

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

For several decades, the problem of insurgency has been a determining factor in the political set up, the state of regional economy and human development scenario of the north-eastern region of India. Movements and rebellions for self-determination and quest for identity assumed tremendous heights at different points of time which claimed, maimed and ruined thousands of lives. The policies adopted by the government to deal with insurgency and related issues hold much significance for the region and its people. However, despite attempts by the government at restoring order, peace has remained elusive. Why has the peace efforts not succeeded in yielding results in bringing about permanent normality and peace in the region? The key question that crops up is, whether the government has a peace policy at all? This research intends to investigate the government's approach while dealing with insurgency in Assam and will try to find the gaps or lacunae in the existing policies adopted by the government to achieve peace. Unlike earlier work on peace process and strategies for peace, here the focus is exclusively on the Government of India's peace policy in the light of the framing of the provisions and implementation process of the four peace accords signed in Assam.

The Northeast of India witnessed many movements that began in a democratic non-violent manner and later took shape of violent rebellions, each displaying their own attributes. We know it as insurgency or extremism—a home grown militancy which challenges the state to meet their wide-ranging demands that include autonomous territory, autonomous state, statehood and in extreme cases, even secession from India. But can home grown insurgency be regarded as 'war' against the Indian state? Can the Government expect to achieve military solutions to the problems which are basically political in nature? If not, what strategy must be used by the government for conflict resolution and for establishing peace in the region? The sceptical paradox is well known—although the region has been in the grip of insurgency since the mid-forties, the Government of India has not been able to formulate an institutional mechanism to take the peace processes forward to achieve sustainable peace.

We find a considerable literature on ethnic issues, citizenship issue, issue of identity and development, insurgency politics, different roles played by various stakeholders, the government's counter-insurgency strategies and so on. Since there was already a substantial body of work on insurgency and related issues, we wished to explore the discourse further in a context that would satisfy our preference for research which might eventually be of practical value. Though the government's strategies and policies to address and resolve the insurgency conflict in the region have been much discussed, it is felt that the topic has not been treated properly or fully. There has been little systematic effort to document or analyse the impact or perceived flaws of government's peace policy while dealing with the major insurgent outfits of the region. Most research in the field is dominated by generalized literature that go into the causes of the origin of the extremist movements linking these to the prevailing sense of alienation among the people, due to the alleged neglect by the Union Government of the region.

Samir Kumar Das has written a generalised critique of the ethnic accords of the region in his article titled 'Ethnic Accords in Northeast India' (Das S. K., 2005). He critically observes the involvement of civil society in the peace processes in the Northeast (Das S. K., Where Are the 'People'? A Study of Peace Processes in India's Northeast, 2015). Swarna Rajagopalan, in her study report titled *Peace Accords in North East India: Journey over Milestones* mentions that the 'success' of a peace accord lies in the ability of an agreement to facilitate a dynamic of peace-building and reconciliation. The study is an examination of 13 peace accords signed from 1949 to 2005 to determine the efficacy and utility of peace accords in bringing an end to conflict in the region. Bethany Lacina in her paper 'Rethinking Delhi's Northeast India Policy' looks New Delhi's response to Northeast insurgency as a two-pronged strategy of tough counter-insurgency combined with development aid. However, no research has been done on the government's peace policy through a clause by clause investigation of the four peace accords that have been signed in the state of Assam from 1993 to 2012. Hence, the topic has its relevance for research studies.

This research study has analysed insurgency from a multi-dimensional point-of-view. A critical analysis of the peace processes and the peace agreements signed in Assam has clearly brought out the ad hocism of peace efforts and policies on the part of the government. It is expected that the research work will advocate certain prerequisites and parameters necessary for lasting peace in the region. The research also aims at theorizing the current insurgency scenario prevailing in the Northeast of India. To evaluate the different dimensions of the insurgency issue, multiple players in the form of plethora of outfits, wide array of demands and the different shades of responses from the government calls for a framework of analysis. To do this in an objective manner, the researcher has fallen back on a tool of analysis known as the Peace Accords Matrix, a model used by Korc Institute of International Peace Studies and adapted it as part of research design. The discussions and analysis are mostly based on empirical data.

