

CONFLICT AND CHILD SOLDIERS MANIPUR CASE

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PREFACE

Manipur, a small state in the north eastern most frontier of India, nestled in the eastern flanks of the Himalayas abounds in natural beauty and biodiversity. A mini India with rich cultural diversity and heritage of more than 34 different ethnic groups and with a history of more than 2000 years old, it was once a princely state till it merged with the Union of India on 21st September, 1949 (effective from October 15, 1949) and eventually got the statehood status in 1972.

Nearly 2 decades after its merger with the Union of India, Manipur started getting embroiled in conflict with a number of insurgent groups. Insurgency started from the 1960s with valley based groups like UNLF, PLA, PREPAK, KCP, KYKL etc the agenda and demands basically to secede from the Indian Union and restore the pre-merger status. Over the years several other groups especially hill based Naga groups, Kuki groups and valley based Muslim groups each with their set of demands and agenda started raising war against the government pegging the total figure of Insurgent groups operating in this small state from the 1960s to the early 2010s to an astounding more than 60 which in itself is quite a phenomenon. With the purpose to quell the insurgency, government of India adopted several measures including one of the most contentious issue of imposition of AFSPA which facilitated the use of central and paramilitary forces for cracking down on insurgents. In the process several lives both of insurgent cadres and security

forces have been lost due to the offensive launched by the insurgents and counter insurgency operations by the security forces. Lateral hazards of the conflict on the populace in the form of civilian deaths and casualties have been an issue raising concerns and voices from human rights activists, Civil Society Organizations etc.

Though much mention has been made in the intellectual, social and media circle about the attendant manifestations and ramifications of the conflict like human rights violations, security excesses, fake encounters etc, a fallout of conflict in Manipur which finds least diligence in the general societal discourse is the extent and magnitude of children of the state getting inducted in the armed outfits for the purpose of fighting wars. The phenomenon of child soldiering though not recent has been grabbing attention of the international community after it has been addressed by the world body like United Nations leading to inclusion in the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child(1989). Subsequent to this development, various humanitarian organizations over the world have started addressing the phenomenon. Considering the present global perspective and the growing concern about the impact of conflict on children, the situation in Manipur, a geographically and geo-politically miniscule State in the map of the world and home to more than 60 insurgent groups (1960s to early 2010s) definitely renders it a subject to be studied and analysed to ultimately come up with solutions and remedies.

Till the early 2010s for lack of awareness and non-reportage, the child soldier issue did not find any mention in societal discourse and people, even the parents of affected children did not voice against any act of child recruitment by the non –state actors. Fear of threats and repercussions from the side of the insurgents perhaps gagged the mouths of the public. However in the early 2012 heart rending episodes of children being abducted and lured into the fold of the insurgents started appearing in the media especially electronic media and that shook the collective conscience of the Manipuri society. With the existence of the phenomenon highlighted an urge to go deep into the issue and unearth the facts played the trigger for the research. Far more a reason for taking up a study in the area is the fact that the issue got to do with children who are considered naive, innocent, uninformed, whose world is meant to be of school, childhood bliss, fun, and laughter and whose tender hands are to play with toys and not guns. My belief of conflict situation in Manipur having afflicted immense damage to the children of the state by way of child soldiering was all the more reinforced by the news reports and footages that I came across though intensive research findings and publications could not be traced in respect of Manipur state.

Exposed to an array of policing issues by virtue of my job as a police officer it had always been my aspiration to contribute in the formulation of measures to scale down crimes and offences. This particular study, which is so relevant with the conflict situation, I felt,

was something that needed to be taken up though it was imagined it would certainly not be without difficulties and impediments. My convictions were consolidated more by the help extended by Sardar Vallabhai Patel National Police Academy (SVPNPA) in the form of fellowship and the unstinted support and guidance of Professor Amar Yumnam of Manipur University, my guide for the project. With the approval of the research proposal by National Police Academy (NPA) there was no looking back and I embarked on extensive literature survey followed by secondary data collection. The data which were rather sensitive and to which I could get access were examined with all professionalism and solely utilized for establishing the magnitude of child soldiering in Manipur and its various aspects. Direct access to the insurgent camps across the border was not considered in view of constraints like security reasons, scattering of camps across the border, uncertainty of the leadership coming up with exact facts and figures because of their denial mode and set standard of recruitment age in contradiction of the International laws etc. The cadres at the time of their surrender or signing the peace agreement were very much adults but this was immaterial. What counted was the age of their joining the insurgent groups and the many revelations they came up with in the course of interview and personal interaction has been good and substantial enough to build up the account of conflict and child soldiering in this part of the world. The account of each of the former child soldiers is a narration of different circumstances under which they got into the outfit and valuable deductions in terms of

trend, Recruitment mode, induction process and activities, etc could be made from the findings. An interplay of several causes and factors where the State, the community and the whole system are accountable have been identified in the course of the study.

The findings of the research has been framed in this report in 6 different chapters. Chapter-1 of this project highlights the issue of conflict and child soldiers, the concept of child soldiers itself along with an elaboration of child soldier stories in conflict ridden countries of the world. Chapter-2 gives an account of the conflict picture in Manipur with its several nuances and dimensions. In Chapter-3 the magnitude and extent of child soldiering by the Armed outfits in Manipur as deduced from various data sources is detailed. Chapter-4 focuses on milieu of child soldiering in Manipur, the factors and causes responsible for the menace. Chapter-5 gives a picture of the general psyche of the people of Manipur in the backdrop of conflict, the various recruitment modes and the revelations of the child soldiers. Chapter-6 enumerates the measures and interventions needed at various levels to combat the menace of child soldiering in Manipur

The phenomenon has been existing in Manipur. Damage is continuing. Only it has not been noticed and addressed. Reasons could be many. But how long can the matter be ignored or unaddressed is the moot question. Based on the key factors identified from the inferences drawn from the findings the recommendations are being formulated with the hope for getting it considered for

incorporation in State policies and plans. A thousand miles journey starts with the first single step and I do believe that this project could always be the start of intensive study in an area of huge significance in international security like child soldiering and which equally could save the children of our state from the menace.

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In the course of my work to study the phenomenon of child soldiering by the Armed Outfits in Manipur, an issue which slowly, silently and unnoticingly is affecting the children of the State, several individuals with their much higher intellect and thoughts have extended tremendous help, encouragement and support. Without these helps, the challenges and hurdles of research and data collection could not have been overcome.

Firstly, I thank the Almighty for giving me the health, zeal and enthusiasm to take up this study on child soldiers in Manipur which could to a certain extent help in giving awareness to the people about the issue and for reference for the policy makers. I thank the Sardar Vallabhai Patel National Police Academy, Hyderabad for extending me the fellowship to take up this research project and further facilitating registration for PhD Degree in the Manipur University.

It is with a deep sense of gratitude that I acknowledge the unstinted support, guidance and supervision of Prof. Amar Yumnam, Economics Department, Manipur University throughout my research. His timely assessment and inputs on critical areas of the research has helped me in steering the research in the right direction and giving it a consolidated form.

I extend my gratitude to Shri O. Ibobi Singh, Ex-Chief Minister, Manipur and Shri Gaikhangam, Ex-Deputy Chief Minister and Home Minister, Manipur for according the Government approval to the research. The prompt help extended by DGP, Manipur, and Special DGP, Intelligence, Manipur in terms of providing me data pertaining to the demobilization schemes of the Government is highly appreciated.

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My endeavour to make my work an inclusive study incorporating all the relevant departments, NGOs and agencies have been facilitated by the kind help and support extended by Director, Social Welfare Department, Manipur, Principal Magistrates of JJB Imphal West, JJB Imphal East, JJB Thoubal, JJB Chandel, Probation Officer, Social Welfare Department, Programme Officer (ICPS), Social Welfare Department, Superintendent, Observation Home, Takyel, Superintendent, Health Integrated Ministry Observation Home, Churachandpur, Chairpersons of Child Welfare Committees of Imphal West and Thoubal districts, Chairperson, Child Line Manipur etc.

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I also thank my seniors and colleagues in my department who have boosted my morale in taking up the challenging task. The help and support extended by my subordinate staffs in the course of data collection during their leave days is highly appreciated and acknowledged.

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Dated:

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Place:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. AFSPA : Armed Forces Special Powers Act.
2. BMT : Basic Military Training
3. BSF : Border Security Force
4. CID (SB) : Criminal Investigation Department (Special Branch)
5. CKRF : Chin Kuki Revolutionary Front
6. HA : Hindu Army
7. HPC : Hmar People's Convention
8. HRA : Hmar Revolutionary Army
9. HRF : Hmar Revolutionary Front
10. IGAR(S) : Inspector General Assam Rifles (South)
11. IKA : Ireipak Kanba Lup
12. INF : Islamic National Front
13. IPRA : Indigenous People's Revolutionary Alliance
14. IRF : Islamic Revolutionary Front
15. JJB : Juvenile Justice Board
16. KCP : Kangleipak Communist Party
17. KDF : Kuki Defence Force
18. KIA : Kachin Intelligent Army
19. KIA : Kuki Independent Army
20. KIF : Kuki Independent Force
21. KKK : Kangleipak Kanba Lup
22. KLA : Kuki Liberation Army
23. KLF : Kuki Liberation Force

24. KLO : Kangleipak Liberation Organisation
25. KLO : Kuki Liberation Organization
26. KNF : Kuki National Front
27. KNLF : Kuki National Liberation
28. KNO : Kuki National Organisation
29. KNV : Kuki National Volunteers
30. KPLA/KPLF : Kuki People's Liberation Army / Kuki People's Liberation Front
31. KRA : Front Kuki Revolutionary Army
32. KREDO : Kom Rem Development Organisation
33. KRF : Kuki Revolutionary Front
34. KRPC : Kom Rem People's Convention
35. KSF : Kuki Security Force
36. KTU : Kuki Tribal Union
37. KUFO : Kuki Unification Frontal Organisation
38. KYKL : Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup -
39. KYKL(MDF) : Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (Manipur Democratic Front)
40. MCPM : Manipur Communist Party- Maoist
41. MILF : Moro Islamic Liberation Front.
42. MLTA : Manipur Liberation Tiger Army
43. MNRF : Manipur Naga Revolutionary Front
44. MOU : Memorandum of Understanding
45. NEMF : North East Minority Front
46. NPCM : Naga People's Council Manipur
47. NRFM : National Revolutionary Front of Manipur

48. NSCN (IM) : National Socialist Council of Nagaland
(Issac-Muivah)
49. NSCN(K) : National Socialist Council of agaland
(Khaplang)
50. OGW : Over Ground Worker
51. PRA : Pakan Revolutionary Army
52. PRA : People's Republican Army
53. PREPAK : People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak
54. PULF : Peoples United Liberation Front
55. RGDI : Real Gross Domestic Income.
56. RJC : revolutionary Joint Committee
57. RPF : Revolutionary People's Front
58. SMO : Social Movement Organizations
59. SoO : Suspension of Operation
60. TPLA : Thadou People's Liberation Army
61. UILA : United Islamic Liberation
62. UILA : United Islamic Liberation Army
63. UIRA : United Islamic Revolutionary Army
64. UKLF :United Kuki Liberation Front
65. UKRA : United Komrem Revolutionary Army
66. UMLA : United Minority Liberation Army.
67. UNLF : United National Liberation Front
68. UNPC : United Naga People's Convention
69. UPF : United People's Front
70. UPF : United People's Front
71. UPPK : United People's Party of Kangleipak.

72. UPRF : United People's Revolutionary Front
73. USRA : United Socialist Revolutionary Army
74. UTLA : United Tribal Liberation Army
75. ZDV : Zomi Democratic Volunteers
76. ZPC/ZPA : Zomi People's Convention/ Zomi People's
Army
77. ZRA : Zomi Revolutionary Army
78. ZRV : Zomi Revolutionary Volunteers
79. ZTF : Zeliangrong Tiger Force
80. ZUF : Zeliangrong United Front

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Chapter 1

CHILD SOLDIERS AND CONFLICT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The issue of child soldiers in conflict raises so many questions as to why some non-state groups recruit children and what could be the factors responsible for the differences in rebels' recruitment of minors. Although there are many historical instances of use of children as soldiers, "the increasing use of child soldiers came with the end of the Cold War and the increasing numbers of intra-state wars in the 1990s." (Vautravers, 2009, p. 99). Vera Achvarina (2010) argued that there are four factors which can help explain the difference in rebels' recruitment of minors. The first two are related to the armed group specific characteristics of fighting capacity relative to the government and the scope of belligerents' territorial access and control within and across the conflict country borders. Both of these factors positively affect the insurgency's propensity to recruit children, especially for armed groups that are unpopular among their constituency. The third and fourth contextual and individual factors of poverty and presence of ethnic persecution in a country also have a positive influence on the outcome of child recruitment especially for popular insurgencies.

A dissertation on "Child soldiers, Armed Conflict and Tactical Innovations" by Robert M Tynes has dealt on various aspects of why youths/ young children are being militarized and it goes much beyond the emotional appeal of the ill-informed, irrational, wild child or tiny victim image.

To account about the historical aspects of Child soldiering phenomenon, children have been used in wars before the modern era, but a shift has occurred

in contemporary conflicts. As Singer (2001) points out medieval knights had young servants to handle and care for their weapons, and the Germans enlisted children for the Hitler Jugend Force during World War II. But these are not standard practices for most armed forces. Rosen (2005) finds an abundance of Children used in battle in the 1800s. He states that the American Civil War was a war of boy soldiers, including many in their early teens and even younger served in the Union and confederate armies. There is evidence that children as young as 8 years old had enlisted in this. Nevertheless, the widespread use of child fighters is essentially a recent innovation in warfare and much more prominent after World War II. The use of children to gain leverage in a conflict becomes apparent during the Vietnam War; it then travels through the practices of the Khmer Rouge and on into numerous insurgencies in South East Asia, Africa and South America. In Columbia today child soldiers are nicknamed little bells by the military which uses them as expendable sentries and little bees by the Guerrillas, because they sting their enemies before they know they are under attack. On the African Continent, the problem is extremely pervasive. Child soldiers are either assisting the insurgency or the government (for a recent report on the state use of children as soldiers, see Child Soldiers International, 2012) or both, in nearly every one of its wars (Singer 2001-2002, p-430). And in Afghanistan, the Taliban has fine-tuned the practice, forming cadres of suicide bombers of children of ages 12 to 18 years. They were trained in weapons handling, preparing of suicide jackets and ambush attacks, as explained by one Pakistani military official, and were promised a place in heaven –a land of virgin and rivers made of milk and honey (Damon, 2010; Tynes, 2011).

Few research work on Child soldiers like the one taken up by Achvarina and Reich (2006) utilizes a triangulation of methods performing a regression

analysis of armed conflicts from 1987 to 2007, process tracing the diffusion of norms through insurgency and terrorist networks and analyzing historical and interview data from troops, adult fighters as well as child soldiers in Sierra Leone. The research was taken up with a view to debunk some of the more common myths that have been generated from past research as well as provide clearer explanations for what might be driving the use of children in battle. To break the myth about the issue of child soldiering and poverty, attempt is made in the research for comparison of RGDI (Real Gross Domestic Income) of 107 armed conflicts, 83 of which involved child soldiers and 24 did not. The comparison shows that states that had armed conflicts, both for child soldier use and non- child soldier use, sit in the bottom third of the RGDI world ranking. Poverty only appears to be more closely correlated with armed conflict than with child soldier use (Tynes, 2011). The myth about all child soldiers being drugged as for drug use and child soldiers, and insurgencies using cocaine and amphetamines to motivate the young to fight have also been examined. When analyzing all armed conflicts in Africa from 1960-2006, Tynes (2007) found that drugs were utilized in less than 50% of the States where children were involved in battle. Drug use tended to parallel illicit drug trade routes. So more insurgencies in West Africa tended to access drugs for their troops because cocaine flowed from South America through West Africa and on into Europe. When cocaine was readily available insurgencies were more likely to access it and feed it to their young fighters.

The generalization made about child soldiers that it takes place in Africa and that it is mostly guerrilla troops that train and deploy young combatants was also deeply analysed. While looking at 83 armed conflicts 6 that had child fighters(1987-2007), a regional spread of the phenomenon was discovered,

Africa contain 26 of the conflicts (31.3%), Asia has 26 (31.3%), Europe's share is 11(13.3%), the middle East has 11(13.3%) and North and South America make up the remaining 9(10.8%) armed conflicts with child soldier use. An analysis of opposition versus government child soldier use also helps to clarify misperceptions. When children are used on the battlefield (83 armed conflicts), the breakdown is as follows:

- a. Used by government only - 13.3% (11 numbers),
- b. Used by opposition only - 36.1% (30 numbers),
- c. Used by both sides - 50.6% (42 numbers).

So, governments used child soldiers 63.9% of the conflicts and the opposition used in 86.1%. The results demonstrate that many governments are culpable when it comes to having youths in the army. (Tynes, *ibid.*)

The Tactical Innovation explanation developed by Robert M. Tynes seeks to tackle the question of why children are used in battle. More than just the instant answer that more troops means more fighting power, the issue becomes more complicated if we consider that use of child soldier has not been the norm until the 20th century. Rosen (2005) counters this view by asserting that it is prevalent throughout history. He further states that the modern shift is that previously battle was seen as ennobling children whereas today battle is seen as doing damage, making the child an abused and exploited victim of war. His arguments are not meant to downplay the brutality of war, but to refocus the attention on the cultural constructs that are being masked as well as reformed. Part of his point is to insert international level forces into the equation. The problem of child soldiers is part of a global politics of age in which humanitarian and human rights groups, sovereign states and the United Nations

and its administrative agencies battle over the rights and duties of children, over the issue of who is a child and who is a child soldier. The child soldier domain is part of a contested domain of international politics in which childhood serves as a proxy for other political interests.

