with skill sets which make them more employable and more productive in their work environment. 'Skill India' offers courses across 40 sectors in the country which are aligned to the standards recognised by both, the industry and the government under the National Skill Qualification Framework. The Ministry for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has been formed to focus on enhancing employability of the youth through skill development.⁴⁵ The opening of a regional institute for skill development inside Imphal College under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurs, which is the first such institute in the North-eastern region will be of great advantage for the educated unemployed youths⁴⁶. There is an urgent need to extend skill development institutes to the hill areas also. The opening of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) in Tamenglong will be a big step to bring about inclusiveness and employment opportunities to the youth in remote areas.

Deployment and Empowerment of Police

The police force requires focused training and capacity building in terms of their numbers as well as weapons holding, for it to become effective. There is an urgent need to have adequate deployment areas in remote villages in sufficient numbers so as to be able to thwart the illegal intimidation of the villagers by the insurgent groups. This will also provide safe and secure environment for the civil administration officials to function fearlessly and will help in timely implementation of developmental projects on ground. Peace will attract prosperity and inclusive development.

Measures to Check Illegal Taxation and Extortion

The scourge of illegal taxation and extortion is thriving in the state, owing to lack of the government's will to act against the menace. It is commonly believed that the money generated indirectly finds its way to the political and administrative establishment. However, for ensuring that development and growth reaches the remote areas, the government will have to display a strong political will to eradicate the menace of illegal taxation and extortion. In addition to effective policing, there is a need to

⁴⁵ "Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship" available at http://www.skilldevelopment.gov.in/central_ministries.html, accessed on December 14, 2015.

⁴⁶ 'Skill development institute will help unemployed youths', Imphal Free Press, April 15, 2017, available at <http://ifp.co.in/page/items/31625/skill-development-institute-will-help-unemployed-youths>, Accessed on December 15, 2015.

identify and eradicate the system of institutionalized extortion that has evolved over the years. The common man and government officials will need to display courage to stand against the illegal and illegitimate demands of the insurgent groups, however, for that to happen, the state must provide an adequately safe and secure environment to the public.

Higher and Professional Education Facilities

The lack of adequate higher learning facilities in Tamenglong is churning out the unemployed, educated youth who are the perfect breeding ground for the insurgent outfits. To address the allegations of bias against the hill districts and also to address this rising number of educated unemployed, there is a need to establish institutions of higher and technical learning in all the hill districts of Manipur.

Focused Infrastructure Development in the Hills

The infrastructure development in the hill areas require a firm push. The works have to be identified in consultation with the local population and implemented in a 'mission mode', so as to complete them in an acceptable time frame. The focus of such works must remain towards provisioning of basic amenities to the common man and ensure that needs of the majority of the society are met. For development to make inroads into the hill districts of Manipur, it is imperative that adequate connectivity and communications infrastructure be developed. Time bound implementation of road construction projects must be ensured so that the benefits of growth may reach the remotest corner of the state at the earliest. Prioritization of execution of projects for development of infrastructure will be imperative for inclusive development.

Trans-Asian Railway Line

The Trans-Asian Railway project is essential in transforming India's 'Look East policy' into 'Act East' and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has pushed for it strongly. Funds are not holding back the drive, the government has allotted Rs 1,397 crore for the Jiribam-Tupul segment and the implementing agency, the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR), is comfortable with it. The plan is to extend the railway line from Imphal to Moreh on the Manipur-Myanmar border and further from Moreh to Tamu. The first phase of the Jiribam-Tupul-Imphal broad gauge rail project in Manipur is likely to be completed by 2019. The law and order situation, extortion and abduction by the militant organizations are certainly

hampering this project⁴⁷. With the Imphal–Jiribam railway project passing through the Tamenglong District, it is going to play a major role in connecting the local population with the rest of India and improving economic conditions in the region. It will also reduce the time and the cost factor of essential items reaching the local population.

Increased Representation of Tribals in State Assembly

The delimitation of Assembly seats based on the latest census must be implemented immediately so that the tribals get proportional political representation. Currently the ratio of representation per constituency in valley area is about 25-30000 voters; while in the hills there is an average of 35-40,000 voters per Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA). The vacancies in the bureaucracy arises due to shortage of Scheduled Tribe employees. A special recruitment drive must be conducted in the hill districts to fill these vacancies, thereby addressing the concerns of disproportionate representation of the tribals in the bureaucracy.

Unbiased Implementation of Social Welfare Schemes of Central and State Government

There are a number of social welfare schemes launched by the Central and State government for the benefit of the marginalized sections of the society. These schemes are not being implemented properly in the hills due to multiple impediments. Lack of adequate infrastructure, government officials and police in remote areas are major reasons for non-implementation of such schemes. The state government must ensure that adequate administrative functionaries are posted to the remote hill districts for implementing such schemes.