## **1.1 Key Terminology**

### **1.1.1 insurgency versus terrorism.**

In Northeast India, insurgents would like to be called by any terms—rebels, extremists, militants or guerrillas but do not like to be called as terrorists<sup>1</sup>. Ironically, there are instances where insurgents belonging to different groups have committed crimes that could be termed acts of terrorism. The term ‘Insurgency’ is defined as an organised rebellion which uses sabotage and armed conflict to achieve its aims.

Insurgencies normally seek to overthrow the existing social order and reallocate power within the country. They may also seek to (1) Overthrow an established government without a follow-on social revolution. (2) Establish an autonomous national territory within the borders of a state. (3) Cause the withdrawal of an occupying power. (4) Extract political concessions that are unattainable through less violent means (What is the difference between insurgency and terrorism?, 2008).

On the other hand, terrorism means “calculated use of violence or threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological.” Insurgents use ideology to target governments, terrorists target governments or societies to advance their motives (What is the difference between insurgency and terrorism?, 2008).

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<sup>1</sup>Based on self-compiled interview data of former militants

Insurgency or small wars occur between asymmetrical parties. Here the survival interests of the greater power are not immediately at stake. The conflict is conducted by the lesser power in a manner where superior military power, position and the might of the government cannot easily defeat it. Insurgency conflicts are protracted because diplomacy remains operative, restricting the level of violence and destruction. Often such conflicts aim at coming to terms with an agreement, instead of unconditional surrender.

### **1.1.2 Peace Accord**

Peace accord, by definition, means “a formal agreement between two warring parties which addresses the disputed incompatibility, either by settling all or part of it, or by clearly outlining a process for how the warring parties plan to manage and regulate the incompatibility”. Peace accords can be categorised into three types: i) Full, ii) Partial and iii) Peace process accords. We can find a full accord where one or more parties agree to settle the whole incompatibility. On the other hand, a partial peace agreement takes place where one or more parties to the conflict agree to settle a part of the incompatibility. A peace process agreement is an agreement where one or more parties to the conflict agree to initiate a process that aims to settle the incompatibility (Definitions, Uppsala Conflict Data Program).

We can find an example of full agreement in the Mizo Accord, which has been generally considered as a successful peace agreement. It is a full peace agreement where both the parties to conflict—the Mizo National Front and the Government of India—agreed to settle the whole incompatibility. However, questions could be raised as whether we can regard it as a comprehensive peace agreement since the Accord failed to address the demand of a ‘Greater Mizoram’ integrating all areas inhabited by Hmars in Mizoram, Assam and Manipur under a single administrative unit. Following the signing of the Mizo peace accord on 30 June 1986, the Hmar People's Convention (HPC) was established as a political party in the same year, advocating for the rights of members of the Hmar people (estimated 12,535 members in Mizoram as per 1991 census), one of the smaller tribes of north-eastern India. The HPC waged an armed

struggle for autonomy since April 1987. The Mizoram government is still busy with a peace process with the HPC.

### **1.1.3 Comprehensive Peace Accords**

Another classification of peace accords is comprehensive peace accords and dyadic peace accords. A comprehensive peace accord includes all parties to a particular conflict. In a dyadic accord, at least one of the warring parties in the conflict is excluded (Definitions, Uppsala Conflict Data Program). Apart from the Mizo Accord, peace accords that were signed in the conflict-hit north-eastern region of India are hardly comprehensive in nature. The two Bodo peace accords, for instance, could be termed as dyadic peace accords since both the accords have excluded one or more than one parties to the conflict.