With Rosen's argument it becomes important to consider that the constructs of the child are not only being leveraged by insurgencies and state militaries but also by humanitarian political entrepreneurs in NGOs and Intergovernmental Organizations. It is a valuable argument because it dissipates the normative bias that surrounds the issue. The project taken up by Robert M. Tynes argues that following World War II, children have become part of a larger war fighting strategy. As Singer(2006) notes, "While not formalized in a drill manual, it represents a new body of fundamental principles, deliberate instrumental choices and transferred teaching about how to fight. The use of child soldiers is a tactical innovation. Most guerrilla troops lie outside the established polity and as such are social movement organizations that must seek alternate forms of power in order to overthrow the established political institutions. One method of power building is through negative inducements which involve the creation of a situation that disrupts the normal functioning of society and is antithetical to the interests of the group's opponents. In essence insurgents seek to disrupt their opponents' realization of interests to such an extent that the cessation of the offending tactic becomes a sufficient inducement to grant their demands. The social movement organizations (SMO), defined in accordance with Lofland (1996), are more persistent forms of insurgent realities. They are associations of persons making idealistic and moralistic claims about how human personal or group life ought to be organized - though at the time of their claims making are marginal to or excluded from mainstream society- and

are the dominant constructors of what is realistic, reasonable and moral. In the case of Intrastate war the regime in power is the mainstream social force. While it might be argued that some insurgencies are more like criminal gangs than social movements, it is contended that armed conflicts, which have occurred since World War II, all involve groups making claims about who has the right to power and ownership of the state. They resemble positive social movements in their claim-making and existence outside mainstream society by incorporating social/ philosophical agenda into their movements. The insurgencies may or may not be faithful to their agenda in the end. Nevertheless, it does not negate existence of the claim in their discourse. (Tynes)

Singer notes that a desperate global security situation fuels the scene of child soldiers. “Desperate and excluded children constitute a huge pool of labour for the illegal economy, organized crimes and armed conflicts. Child soldiers are recruited from this listless mass. The emerging generation of disconnected children is the rank from which child soldiers are born. (John P. Sullivan, 2008)

Recruitment of children in regional and cross border conflict is also of growing concern. According to the special representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, cross border recruitment of children and their recycling in regional conflicts are significant challenges in which significant number of children and young people are being compelled to join armed groups and take up lives as fighters. This compulsion is to ensure them and their families with a measure of protection in highly volatile and insecure settings, or in environments where war may represent the most viable livelihood. The use of child fighters results from deliberate choices by actors ready to thwart the rule of law in the pursuit of raw power, plunder and profit. (Sullivan)

A significant factor in the increased use of child soldiers has been the proliferation of small arms and light weapons because these weapons are easy to use and are light weight. A small child can carry and operate them. A New York Times report quotes the Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund's Stephen Lewis as saying that a booming trade in small arms was contributing to a worldwide culture of violence and indiscriminate killing at the end of the 20th century that was putting guns into the hands of children. (Weekly Defence Monitor/Vol 2, Issue No. 27, July; 1998)

Widespread use of children in armed conflict is one of the most atrocious trends in wars today. They are compelled to become instruments of war, to kill or be killed, with devastating effects on their physical, emotional and social development (IRC News, Child Soldiers)

War affects every aspect of Child's development. Children affected by armed conflict can be injured or killed, uprooted from their homes and communities, internally displaced or refugees, orphaned or separated from their families, subjected to sexual abuse and exploitation, victims of trauma as a result of being exposed to violence, deprived of education and recreation, at risk of becoming child soldiers. It is highly probable that children living in conflict area will be deprived of basic needs such as shelter, food and medical attention. In addition relief for children tends to be the last priority in war resulting in insufficient or no protection for minors. There have been armed conflicts involving child soldiers in at least 36 countries since 1998. Children from poor and disadvantaged families who are seeking physical support, revenge for their losses or the sense of belonging are particularly vulnerable to exploitation during conflict. Other children are kidnapped and forced to become fighters. (Tynes)

1.2 UNDERSTANDING CHILD SOLDIERS

Several narratives explain the image of a child soldier. Within the very realm of the concept of child soldiers are the contentious issue of ‘age’ at which a child is differentiated from an adult, the variation across cultures regarding the same and the generalizations about children in war.

A ‘child’ is perceived as a young person in the transition between infancy and youth, with underlying connotations of immaturity, simplicity and absence of full physical, mental and emotional development. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - a human rights treaty which sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children - defines a child as any human being under the age of eighteen, unless the age of majority is attained earlier under a State’s own domestic legislation. ‘Soldier’ generally refers to men and women who are skilled warriors (Kuper, 1997, p. 13; Rosen, 2005, p. 3). A child soldier associated with an armed force or armed group refers to any person below 18 years of age who is or who has been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys, and girls used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes. It does not refer only to a child who is taking or has taken a direct part in hostilities. (Paris Principles, 2007, p. 7)

Though history is proof that children had been involved in wars from the time of American Civil War (often termed as “boys’ war”) and the Hitler Jugend during the Second World War, the many horrors of war particularly in the contemporary conflict where the opposing parties deviate from the traditional rule bound warfare have provoked thinkers and the International community to address the issue of child soldier across the globe. As Graca Machel states in her report, “War today just simply does not match the traditional conception of

two opposed armies; or even of an internal conflict pitting an armed opposition force against the established government, in which each side generally abides by the ‘rules of the game,’ respecting the basic inviolability of civilian non-combatants and the special protection due to the young.” Within this framework, humanitarians sometimes claim that children are soldiers or targeted as part of the strategy of war (Rosen, p. 13).

While children are considered to be lives deserving greatest protection and care, yet in conflict zones as child soldiers they are considered most expendable and the most convenient to use. Most of the narratives assert that children are recruited and conscripted as child soldiers because they are vulnerable and can be easily manipulated. It is generally easier to abduct, subjugate and manipulate children than adults. Children are more impressionable and vulnerable to indoctrination. They can learn skills and tasks quickly and they can be fast and agile on the battle field with their willingness to take risks. They can be effective spies as they can unentendingly slip through enemy lines. With their inherent innocence they are more loyal and less threatening to adult leadership (John. P. Sullivan, 2008)

The contemporary child soldier issue emphasizes on the forced recruitment and abusive exploitation of child soldiers in internal conflicts i.e civil wars and insurgencies by the rebels and the insurgents, by the terrorists and also the criminal gangs. (Sullivan, *ibid.*). The many facets of child soldiering which finds mention in the whole discourse on the issue include recruitment, training and indoctrination, tasks assigned, hazards, force used, exploitation and punitive measures employed for subjugating and retaining them. From being used as spies, messengers, porters, cooks, etc., children have been used by armed groups as trigger happy killing machines who dare to take on even their

family members and relatives and also as suicide bombers ready to sacrifice their lives. The effects of such engagement of children in armed conflicts losing on their childhood bliss and innocence can be ignored only at the own peril of human civilization.

Towards realization and awareness of the various implications of involving children in wars and the need to stop the menace of child soldiering, various International bodies and agencies have deliberated and worked on the issue. Humanitarian groups have had an enormous influence in shaping the international treaties that seek to ban the use of child soldiers, especially the provisions of the Rome Statute of the new International Criminal Court, which makes the use or recruitment of children a war crime. In addition to the numerous rights and protections for children elaborated by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, two optional protocols were adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 May 2000 and the first optional protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict requires parties to ensure that children under the age of 18 are not recruited compulsorily into their armed forces, and calls on government to do everything feasible to ensure that members of their armed forces who are under 18 years do not take part in hostilities.

Despite considerable differences in outlook and policy among the various groups and agencies addressing the menace of child soldiering, a set of concepts that is common is that the root of child-soldier crisis lies in three main sources: fundamental changes in the nature of warfare in the postcolonial era, the emergence of the small-arms trade, and the special vulnerability and innocence of children. (Rosen, Page 9)

The many facets of child soldiers across conflict ridden zones of the world have led to better comprehension of the problem and targeted efforts have been stepped up to combat the menace. At this juncture, the nuances of child soldiers in the armed groups operating in Manipur, a state ridden by conflict for more than 4 decades in the North eastern frontier of India too, would certainly offer meaningful insights in consolidating the whole discourse on child soldiers.

1.3 CONFLICT AND CHILD SOLDIERS: A GLOBAL PICTURE

In the previous sections, an attempt has been made to understand the phenomenon of child soldiers. In this section, a broad picture of the global scenario would be provided.¹

Wherever there is conflict in the world, children have always been affected, naturally vulnerable as they are², not only as victims or survivors but as soldiers having to take up arms and fight wars. Around 52 countries have been listed in the “Shame list” of the United Nations. These are those countries where studies, reports and research conducted by various organizations, coalitions, Child Rights groups and Human Rights activists across the globe have established and revealed the stark reality of young children being taken into the fold of armed movement. Shocking and heart rending as much as menacing, the phenomenon has spread its tentacles to put the figure of child soldiers across the globe to an astounding 2,50,000. Currently out of this figure roughly 40% are in the Continent of Africa to sustain on-going conflicts. It has also been documented that the legislation, policy and practice of recruiting children in

¹ A recent international report on conflict and hunger is the IFPRI, Concern Worldwide, Welthungerhilfe, World Peace Foundation, 2015, *2015 Global Hunger Index: Armed Conflict and the Challenge of Hunger*, Bonn/Washington, D.C., Dublin. Of the four components of hunger, three relate to children – child wasting, child stunting, and child mortality. P. 7.

² Children do not have the independence and capability to articulate or assert their preferences.

peacetime armies as well as non- State armed groups are spread across more than 190 countries (Child Soldiers Global Report 2008). These go to say that the use of children as soldiers is not confined to developing world or countries affected by armed conflict but also includes developed and advanced countries like The United States and Britain.(India's forgotten children of War by Meha Dixit, 05/12/2007). Statistics and reports are galore of the recruitment of children by the State Armed Forces as well as non-state armed groups, Guerrillas, terrorists, jihadists, gangs in countries affected by conflict like Columbia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda, Congo, Nigeria, Mozambique, Sri-Lanka, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Cambodia, Philippines, Mali, India, Nepal, Israel, Palestine, Yemen, , Syria, Ukraine, Liberia, etc.

The genesis and cause of armed conflict across the globe could be varied depending on the specific and contextual factors. While it is seen that conflict in one part of the world are over ethnic issues in other parts it is about assertion and recognition of political rights or about secession from a union/ country or for greater autonomy within a country or even for a statehood within a country. The hues may be varied and different but the common thread that runs in all the armed conflict situations are the orgies of unrest, violence and insecurity associated. A recent report for the period from December 2014 to December 2015 asserts "the wave of violence, in particular by extremist groups, that has affected children has compounded the challenge of addressing accountability comprehensively owing to the breakdown of law and order in areas under the control of non-State armed groups." (Annual Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2015, p. 4).

The world has seen six serious negative effects on children in situations of conflict United Nations, Special Representative of the Secretary General, 2015, p.2). They are: “(a) recruitment and use of children; (b) killing and maiming of children; (c) sexual violence against children; (d) attacks on schools and hospitals; (e) abduction of children; (f) denial of humanitarian access”. The impact of conflict on children especially in terms of engaging them as soldiers leaves several notions to ponder on and has indeed gained ground for greater concern and understanding. It would be imperative to have an overview of the conflict situations in different parts of the globe and analyse the magnitude of child soldiering in these countries to draw an inference as to the actual picture of conflict and child soldiers over the globe.

Conflicts across the world can be categorized as follows:

1. Ethnic conflict (intra-country) - Myanmar, Srilanka, Phillipines, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Somalia.
2. Ethnic conflict (inter-country) - Congo, Rwanda
3. Political (intra-country) - Sudan, Columbia, Mali, Pakistan, Uganda, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Liberia, Libya, Liberia, Cambodia
4. Political (inter-country) - Chad, Israel, Palestine, Ukraine.

1. Ethnic Conflict (Intra Country): Myanmar, Sri lanka, Phillipines, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda , Somalia.

Ethnic conflict is the conflict between different ethnic groups. Ethnic groups are large groups of people who share a distinctive racial, religious, linguistic, and national cultural heritage. In a multi ethnic country, dissent,

differences and oppositions come up in the process of each group trying to assert their dominance either in political representation or in identity. It often takes a violent turn with the warring parties building up their armed groups and bases. In such situations of conflict across the World like in Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Nigeria, Kenya, and Somalia the warring parties have resorted to recruiting large number of children in their fold.

In conflict ridden country where the government is waging war against multiple armed ethnic groups, children have been widely used by both the state armed forces and the non- state armed groups. In Myanmar, the overwhelming majority of Myanmar's child soldiers are found in the national army (Tatmadaw Kyi) who forcibly recruits children as young as 11yrs old and deploy them in areas where state forces have been fighting armed opposition groups. Human Rights Watch has noted that there is no way to precisely estimate the number of children in Myanmar's army, but there may be as many as 70,000 soldiers under the age of 18 (Jo Becker). Border guard forces also have under 18s in their ranks. The armed opposition groups that are reported to recruit child soldiers include the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), Kachin Independence Army (KIA), Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army(KNU/KNLA), Karenni National Progressive Party/Karenni Army(KNPP/KA) , Shan State Army South(SSA-S), United Wa State Army (UWSA) etc. Children recruited in armed outfits in certain conflict zones are mobilized into formations which can combat opponents with the same force and lethality to cause maximum casualty. This fact can be exemplified by no other child soldiers' story than the child soldiers of Sri Lanka, a country embroiled in ethnic conflict for over 25 years. According to an April 2000 estimate there were some 200 children in the LTTE ranks. Serious recruitment of children into the

LTTE began after the LTTE decided to take on the Indian Peace Keeping Force which was sent to the Island Nation in 1987. Even earlier, children formed a part of the Tiger cadre. Child soldiers were originally recruited into the LTTE's "Baby Brigade" commandeered by Justin. But after 1987 they were integrated with adult units. The fiercest of all LTTE fighting units, analysts have noted, is the Leopard Brigade or the Siruthai Puli. It consists exclusively of children, whose unswerving loyalty to Tiger chief Prabhakaran and their commitment have attracted considerable attention. As of September 2007, the LTTE are known to have recruited well over 6000 children since January, 2002 ceasefire with the government, according to cases documented by the UNICEF. The Karuna group broke away from the LTTE in March 2004 with 5000-6000 fighters, many of them under 18s. In 2004 when it was on the verge of defeat in the hands of the LTTE (Prabhakaran) the troops were disbanded and thousands of under aged fighters were sent home (Child Soldiers Global report-2008). Somalia a country ravaged by conflict, poverty, natural disasters and insurgency for the last fifty years is no less affected by the scourge of child soldiering. With the conflict between different groups for gaining control over the resources in the absence of a centralized government, influx of the Islamic militia in the country especially the Al- Qaeda aligned Al-Shabab Islamist militant aggravated the already tense conflict situation. Amnesty International has reported that Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and other armed forces have recruited children for conflict. In the areas controlled by Al Shabaab, the recruitment of children and the fear it comes with are a daily occurrence. It is believed that 20% of Government troops such as TFG's forces are children alone while 80% are among rebel forces (Williams). In Phillipines which is ridden in ethnic conflict between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), having a strength of 12000 numbers, the Abu Sayyal numbering about 300-400 members and the

new People's Army, about 600 child soldiers belonging to the MILF were identified by the United Nations.(Phillipines: UN finds 600 child soldiers in Phillipines, 12/04/2011). The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) have also been reported to use children in conflict. Nigeria's home-grown Islamist insurgent movement, Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, popularly known as Boko Haram (which translates as "Western education is sinful"), intensified its attacks in 2009 in the country's mainly Muslim north. Human Rights Watch has accused the group of abducting scores of women and girls and of using children as young as 12 in its combat operations. (Al Jazeera, Nov 29 2013). Civilian Joint Task Force, working with security forces within several towns in Borno State have admitted to having used numerous children in operations. The series of ethnic conflict in Kenya dating from 2007, are fraught with numerous instances of child soldiering (Wikipedia.org/wiki/ Ethnic conflicts in Kenya). The Kenyan army kidnap children in order to help their military force catch up and get back to where they used to be decades ago. Children, inducted into the armed groups by force under the threat of their family being killed by militants if they do not join war, are brainwashed to avenge the past damage that was done to their nation, kill family members and relatives, and subjected to torture so that they have no qualms about committing torture . To enable the children to go on the wanton act of killing they were even given drugs. (Kenya: Child Soldiers, Louisa Frye World History-Hjelmgren,5/19/09.)

2. **Ethnic Conflict (Inter Country):** Congo, Rwanda

Ethnic conflict across boundaries of two countries like the one in Rwanda and Congo breeds wanton recruitment of children in the armed outfits. The ethnic violence which blighted the Democratic Republic of Congo for decades

got intensified after the Rwandan civil war in 1994 when Rwandan Hutu Rebels known as interahamwe fled to the DRC, fearing reprisals for their part in the mass killing of Rwandan Tutsis. In 1998 the Interahamwe joined hands with Zairian Army to launch an offensive against the Congolese Tutsis in Eastern Zaire. The M 23 is a Tutsi dominated rebellion of former Congolese soldiers that began taking parts of eastern Congo in 2012 (US sanctions Rwanda, others over child soldiers. Washington 3/10/2013). The extraordinarily complex war, with huge number of rebel groups fighting each other, has affected the children of the two countries. There are an estimated 7000 children being used in active warfare in Congo and most of these children are in the Mai Mai militia in Kivu which is a self-defence group also called FDC –“Force de Liberation de Congo” formed to defeat and root out the Rwandan rebels called FDLR (“Forces Democratiques de Liberation de Rwanda”). A report drawn up by a panel of experts established to investigate breaches of an International arms embargo against Congo have claimed that 150 Rwandans, including 29 children were repatriated to their home country between January 2007 and October 2008 by the UN’s mission in Congo. Most had been recruited in Rwanda and most had fought or served in Nkunda’s National Congress for the liberation of the people.(Rwanda ‘recruited child soldiers for Congo rebels’: Mike Pflanz in Nairobi,1 /12/2008)

3. Political Conflict (intra country) - Sudan, Siera Leone, Columbia, Mali, Pakistan, Uganda, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Liberia, Libya.