Focus on Governance and Eradication of Corruption

Core issues of state governance and corruption need to be addressed through a determined political will. There is a need to follow the development models of states like Gujarat for industrialization and Bihar for social welfare. This strategy should involve:-

- a. Political will to change the existing working ethos of the state.

⁴⁷Subir Bhaumik, “Trans-Asian Railway Project Badly Hit by Extortion, Abductions” The Quint, available at <https://www.thequint.com/opinion/2016/03/24/trans-asian-railway-project-badly-hit-by-extortion-abductions> , Accessed on November 20, 2016.

- b. Harsh punitive actions against corrupt officials
- c. Posting the best talent civil services officers to Manipur for Officer on Special Duty (OSD) tenures of five-six years through a special incentive scheme and provide protection to honest officers.
- d. Make concerted efforts to remove the backlog of all pending legal cases through fast track courts. The judicial system which is almost nonexistent in the district needs to be set up, as villagers are losing lakhs of rupees, in fighting judicial cases in Imphal.
- e. Exploit the Central Government aid in carrying out maximum development activities in a transparent manner by involving the tribal system of governance. The expenditure monitoring would involve:
 - (i) Institutionalized e-governance and e-payments,
 - (ii) Audit of government aid,
 - (iii) Empowered group from all tribes to monitor aid,
 - (iv) Kind in lieu of cash.
 - (v) Involve tribal system of governance for monitoring.
 - (vi) Opposition to be made stake holders,
 - (vii) Punitive actions for violations with publicity.
 - (viii) Strong Right to Information (RTI) to enhance transparency.
- f. The funds for the central government sponsored welfare schemes may be directly credited to the respective hill development authorities or village authorities for an interim period of twenty years in order to address the concerns of the hill people regarding their perception of bias and neglect by the state government.
- g. Audit and Accountability of Government Projects including Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA)⁴⁸. Numerous social sector welfare schemes like MNREGA must be implemented in a manner that the fruits of development reach the marginalized members of the society. The village authorities and the councils must be subjected to central audit and

⁴⁸"Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act" (or, MGNREGA), is an Indian labour law and social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work'. It aims to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

selective surveys must be institutionalised for ascertaining the correct implementation of the schemes and proper distribution of funds as mandated in these schemes.

Address Ethnic Divide through Inclusiveness

Address of the differences due to ethnic divide by encouraging interaction of all communities at the work place as well as socially and work for inclusiveness can be achieved through the following measures:

- a. Invoking proportional vacancies for all job opportunities at Centre and State level.
- b. Focusing the state towards inclusive development.
- c. Encouraging the media to give impetus to more relevant issues of the state and ignore ethnic differences through electronic and print means. Media should be encouraged to take up issues courageously.
- d. The State must ensure equitable opportunities to people in hills as compared to people in the valleys.
- e. The infrastructure development of remote hill districts must be undertaken at par with the Imphal Valley, thereby achieving faster integration of remote inaccessible areas initiating a feeling of inclusiveness amongst the hill people.
- f. Distribution of State's fund should be done taking into account the following parameters: the population (50 percent), area (25 percent) and distance from the capital (25 percent)
- g. The Central and State governments must ensure unbiased and effective implementation of social sector schemes including reservations for tribals so that their equitable representation may be achieved leading to inclusive growth and harmonisation.
- h. Improvement of Banking Facilities - at least one bank must be established in each sub division with multiple ATMs to cater to the banking needs of the remote areas.

Conclusion

The issue of non-inclusive nature of growth in Manipur has multiple facets and is characterized by a deep ethnic divide and allegations of bias against tribals by the Meitei dominated state government. Such a complex

and divisive problem, therefore, throws a challenge to any strategist, researcher and academician who are attempting to study the complex issues. The causes of the problem are complex and are an interesting facet of study to dwell into, for conflict resolution. Finally, the world is becoming a global theatre where ethnic fault lines are fading away and is giving way to a more inclusive and hopeful future. The fractured societies in Manipur require such inclusive economic development. Given a fair chance the youth would definitely be ready to forget the dark past and move ahead with their counterparts towards a better and bright tomorrow.

Image Source:

- <http://tamenglong.nic.in>

About the VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

The Vivekananda International Foundation is an independent non-partisan institution that conducts research and analysis on domestic and international issues, and offers a platform for dialogue and conflict resolution. Some of India's leading practitioners from the fields of security, military, diplomacy, government, academia and media fields have come together to generate ideas and stimulate action on national security issues.

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