## **1.2 State Response to Insurgency**

The usual state response to insurgency has been a counter-insurgency strategy with the use of the military. Some other approaches too have been adopted by the state such as measures to protect the population, different political and economic actions aimed at addressing issues raised by the insurgents, including lack of development and opportunity. But the most crucial role in resolving violence has been played by dialogues and peace talks between the state and the rebel groups (Das R. P., *Insurgent Politics & Negotiations: Is a Moratorium on Peace Talks Needed?*, 2012).

It has been observed that while military operations against the insurgency movements in the Northeast have achieved only limited results, it is the dialogue for peace with them that has brought some order to the region. Dialogue with the Mizo National Front (MNF) culminated in the signing of the Mizo Peace Accord in 1986 ending the 20-year-long insurrection. But it is only the Mizo Accord which is considered successful. Most of the peace accords signed in the region have been hardly able to bring the desired peace. The Shillong Accord signed in 1975 with the Naga National Council (NNC), the agreement signed with the Tripura National Volunteers (TNV) in 1988, the 1993 Bodoland Autonomous Council agreement signed with the Bodo hardliners in Assam fell through as new factions, dissatisfied with the terms of the agreement resumed hostilities under new leaderships. The Bodo

Liberation Tigers (BLT) was one such group that launched rebellion after the failure of the 1993 Bodo Accord. The BLT did en-masse surrender on 3 December 2003 and subsequently, Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) was formed after signing of peace accord. With this, it appeared that peace will prevail in the Bodo dominated parts of western Assam. However, the reality turned out not as expected (Das R. P., *Insurgent Politics & Negotiations: Is a Moratorium on Peace Talks Needed?*, 2012). The two peace agreements that were signed with the United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) in 2011 and Dima Halam Daogah (DHD) in 2012 respectively have not been able to resolve conflict.

Ceasefire by militant groups for dialogue and negotiations has played a key role in maintaining the region's stability. Cessation of hostility with insurgent groups in the Northeast by bringing them to ceasefire may be a strategy of the government to pacify the prevailing unrest, but the long-drawn-out peace talks and negotiations that follow such ceasefires without culminating in some meaningful resolutions raise questions about the effectiveness of such strategy. If the peace talks stretch indefinitely, the process may lead to violation of ceasefire rules, factional clashes, as well as emergence of new factions or newer insurgent outfits. Incomprehensive peace talks tend to give incentive to some, while those neglected tend to form new rebel groups to fight for their own causes. Here, fresh talks with new militant groups imply more militant groups emerging. Therefore, it has been argued that the government must form a firm policy on peace talks (Das R. P., *Insurgent Politics & Negotiations: Is a Moratorium on Peace Talks Needed?*, 2012). Piecemeal effort and half-baked attempts to resolve the problem of insurgency becomes counter-productive in a serious way and subsequently, government has to grapple with a condition more severe and complicated than the initial position. Thus, understanding the dynamics of peace process and paying attention to the unintended offshoots in case the process goes astray is very essential.

### **1.3 Background: Insurgency in Assam**

The road to peace in India's Northeast has been hazy with the government pursuing a peace strategy that seems to be ever-evolving. Starting with the Naga insurgency

since India's independence in 1947, most of the states in the region have experienced various forms of insurgency. Demands of the insurgents too, cover a very wide spectrum. While groups like the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) aimed at establishing independent states, outfits such as the erstwhile Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) demanded separate states for their tribal constituency. Smaller outfits, such as the United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) and Dima Halam Daogah (DHD), confining their activities to the geographical limits of separate districts in Assam, have fought for maximum autonomy, within the purview of the Indian Constitution (Das R. P., *Insurgent Politics & Negotiations: Is a Moratorium on Peace Talks Needed?*, 2012). While the government signed peace agreements with the BLT, the UPDS and the DHD in Assam, several others including the majority faction of the ULFA and two factions of the NDFB are now in peace mode. Yet a number of groups are still engaged in violent rebellion against the state machinery.