In countries affected by political conflict between government and rebel Groups / insurgents over demands for greater autonomy, decentralization, equal and even distribution of resources etc children are invariably affected and recruited in the State as well as the non-state forces. From forcible recruitment to indoctrination children have been manipulated and used to the extent of

making them trigger happy invariably and even prepare them for suicide missions. In the African country Sudan, ridden with conflict for more than 20 years killing an estimated two million people and displacing more than 4.5 million, stories and reports are galore of the inclusion of children in the conflict. Even after the signing of Machakos Protocol between the Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), the main insurgent Group, in 2002 for peaceful settlement, fighting continued between militia groups in the south and the SPLA. In February 2003 the Darfur Liberation Front, renamed the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) took up arms against the government and its allied militias and the fighting continued till 2004. It is in this milieu of conflict that children have been exploited and used. Both the government and government backed militias recruited children in the north and the south. The former SPDF was believed to have at least 3500 children within its ranks in 2002. (Child Soldiers Global Report 2004-Sudan) There are as many as 6000 child soldiers, some as young as 11years old in the war torn region of Darfur. About 2.3 million children had been affected by conflict in Darfur since it began 6 years ago (Sudan has 6,000 child soldiers - Amber Henshaw, BBC News, Khartoum). The picture in Afghanistan, which has been at war for nearly three decades, frames up a case of children being used both by the State and non-state actors who orient their thought process towards revenge for the alleged atrocities committed to their parents and relatives. The conflict in Afghanistan for most of 2001 was between the Taliban , then controlling over 90 percent of the country and the United Front, also known as the Northern Alliance an armed alliance supported by the UN recognized government (Child Soldiers Global Report). Documented records proves the Northern Alliance of recruiting children as young as 11 though 18 years is given as the age of recruitment. The Taliban denies both

conscription and the use of child soldiers, though reports of the use of child soldiers by the Taliban continue to appear. According to the UN Special Mission in Afghanistan, the Taliban and the United Front (Northern Alliance) each have a typical strength of 30-40,000 fighters. These numbers become difficult to sustain as a lot of Afghan youth have already been recruited or have lost their lives in the war. Child soldiers thus offer a practical alternative. (Child soldiers in Afghanistan by Swapna Kona, Research Officer, IPCS). The Presidential decree passed in 2002 establishing the Afghan Transitional Authority and another passed in 2003 laid down that forced and coerced recruitment are prohibited and since then there are no under -18s in the Afghan army. However according to UNICEF, all fighting forces used children throughout the war, including the Taliban, the Northern Alliance, Afghan military forces and other armed groups. The number of actual and former child soldiers was estimated at around 8,000. Under-18s arrested in Afghanistan were held at the US military detention camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. (Child Soldiers Global Report, 2004).The child soldier issue in Columbia which has a long history of conflict and violence since its independence in 1821 depicts a systematic recruitment of children who in the fold of the armed outfits are feared to be affected by drugs as the left wand and the paramilitaries have all been tied to drug trafficking. Confrontations between the Liberals and the Conservatives during the first half of the 20th century, reached a peak in the civil conflict known as La Violencia (roughly from 1948-1958). Since the end of the 1990s the main actors of the conflict have been the rebel forces, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC-EP), the National Liberation Army,(UC-ELN), and the paramilitary group United Self Defense Forces Of Columbia(AUC). Since 2010 the Columbian government have been making efforts by way of prosecuting paramilitaries for recruiting children and carrying

out demobilization programmes. Yet, the situation does not seem to be improving with the UN and watch dog groups reporting that besides FARC and ELN , Columbia has illegal armed groups like the Aquilas Negras and Los Restrepos, who are widely understood to be systematically and increasingly recruiting children. (Child Soldiers in Colombia: The Recruitment of Children into Non-state Violent Armed Groups. MICROCON Research Working Paper 27, Brighton). The economic backwardness in a region can drive children to take up arms not with regard to the ideologies of the armed movement but the amount paid to their families when they were bought serves as a means of sustenance for the family members. This fact can best be understood by taking into account the Mali conflict scenario. The conflict in the north of Mali puts the Malian army and its allies against many rebel groups such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, the movement for oneness and Jihad in Western Africa and Ansar Dine and Tuareg nomads who belong to the political and military Azawad National Liberation Movement. The bloody conflict aggravated when Islamist groups took over the north of the country in 2012. Though the French troops claim to have successfully taken over control of the northern Mali in January, 2013, sectarian violence is still worsening. It has also been reported that Islamists who seized control of part of Mali are also buying child soldiers paying families \$ 1600 per child (Mr Simonovic, UN Asst Secretary General for Human Rights report). Mali being the transit corridor for cocaine and other drugs from South America to Europe the extremists have kickbacks from Narco Traffickers in the region and the money is used to buy child soldiers. Children are particularly vulnerable to attempts to enlist them as child soldiers often to plant IEDs with their families being given \$ 600 for enlistment and then \$ 400 a month in a country where half the population lives on \$ 1.25 a day.(Mali Islamists Using Drugs and Prostitution to Buy Child Soldiers, October 13, 2012

by Daniel Greenfield) Persuasion of young minds to take revenge against a group of people who allegedly killed their relatives and dear ones is adopted as a mechanism for recruiting children even to the extent of becoming suicide bombers in certain conflict ridden countries. The growing phenomenon of child militants in Pakistan is a horrific reality, one mirrored in conflicts between the government, the Taliban and the Al- Qaeda.(Kalsoom Lakhani : Director of Social Vision, the strategic philanthropy arm of ML Resources in Washington, D.C.) The Islamic predilection for using children as human explosives can best be explained by the unfortunate fact that children make particularly good suicide terror candidates given that they are more willing to martyr themselves due to their lack of reasoning on taking innocent lives. Al-Qaeda and the Taliban have constructed and operated a slew of suicide training facilities in Afghanistan and Pakistan , death factories that have trained over 5000 Pakistani children ,many as young as eight, as suicide bombers. Children and adolescents can be managed easily and can be recruited to carry out terrorists acts at a lower cost because it is enough to convince them of a life in paradise to encourage them to die while conducting a terrorist operation. (Al-Qaeda's Child Soldiers November23, 2012 by Frank Crimi) In Pakistan, a disturbing number of suicide bombers are between 12 and 18 years old, about 90 percent, (noted Pakistani journalist Zahid Hussain, senior editor at *Newsline* magazine and author of *Frontline Pakistan*).Interviewed Taliban commander Qari Abdullah revealed he also recruits children as young as 5, 6, and 7 years old, emphasizing, "Children are tools to achieve God's will. And whatever comes your way, you sacrifice it." (Kalsoom Lakhani : Director of Social Vision, the strategic philanthropy arm of ML Resources in Washington, D.C.) The forced recruitment of children without their consent and discern in certain conflict zones like Uganda tragically is noted as one of the most audacious act of militarizing children which can shake the

collective human conscience. Conflict in Uganda started with the Cult like Holy Spirit Movement Lord's Resistance Army led by Joseph Kony. He took over the reins of the rebel group from his niece Alice Lakwina who led thousands of dissatisfied Acholi Soldiers into battle against President Museveni (who had defeated their army). The LRA have unleashed a wave of terror in the region by forcibly abducting small children and recruiting them as armies in their fold. Joseph Kony claims to want to make Uganda into a state based on Ten Commandments but his movement is all about demonic control of children both boys and girls. He recruits his soldiers from the villages and schools of northern Uganda. It has been reported that in the northern districts of Uganda, 30000 children have been abducted in the past 20 some years ever since the rebellion started in the 1980s. The most disturbing aspect of this humanitarian crisis in Uganda is the fact that this is a war fought by children on children- minors make up 90% of the LRA soldiers. No fewer than 50% of these recruits are boys and girls between the ages of 11-16. (Youth lost: Ugandan child soldiers in Lords Resistance Army by Luke Falkenburg) In some of the conflict ridden countries, children in the process of making them suicide squads are subjected to rigorous trainings and indoctrinating sessions in utter disregard of their fragility and tender strength. Iraq with history of child soldiering since the Gulf War in 1991 as well as the Iran-Iraq war has horrendous stories on record about child enlistment .Numerous military style boot camps were organized for thousands of Iraqi children. The children are also provided with Ba'athist, or political indoctrination. Some of the best known military and boot camps include "Raad", "Al Anfal", and "Ashbal Saddam" also known as Saddam Lion Cubs. The "Ashbal Saddam" is the most recent organization formed after the defeat of the 1991 Gulf War. The Ashbal Saddam involves boys between the ages of 10 and 15. These children not only learn basic techniques of war but are also taught

how to become desensitized by violence such as beatings and deliberate cruelty to animals. This program essentially becomes a feeder program to “Fidayin Saddam” also known as Saddam’s Men of Sacrifice. Children who are not selected to attend Saddam’s Lion Cubs may be sent to child units known as “Futuwah” which is a feeder to the Ba’ath party formed in the late 1970’s. At first its main goal was to act as a paramilitary organization among secondary level school children. Units of this organization have even been forced to serve during the war against Iran in the 1980’s. Iraq has taken no steps to prevent the use of children in its military yet. (Child Soldiers Forced Into Combat In Iraq by Jennifer Lapicki December 2006). Now down the years after the regime of Saddam Hussain has come to an end the ISIS fighting for a caliphate in Iraq and Syria are recruiting small children as young as 10 years and 11 years in their fold. The conflict in Syria which started as a popular uprising in 2011 against the President Bashar Al- Assad has turned into a complex war involving many fronts namely loyal troops of Syrian Army and militias, Free Syrian Army (Union of different militias who fought against the Assad regime, Islamic militias (ISIS, al-Nusra Front both associated to al Qaeda) and Kurdish militias. (Three years on , no end in sight for Syrian war) There are reports that children as young as 15 years old are being recruited to fight the war by the rebels like ISIS, al-Nusra Front, Free Syrian Army and Kurdish forces. Some of the children have also been turned into suicide bombers. (Human Rights Watch: Syrian rebels recruiting child soldiers, 23/06/2014). The Sierra Leone conflict between the Government Forces, International Peace keepers and armed groups including Revolutionary United Front (RUF)) and the armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) from 1991 till 2002 that resulted in tens of thousands of deaths and displacement of more than 2 million people saw around 6914 child soldiers. The Lome Peace Agreement of July 1999 included important provisions on the

demobilization of child soldiers. The Government Allied Forces comprise a loose alliance of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) including more recently formed AFRC members. The Civil Defence Forces (CDF) which are actually self-defence militias formed by civilians themselves are the ones accused of serious human rights violations including extra-judicial killings and executions of suspected rebels and induction of child soldiers. In May 2000, a UN assessment mission observed children between 7 and 14 years old comprising 25 to 35% of the SLA/CDF in the town of Masiaka. The opposition group posing the greatest challenge to the Government viz, Revolutionary United Front (RUF), West Side Boys and before the Lome Accord, the AFRC have forcibly recruited children both boys and girls for use as soldiers, sexual slaves and forced labour. There are reports of the outfits even using drugs to induce their compliance and fighting ferocity. The 14 years civil war in Liberia which started from the 1990s till the end of 2003 with the mission to overthrow the brutal regime of President Samuel Doe had definitely taken its toll on the children population. Under the leadership of Charles Taylor, Children as young as 10/11 years old were recruited as soldiers, inducted into "Small Boys Formation" and trained to the extent of becoming killing machines. The affected children now grown up into adults show no resentment and remorse for whatever actions they had committed but rather recall their days with nostalgia. (Lost boys: What became of Liberia's child soldiers?- The Independent). In the Libyan conflict from February to October, 2011 between the forces loyal to Gaddafi and those seeking to oust his government rebels, children were reported to be part of the rebel forces as well as the forces loyal to Gaddafi (Wikipedia: Conflict in Libya, UN says reports of child soldiers being recruited in Libya, 11/03/2011). The low level insurgency by the Gaddafi loyalists after the National Transitional Council had taken over the control of Libya are reported to

indulge in recruiting children. The long years of conflict in Cambodia dating from the ouster of Khmer Rouge regime (from 1975 to 1979) by Vietnamese forces in 1979 till 1997 accounts for numerous cases of child recruitment both by the Khmer Rouge as well as the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces.

4. Political conflict- Inter country: Chad, Ukraine, Israel, Palestine

Political conflict between countries have also inflicted irreparable damage to the children of the warring countries as they have been recruited as soldiers and sent to operations. The recruitment of child soldiers in the Chad which had been involved in conflict in its eastern region with neighbouring Sudan is an issue reported by organizations like Amnesty International and addressed by UN Security Council. A five year proxy-war between Chad and Sudan ended in January 2010 with a rapprochement but the Chadian Government continued to clash with rebel forces in the east. An Amnesty International report states that 80% of the estimated 7000-10,000 (figure estimated by UNICEF in 2007) child soldiers recruited in Chad are associated with armed groups while the remaining 20 percent are involved with the country's armed forces. These UN estimates also indicate that they may have been used as combatants (In Depth: Child Soldiers: Chad) The report to the United Nations Security Council by its Secretary General Ban Ki Moon in 2011 on children and armed conflict in Chad, which covers the period from July 2008 to December 2010 also notes that children continue to be targets of sexual and gender based violence and that mines and other explosive remnants of war continue to expose children to danger (**Use of child soldiers in Chad**). Reports of the one in Israel which is in deep conflict situation prevailing between Israel and Palestine unravels another aspect of children in war in which the state engages child volunteers as soldiers in combat specific roles and border patrols and also recruits children from the

opposing community . In the occupied Palestinian territories and in Israel, the Israeli Intelligence Services continually seek to recruit children as informants. In the process of doing so several children have been tortured or subjected to other forms of coercion or inducement in an attempt to make them co-operate. The Israeli armed forces were also reported to have used children as human shields. In the occupied territories, the Israeli Forces operate under a number of military orders like treating minors over 16 years as adults, arrests of Palestinian children as young as 12 by Israeli Forces, use of inappropriate interrogation methods to children involved in intifada (uprising). The Palestinian Authority deny recruitment of children but unofficial reports indicates otherwise. All the main political Armed Groups in Palestine like Fatah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, etc., condemn the use of child soldiers but there are reports of children being used by these groups as messengers, couriers, as fighters and suicide bombers in attacks on Israeli soldiers and civilians. (Child Soldiers Global Report- 2004) There have been 19 documented cases of using Palestinian children as human shields from 2004 to 2012, 95% of which occurred in 2005 right after such a practice was ruled illegal by Israeli Court system reflecting gap in government policy and military actions. The conflict in Ukraine in the last few years between the Ukrainian Government and the pro-Russian militants has also been reported that the Donetsk militants in Ukraine directly recruits children (Ukrnews.co/Donetsk Terrorists openly recruit Child soldiers, August 2014).In Ukraine the constitution provides for conscription in the name of defence of the motherland, of the independence and territorial integrity with minimum age set at 18 (Child Soldiers Global Report: 2008).

1.3 CHILD SOLDIERS IN INDIA

With insurgency, proxy wars and left wing extremism engaging the security apparatuses of the country in certain conflict ridden zones, India is not absolved of the issue of child soldiering. There are 197 districts in India which are officially notified as affected by internal armed conflicts. These 197 districts notified as conflict affected include:

- a. Seventy-one districts notified as “disturbed” under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) of in 7 Assam, 8 in Arunachal Pradesh, 9 in Manipur, 10 in Meghalaya, 11 in Nagaland and 12 in Tripura in the North East India, 20 out of 22 districts in Jammu and Kashmir;
- b. One hundred and six districts declared as Left Wing Extremism affected in nine states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

For various purposes and reasons many under-aged continue to be recruited and involved in armed violence in these conflict ridden zones. Though there is no official information about children being recruited into the military forces there are allegations that children have been recruited into government–supported anti-Maoist village defence forces. (www.childlineindia.org.in/children-in-armed-conflict.html). One curiously interesting case is the recruitment of under-18 as Special Police officers (SPOs) and giving them full military training and as “boy orderlies” in 2005 in Salwa –Judum anti Naxalite campaign launched in Dantewada district of Chattisgarh under the state police as per section 60 of the Madhya Pradesh Police Regulation. The report submitted by the government of Chattisgarh in June 2011 on a complaint filed by Asian

Centre for Human Rights before the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights regarding 300 "boy-orderlies" employed in the state police force at that point of time, seven of them being posted with 4th Battalion of Chhattisgarh Police at Mana in Raipur, stands testimony to the fact that the Government of Chattisgarh too recruits children below 18 years of age into the force.

The governments of these States emphasize that the recruitment is to be seen from the humanitarian perspective in that (i) it is arranged for the children of the deceased police personnel with option opened to the family members of the children whether to let their wards join or not; and (ii) with arrangement made for those who have joined for attending school 3 days a week alternately. However human rights activists and child rights activists have deplored the act as it is much against International laws and engaging children even for menial and simple tasks in the camps of security agencies amounts to child soldiering as per United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Testimonies of child soldiers caught in various theatres of conflict who voluntarily joined or were forcibly abducted by armed insurgent groups and Maoist rebels have been reported and documented .(HUMAN RIGHTS: India pressed to address child soldier issue, www.dw.com/en/india-pressed-tochild-soldier-issue/a16801886).

While there are no official estimates, it is believed that at least 3,000 children, i.e. about 500 in the North East India and Jammu and Kashmir and about 2,500 in the Left Wing Extremism affected areas are involved in conflict. This number excludes those who have become adult since their recruitment. All the insurgent groups, irrespective of their ideology or origin and place of operation, recruit children, not necessarily only for combat purposes.

Reports are galore of the rampant recruitment of child soldiers by the Communist Party of India (Maoists) across the Naxal afflicted areas in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The Maoists, also known as the Naxals, have their children's wing, *Bal Sangathan*, and regularly recruit children. Forcible recruitment of one cadre from each Adivasi family by the Maoists has even compelled many families to send the female members with the Naxals if there is no male member in the family. Those who refuse to give their kids for arms training face severe consequences. (*India's Child Soldiers*, ACHR, A shadow report to the UN Committee on the rights of the child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, Page -18). The recruited children are given different training and assignments. While new entrants in the age group from six to twelve year olds are initially used as spies and couriers and also trained in basic drills and armed with .303 rifles while children above 12 are used as fighters. They are trained in handling explosives, gathering intelligence and for sentry duty. Young girls participate in the same drills as the boys. They are trained to lead operations from the front. (*India's Child Soldiers*, ACHR, A shadow report to the UN Committee on the rights of the child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, page-19).

The inclusion of children in the rank and fold of the Maoist are amply certified by instances of arrests and other operational feats by the security agencies operating in the Naxal affected areas. On 12 December 2012, the police in an operation code-named 12/12/12 with 250 policemen in the forests of Abhujmarh destroyed a Naxal camp somewhere between the villages of Wala and Sitram and killed eight Naxals and arrested nine. (*India's Child soldiers*, ACHR, Page -19). On 6th January 2011, five teenaged alleged Maoist girls who

were active since 2008 in armed Naxalite squads laid down their arms in front of top police officials in Keonjhar District of Odisha .(India's Child soldiers, ACHR, Page-225) It is reported that in Kashmir, 17 militant factions are involved in recruiting children.(Child soldiers in India: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>) There was evidence that armed groups in Jammu and Kashmir, in Pakistan-administered Kashmir and in Pakistan were actively recruiting children. The Jammu and Kashmir police claimed that around 200 children had been reported missing in the state since 2004, alleging that most of these were children of poor and illiterate families who had been recruited by militants, although this could not be independently confirmed. Some were said to be as young as 13 or 14 and using sophisticated weapons. In August 2004 the Indian Army claimed to have caught nine armed children some from Pakistan and trained by Pakistan-based armed groups including the Jaish-e-Mohammed and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen as well as the Hizbul Mujahideen. Lack of education and employment opportunities for young people being accounted as major factors for recruitment of children by armed groups, children in Jammu and Kashmir are said to be indoctrinated and recruited from schools and mosques. Children as young as ten are said to be used by armed groups as messengers and couriers and provided with basic training in the use of weapons, throwing grenades and planting improvised explosive devices.

The use of children by armed groups put them at increased risk from the security forces. During 2005 and 2006 there were two major incidents in which security forces opened fire on children. In Bangergund in Kupwara district, soldiers of the Rashtriya Rifles waiting to ambush militants claimed to have mistakenly shot dead three boys and critically injured a fourth on the night of 23 July 2005. The army said that the boys had acted suspiciously by failing to stop

when challenged. In Doodipora, Handwara, on 22 February 2006, soldiers shot at a group of children playing cricket, claiming that militants were among them, killing four boys including an eight-year-old. As per a report of the ACHR, out of the 3000 numbers of child soldiers in India, 500 are from the Northeast India. In May 2007, for example, it was reported that ULFA in Assam used teenagers to ferry explosives and throw grenades, although they did not openly recruit child soldiers. The report further claimed that other armed groups operating in the North-East, including the NSCN (though faction is not reported), the United National Liberation Front (Manipur), Garo National Liberation Front (GNLF) and the People's Liberation Army (Manipur) openly recruited children. (Child Soldiers Global Report 2008). The issue of child soldiers as young as 12 years of age being drafted by the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN-K) led by SS Khaplang, a Zemi Naga from Myanmar has troubled the parents of young adolescents for a long time now. Children who should be in school charting out a future for themselves are instead taught to handle the deadly Kalashnikov rifle. Young girls who do not qualify to fire guns will have to look after the welfare of the male soldiers. Many parents complain to the Indian security forces about this forced abduction of their children but the fact that bringing back the children from across the Myanmar border is not an easy task for the security personnel causes much pain and anxiety to people of Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur who reside along the international borders. (Patricia Mukhim: the [northeasttoday .com](http://northeasttoday.com) /child-soldiers-of-northeast-straddling-between-boundaries /04/02/2016). One significant instance of people's resistance is the strong opposition shown by Thadou Students Association, Chandel during mid- July, 2016 against the forced recruitment of 3 (three) child soldiers by a SoO signatory, the Kuki National Organisation (KNO), in the general area of border town Moreh in Chandel district. The call was more for putting an end to the clandestine recruitment by the demobilized armed group as the student body threatened of taking up further course of action

along with civil organizations for seeking justice for the children and their families in the event of failure by the State government to act timely and rein in the erring group which is under Suspension of Operation with the Government.

The scourge of child soldiering by the armed opposition groups in India has deeply affected the psycho-social lives of children especially of those in the vulnerable group. Further neglect or indifference towards the problem will only be at the peril of the whole societal fabric of the nation.

Summary:

The menace of child soldiers is still a challenge in large parts of the world including India. Besides the diversity of contexts, there is the issue of child soldiers by both state and non-state forces even in non-conflict periods. In certain conflict zones the risk of child soldiering still remains even after the conflict had come to a close. Post conflict chaos, like poor governance and collapse of rule of law in certain cases, have resulted to greater recruitment of children. The dimensions for resolving this humanitarian crisis are varied depending on each conflict situation and circumstances. Though the Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Child was adopted in 2000 and implemented since 2002, “that where states are [still] involved in armed conflict it remains common for children to be found serving in military forces under government control. In these situations children can still be found serving in national armies of some states, but their use also occurs in other elements of states’ armed forces (for example paramilitaries and civil defence forces) as well as in state-allied armed groups which, although not legally a part of official armed forces, are nevertheless supported by or provide support to states and for whose actions those states therefore bear a responsibility” (Child Soldiers

International, 2012, p. 16). This is truer with the non-state forces in a conflict, like the insurgent organisations in the north east of India.

Chapter 2

CONFLICT SITUATION IN MANIPUR

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The genesis of armed insurgency in Manipur dates back to the 1960s when certain section of the society especially the Meiteis started having the secessionist tendency with the notion and conviction that union with India brought them no political or economic benefits even after it got merged with the latter on September 21, 1949 (effective from October 15, 1949). With the United National Liberation Front(UNLF) born in the year 1964 followed by the People's liberation Army (PLA) in 1978 Manipur witnessed the growth of a number of Meitei underground organisations with similar objectives in the late seventies and early eighties. While Meitei outfits remained active in the Imphal Valley, the major Naga insurgent group - National Socialist Council of Nagaland NSCN (IM) unleashed a reign of terror in the Naga-inhabited areas in four of Manipur's five hill districts, namely, Ukhrul, Senapati, Tamenglong and Chandel. A number of Kuki outfits like Kuki National Army (KNA), Kuki national Front (KNF) were raised in the late eighties with their demand for a separate State within the Indian Union. The ethnic conflict between the Nagas and the Kukis - the two major tribal groups in Manipur constituted another problem of the State. In addition to Meitei, Kuki and Naga rebel groups, several other tribes, such as the Paite, Vaiphei, Zou, andHmars had also launched their own terrorist groups in recent years. There had also been frequent internecine conflicts, particularly between the Kukis and the Paites. The Meetei Pangal clash in 1993 which resulted to the death of a number of Muslims

(Meitei Pangals) and Meiteis sowed the seeds for the emergence of People's United Liberation Front (PULF) a Muslim insurgent group. The ethnic conflict which may be propounded as a manifestation of the elitist politics of each ethnic group had an added dimension on the entire State's polity which remained polarised along ethnic lines. (Manipur backgrounder: SATP, Insurgency in North East India : Wikipedia, CDPS)

2.2 ETHNO GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE CONFLICT SITUATION

The significance of the ethno-geographical frame- up of the State in the dynamics of conflict can hardly be lost sight of. A State with an area of 22,327 square kilometres and a population of 25,70,390 (2011 Census) in the North Eastern-most frontier of India, Manipur is a land of ethnic diversity. While the Meeteis constituting 50% of the population and Meetei Pangals (Manipuri Muslims) constituting 8.2 % inhabit the oval-shaped valley comprising of 4 (four) districts, the 34 tribes inhabit the remaining 5 hill districts spanning an area of 20736 sq kms. (Manipur- Census2011.Co.in) The tribes of Manipur though broadly categorized into 2 main tribes namely Kuki and Naga, each tribe has many sub-tribes with a distinct identity and culture of their own. It is in the pursuit of preservation, protection and assertion of their own ethnic identities and supremacy that the dynamics of the conflict started to change in the 1990s along ethnic lines though the Valley based pioneering groups built up and steered the insurgency on the agenda of seceding from the Indian union. Thus, with the main Naga insurgent outfit like NSCN starting to assert their dominance in Naga inhabited districts like Ukhrul, Tamenlong, Senapati and Chandel along with starting to resort to an act of cleansing the Kukis leading to the Kuki- Naga clash in the early 1990s followed

by other Naga groups like UNPC, MNPF, etc., large number of Kuki insurgent groups like KNO, KLA, KNLF etc started mushrooming in Churachandpur, Senapati, Chandel and Ukhrul districts in Manipur in the 1990s. The Manipur Muslims, which constitute sizable amount of the population along with other ethnic groups like Zomis, Paites, Hmars, Zous, too started raising armed groups primarily for safeguard of their own ethnic identity and rights. With all the ethnic connotations and the demands of the numerous groups ranging from autonomy, carving out a separate State within the Indian Union to seceding from the Country, conflict landscape in Manipur still needs deeper speculation and a multi- pronged approach for arriving at a resolution formula.

2.3 PHENOMENAL CONFLICT SITUATION WITH MULTITUDE OF ARMED GROUPS

The conflict situation in Manipur, which has embroiled the State for more than 4 decades certainly, has a phenomenal element rendering it unique and different from those in other parts of the world. While it has been noted that conflicts in countries like Rwanda, Uganda, Chad, Somalia, Columbia, Philippines, Myanmar, etc., show a picture of 2 to 3 non-state actors up in arms against an established government or regime, the conflict scenario in Manipur with multiple insurgent groups varying in their agenda and demands, up in arms against the Government renders it unique and phenomenal. The intensity of the conflict may be considered low compared to those in African countries and elsewhere, but impact on the lives and activities of people owing to the geo-political and socio-economic connotations of the protracted conflict can hardly be lost sight of.

Dating from the 1960s multitudes of insurgent groups of Manipur have been in armed conflict with the Union of India. Except few groups remaining united under their respective leadership, majority of the groups have broken into factions. These break-up factions, on pronounced issues of leadership and ideological differences, have each floated separate cause and agenda. This has blown up the total figure of insurgent groups to a markedly disproportionate size for a geographically miniscule State like Manipur. Dating from 1964 to 2016 the total number of insurgent groups which operated in Manipur and which resorted to subversive activities records a total figure of 90 (Table No. 2.1). These multiple groups adopting their own modus operandi went on an offensive against the state security forces making their presence felt and also mobilized popular support and resources to sustain their armed movement. To quell the rising insurgency Government of Manipur declared the State as disturbed area and further imposed the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in 1980; this Act was earlier extended only in the Naga inhabited areas in 1958. With the imposition of the Act deployment of army and paramilitary forces was facilitated in the State resulting in stepping up of Counter Insurgency Operations. A special Commando Unit of the Manipur Police was also set up mainly to counter insurgent activities.

Table No. 2.1
Insurgent groups/ factions in Manipur from 1964-2016

Sl. No.	Name of the insurgent group/faction	Hill based/ valley based	Sl. No.	Name of the insurgent group/faction	Hill based/ valley based
1.	United National Liberation Front (UNLF)	Valley based	2.	People's Liberation Army (PLA/RPF)	Valley based
3.	People's Revolutionary Front of Kangleipak (PREPAK)	Valley based	4.	Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL)	Valley based
5.	People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak Progressive (PREPAK-PRO)	Valley based	6.	United People's Party of Kangleipak (UPPK)	Valley based
7.	Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP)	Valley based	8.	Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup-MDF (KYKL-MDF)	Valley based
9.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Nando (KCP-Nando)	Valley based	10.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Lamphel (KCP-Lamphel)	Valley based
11.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Nongdrenkhomba @ Ngangom Ibungo (KCP-Nongdrenkhomba)	Valley based	12.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Kokkai(KCP-Kokkai)	Valley based
13.	Kangleipak Communist Party-MK Mangang (KCP-Mangang)	Valley based	14.	Kangleipak Communist Party-City Meetei (KCP-City Meetei)	Valley based
15.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Ningamba (KCP-Ningamba)	Valley based	16.	Kangleipak Communist Party-MTF Kesho Meetei (KCP-MTF Kesho Meetei)	Valley based
17.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Noyon (KCP-Noyon)	Valley based	18.	Kangleipak Communist Party-KK Ngamba (KCP-KK Ngamba)	Valley based
19.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Lalheiba (KCP-Lalheiba)	Valley based	20.	Kangleipak Communist Party(MC)-Hitendra @	Valley based

				Lallumba (KCP-Lallumba)	
21.	Kangleipak Communist Party MTF-Sunil Meetei (KCP-Sunil Meetei)	Valley based	22.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Chingkheinganba (KCP-Chingkheinganba)	Valley based
23.	Kangleipak Communist Party-MC Lamyamba Khuman (KCP-Lamyamba Khuman)	Valley based	24.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Maoist (KCP-Maoist)	Valley based
25.	Kangleipak Communist Party MC-Wanglen Khuman (KCP-Wanglen Khuman)	Valley based	26.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Punshiba (KCP-Punshiba)	Valley based
27.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Leibakmacha (KCP-Leibakmacha)	Valley based	28.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Taibangnganba (KCP-Tainganba)	Valley based
29.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Paikhomba (KCP-Paikhomba)	Valley based	30.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Khaba (KCP-Khaba)	Valley based
31.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Nongthang (KCP-Nongthang)	Valley based	32.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Soviet (KCP-Soviet)	Valley based
33.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Lanchenba (KCP-Lanchenba)	Valley based	34.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Pakhanglakpa (KCP-Pakhanglakpa)	Valley based
35.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Poirei (KCP-Poirei)	Valley based	36.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Moramba (KCP-Moramba)	Valley based
37.	Kangleipak Communist Party-Rocky Meetei (KCP-Rocky Meetei)	Valley based	38.	Kangleipak Communist Party (URF-Mangangthoi)	Valley based
39.	Manipur People's Liberation Front (MPLF) (UNLF+PREPAK+PLA)	Valley based	40.	United People of Kangleipak (UPK)	Valley based

41.	People's United Liberation Front-Umar Farooq (PULF-Umar Farooq)	Valley based	42.	People's United Liberation Front-Azad (PULF-Azad)	Valley based
43.	People's United Liberation Front-MI Khan (PULF-MI Khan)	Valley based	44.	Islamic Liberation Front (ILF)	Valley based
45.	United People's Revolutionary Army (UPRA)	Valley based	46.	Islamic Nation Liberation Front (INLF)	Valley based
47.	Islamic Liberation Army (ILA)	Valley based	48.	Kangleipak Liberation Front (KLF)	Valley based
49.	Kangleipak Socialist Army (KLF)	Valley based	50.	North Eastern Council Army (NECA)	Valley based
51.	National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak Muivah (NSCN-IM)	Valley based	52.	National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang (NSCN-K)	Hill based
53.	National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Reformation (NSCN-R)	Hill based	54.	National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Unification (NSCN-U)	Hill based
55.	Manipur Naga Revolutionary Front (MNRF)	Hill based	56.	United Naga People's Council (UNPC)	Hill based
57.	Naga National Council (NNC)	Hill based	58.	Zeliangrong United Front (ZUF)	Hill based
59.	Naga National Liberation Army (NNLA)	Hill based	60.	Naga National Worker People's Support Group (NNWPSG)	Hill based
61.	Kuki National Front (KNF) (6-factions)	Hill based	62.	Kuki Revolutionary Front (KRF)	Hill based
63.	Kuki Liberation Army/Kuki Liberation Organization (KLA/KLO)	Hill based	64.	Kuki National Army/Kuki National Organization (KNA/KNO)	Hill based
65.	Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA)	Hill based	66.	Kuki Revolutionary Army-Unification (UKLF)	Hill based

67.	United Kuki Liberation Army (UKLA)	Hill based	68.	United Kuki Liberation Front (UKLF)	Hill based
69.	United Kuki Liberation Army (UKLA)	Hill based	70.	Thadou People's Liberation Army (TPLA)	Hill based
71.	Kuki National Liberation Front (KNLF)	Hill based	72.	Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA)	Hill based
73.	Zomi Revolutionary Front (ZRF)	Hill based	74.	Zomi Defence Volunteers (ZDV)	Hill based
75.	United Socialist Revolutionary Army (USRA)	Hill based	76.	Pakan Revolutionary Army (PRA)	Hill based
77.	United Minority Liberation Army (UMLA)	Hill based	78.	Hmar National Army (HNA)	Hill based
79.	United Komrem Revolutionary Army (UKRA)	Hill based	80.	Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) HPC(D)	Hill based
81.	Kuki Unification Frontal Organisation (KUFO)	Hill based	82.	Hmar People's Convention (HPC)	Hill based
83.	United Maring Liberation Army (UMLA)	Hill based	84.	Kuki Tribal Union (KTU)	Hill based
85.	Zomi National Volunteers (ZNV)	Hill based	86.	Zomi People's Council (ZPC)	Hill based
87.	Zeliangrong Youth Front (ZYF)	Hill based	88.	Kuki People's Liberation Army/ Front (KPLA/KPLF)	Hill based
89.	Zeliangrong Tiger Force (ZTF)	Hill based	90.	Hmar Liberation Front (HLF)	Hill based

In addition to the number of insurgent outfits which were active and accounted for damages to the state and civilian population to certain extent, there are also reports of several groups and factions floated in the last few years. These groups have, however, rather become inactive in due course of time. The groups may be listed as Chin Kuki Revolutionary Front (CKRF), Hmar

Revolutionary Front (HRF), Indigenous People's Revolutionary Alliance (IPRA), Ireipak Kanba Lup (IKL), Islamic Revolutionary Front (IRF), Islamic National Front (INF), Kangleipak Kanba Kanglup (KKK), Kangleipak Liberation Organization (KLO), Kom Rem People's Convention (KRPC), Kuki Defence Force (KDF), Kuki Independent Army (KIA), Kuki International Force (KIF), Kuki Liberation Front (KLF) Kuki National Volunteers (KNV), Kuki Revolutionary Front (KRF), Kuki Security Force (KSF), Manipur Liberation Tiger Army (MLTA), United People's Revolutionary Front (UPRF), North East Minority Front (NEMF), People's Republican Army (PRA), Revolutionary Joint Committee (RJC), United Islamic Liberation Army (UILA), United Islamic Revolutionary Army (UIRA), Kachin Intelligent Army (KIA), Hindu Army (HA), Naga People's Council Manipur (NPCM), Kom Rem Development Organisation (KREDO) and Zomi Revolutionary Volunteers (ZRV). (South Asia Terrorism Portal-SATP).

Many of the factions of KCP raised after the demise of its founder, Y. Ibohanbi in 1995 which could not be united also became inactive in due course of time while some were demobilized by way of certain agreement/MOU with the government of India. (Centre for Defence and Peace Studies). The now inactive KCP factions are KCP (Ningamba), KCP (Nando), KCP (Nongthang), KCP (Paikhomba), KCP (Soviet), KCP (Wanglen Khuman), KCP (Leibakmacha), KCP (Lanchenba), KCP (Moramba), KCP (City Meitei), KCP (Tamnganba), KCP (Prithvi), KCP (Lamphel), KCP (Tabungba), KCP (Anand) and KCP (Punshiba). Similarly, the Muslim armed outfits-PULF and its various factions like PULF (Uman Farooq), PULF (Azad), PULF (Keshorjit), PULF (Soni Begum) and PULF (M I Khan) - have ceased to be active due to deaths of leaders, arrest, surrendering, etc.