### **1.3.1 ULFA and the Assam Agitation.**

The United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) was formed on 7 April 1979 by six radical Assamese youths with the objective to establish a 'sovereign socialist Assam' through an armed struggle. In the same year of the formation of ULFA, voters' rolls were revised for the Mongoldoi constituency in northern Assam. As many as 70,000 complaints were registered against inclusion of illegal Bangladeshi migrants in the voters' list. A tribunal was set up by the state government to investigate the complaints. It upheld 45,000 complaints or sixty-four per cent of the cases out of a total electorate of 6,00,000 (Hazarika S. , 1995). The All Assam Students' Union (AASU), the State's largest student group, successfully mobilised the people to come out onto the streets, and enforced general strikes and a boycott of elections. The AASU-led anti-foreigner movement in Assam sought to halt the illegal influx of foreign nationals from across the porous border in Bangladesh as well as from Nepal, preventing these categories of people from taking part in the electoral process, and eventually detecting and deporting them. This was intended to protect the State, its people and culture against what it called the 'silent invasion from Bangladesh'. To

tackle the agitation, fresh elections were fixed for 1983. The people of Assam boycotted the elections.

After protracted negotiations, the Assam movement formally ended on 15 August 1985, with signing of the Assam Accord between the AASU and the central government. This Accord fixed 25 March 1971 as the cut-off date to determine who the illegal migrants in Assam were. The farcical election to Assam's 126-member State Assembly in February 1983 was the real turning point that transformed the ULFA from a directionless outfit to an armed group, promising to liberate Assam. The rebel leadership looked at the Assam agitation as an all-encompassing nationalism that ultimately unites the 'exploiter' and the 'exploited', and, therefore, serves no real purpose. The ULFA was shaping up the direction it would take to achieve a *Swadhin Asom* (independent Assam) and was growing stronger organizationally.

#### ***1.3.1.1. ULFA's political theory.***

Though ULFA was formed in 1979, the organization came to surface and made its political presence visible only in 1983 with its boycott of elections in that year—by joining hands with the AASU and *All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad*. Gradually, it clutched the limelight in the State by almost replacing the namesake government through its criminal and social activities—from the daring bank robberies to gather money to buy arms and ammunitions, the delivery of summary justice by punishing and even killing those involved in corruption or social crimes, to their involvement or initiatives in rural development works e.g. building bridges, repairing roads, building temporary embankments in flood affected areas, running cooperatives in village cultivation etc.(Das S. K., *Conflict and Peace in India's Northeast: The Role of Civil Society*, 2007).The ruling government was hand in glove with the group as most of the political parties were concerned with their political mileage in those ULFA dominated areas and never tried to crack down on the outfit.

Samir Kumar Das points out ULFA's thesis of de-nationalization (*nirjatikaran*) during the early period of its formation. The organization wanted to build a strong trans-ethnic solidarity as a safeguard against New Delhi's "colonialism". This thesis was opposed by many communities who felt that in the name of de-nationalisation,



ULFA wanted to promote mainly the hegemony of the Assamese community. Sensing hysteric reactions from minorities and smaller tribal groups, ULFA revised the thesis and by May 1992, it came up with a new theory of “combined nationalism of all the exploited peoples of Assam” (*Asomar samuh soshit rajjar sanmilit jatiyatabad*). It called for free self-development of each nationality, including the Bodos settled in the northern banks of the Brahmaputra. ULFA’s popularity declined after its shift from its stance on the issue of illegal Bangladeshi migration. It was no doubt a survival strategy adopted by the ULFA in 1992, for want of safe hideouts in a foreign country after two major counter-insurgency operations against them by the Indian security forces. Later, in a pamphlet entitled ULFA’s call to the groups from East Bengal living in Assam (*Asombasi purbabangeeya janagoshthiloi ULFAr Ahvan*) ULFA redefined the concept of Assamese as “a people of all communities, the mixture of people who are determined to work for all-round progress of Assam.” The mention of the migrants from Bangladesh as “an indispensable part” of the Assamese society had alienated ULFA from the Assamese middle class (Das S. K., *Conflict and Peace in India's Northeast: The Role of civil Society*, 2007). The Assamese middle class, apart from being unhappy with the ULFA’s seemingly pro-Bengali migrant stand, was also agitated with the rebel group for expanding its extortion demands to Assamese professionals like doctors, engineers and others. The ULFA had lost much of its earlier goodwill.