2.4 ARMED CONFLICT RELATED VIOLENCE IN MANIPUR

In a conflict, casualties and loss of lives on the part of the security agencies and the insurgents could be well understood as a natural fall-out of the standoff. However the damage to lives and properties of citizens /

civilians consequent upon the standoff or actions on either part is a matter of serious concern. An analysis of the deaths and casualty figures from 1992 to 2014 (Table 2.2) indicates the extensive loss of civilian lives caused by the Naga Kuki clash in the early 1990s. Starting from the 2000s there was a declining trend in civilian deaths. The number of deaths, though less, registered were mainly on account of IED explosions, getting caught in encounter, certain UG groups targeting non-local labourers etc. Loss of lives on the part of the Security Forces show a high reading in the 1990s which gradually decrease down the years, the early 2010s showing the least numbers. The number of militants killed in security offensives as well as factional clashes show a high reading in the early 1990s followed by a lull period from late 1990s to early 2000s. From 2004 there is an abrupt rise in the number of deaths of militants which continue till 2010. However, the early 2010s records a gradual low which could be attributed to demobilization of large number of cadres of various groups, busting of insurgent bases in certain parts of the state and subsequent sanitization following army operations.

Table 2.2

ARMED CONFLICT/INSURGENCY RELATED VIOLENCE FROM 1992 TO 2014.

YEAR	NO.OF INCIDENTS	PARTIES/GROUPS INVOLVED	NO. OF DEATHS				NO. OF INJURED			
			CIV	S.F	MIL	TOTAL	CIV	S.F	MIL	TOTAL
1992	01	NSCN-IM		06		06				
1993	06	NSCN-IM	80	32		112		05		05
1994	03	NSCN-IM, KUKI MILITANTS	30	11		41				
1995			183	64	74	321				
1996			119	65	93	277				
1997	07	NSCN-IM, KUKIS, PAITES, KUKI MILITANTS,	139			139				

1998	01	KUKI MILITANTS	11			11				
1999	01	UNLF		09		09				
2000	04	MPA, UNIDENTIFIED MILITANTS	04	19		23		04		04
2001	03	PULF,KRA, UNIDENTIFIED NAGA MILITANTS	15			15	07			07
2002	07	KYKL, PLA, UNLF, KNA UKLF, UNIDENTIFIED MILITANTS	06	30	03	39	34	2		36
2003	01	KYKL		05		05				
2004	08	SF, KRA, KNF(S), UNIDENTIFIED MILITANTS	01	07	25	33	01	02		03
2005	18	SF, UNLF, KYKL, KNF, PLA PREPAK, NSCNIM, NSCN-K, KNA,KNF(P), UNIDENTIFIED MILITANTS	25	38	20	83	08	09	03	20
2006	18	UNLF,PLA,KCP,ZRNF, ZRA& KNA, KRA, UNIDENTIFIED MILITANTS	10	15	40	65	10	51	08	69
2007	22	KNF, KNA, UNLF, KNF-Z KYKL, KNF-P, PLA, KLA PULF,NSCN-IM, NSCN-K ,PREPAK, UNIDENTIFIED MILITANTS	26	28	89	143	22	10		32

2008	23	KRA-KLA,PLA, KCP-MC, PREPAK, NSCN-IM, KCP, NSCN-K, PULF(A), KYKL, UNIDENTIFIED MILITANTS	45		58	103	33			33
2009	29	KRA, KLA, PLA, KYKL, NSCN-IM, NSCN-K, PULF(A), PREPAK, KCP-MC, SFs, UNIDENTIFIED MILITANTS.	19	10	94	123	02	08		10
2010	7	PRA, UTLA, KYKL-MDF, PREPAK, KLA, KNF, KCP, MTF			42	42			04	04
2011	03	NSCN-IM, ZUF	07	06	06	19	14		05	19
2012	08	CORCOM, NSCN-IM, SFs ZUF, PREPAK, KNA, ZUF,	07	04	28	39	01			01
2013	05	PLA, UNLF, SF, NSCN-K, KNF-N	09	03	13	25	11			11
2014	04	MNPF, KNLA, ZUF, SFs	03		11	14	04	01		05
						1089				249

Sources: A. Chadha, Lt. Col. Vivek, (2005) Low Intensity Conflicts in India : An Analysis; and B. SATP

2.5 DEMOBILIZATION INITIATIVES AND THE DEADLOCK

With a view to bring about a solution to the insurgency problem in Manipur, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India and the Government of Manipur embarked on a series of measures which include policies and packages for surrender of Underground cadres, Suspension of Operation, signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), etc. The initiative has not been without dividends as (A) in the last decade from 2004 there has been a

spurt in the increase of surrenders to the government; and (B) dating from 2005 while most of the hill based Kuki groups have entered into a ‘Suspension of Operation’ agreement with the Government of India and Manipur Government, some of the valley based groups have also been demobilized by way of signing of “Memorandum of Understanding” with the Government of India and Manipur Government (Table 2.3).. Under the different types of demobilization steps initiated by the government, special and elaborate arrangements are made for lodging the cadres in designated camps spread across different parts of the State, payment of stipend, etc.

Table 2.3

Demobilized Armed Outfits of Manipur

Sl No	Name of the Armed Group	Hill Based /Valley Based	Arrangement
1.	KUKI NATIONAL ARMY (KNA)	HILL BASED	Demobilized by Suspension of Operation (SoO) under the name of an Umbrella organisation called “Kuki National Organisation (KNO)”
2.	KUKI REVOLUTIONARY ARMY (KRA)	HILL BASED	
3.	KUKI NATIONL FRONT [KNF (S)]	HILL BASED	
4.	KUKI NATIONAL FRONT [KNF(MC)]	HILL BASED	
5.	KUKI LIBERATION ORGANISATION – KUKI LIBERATION ARMY [KLO-KLA]	HILL BASED	
6.	KUKI NATIONAL ORGANISATION – KUKI LIBERATION ARMY [KNO-KLA]KUKI	HILL BASED	
7.	KUKI NATIONAL FRONT-ZOUGAM [KNF(Z)]	HILL BASED	
8.	KUKI NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (KNLF)	HILL BASED	
9.	UNITED SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONARY ARMY (USRA)	HILL BASED	
10.	HMAR NATIONAL ARMY (HNA)	HILL BASED	
11.	UNITED MINORITY LIBERATION ARMY (UMLA)	HILL BASED	
12.	UNITED KOM REM REVOLUTIONARY ARMY (UKRA)	HILL BASED	
13.	ZOMI REVOLUTIONARY FRONT (ZRF)	HILL BASED	
14.	PAKAN REVOLUTIONARY ARMY (PRA)	HILL BASED	

15.	ZOMI REVOLUTIONARY ARMY (ZRA)	HILL BASED	Demobilized by Suspension of Operation (SoO) under the name of an Umbrella organisation “United People’s Front” (UPF)
16.	HMAR PEOPLE’S CONVENTION [HPC (D)]	HILL BASED	
17.	UNITED KUKI LIBERATION FRONT (UKLF)	HILL BASED	
18.	KUKI REVOLUTIONARY FRONT (KRF)	HILL BASED	
19.	ZOMI DEMOCRATIC VOLUNTEERS (ZDV)	HILL BASED	
20.	KUKI NATIONAL FRONT (KNF)	HILL BASED	
21.	UNITED TRIBAL LIBERATION ARMY (UTLA)	HILL BASED	49 Cadres demobilized under SoO Agreement and 48 Cadres under “MOU” arrangement
22.	KUKI REVOLUTIONARY ARMY UNITED [KRA(U)]	HILL BASED	21 cadres demobilized by SoO Agreement under an umbrella organisation “KNO” while 13 are demobilized under “UPF” organisation
23.	UNITED PEOPLE’S PARTY OF KANGLEIPAK (UPPK)	VALLEY BASED	Demobilized by way of “Memorandum of Understanding” Agreement
24.	UNITED REVOLUTIONARY FRONT (URF)	VALLEY BASED	
25.	KANGLEIPAK COMMUNIST PARTY-LAMPHEL [KCP (Lamphel)]	VALLEY BASED	
26.	KANGLEIPAK COMMUNIST PARTY -NONGDRENKHOMBA [KCP(Nongdrenkhomba)]	VALLEY BASED	
27.	KANGLEI YAWOL KANNA LUP (KYKL-MDF)	VALLEY BASED	
28.	KANGLEIPAK COMMUNIST PARTY [KCP (Lallumba)]	VALLEY BASED	
29.	United Kuki Liberation Army – SK. Thadou [UKLA(SK. Thadou)]	HILL BASED	

However the valley-based Meitei insurgent groups like the UNLF, RPF, PREPAK, KYKL, and hill-based ZUF have not yet yielded to the appeal of the Government to join the mainstream. With the ceasefire of NSCN (IM) and NSCN (K) with government of India not extended to Manipur and all these groups adamant with their demands and agenda the armed conflict still persists pegging the figure of insurgent group active till date in Manipur at 12 (Table 2.4). These active groups still carry out subversive activities against the establishment in their pursuit of attaining their set goals and demands and the attendant hazards of the conflict still affect lives of the common masses.

Insurgent outfits active in Manipur as on 31/12/2016

SL. No.	Name of the Insurgent group/factor	Valley/Hill based
1.	United National Liberation Front (UNLF)	Valley based
2.	People's Liberation Army / Revolutionary People's Front(PLA/RPF)	-do-
3.	People's Revolutionary Army of Kangleipak (PREPAK)	-do-
4.	People's Revolutionary Army of Kangleipak (Progressive) PREPAK(PRO)	-do-
5.	Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL)	-do-
6.	United People of Kangleipak (UPK)	-do-
7.	Kangleipak Communist Party – Noyon (KCP-Noyon)	-do-
8.	Kangleipak Communist Party – Lamyamba Khuman (KCP-Lamyamba Khuman)	-do-
9.	Kangleipak Communist Party –	-do-

	Chingkheinganba (KCP-Chingkheinganba)	
10.	Kangleipak Communist Party MTF – Kesho Meetei, KCP-MTF(Kesho Meetei)	-do-
11.	Kangleipak Communist Party MC- Taibanganba (KCP-MC Taibanganba)	-do-
12.	Kangleipak Communist Party Maoist (KCP-Maoist)	-do-
13.	Kangleipak Communist Party – Khaba (KCP-Khaba)	-do-
14.	Kangleipak Communist Party – KK Nganba (KCP- KK Nganba)	-do-
15.	Kangleipak Communist Party – Kokkai (KCP-Kokkai)	-do-
16.	Kangleipak Communist Party – Poirei (KCP-Poirei)	-do-
17.	Kangleipak Communist Party – Rocky Meetei (KCP- Rocky Meetei)	-do-
18.	Kangleipak Communist Party – URF	-do-
19.	Kangleipak Communist Party – Military Joint Committee (KCP- MJC)	-do-
20.	Kangleipak Communist Party (National Revolutionary Front of Manipur) KCP-NRFM	-do-
21.	Kangleipak Communist Party – Mangang (KCP- Mangang)	-do-
22.	National Socialist Council of Nagalim – Issak Muivah (NSCN –IM)	Hill based

23.	National Socialist Council of Nagaland – Khaplang (NSCN –Khaplang)	-do-
24.	National Socialist Council of Nagaland – Reformation (NSCN –R)	-do-
25.	National Socialist Council of Nagaland – Unification (NSCN –U)	-do-
26.	Manipur Naga People’s Front (MNRFF+UNPC)	-do-
27.	Naga National Council (NNC)	-do-
28.	Zeliangrong United Front (ZUF)	-do-
29.	Thadou People’s Liberation Army (TPLA)	-do-
30.	Zeliangrong Tiger Force (ZTF)	-do-
31.	Kuki Tribal Union (KTU)	-do-
32.	Kuki People’s Liberation Army/ Front (KPLA/KPLF)	-do-
33.	Hmar Liberation Front (HLF)	-do-
34.	Kuki Unification Frontal Organisation (KUFO)	-do-

Manipur Police Department: CID (SB), SATP, Hueiyen News Service/
Imphal, June 28.

CONCLUSION

The conflict situation in Manipur is linked with several issues like merger of Manipur with India, perceived sense of neglect by the Indian Government and the mainland Indians, Nagas’ claim over territory of Manipur, multiplicity of ethnic groups and ethnic divide, imposition of Armed Forces Special Powers Act, etc. This has afflicted damages down the years to the lives and properties of not only the warring parties but of the civilians too. It renders Manipur one of

the most violence-ridden States in the country. As a step towards conflict resolution the Government has embarked on measures of pumping in more developmental funds into the State to buy development and peace and to bridge the socio-economic gaps which is perceived as the root cause of insurgency .The insurgents adopting vicious designs to divert the funds for sustaining insurgency is a matter attracting utmost attention. By institutionalizing tax system, imposing and enforcing self-styled rules and dictates on the populace, the non-state groups' activities were akin to running a parallel government. Though several groups have been demobilized, the many active insurgent groups still operating in Manipur continue to grip the people in an atmosphere of fear, apprehension and uncertainty as is in a conflict situation elsewhere in the world. (Singh, 2010)

Chapter 3

MAGNITUDE AND EXTENT OF CHILD SOLDIERING IN MANIPUR

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the last two chapters, we have seen the global scenario of child soldiers and a picture of the conflict scene in Manipur. In this chapter, we shall examine the magnitude of child soldiers in the prevailing conflict scenario of Manipur.

The intrastate conflict in Manipur stretching over more than four decades characterized by guerrilla warfare involving small groups of combatants resorting to ambushes, sabotage, etc., leaves little room to discard the hypothesis that over the years children have been attracted and drawn towards the insurgency. The North Eastern Region of India including Manipur, besides Jammu and Kashmir and Naxal affected regions of South Eastern India and South Western India are spotted zones with reports of Non State Actors recruiting children. There has been no comprehensive study or research undertaken to form a strong statistical base of the phenomenon. Efforts in pursuit of establishing and estimating the extent and magnitude of the phenomenon are not without difficulties and hindrances. The difficulty is compounded by the inherent secrecy of it all. Because child soldiering as such is a matter under International scrutiny and something deliberated as not well in line with the humanitarian laws, the insurgent groups do not share any information about the matter but are

in denial of such practices. This is evident from the reactions and rebuttal in media or unexpected silence when episodes of child recruitment by the Armed Outfits hit the news in the year 2012 in Manipur.

The estimation of exact number of child soldiers in the Armed Outfits presently active in Manipur cannot be carried out owing to several reasons. Primarily the camps, in multiple numbers, are based in different locations across the border. The insurgent leaderships in appreciation, as stated above, of the fact that International law and conventions pitch for an end to child soldiering are in denial of the practice of child soldiering. Some groups had in certain instances come up with their own justifications of setting particular age as the recruitment age much in contravention of the International laws. In view of these facts, it is highly unlikely that exact information and data from the insurgent leadership could be obtained. Thus the data so collected may and may not corroborate the documented data obtained from the Governmental and non-governmental sources.

3.2 DATA SOURCES

This chapter draws on data collected in two phases of field work conducted over a period of 10 months from June 2013 to November 2013 and from May 2014 to August 2014. The first phase during the period from June 2013 to November 2013 entailed collection of data regarding surrendered cadres from security agencies dedicated to Counter Insurgency Operations like 57th Mountain Division, Inspector General Assam Rifles- South (IGAR-S), Border

Security Force (BSF), State Criminal Investigation Department- Special Branch (CID/SB). Data pertaining to underground groups which have been demobilized by way of Suspension of Operation, Memorandum of Understanding, arrangement from the State CID (SB), those of children admitted at the two observation Homes in the State have been critical in estimating the magnitude of child soldiers in Manipur. In addition, the reports from the print as well as electronic media have also been used as part of the data analyses.

Table 3.1
Child soldier Estimates From Demobilised Cardres

Sl. NO.	Categories	Time Span (period of surrender/ demobilization apprehension)	No. of Cadres	No. of Child Soldiers	Percentage of child soldiers
1.	Surrenderees	2004-2014	1251	270	21.58
2.	SoO	As verified on May 2014	2181	621	28.47
3.	MoU	As verified on 2014	472	39	16.02
4.	JJBs	2009-2014	238	66	27.73
Total			4142	966	24.04

The child soldier estimates have been drawn from the data taking into account the age of the cadres at the time of their induction into the Armed Outfit. These child soldiers have 'grown up' in the rebel movement and demobilized as an adult fighter years after their moment of recruitment.

Out of the total number of 1251 cadres of various outfits, who surrendered to the various agencies during the period from 2004 to 2014, 270 (21.58 %) of them were children at the time of their entry into the Armed Outfit. Of the 2181 cadres of two main hill-based insurgent groups, namely KNO and UPF which are under SoO arrangement, 621 cadres accounting for 28.4% are estimated as children at the time of their recruitment into the armed outfit. Out of the 472 cadres demobilized by way of Memorandum of Understanding arrangement, 39 cadres accounting for 16.02% are determined as children. The Observation Homes in Manipur recorded 238 children as children in conflict with law during the period 2009 to 2014. Of these 66 (27.73%) are determined as child soldiers. Exercises of collation and analysis along with the secondary data reveal that the proportion of child soldiers in the total number of cadres (estimated to range from 11,000 to 13,000) in the armed outfits of Manipur would be 24.04 per cent. Out of the total child soldiers, 6.1 per cent would be girls.

3.2.1 Group Representation

These 996 child soldiers, as reflected in Table 3.1, have been subjected to further analysis. In order to explore the relative tendency of the insurgent outfits employing child soldiers, they have been classified into two: one, on the basis of geography - whether based in the valley or the hills, and second, according to the organisation they belong to (Table 3.2).

(Table 3.2 about here)

With 300, the Valley-based groups represent 30.12% and the Hill-based groups with 696 account for 69.87 % of the caseload. It is pertinent to note that the great variance in the two figures owes to the fact that the consolidated data includes the two main Hill- Based groups (conglomeration of several groups/ factions) which have been demobilized by SoO arrangement. While the whole cadre strength and the child soldier ratio in respect of the demobilized Armed Outfits could be estimated, in respect of the outfits which are still waging war against the establishment, mostly valley-based, the estimate is established from the surrenders only which are comparatively low. However, within the scope of the data available for the valley-based insurgent groups it is seen that the strongest representation of 23.33% is from the UNLF, followed by PULF with 15.33%, RPF with 12.66 %, PREPAK with 11.33 %, KCP with 10 %, UPPK with 2.66%. The demobilized valley- based groups account for the remaining 13%. (Table 3.2)

3.2.2 Age-Group Child Soldiers of Armed Outfits in Manipur

In order to have a better grasp of the situation, the child soldiers being recruited by the insurgent organisations have been categorised into three age groupings - 8 to 11 years, 12 to 14 years and 15 to 17 years (Table 3.2). It is seen that children as young as 8 years have been found to be recruited in the armed outfits operating in Manipur, though maximum number of recruits happen to be in the age group of 12 to 17 years. As evident, it is mainly at the formative and adolescent stage of these young children that they had been recruited either voluntarily, by force/coercion or voluntarily forced.

TABLE 3.2

AGE WISE INDICATION OF RECRUITMENT OF CHILD SOLDIERS IN ARMED OUTFITS OF MANIPUR

PARTY	8-11YRS	12-14 YRS	15-17 YRS	TOTAL	HILL BASED / VALLEY BASED	REPRESENTATION	CATEGORY
UNLF		11	59	70	VALLEY BASED GROUPS (PRESENTLY ACTIVE)	23.33%	SURRENDERED/ APPREHENDED CADRES
RPF		11	27	38		12.66%	
PULF	1	11	34	46		15.33%	
KCP	2	8	20	30		10%	
KYKL	2	14	19	35		11.66%	
PREPAK	1	14	19	34		11.33%	
UPPK		2	6	8		2.66%	
NSCN(IM)		2	4	6	HILL BASED GROUPS	Most of these hill based groups have been demobilized. NSCN(IM) and NSCN (K) still active in Manipur	SURRENDERED/ APPREHENDED CADRES
NSCN(K)			1	1			
UTLA			6	6			
KRA			1	1			
KNF			1	1			
ZPC			7	7			
KNLF		3	5	8			
UPRF		1	2	3			
UNPC			5	5			
HRA	1	4	7	12			
HPC(D)		6	16	22			
ZRA			1	1			
CHANGE REVOLUTIONARY ARMY			2	2			
UPF	42	76	240	358			
KNO	49	61	153	263			
MoU GROUPS [UPPK, KCP (Lamphei), KYKL (MDF), URF, KCP (Nongdrenkhomba), (UTLA) (KCP-LALLUMBA,)]	1	7	31	39			

3.2.3 Time line of child recruitment by the Armed Outfits of Manipur:

Though insurgency in Manipur is traced back to the dates of Indian Independence from the colonial rule, the contemporary turn to a rather major problem can be traced back to the 1960. But recruitment of children in the armed groups could be traced only from early 1990s which as of now reached plateau

during 1996 to 2010. (Table 3.3). For the hill based groups it is clearly indicated that the child recruitment started from the time of the inception of the heightening of inter-ethnic tensions in the 1990s. In the case of valley based groups too, no child had been recruited till the early 1990s.

TABLE 3.3

YEAR-WISE INDICATION OF RECRUITMENT OF CHILD SOLDIERS IN ARMED OUTFITS OF MANIPUR

GROUP	1971-1975	1976-1980	1981-1985	1986-1990	1991-1995	1996-2000	2001-2005	2006-2010	2011-2015	TOTAL
UNLF					3	17	26	20	4	70
PLA						12	11	12	3	38
PREPAK					2	10	8	13	1	34
KCP						2	5	12	11	30
KYKL				1	1	7	14	11	1	35
PULF					1	6	19	19	1	46
UTLA								6		6
ZPA/ZPC								7		7
NSCN (IM)					1	3	1	1		6
NSCN(K)						1				1
KRA							1			1
KNF									1	1
UPPK						3	2	3		8
UPRF					1		2			3
KNLF								7	1	8
HRA								12		12
HPC(D)								22		22
ZRA									1	1
CHANGE REVOLUTIONARY ARMY									2	2
UNPC								5		5
UPF				1	10	22	102	211	12	358
KNO				2	7	24	105	112	13	263
MOU					1		3	13	13	30
TRI. AGREEMENT GROUPS(KCP-LALLUMBA)								2	7	9

3.2.4 District -Wise Profile of Child Recruitment by Armed Outfits of Manipur:

A very interesting picture emerges when the problem of child soldiering is examined district-wise. The geographical dimension of the conflict in Manipur which is accounted by the affinity of the insurgent groups to particular ethnic groups or tribes inhabiting a particular area is reflected too in the pattern of child soldiering that takes place across the State. An analysis of the district wise or area-wise extent and magnitude of child soldiering in Manipur based on the secondary data pertaining to surrendered cadres, arrested or apprehended cadres, and demobilized cadres of various armed outfits reveal drastic differences in the degree and magnitude (Table 3.4).

The following pictures emerge from the examination of Table 3.4:

- i. There is no single district free from the problem of child soldiering.
- ii. In the two hill districts of Churachandpur and Senapati, the problem is rather acute in the sense that they constitute 35.24 per cent and 22.59 per cent of the total.
- iii. The valley district of Thoubal (11.54%) and the hill district of Chandel (10.84%) contribute each more than 10 per cent of the total.
- iv. The hill district of Tamenglong has the lowest density of child soldiers.
- v. A comparison of the density of child soldiers with the district shares in the total population of the State reveals the acuteness of the problem in the hill districts. As of the 2011 census, the hill districts share 40.18 per cent in the total population of the State. But in the case of child soldiers, the hill districts constitute 72.58 per cent of the total.

- vi. There is every possibility that the density of child soldiers in the hill districts could be even worse. The above inferences are drawn from the available data and the area of study confined to Manipur. If the dynamics of insurgency of the adjoining States like Nagaland and Mizoram are to be considered, then a more complete picture might emerge. There are large cases of a significant number of cadres of Naga armed outfits like NSCN(IM) , NSCN (Khaplang), though based in Nagaland, as reportedly drawn from Ukhrul, Chandel, Tamenglong and Senapati districts of Manipur. Similarly armed outfits having bases in Mizoram have been reported to have cadres hailing from Churachandpur district.

The high proportion in the districts of Churachandpur and Senapati needs to be accounted for in the context of the demobilisation of Kuki armed groups as the Kukis concentrate in these two districts, especially in Churachandpur and in certain parts of Senapati district. It has led to the establishment of a consolidated figure of child recruits in respect of the two districts. However, It has not been possible in the case of the other hill districts where the Naga population is substantial and where the Naga insurgent groups like the NSCN (IM), NSCN (K), ZUF, UNPC, MNPF, etc. operate; these groups are still active and a sizable number have neither surrendered nor have been demobilized in Manipur. Especially in this context, the ceasefire between the NSCN (IM) and the Government of India is not extended to the State of Manipur though the group is still considered active here. This particular group is believed to have inducted a large number of children in their fold. There are reports as well as accounts given by a surrendered cadre of NSCN(IM) that it was through an announcement made in his school asking for volunteers to join the outfit that he got into it. Similarly a cadre of NSCN(K) narrated that in Tamenglong district the outfit imposed a dictate that every household had to

compulsorily ‘contribute’ a male child to the armed outfit for sustaining the insurgency.

TABLE 3.4

DISTRICT WISE PROFILE OF CHILD RECRUITMENT BY ARMED OUTFITS OF MANIPUR

<i>DISTRICT</i>	<i>SURRENDEREES</i>	<i>MOU</i>	<i>SoO</i>	<i>T.A</i>	<i>OBS Home</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>As Proportion of the Column Total (In percentages)</i>	<i>District Share in the States Total Population, 2011 (In percentages)</i>
IMPHAL WEST	18	05	04	01	06	34	3.41	35.54
IMPHAL EAST	37	07		05	06	55	5.52	
BISHNUPUR	62	04	02	01		69	6.92	8.83
THOUBAL	98	05		02	10	115	11.54	15.45
Valley Districts	215	21	06	09	22	273	27.39	59.82
CHURACHANDPUR	19	06	288	-	38	351	35.24	9.97
CHANDEL	20		82	-	06	108	10.84	5.29
UKHRUL	04	01	24	-	-	29	2.91	6.73
SENAPATI	07	01	217	-	-	225	22.59	13.04
TAMENLONG	05	01	04	-	-	10	1.00	3.67
Hill Districts	55	09	615	-	44	723	72.58	40.18
<i>State Total</i>	270	30	621	09	66	996	100	100

3.2.5 Surrenderees as Primary Data Source:

The second phase of primary data collection involved interview of 270 consolidated caseload of former child soldiers (who have surrendered to the Government) using a Semi structured Qualitative Questionnaire consisting of 6 parts to probe issues like (a) personal profile of the respondent (b) Educational profile of the respondent (c) Socio-economic condition and living condition of the respondent (d) Working condition of the respondent when

he was in the armed group (e) Associated hazards of being a recruit in the armed group.(f) Life after being a child soldier in an armed outfit. The surrenderees, who were former child soldiers, are opted as sample for primary data collection as the category comprises of different insurgent groups and hence could provide broader understanding of child soldiering issue across parties. Accessibility is another factor as it would not have been possible to get access to the child cadres which are reportedly mostly based across the border. Further, even though account of child soldiers from insurgent camp at present time could not be obtained as a part of the study due to obvious reasons of security and other logistical inconveniences, narration of past experiences by the former child soldiers holds as much water to drive home the existence of the problem and the magnitude of the same to an appreciable extent and for which the armed non State actors cannot be relieved of the liability of violating humanitarian laws. The information obtained from the primary data analysis has helped in developing the picture of child soldiering in the conflict landscape of Manipur and understanding the factors responsible for the problem which have been dealt with in the next chapter.

3.2.6 CWCS and Media Sources

Before we conclude the chapter, it would be rewarding to have a glimpse of cases of child soldiering as reported to the Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) and those reported by the media. In Table 3.5 we have the CWC cases while Table 3.6 the media reports. Both these reports confirm the prevalence of recruitment of children by the various outfits for using as their soldiers.

Table 3.5**Cases reported at Child Welfare Committees**

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Description of the case</i>	<i>Insurgent Group</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Child welfare Committee</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1.	A 15 years old boy from Tera, Imphal West apprehended along with a cadre who lured and influenced him to join an insurgent Outfit.	UNLF	March 2013	Imphal West	Child handed over to family after proper counselling
2.	A minor boy of 17 years from Tera, Imphal West rescued by Police Commandos of Thoubal district and Imphal West district police from being transported to Myanmar for getting recruited in an insurgent group.	KYKL	July 2014	Thoubal	Child handed over to family after proper counselling.

Table 3.6**Media Reports on Child Recruitment**

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Description of the incident</i>	<i>Insurgent group involved</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1.	3 young boys of age 14 years from Sairem Khul village in Imphal West lured to join the group by one of the boys' relative. Reported in April,2012	PREPAK	The boys were rescued.
2.	A young boy of 16 years from Haorang Keirang Village recruited into a valley based insurgent group. Reported in April,2012	PREPAK	Recruited
3.	2 young boys of 10 years from Lourembam village lured to join the armed outfit. Reported in 2008.	PREPAK	Rescued.
5.	A 13 year old boy from Bashikhong Kitnapanung missing from home and suspected to be recruited in the UG group. Reported in 2013.	Not ascertained	
6.	2 men arrested by the police in connection with the missing of a 15 year old boy (allegedly recruited in UG group) . Reported in June 2013.	Not ascertained	
7.	A class VII student of Don Bosco High School, Chingmeirong kidnapped by KCP cadres. Reported on April, 2012	KCP	Rescued
8.	2 girls both 15 years of age from Kachikhul , Imphal West taken to Moreh , commercial town along Myanmar border by three men for getting recruited in Armed outfit. Reported in February, 2013.	KYKL	Recruited

3.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has explained the various sources of data. It has also given age-group, district and armed-outfit-wise data on the involvement of child soldiers. It has been found that, though children as young as 8 years old are recruited, yet the maximum density is found among 12 to 17 years olds. Further, the acuteness of the problem is found to be more among the hill districts of Manipur, with the probability of being even worse if one includes the studies of the armed outfits in the neighbouring States.

Chapter 4

MILIEU OF CHILD SOLDIERING IN MANIPUR

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The last chapter has shown the prevalence of child soldiering problem in all the districts of Manipur and with the hill districts bearing greater burden. This chapter purports to show the socio-politico-economic milieu in which the problem has arisen in the State.

While the direction of causality cannot be easily determined, the impact of the protracted conflict on the socio-economic condition of the State manifested in rising poverty, low literacy rates, degradation of familial structure and values, psycho-social insecurity, etc., are all too salient to be ignored. Some of the main issues are analysed in what follows.

4.2 POVERTY

In the light of the linkages between the socio-economic status of households and the possibility of being recruited or joining the insurgent groups it would be in place here to have a picture of the socio-economic scenario of Manipur³. It is already a common knowledge that Manipur is one of the least diversified and developed provinces of India. The Per Capita Income of Manipur has been consistently below the All-India Average as seen from the Table... It is seen from the Table that not only the Manipur average is lower, but the distance is also widening; in 2004-05 the All-India Average was 1.29 times of Manipur but it has risen to 1.86 times in 2012-13.

³We do not intend to enter into the big controversy surrounding definition and size of poverty. Our aim is to appreciate the context of livelihood of households.

Table 4.1

Per capita Income, Manipur and India at Current Prices

<i>State/India</i>	<i>2004-05</i>	<i>2005-06</i>	<i>2006-07</i>	<i>2007-08</i>	<i>2008-09</i>	<i>2009-10</i>	<i>2010-11</i>	<i>2011-12</i>	<i>2012-13</i>
Manipur	18640	20395	21419	23093	24773	27095	28931	32641	36474
All-India	24143	27131	31206	35825	40775	46249	54021	61855	67839

Source: CSO as given by the various issues of *Economic Survey*

Note: Final figures for the more recent years are yet to be available.

The pressure on the livelihood sustenance of various households can be gauged from the results of the various rounds of the National Sample Survey. The various rounds (e.g. 63 and 66) on the Consumption Expenditure Surveys reveal how the monthly per capita consumption expenditure in Manipur is consistently higher than of the All-India Average. The picture emerging from the 63 Round (July 2006 to June 2007) is given in Table .It is seen that the per capita consumption expenditure in the rural areas of Manipur is more than 1.45 times the average at the national level; in fact it is even higher than the richer States of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

Table 4.2

Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure: Rural (Rs)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Manipur</i>	<i>All India</i>
Food Group	411.62	363.42
Non-Food Group	384.72	331.75
<i>Total</i>	<i>796.34</i>	<i>695.16</i>

Source: NSS 63rd Round

So in a context of lower per capita income, we have a reality of higher consumption expenditure. This is a veritable scenario for indebtedness. The Rounds of 2003 and 2013 Surveys of Indebtedness reveal a lot on the low scale but critical indebtedness scenario of Manipur. Around 54 per cent of the households show indebtedness in Manipur compared to the all India scenario of around 25 per cent. The latest 2013 (70th Round NSS Survey) reveals that the average cash indebtedness of the households remains at around Rs. 5000 per household compared to the all-India average of around Rs. 30000. The various rounds also reveal that most of the borrowings are for meeting Medical and Educational expenses of the households followed by Consumption expenses and rather than for capital investments. This implies that the households do not generally have the capacity to borrow a threshold level of borrowing to cross the prevailing livelihood level to a higher one.

Further borrowing small amounts even for Education and Medical expenses imply that majority of the households are at the margin of livelihood.

All these imply

1. Meeting livelihood requirements is a real struggle for many households.
2. There must be many households who find it very difficult to meet Consumption, Medical and Education Expenses. They have necessarily to borrow. Given the prevailing lack of employment opportunities, the opportunities for repayment is rather low.
3. There must be a huge proportion of households who do not have access to loans and do not have the capability to meet their two square meals.

There are conditions for the offspring of these households to be both under the push and pull factors to join insurgency groups. The other side is definitely greener for the children of these households.

4.3 DECLINE OF THE INSTITUTION OF FAMILY

The widespread existence of poor families has expectedly affected adversely the very institution of family. This setback has created a base provided for social ills and unwarranted social practices. The impact of this absence of a viable family becomes visible when 22.91% of former child soldiers were from single parent families and 4.16% were orphans prior to their recruitment in the armed outfit; the vacuum of a support mechanism within a family during childhood must definitely have led the children to search for a meaningful existence without knowing anything about it. In the struggle for meeting the basic requirements and material needs for a living, single parents in majority of the households focus their time and energy on earning something for the day leaving their family and especially children behind. In the process care and concern for meeting emotional needs of the members of the family has taken a back seat and familial bond suffers a setback .The trend of Traditional Joint families giving way to nuclear families in modern times adds to the predicament as the guidance and clout of the elders of the family are non-existent. This decline in the institution of family, the most important elemental unit of the society may be accounted as one of the factor which exacerbated the vulnerability of the children to get recruited in the armed outfits.

4.4 POOR EDUCATIONAL STATUS

The survey conducted on 270 demobilized former child soldiers clearly indicates that 25.69 % of them joined the outfit when they were attending school while 68.05% joined insurgency later after they dropped out of

school; the absolute illiterate account for 6.25%. The reasons given by the latter group is invariably poverty and non-affordability of the educational expenses by their parents. While it may be noted that the percentage of drop out children is much higher, as certain group of school attending children too got recruited in the armed outfits a conclusive link of school dropouts with child recruitment cannot be drawn. The school dropouts, who for reasons of poverty and non-affordability on the part of their parents, non-availability of schools and educational facilities or simply lack of motivation do not attend school form a rich pool of potential child soldiers. Such children are more vulnerable to the preying by the unscrupulous recruiters.

4.5 PSYCHO-SOCIAL INSECURITY

The long periods of social instability have created a general atmosphere of psycho-social insecurity among the masses generating an atmosphere of indifferent attitude and lack of concern for others, including children particularly. In the absence of community concerns for such ills as child soldiering for reasons of fear and insecurity the problem had only magnified and added impetus to the insurgents.