Within less than a decade, in 2003, the ULFA faced pressure of leaving their safe hideouts in adjoining Bhutan. Bangladesh followed suit and by 2010, almost all the top ULFA leaders were handed over by Dhaka to Indian authorities. While the group led by Chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa joined the peace process and began holding peace talks with New Delhi, one faction led by military chief Paresh Baruah decided to continue with the armed movement. Paresh Baruah had already left Bangladesh and was operating from the Myanmar-China border. Later, he renamed his outfit ULFA-Independent and is so far engaged in violence directed against the Indian state.

### **1.3.2 ethnic insurgencies in Assam.**

#### **1.3.2.1 Bodo insurgency.**

Denial of Sixth Schedule status for the Bodos at a time when they needed it most for constitutional protection of their land and identity can be seen as one of the primary causes leading to the alienation of tribal land. With increasing flow of migrants in the immediate years before and after Independence, tribal land was increasingly acquired by non-tribal immigrants. This became a threat for the Bodos. The Bangladesh war added to the changing demographic scenario of the State, with several lakhs of immigrants, mostly Bengali Muslims, staying back in the Brahmaputra Valley (Misra U. , *Bodoland: The Burden of History*, 2012).

The demand of a separate homeland for the Bodos was first raised in an unorganized way before Independence. In 1967, the Bodos formed a political party called the Plains Tribals Council of Assam (PTCA). The party demanded a union territory for the Bodos and other plains tribals of the region called Udayachal. In the same year, the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) was formed and raised demand for a separate state for the Bodos. (George, 1994). During the 1980s, a majority of the Bodo youths landed support to the Assam Agitation. The Bodos began to hope for fulfillment of their longstanding demands as the AASU leaders gained political power in 1985. But as the euphoria of the Assam Accord waned away with time, the tribal leaders realized that the new government's attitude towards them was not much different from that of the earlier ones.

So the Bodos decided to fight for themselves and on 2 March 1987 launched a movement demanding creation of a full-fledged Bodoland state to be carved out of Assam. The ABSU formed its armed wing called ABSU Volunteer Force or AVF, later rechristened as Bodo Volunteer Force (BVF). Kokrajhar and Darrang—the two strategically located Bodo inhabited districts became the nerve centres of militancy initiated by the ABSU<sup>2</sup>. At the time of launching the movement, the ABSU released a list of 92 demands (Why Separate State , 1987). Over time, the demands centred around three major political issues: i) Formation of a separate state named Bodoland

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<sup>2</sup>Bodoland Territorial Council to come into being tomorrow, *The Hindu*, 6 December 2003

on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, ii) Establishment of autonomous district councils in the tribal dominant areas on the south bank of the Brahmaputra, and iii) Incorporation of the Bodo-Kacharis of Karbi Anglong in the Sixth Schedule<sup>3</sup> of the Indian Constitution.

It was during the same period that the insurgent group called Bodo Security Force (BdSF) was formed by Ranjan Daimary on 3 October 1986 which was later renamed National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB). The NDFB emerged as the most violent outfit with the aim to secure an ‘independent Bodo nation’ on the north bank of the river Brahmaputra. The proportion of violence carried out by the outfit was extreme, including killings, explosions, arson and attacks on police stations. A ‘working arrangement’ was established by NDFB with the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak Muivah faction (NSCN-IM). Another militant group, the Bodo Liberation Tiger Force (BLTF), was formed on 18 June 1996 under the leadership of Prem Singh Brahma. This group too was fighting for a separate State of Bodoland within the Indian Union.