4.6 CHILDREN AS SUBSTITUTES FOR ADULTS- THE PULL FACTOR

Besides the various leading factors discussed above, the policy intervention context can also be an inducement. The change in conflict dynamics in the State in the aftermath of stepped up counter- Insurgency measures may be one of the factors for child soldiering in Manipur. The numerous insurgent groups have been making efforts to sustain the armed struggle. Besides the financial implications of running the insurgency and sustaining it - reportedly by way of extortion, arms and drug smuggling - the maintenance of the strength and numbers in a context of stepped up Counter

Insurgency Operations is a critical component for sustaining the armed movement. Child soldiering too has to be looked at from this angle too. Though several groups/outfits have been demobilized through peace initiatives by the government, there are yet many deadlocked issues with all their ramifications and attendant hazards. The number of active groups are reportedly dwindling due to several factors like death in combats and encounters with the Security forces, surrenders to the Government, desertions, voluntary retirement or discharge on health grounds, reluctance of the bailed outs to join again, differences and disgruntlement within the group owing to inefficient leadership, etc. The equation of might with guns and the status quotient of getting associated with the underground elements by compulsion of circumstances and not by choice have changed over time with the stepping up of Counter Insurgency measures. In certain rural areas, some of the cadres got killed in the offensive launched by security forces while the survivors were pushed back across the border. Except some random elements in some pockets the insurgent cadres are literally incapacitated from operating within the populace with the kind of audacity and potency that they earlier used to. Along with sanitization of the once liberated zones came the process of cracking down on the remnants of insurgents' occupation. People who had been sympathizers and covert workers too have had to bear the brunt of security actions and this has proved a deterrent for people from getting associated with the insurgent groups. Especially the adult population have been deterred to a great extent from joining the insurgency, and with the pressing need to make up the numbers the insurgent leaderships have resorted to enlisting young children who are naive about the development that have unfolded in the recent years and equally zealous to take up new ventures.

4.7 LACK OF POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

In the backdrop of the phenomenon of child soldiering by the Armed Outfits in Manipur there is interplay of myriad of factors. The various schemes under the social Welfare Department, Government of Manipur for the welfare of children such as bal bhavans, bal Kendras, shishu grihas etc though implemented do not seem to reach the remote villages as evident from the account given by most of the affected persons of lack of amenities and recreational facilities in their households and localities. With no playgrounds, playthings and other facilities for their recreation and leisure, children find no avenue for channelizing their energy. This, coupled with the non availability of educational facilities drives the children towards unwanted companies and activities. Deprivation of benefits and facilities to the BPL families due to corruption, lack of monitoring and other reasons further aggravate the condition of the poor indirectly contributing to the rising menace of child soldiering. Lack of policies and regulations to ensure meaningful implementation of child welfare programmes and less enforcement of law and imposition of penalty on the recruiters and perpetrators of the abhorrent act has all the more emboldened the unscrupulous recruiters to carry on their sinister activities.

4.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the inducing factors compelling the emergence of child soldiers among the insurgent groups in Manipur. The findings as emerging from the former child soldiers reveal the significance of economic factors and absence of social opportunities in determining the outcome as child soldiers.

Chapter 5

CONFLICT AND THE GENERAL PSYCHE OF THE PEOPLE OF MANIPUR

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters have discussed the presence, density and underlying determinants for the emergence of child soldiers in Manipur. This chapter dwells on the impact of the conflict on the general psyche of the people as it impinges on the phenomenon of child soldiering. The protracted conflict situation of more than 4 decades old with its attendant orgies of violence and bloodbath has left deep impact on the general psyche of the people. The pioneering valley based insurgent groups built up their ideology for the armed insurgency on the agenda of regaining lost independence of Manipur by seceding from the union of India and seeking the right to self-determination towards realization of the same. The armed movement from the beginning has been projected as a movement for the people and with this contention support of the people was solicited and to a certain extent taken for granted by the non-state actors. The mushrooming of insurgent groups that started in the later years of 1990s and 2000s especially along ethnic lines also had this projection of being a people's movement. While it may be noted that the insurgents did garner certain amount of people's support in the early years, the same is perceived to be diminishing over the years due to several factors and reasons.

At one point of time when insurgency was at its peak with less intensification of counter insurgency measures, certain areas of the State were akin to liberated zones with the insurgent cadres influencing community

activities and asserting their terms in matters of public interest. The insurgents propounding their movement as for people's cause had championed certain causes which received due accolades and appreciation of the public. People's co-operation was always sought to forge the movement ahead. However over the course of time it was also seen that little consideration of people's sentiment was accorded. Within their own set of principles and justice system, the insurgents had resorted to actions which were considered arbitrary by the public. The equation of guns with might which had been reflected in several acts of threat, intimidation and killings of civilians on whatsoever grounds by the insurgents attracted unexpressed public criticism; unexpressed because the people of Manipur started to feel that insurgency was there to stay and that it would be in the fitness of things to remain a silent spectator to any of their diktat or unwarranted actions. The result is the indifference of the masses to acts and designs of the armed outfits even if it contradicted the aspirations of the people and one of the casualty of this indifference is the extent to which children of the State had been all these years affected by the menace of child soldiering and left unaddressed. Despite statistics having confirmed the veracity of the proposition that the armed groups in Manipur do recruit child soldiers even from the time of inception of the various groups, people of the State have remained mute spectators or rather indifferent to the whole menace. Parents and guardians of children missing from homes and playfields even after confirming that their children/ wards had been taken away by underground elements for the purpose of child soldiering have rather opted to hush up the matter and not report at the jurisdictional police station. The statistics of missing children reports available with the Manipur Police Department contain very little missing reports during the period from 1970s to the early 2000s though statistics available with the Manipur Police Department indicated a gradual rise in the

number of missing children reports from 2005 onwards. The rise started from the year 2008 with the peak recorded in the year 2012 (Table 5.1). Though the available entire statistics of missing children reports cannot be concluded as pertaining to child soldiering issues alone, there is every likelihood of a good percentage of the cases being for child soldiering purpose in the light of several unreported and unpublished instances of children missing from homes and getting recruited in the armed outfits. Beyond this argument whether the less number of missing reports during the period from 1970s to early 2000s is to be conceived as a case of less incidence of children missing or a figure arising out of non-reporting of children missing even after actual incidence on ground is but the moot question. The inference that could be drawn from this observation is the probable mind-set and psyche of the people, even that of the immediate affected families of children.

Table 5.1
Report of Missing Children

Year	Missing		Traced	Untraced
	Boys	Girls		
2005	6	8	7	7
2006	4	2	5	1
2007	9	5	9	5
2008	29	16	20	25
2009	28	17	42	3
2010	27	15	15	27
2011	35	34	49	20
2012	63	62	90	35
2013	11	3	11	3
2014	8	28	24	12
	408		252	138

However, public acknowledgement of the existence of the menace in Manipur and show of will to fight against the practice in the recent past is testimony of the fact that with time the equation has changed and that not all sections of the society could be yielded to the terms of the insurgents. It was with the filing of report in media by one....., a 39 year old widow, from a Locality in Imphal in 2008 regarding the abduction of her only son, (then 10 yrs old), by the PREPAK for child soldiering that blew the lid off several other cases of child abduction and set the trigger for garnering collective public dissent against the practice. Reports after reports followed in the media and people started to raise voice against the perpetrators of the act heralding a new era in the conflict landscape of Manipur. This very trend continues and the present study is an attempt in encouraging the change in psyche that has come about and also for reinforcing the cause for voicing against the despicable act of recruiting children for fighting wars.

5.2 RECRUITMENT MODE

The recruitment of child soldiers in Manipur by the multitude of Armed Groups under varied circumstances, i.e., voluntarily, forcibly or in the grey zone between voluntary and forced is suggestive of a wanton recruitment pattern which smacks of little or no discern about the ill-effects of involving children in wars by the Armed Outfits and also the community with perhaps the state remaining a silent spectator. This is what is to be expected in the context of the general psyche of the populace.

The shady recruitment of child soldiers in Manipur occurs in a landscape of insurgency where as a part of their tactics, cadres of Armed Outfits operate from within the populace. The infiltration has been possible because of community's submission to the designs of the underground elements

because of fear of repercussions from their side in the event of any opposition raised against them. The absence of resistance is so apparent in the context of child recruitment as we get to see children recruited into Armed Outfits from as early as 1993 till the present day. From the analysis of the secondary data and primary data of 270 of former child soldiers the mode of recruitment of children into the fold of the insurgent outfits in Manipur could be established to be taking place in three different ways.

5.2.1 Recruitment by middlemen/ women.

More than the two actors - the insurgents and the gullible children - a very important actor in the various episodes of child soldiering in Manipur has been the recruiters who are from amongst the so called normal citizens of the society. Many former child soldiers have narrated stories of how they were lured by the recruiters by promising them money, mobile phones, clothes and other luxuries. Between the insurgent group and the pool of potential new entrants there is a network of recruiters who have taken up the recruitment of children as a business for their sustenance. For receiving an amount of anything from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 30,000 per recruit, all that the recruiters had to do was to look out for potential soldiers and who better could fit the bill than young gullible children who would not be able to understand their sinister designs and all the clandestine transactions. These recruiters would try to be close to the young children and fascinate them with all the promises till the child would ultimately give in to their words and agree to be taken to the prescribed location. From this point the child would be further taken over by other middleman till he /she reaches the insurgent camps mostly across the border in Myanmar, Nepal and Bangladesh. It is in such cases of inducing the child to agree and volunteer for the recruitment under the veil of promises and make believe that the grey

zone exists where one cannot actually account that he/she did volunteer nor deny that he/ she ever disagreed to the proposal of the recruiters. The various types of recruiters range from relatives of the child, relatives of their friends, etc. Invariably these recruiters are over-ground workers or sympathizers of the insurgent groups. Besides the vulnerability of the children to be lured in to the outfits, these recruiters are also driven by their poverty, unemployment, craze for easy money and most importantly lack of social reasoning.

5.2.2 Recruitment facilitated by the child soldiers.

The recruited children were sent back to their villages/localities to carry out clandestine activities, in several cases, after obtaining their basic military training. These children reach out to their friends and children in their localities and with their saga of encounter with the insurgent world, motivate them and subsequently get them recruited within their fold. This mode of child recruitment accounts for 35.37% of the recruitment of former child soldiers in Manipur as testified by the first-hand account of the former child soldiers. Almost all the outfits resort to this means to get new entrants in their fold. The child soldiers carry out the tasks as duty bound to follow their masters' orders, more to prove their might than pecuniary benefits. The excitement and feeling to have their peers follow their footsteps and join their fold is considered a feat in itself by these child soldiers

5.2.3 Recruitment by cadres.

Several instances have been accounted by child soldiers of how they were influenced by the hard core cadres who were harboured by their sympathizers in some houses or who forcibly took shelter at their houses or in one of the houses in the locality to take cover as well as carry out their subversive

activities. Being exposed to all the underhand dealings and activities of the insurgent cadres the young minds were corrupted into developing a mental equation of guns with power and the urge to actually have a feel of how insurgency and life of an insurgent is all about. This desire coupled with their limited understanding of revolutionary ideals and principles eventually drive them towards the insurgent group. Attempt to recruit new entrants in this manner is invariably an integral part of the insurgent activities as building cadre strength is central to sustaining insurgency.

5.3 UNFOLDING STORIES

In this section, the life, training and activities of child soldiers would be examined.

5.3.1 Revelation

A former child soldier retells: “It was in the month of February 2008, that day I made up my mind to join the outfit as I was really fascinated by the stories this over-ground worker told me about the organization. He further assured me that financial assistance would be extended if I joined the outfit. I was curious and wanted to have a feel of how life actually would be in the jungle as an insurgent cadre. Then the OGW took me to a house in Phubala (three kilometres from my residence) where we halted a night. Next morning he took me to another OGW’s house at Singjamei. From there this OGW took me to Moreh. On reaching Moreh, I was taken towards Namphalong, and handed over to a S/S Lance Corporal of the outfit. The OGW left the place then. Then we proceeded to Heizik Thongren Training Centre on a motorbike. On reaching the camp, one S/S Lieutenant of the outfit recorded my bio-data and got me enrolled. There were 40 armed cadres and 38 new recruits waiting for Basic Military Training”.

5.3.2 Basic military Training

The Basic Military Training is set as mandatory for almost all the Armed Groups to equip the new entrants with the knowledge, skill and attitude to take up the challenges of waging war against an establishment. There is no differentiation in training according to children and adults; irrespective of their ages, all needed to go through the rigours of military training varying from 45 days to 6 months according to the organisation. Recording of bio-data, issue of uniform and training kit marks the commencement of the basic military training encompassing disciplines like Physical Training (P.T), Drill, Weapons, Tactics, Guerrilla Warfare, Political Class, etc. Reports of desertions by the recruits even during the training do indicate the amount of physical exertion the trainees must have been subjected to. Firing of few rounds, administration of oath and allotment of army numbers to the recruits at the end of the basic military training confirms the status of the child recruits as soldiers ready to take on the 'enemy'.

5.3.3 Activities of the child soldiers

As insurgency being guerrilla warfare, the safeguard and maintenance of camps across the border, where the leaders and cadres stay and chalk out policies and plans of the outfit, is a critical factor and lots of manpower are deputed for the same. Almost 80% of former child soldiers have accounted that immediately after the BMT they were made to do camp duties like ground levelling, fetching water, collection of firewood, cooking, washing, cultivation, construction of barracks for shelter, etc. They were also made to do patrolling duties, sentry duties, military intelligence duties like collection of information on security forces and their activities and also used as escorts for senior cadres. The other 20% of the former child soldiers retold they were sent

for operational duties like laying ambush, planting bombs, attacking security posts, etc. It is also quite an interesting fact that child recruits of some of the insurgent groups, after their basic training, were sent back to their homes/localities/ town areas and made to carry out certain activities for raising funds for the organization like handing monetary demand letters to businessmen, Government Establishments, commercial establishments, etc. They also had to carry out collection of cash and further transactions for realization of the funds at the top level in the hierarchy.

5.3.4 Hazards and Threats.

The hazards to which the child soldiers were exposed are not limited to the operational or combat tasks. Diseases and injuries also threatened them in the absence of proper medical facilities and expert hands to deal with severe cases though it is also learnt that cadres with health and medical problems were given due care and attention in almost all the Armed Outfits. As most of the insurgent camps were located within the territory of Myanmar and Bangladesh, much with the support of the respective government, the insurgent groups did have access to the medical and health care facilities available within the territory. However, proper care and medical expertise was always wanting. Hence some of the child soldiers were discharged on medical ground, some allowed to take a break and get treated at home with all the probable consequences at their own risk while some were treated at the expense of the outfit in noted health centres in India.

Further inter-group clashes like the ones between NSCN(IM) and UNLF, factional fights like the one between NSCN (IM) and NSCN (K), PREPAK(GS) and PREPAK (VC), KYKL and (KYKL-MDF) ,PULF(U/F) and PULF (Azad), etc. endanger the lives of the child soldiers all the more.

5.3.5 Pecuniary transactions- expectations and realities

As the insurgent groups float the idea of fighting for the cause of collective benefit of the State, community or the ethnic group be it independence of Manipur from the Indian Union for Valley Based groups like UNLF, RPF, PREPAK, KYKL, etc., formation of greater Nagaland for NSCN(IM), formation of Kukiland for the KNO, KLO, etc., protection of Muslim minorities for PULF, etc., cadres were expected to have the 'sacrificial' spirit and not expect any pecuniary benefits for whatever tasks assigned to them. This is in total contrast to the effort made by the unscrupulous recruiters, OGWs who played the card of 'monetary benefit' to attract the young children in their fold. Not getting pay or wages simply meant cheating them with false promises or rather deprivation of their due benefits for these children who got into the outfit not as an informed adult but as an uninformed child. However in respect of Armed Groups like PULF, the child soldiers entrusted with extortion tasks were given a significant percentage of the amount obtained on accomplishment of their assigned duty.

5.3.6 Penalties

Adding to the various facets of child soldiering in the Armed Outfits in Manipur and among many of the adversaries that the young souls often had to go through is the nature of penalty and punitive measures in the event of any misdoings or faults. Former child soldiers narrated that according to the gravity of the offence committed they were given punishment ranging from fatigue, whipping with cane-sticks, extreme physical exertion, submerging body till neck underneath the earth, etc. Perhaps the harsh measures are adopted so as to retain them in the group as fear for punishment and retributive action deter the children from deserting the group.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The myriad of issues that beset lives of the insurgents in the jungle when superimposed with the predicament faced by the child soldiers only reinforces the collective consciousness and understanding that children should not be made to participate in wars.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Tracing the causal variables of conflict in Manipur from the days when valley-based armed Outfits started insurgency in Manipur with the ideology of separating from the Indian Union as an Independent nation to the recent times where conflict had been driven more along ethnic lines especially for the large number of hill based groups, the narrative of child soldiers varies along the timeline.

The early phase of insurgency driven more by ideology had more voluntary' child recruits indicating the community patronage and popular support the insurgency perhaps might have enjoyed at that point of time. The role of community in supporting and facilitating children/youth participation in civil conflict is accounted by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Mindanao, Philippines where proximity to MILF camps created community conditions facilitating children's enrolment into armed groups. The ancillary communities are inhabited by extended families or relatives of MILF members and hence the conciliatory relationship between the two also negates the coercion argument in child soldiers recruitment in Mindanao (Alpaslam Ozerdem and Sukanya Podder, Page 13).

The picture in Manipur during the initial years of conflict, though not reflecting a similar one with the Mindanao case, could well be considered as community's endorsement of children participation in conflict. The prevailing conditions vis-à-vis governmental actions in terms of crack down and Counter Insurgency Operations not so intensified led to close interface of the insurgent cadres with the public which again served them the

dual advantage of carrying out their clandestine activities using the cover of public and also mobilization of the masses towards the movement. With the primary motive for building cadre strength to sustain the insurgency all, irrespective of age, caste, creed, sex and ethnic affiliations were inducted into the insurgent groups as is evident from the array of communities like tribals, Meeteis, Muslims, etc., in some of the insurgent groups like UNLF, RPF, PREPAK, KYKL, etc., and also the number of children recruited. Not offering resistance to episodes of child recruitment during the earlier four decades of insurgency from 1970s to 2000s do reinforce the argument in favour of voluntary recruitment as non-resistance; there could be a case of passive submission.

The conflict situation in Manipur unlike those in other conflicts of the world has not led to situations of widespread displacement, mass civilian casualties, food scarcity, etc., and hence the push factors in recruitment are not the absence of favourable living conditions and war-induced-hardships. However to some extent the general economic condition of the population especially the rural masses has led to increased vulnerability to join the insurgency. Even more appealing as a factor for the induction is the probable equation of power the armed groups possess with guns which may have attracted the young children as an opportunity for rise to prominence.

The later phases of conflict starting from the 1990s till date, coinciding with mushrooming of a number of insurgent groups both hill-based and valley-based groups along ethnic lines and also factionalism, children's participation in conflict are noted to be more by force and coercion. The mode of force recruitment could be in terms of letting a child join by way of threat at gun point, pressure on village chiefs to get certain number of recruits to join the outfit,

etc. The latter finds relevance more with the hill based armed groups like NSCN (K) as evident from interviews with former child soldiers; the Outfit imposed a dictate to get a male child of each family especially in its stronghold areas compulsorily inducted into the outfit.

With the activities of armed groups more inclined towards their fund raising drives by way of extortion and demands in the past two decades, children in the marginal section of society were considerably lured and coerced to join the outfit with promises of pecuniary benefits and better financial conditions for their families. The 'get rich quickly' appeal along with the urge to experiment with life as a member of an armed outfit directed large number of children to join the armed outfits in Manipur. The wanton way of recruiting children had ultimately given rise to huge public dissent which was manifested in the form of wide appeals in media to the Armed outfits to leave children, sit-in demonstrations denouncing the very act of child recruitment, etc.

One of the most important and striking facets of Child soldiering across the globe is the way children are being used after they become members of the outfit. While stories are galore of children being indoctrinated, trained, 'hardened' to maim and kill and even blow up themselves as suicide bombers in certain conflict zones of the World like Sierra Leone, Uganda, Afghanistan, etc., the extent to which child soldiers are utilized by the Armed outfits in Manipur depicts a comparatively much sober picture. Analyses of the caseload of 270 have revealed that 80% of them were given menial tasks inside camps. This perhaps owes to the fact that the armed groups are more engaged in low-intensity guerrilla warfare and the conditions are more in favour of maintaining the set-up of their respective camps mostly across the border.

The issue of retaining the recruited children in the armed outfits is seen to be addressed in various ways across conflict situations and several findings have been floated in this regard. It has been propounded that a child will not join an organization unless the organization can offer a ‘payoff’ over time that is greater than what he would earn otherwise. This condition can be satisfied when the rebel movement can offer greater rewards through wages from loot-seeking activities or from the intangible rewards that stem from fighting for a religious, ideological or ethnic separatist cause. (Alpaslam and Podder, Page 34). Children in the armed outfits of Manipur do not get the pecuniary benefits in the form of pay but there are reports of child soldiers getting their share of commission or wages for any successful monetary extortion. This is especially true for the various factions of Muslim armed outfit PULF. For most of the insurgent groups it is the ‘sacrifice for motherland’ card and promotion in ranks that are employed as measures for motivating as well as retaining the child cadres in the absence of arrangement for giving them monthly pay or wages. Punishment in the form of fatigue, extreme physical exertion, etc., are reportedly also used as punitive measures by the armed outfits in the event of detecting any cadre, child or otherwise attempting to desert the outfit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the study certain points regarding child soldiers in Manipur emerge very strongly:

1. Involvement of the non-state armed groups;
2. Significance of socio-economic variables as correlates of child soldiers; and
3. The withdrawal kind of attitude of the state on addressing this problem.

These imply that the issue of child recruitment by the non-state armed groups in Manipur requires a broad-based approach involving all segments of the society- the state, the general public, civil society and NGOs. Interventions essentially should be focused on the core of the matter to arrive at holistic solution. The needed interventions are explained in what follows.

A. State Interventions

The Optional Protocol-Convention on the Rights of the Child-AC provides protections for children up to age 18 against direct participation in armed conflict and places the burden squarely on the state to: (1) take all feasible measures that children do not take direct part in hostilities; (2) ensure that children (persons under 18) are not compulsorily recruited into state armed forces. (OP-CRC-AC (2002), Article 2).and (3) take all feasible measures to ensure that children (persons under 18) are not recruited in any manner by non-state armed groups or used directly or indirectly by such non-state groups in armed hostilities (OP-CRC-AC (2002), Article 4). The international community recognizes that the burden to prevent the so-called voluntary recruitment of children into non-state armed groups falls heavily on the state as well as on the armed groups in question. This tacitly reflects the view of the international community that alleged ‘voluntary’ recruitment (at least in the case of non-state armed groups) does not obviate the state’s responsibility to provide children the protection to which they are entitled (protection of their right to survive and thrive; right to be protected from exploitation etc.) (Sonja C. Grover-page 18). In the light of the guidelines laid down by the convention, though children are recruited only by the non-state armed outfits in Manipur, yet the state cannot shy away from the responsibilities of protecting the children from the menace.

B. Ensuring better socio-economic condition

Equitable development and opportunities for all sections of the society is a primary responsibility of the government. Failure of development and governance leads to the vicious cycle of continuing poverty, inequality, social discrimination and lack of social justice. These are conditions paving the way for discontent and further conflict. In as much as socio- economic and political issues matter for conflict, genuine grievances due to economic inequality, social discrimination , lack of opportunity accounts for recruitment of children in the non-state armed groups in Manipur. In view of the high instances of (a) child recruitment in rural and hill areas, and (b) the economically backward classes of the society, the socio- economic condition of the vulnerable sections of the society, viz., the daily wage earners and labours, cultivators in rural and remote areas need to be improved to reduce the vulnerability of children belonging to these section of the society. Employment generation programmes, extension of credit to the poor sections of the society, and proper implementation of schemes for BPL families can ameliorate the condition of the poor to a great extent.

C. Strengthening the institution of family.

Family, the most important and elemental unit of the society, is the base on which to build a healthy and prosperous society. When the institution of family is strong with right values and ethos every individual product of this family goes to make up a strong building block for a good society. Hence the imperative need for the elders in a family to guide the youngsters in the right path and maintain their clout over the latter's activity. The unit of family which has been degraded in recent years in the Manipuri society and which has also been accounted as a factor for the growing instances of child soldiering needs to

be strengthened. Fascination for modern gadgets like mobile phones and other trendy materials have led the majority of the potential child soldiers to embark on the path of joining insurgency believing the false promises of the middlemen /recruiters of satisfying their wants and desires. These wants and urges of a growing child can best be understood by the parents and close family members who are expected to satisfy their needs or explain to the child their inability or rather impropriety of using such gadgets at a tender age, etc. In as much as the young minds are gullible to insinuations, persuasions and distractions they are also equally receptive to logical reasoning and justifications.

Strengthening the institution of family could be effected by way of community awareness and interventions through prayer houses, Churches and other community interaction and service programmes, incorporation of value education in school syllabi etc.

D. Education

Education is considered a very important stabilizing element for younger population in conflict situations. Non availability of educational facilities especially in the far flung remote villages, disruption of education leading to drop-outs due to non-affordability of educational expenses by the parents make children deprived and vulnerable to unwanted activities. The state should ensure that schemes for free elementary education to children below 14 years of age are implemented in the true spirit.

E. Special rehabilitation package for the demobilized child cadres.

The peace initiatives take up by the Government of India and Government of Manipur which have demobilized large number of cadres

of Armed outfits should address the issues of children if any in the camps. While it is established that sizable number of cadres presently lodged in Security camps and set-ups pending completion of the infrastructure for accommodating them were children when they joined the outfit, they have grown into adults over the years. It is under certain terms and conditions that the cadres are stationed at the camps with arrangements for their security, sustenance, skill development training,, stipendiary extension etc. In addition to this, a standard child specific special arrangement inclusive of schemes for meeting educational needs, livelihood issues, psychological counseling etc should be in place for making up on the lost opportunities of the cadres and for subsequent meaningful integration with the society. Such provision could be a positive element in future peace endeavours of the Government with warring outfits.

F. Recreation facilities for children

The significance of recreationⁱ in the personality growth of individuals and social stability are long established. The immense role recreation plays in the proper and healthy development of children is an established fact. There is however no international consistency in defining leisure time and recreation activities though “there is general consensus that free time and leisure activities are freely chosen and non obligatory in nature.”ⁱⁱⁱ Further, it is found that there could be constraints of social status, cultural, sex, family well-being level,

ⁱ “Recreation is defined as being all those *socially acceptable activities* that a person chooses to do in order to make their leisure time more interesting, more enjoyable, and more personally satisfying.” (McKay et al., 1996) McKay, S., I. Reid, M. Tremblay and R. Pelletier, “The Impact of Recreation on Youth in Transition to Adulthood: A Focus on Youth at Risk,” in *Youth in Transition: Perspectives on Research and Policy*. Galaway, Burt and Hudson, J. eds. Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing Inc. 1996

ⁱⁱ Byrne, Tina, et al, *The Free Time and Leisure Needs of Young People in Disadvantaged Communities*, Children’s Research Centre, Dublin College, 2004, p.1

communication and institutional nature that work as barriers in the children's participation in recreation activities.

The consideration of these constraints is particularly relevant in the context of Manipur, given the socio-economic situation and the family background of the child soldiers. Underscoring this, the availability of recreational facilities or otherwise in the settlements where former child soldiers lived and further assess if any factor can be deduced as to the effects of their absence in exacerbating the vulnerability of children in conflict zones to unwanted activities. Incorporation of this aspect as an integral part of the secondary data collection and study of the statistics derived there from has helped in building up an understanding of the circumstances in the conflict zone of Manipur which possibly had acted as a push factor to the children to join the armed outfits. While 82 per cent of the former child soldiers have grown up in settlements with no recreation facilities, 16.7 per cent had only open fields in their localities as recreational grounds. 0.69 per cent had the facility of a park in their locality. Though the State and the Central Governments have various schemes and programmes for provision of recreational facilities for children, little or no reflection of implementation of the same on ground is seen. Absence of avenues for the growing adolescents to positively channelize their energy and potential could have led the children to idle away their time and energy and increased their vulnerability to get attracted towards unwanted companies and activitiesⁱⁱⁱ⁶. For the school drop outs the vulnerability could have been more. Such pool of children constitutes the most attractive target for the recruiters. In this context, the need for provision of recreational facilities for children in localities and villages, both rural and urban to ensure proper development of

ⁱⁱⁱ " There's nothing else to do so I smoke a bit of hash, get stoned, have a laugh...we end up getting in fights, we end up getting in trouble...we're bored of sitting around doing nothing ". (young woman, suburbs, age 15). Quoted in Byrne, *op. cit.*, p. 8

children and non-diversion of their thoughts and energy to unwanted activities can hardly be overemphasized. The inclination and potential of Manipuris in sports can best be exploited for serving the dual purpose of checking child soldiering and nurturing sporting talents by setting up adequate sports and recreational facilities in villages and settlements.

G. Streamlining the role of JJBs and CWCs.

For most of the issues and offences/ crimes involving children the Juvenile Justice Boards and Child welfare Committees have been functioning with a clear cut mandate, the former to deal with children in conflict with law and the latter to deal with child victims, destitute, etc. However when the issue of child soldiers come up certain critical issues are confronted as to how to conclude whether an affected child is to be treated as victim or a culprit. Children intercepted by police on the transit route and rescued from the hands of the recruiters are treated as victims but a child caught committing an act of militancy like planting bombs, serving demand letters, using firearms are treated as child offenders and referred to JJBs. Some child rights activists are of the opinion that the latter should be categorized as victims because they have joined the insurgency not by choice but by way of luring, coercion, kidnapping and even if they state to have voluntarily joined the outfit their decisions are not informed ones. The stay in observation homes for the child soldiers should be a rehabilitative process with proper counselling. Monitoring activities of the child soldiers after their stay in the Observation Homes should be carried out in consultation with parents and community leaders.

H. Stricter legislation: Amendment in the Unwanted Activities (Prevention) Act.

There are many weaknesses in the legal means to stop the perpetrators of the crime of recruiting children and the facilitators of the crime. Steps to

punish those responsible for recruiting children have been inadequate giving impunity to the perpetrators. Laws and acts framed to deter crimes against children as well as to deal with child offenders needs to be revisited to give more teeth to the law enforcement agencies as well as address the ‘victimcy’ aspect of child recruitment problem in Manipur. The Unwanted Activities (Prevention) Act enacted to check insurgency and all unlawful activities do not specifically address the issue of child recruiters. When we analyse the issue of Child Soldiers and attempt to zero in on the real culprit, the child soldier nabbed carrying out a subversive activity or the potential child soldier recruits rescued on the transit route cannot be held liable for penal actions. Needless to say the insurgents have been categorized as anti-state, secessionists, etc. and the Indian Penal Code and several acts are enacted for containing them. Section 18 B of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2012 provides for dealing with persons involved in recruiting persons to Underground groups /terrorists organizations. It says: “Whoever recruits or causes to be recruited any person or persons for commission of a terrorist act shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than five years but which may extend to imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine.” Although recruiters of children come under the purview of this section, the degree of criminality of the recruiters taking different roles and associating closely with the act of nipping the lives of the young children in the bud definitely need to be dealt with tougher laws and greater penalty. Amendment of the Act in this regard giving more teeth to the law enforcers is expected to deter the child recruitment to a considerable extent. Effective prosecution leading to conviction of child recruiters would go a long way in discouraging the recruiters and decreasing the menace.

In the Philippines, which has been fighting insurgency for many years, a special “Protection of Children in Situations of Armed Conflict Bill” is being considered by the Philippines Government which includes provision for free legal aid and Psychological Counselling to the child soldiers who break free, penalizing parents of child soldiers, etc. (Phillipines to prosecute parents of child soldiers, Zoe Daniels,02/12/2012). In line with the developments in the Philippines, considering the extent of damage caused to the children of the State by the protracted armed conflict, a similar bill for the State of Manipur may be considered for deliberation and further adoption.

I. Greater Role of media in sensitizing about the issue.

The role of the Fourth Estate in dissemination of news and views on issues of social relevance need not be overemphasized. When it comes to the child soldiering issues in Manipur the media have got a greater role to play in view of the gravity of the situation and the ignorance or rather indifference of the society. The expression of dissent by parents and relatives of the affected children , coupled with the media coverage of the same in the early 2010s have helped in provoking thoughts and sentiments of the general public and orienting the thought process towards curbing the recruitment of small children in armed outfits. With greater coverage by the media proportionately greater pitch in the voice against child soldiering from all sections of the society can be expected.

J. Need for coordination and synergy between the Social Welfare Department, Police and the NGOs of the State.

Police, NGOs and Social Welfare Department are mandated with the task of checking child trafficking in Manipur. They need greater sensitization on the issue of child soldiering in Manipur and to work with better co-ordination and

synergy. Sharing of information and clues, follow up on action taken, strengthening the communication system are the important aspects for maintaining better co-ordination between the various agencies. In addition to the government agencies and bodies mandated with the task of checking the menace, the community, local clubs and churches can contribute immensely to the process of checking child soldiering. The institution of Meira Paibees in Manipur has to be roped in actively in the process. There cannot be a substitute for vigilant community which asserts the importance of saving young children from getting into wars and conflict.

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APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE

(The questionnaire is framed for collecting information pertaining to their lives prior to joining and as a child soldier in Armed Outfits from the former child soldiers who have surrendered to the government).

I. PROFILE OF THE CHILD RESPONDENT.

1. Name (Optional) : _____
2. Age : _____
3. Gender : _____
4. Religion/ Ethnic Group : _____
5. Date of birth : _____
6. Place of birth : _____
7. Name of the Armed Outfit : _____
8. Year of joining/age at the time of joining the outfit : _____
9. Year of surrender/ Age at the time of surrender : _____

II. EDUCATIONAL PROFILE

10. Did you ever attend school? _____

If yes, which school and what grade?

If not why? Give reasons for your stopping to attend school.

11. Can you read? (English/ Manipuri/ Hindi/ any other language or dialect)

12. Can you write? (English/ Manipuri/ Hindi/any other language or dialect)

III SOCIO ECONOMIC CONDITION AND LIVING CONDITION OF THE FAMILY

13. Where did you live? _____

14. With whom did you live?

15. Did any of your (child's) immediate family- parents or guardians died or left?

16. If parent had died, when?

17. If parent had left, when and why?

18. How many siblings did/do you have?

Who are the members of your family?(Siblings in birth order and also to include other members like parents, grandparents, uncles aunts, cousins etc.

Name of the family member	Relationship to R	What does he/she do?

19. Can your parents/ guardians read and write? _____

If yes, in what language?

If not, reasons why they cannot read or write?

20. What was the occupation / major source of income of your

Father _____

Mother _____

21. What was the working hour of your

Father _____

Mother _____

22. How much did they earn (per day / monthly)? _____

23. What type of house was yours? (What was it made of, size, some amenities in it if any)

24. Did you always live there?

25. If not, where did you live before?

26. Why did you and your family move?

27. What were your leisure activities?

28. What were the recreational facilities available for children in your locality?

IV WORKING CONDITION OF THE RESPONDENT. (DURING HIS DAYS AS A CHILD SOLDIER)

29. How old were you when you started as a soldier or member of the armed group?

30. How long have you served as a member of the armed group?

31. Why were you recruited in the armed outfit?/ why did you decide to join the armed group? How were you recruited as a child soldier? (The respondent to describe the situations or events that got him/her into the armed outfits)

32. Did your parents allow / permit you to join the armed outfit?

33. Were you imparted any training as you got inducted into the armed outfit?
If yes, how long and where?

34. Mention some details about the training imparted.

35. What did you do at work? (Child's specific assignment and responsibilities)

36. How many hours per day did you work?

37. Did you work all year round or only during specific times when you are needed?

V. ASSOCIATED HAZARDS OF BEING A RECRUIT IN THE ARMED OUTFIT.

38. Were you ever hurt or sick since you joined the armed outfit?

If yes, give details _____

39. Did you ever feel tired while working? _____

If yes, what did you do then?

40. Did you ever feel sad that you were involved in that type of work?

If no, why? _____

If yes, why? _____

41. Did you think your work was dangerous?

If yes, why? _____

42. Had there been instances when you didn't work or refused to work?

If yes, what happened then? _____

43. What happened if you commit a mistake in your work?

44. What happened to other children (if any) in your group if they didn't work?

45. Were you paid?

If yes, how were you paid (in cash,/kind, per day, per week, per month etc)?

46. If no, why weren't you paid _____

47.If you were paid in cash , what did you do with the money?

48.What did you do during free time?

49. Give details about your relationship with these people.

Immediate superior	
Supreme leader	
Fellow child soldiers	
Members of the Armed Outfit	

VI. LIFE AFTER BEING A MEMBER IN ARMED OUTFIT

50.When did you come out of the armed outfit? _____

51.Did you come out on your own? _____

f yes, why and how? _____

52.If no, how did you come out?_____

53.Now that you are back with your family, what difference you find between life at home and life in the jungle?

54.What do you do now? (attend school/work)

55.What comments you got to hear from your friends and relatives? Have they accepted you back?

56.Did the security men (police/ army/ paramilitary) ever came/ come searching /looking for you?

57.Are you happy with your life now?

58.What is your aspiration?

59.What are your thoughts about this whole issue of children being recruited in armed outfits rather forcibly?