The government signed two peace accords within the three decades since the Bodoland movement began in 1987—the Bodoand Autonomous Council Accord in 1993 and the Bodoland Territorial Council Accord in 2003. While the BAC Accord proved to be a failed experiment. Instead, fierce ethnic and fratricidal clashes followed the signing of the Accord. Both NDFB and the newly formed BLT militants were engaged in a campaign of violence since the mid-1990s, especially in the districts of western and northern Assam, particularly Kokrajhar district. The other ethnic groups within ‘Bodo areas’ were the main targets of the violence. Thousands died and millions were left homeless in the western Assam districts due to violence. In order to protect themselves, the Santhals and other non-Bodo communities too began to arm themselves and fight back. As a result, significant displacement of Bodo population took place from areas where they were a minority. Apart from being involved in

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<sup>3</sup> The Sixth Schedule [Articles 224 (2) and 275 (1)] provides the hill tribes of the Northeast with a simple, inexpensive, administrative set up of their own district councils to safeguard tribal customs and ways of life to secure to the tribes the maximum autonomy in management of their characteristically tribal affairs. See <http://www.constitution.org/cons/india/shed06.htm>

conflicts with non-Bodos, the Bodos were involved in fratricidal clashes, mainly between the NDFB and the erstwhile BLT militants.

The BLT signed a ceasefire agreement with the government on 29 March 2000. A second peace agreement was signed on 10 February 2003 between the Central Government, the State Government and the leaders of BLT (Bodo Liberation Tigers). BTC (Bodoland Territorial Council) was formed with jurisdiction over four districts of Assam: Kokrajhar, Baksa, Udalguri and Chirang.

Peace was not lasting this time, either. Insurgency violence continued, as the NDFB, which had been demanding for a sovereign territory, was not made a party in the Government's peace process. Besides, the second Bodo Accord was formulated and signed in haste, without taking into account the wishes of the majority 70 percent non-Bodo people living in the area who were against the creation of Bodoland. The Accord, as it speaks, is meant for the Bodo people of the area: "The Government of India and the Government of Assam have been making concerted efforts to fulfill the aspirations of the Bodo people relating to their cultural identity, language, education and economic development." (See Bodoland Territorial Council Accord) This resulted in a feeling of insecurity among the non-Bodos living in the area. The provision in the Accord saying that "a committee comprising one representative each from Governments of India and Assam and BLT will decide by consensus on the inclusion of additional villages and areas in the BTC from out of 95 villages and areas on the basis of the criteria of tribal population being not less than 50 percent" has created much trouble and disturbance. This was a significant factor behind the escalating ethnic conflict and bloodshed in the BTC area.

A religious polarisation in Bodoland caused much harm to the Bodo movement. The Hindu dominated BLTF supported the Security Forces to act against the Christian dominated NDFB. While the BLTF demanded statehood, the NDFB was fighting for a separate state outside the Indian Union. At different points of time, the Bodo movement was weakened by internal differences and rivalries between different Bodo organizations. If at one time the ABSU alleged PTCA for betraying the Bodo cause, at

some other time there was rivalry between moderates like ABSU and hardliners like BdSF.

### ***1.3.2.2 Karbi insurgency.***

Karbi Anglong<sup>4</sup> is the largest district in Assam with a total geographical area of 10,434 Sq. Kms and is considered one of the most backward districts. The area is populated by different ethnic tribes, such as Karbis, Bodos, Kukis, Dimasas, Hmars, Garos, Rengma Nagas, Tiwas, and Man (Tai Speaking). Karbis form the majority of the population at 46.3 per cent. The father and the architect of Karbi nation and nationalism was Semson Singh Ingti (1910-1948) who raised the issue of a separate district for the Karbis. He, along with a set of other educated elite from the community, tried to bring all the Karbis scattered in different places to one geographical space and to form a single political administration. They submitted a memorandum before the Bordoloi Committee on 18 May 1947 demanding a separate district for the Karbis and desiring consolidation of the Mikir areas, protection of customs and extension of franchise. This led the Constitution of India adopt the provision of Sixth Schedule for the hill population of Northeast India. The United Mikir and North Cachar Hills district was created and an Autonomous Council was formed in 1952. However, underdevelopment of the region led to bifurcation of the district in 1970 and MikirHills district and North Cachar Hills District were created. On 14October 1976, Mikir Hills District was renamed as Karbi Anglong(Growth and Development of the Karbi Ethnic Movement).

The demand for a separate Karbi Dimasa state was again raised on 20 August 1978 in the meeting of All Party Peoples Conference (APPC). The Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) was formed on 17 May 1986. Various students' organizations joined the movement which was in its peak during 1986-1989. The Karbis were unhappy for the insufficient amount of power offered to them in the name of self-rule. After a prolonged agitation by organizations namely ASDC (Autonomous

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<sup>4</sup> Located in the central part of Assam, Karbi Anglong spreads over an area of 10,434 sqkms. As per the official census of 2011, Karbi Anglong has a population of 956,313 (951 females/1000 males) with average literacy rate of 69.25 per cent.<sup>3</sup> It is geographically divided into two parts i.e. East Karbi Anglong (EKA) and West Karbi Anglong (WKA) with its administrative headquarters located at Diphu town in EKA. The terrain in the district is hilly with thick vegetation and dense tropical forest cover.

State Demand Committee, formed on 17 May 1986), KSA (Karbi Students Union), DSU (Dimasa Students Union), KNCA (Karbi Nimso Chingthur Asong) and NCHSF (North Cachar Hills Students Federation) a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 1 April 1996 with the Centre and the Government of Assam, Karbi Anglong District Council was renamed as the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) by an Act of Parliament by incorporating the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1995 (42 of 1995) to the Constitution of India granting greater autonomy to the Council (Sharma, 2016). The ASDC faced a split in August 2000 resulting in fratricidal conflicts and killings. None of the factions could win elections in Council, Assembly and Parliament and Congress came back to power in 2002.

#### *1.3.2.2.1 insurgency breaks.*

With the same demands of a separate homeland which was initiated by democratic movements, insurgent activities started in Karbi Anglong. In 1994, insurgent outfits called Karbi National Volunteers (KNV) and Karbi People's Force (KPF) were formed. In 1999, both the organizations merged to form the United Peoples' Democratic Solidarity (UPDS). The UPDS blamed the ASDC for its failure to achieve the demand of a separate state and started armed struggle to attain the same goal. After causing much violence, bloodshed and extortion, the UPDS came to a ceasefire agreement with the Government of India in 2002. Split in UPDS occurred due to disagreement on whether to hold talks with the government or not. The anti-talk faction led by H. E. Kathar decided to stay away and formed a separate group called Karbi Longri North Cachar Hills Liberation Front (KLNLHF) in 2004. It demanded creation of a political institution for self-determination for the Karbi people of Karbi Anglong and contiguous Karbi dominated areas of Assam and Meghalaya (Mangattuthazhe, 2008).

Between 2000-2005 insurgent activities multiplied as several small insurgent groups were formed representing different ethnic tribes due to ethnic clashes that took place in the area. The KLNLHF too signed a ceasefire agreement with the Government and 403 cadres of the KLNLHF laid down their arms in a formal ceremony on 11

February 2010. Once again, 17 cadres defected from KLNLF and formed a breakaway group called Karbi People's Liberation Tigers (KPLT) on 8 January 2011.

Simultaneously, peace process continued with UPDS and on 25 November 2011, UPDS signed a tripartite Memorandum of Settlement (MOS) with the Centre and the State government. The agreement promised further decentralisation of powers by upgrading the existing Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) to Karbi Anglong Autonomous Territorial Council (KAATC).

The KPLT, on the other hand, continued to wage an armed struggle. In order to project itself as the only group fighting for Karbi statehood, the KPLT divided itself into three sub groups spread across different areas of Karbi Anglong under different leaders. It has been challenging civil administration and political leaders by frequently calling *bandhs* and carrying out extensive recruitment drives in the remote areas (Sharma, Karbi Insurgency in Assam: The Way Forward, 2016). The group has linkages with the ULFA (I), NDFB (S) and NSCN (IM). Being the only group carrying out an armed insurgency, KPLT also enjoys illegal support from all political groups, including Karbi Students' Association, fighting for the Karbi cause. Even the UPDS is said to have provided adequate political support during 2010-11. Reports also suggest that political parties of Karbi Anglong have maintained understanding with KPLT to keep the issue of Karbi statehood alive.

### ***1.3.2.3 Dimasa insurgency.***

Years of discontent, unfulfilled aspirations and under-development in NC Hills was a perfect recipe for the rise of an armed insurgency in the district. Geography, too, helped in the sense that it provided the perfect logistic support for the rebels to sustain themselves. The terrain in Dima Hasao is rugged and hilly, located on the Eastern flanks of the Jaintia Hills and the Northern flanks of the Barail mountain range. Besides, the district has common boundaries with three north-eastern states and three other districts of Assam. Because of its difficult terrain with thick jungles which provide safe shelter and hide outs of the militants in the adjoining states and countries counterinsurgency operations launched by the security forces here have not achieved satisfactory results (Gogoi, 2009).

Armed rebellion began with the formation of an outfit called the Dimasa National Security Force (DNSF). It emerged on the scene towards the end of 1990 and took shape in the early part of 1991 with the demand for 'revival of the lost Dimaland'. The DNSF was widely believed to have been patronised and supported by the Naga insurgent group, NSCN-IM (National Socialist Council of Nagaland, Isak-Muivah faction). The NC Hills district was already a known transit point for cadres of the NSCN-IM and Meitei insurgents from Manipur to Bangladesh. DNSF began its operation in the area and started gathering funds through extortion and other activities. The Assam government stepped in and started talks with the DNSF in a bid to end the insurgency. Finally, the DNSF surrendered en masse on 17 November 1994.

When the DNSF surrendered, its commander-in-chief Jewel Garlosa and some other leaders of the outfit stayed away from the process (Kashyap, 2009). On 1 January 1995, they floated a new militant outfit, the Dima Halam Daogah (DHD). The DHD's avowed objective was to carve out a separate Dimasa homeland, 'Dimaraji', comprising the Dimasa inhabited areas of Dima Hasao (North Cachar Hills), Karbi Anglong, parts of Nagaon district, and parts of Dimapur district in nearby Nagaland.

DHD signed a ceasefire agreement with the government on 1 January 2003. The cadre strength of the outfit at that time was around 800. The DHD ceasefire, however, did not bring an end to violent incidents in NC Hills. A new phase of violent insurgency and terror began in the district with the formation of the Black Widow in July 2004. It was formed by Jewel Garlosa, who once again decided to stay away from the peace process and created a reign of terror in the 4,890 square kilometre district. Aside from clashing with the parent faction of the DHD, the Black Widow or DHD (J) began killing and extorting people, besides attacking security force personnel. The outfit, with 416 cadres, had an arsenal of modern, sophisticated weapons including AK series rifles, machine guns and high explosives. Between 2004 and 2009, DHD (J) was involved in the killing of 108 civilians and 32 security force personnel. The internecine clashes with its parent group also led to the deaths of 28 cadres from both the groups.



The Assam Police launched ‘Operation Treasure Hunt’, a cross-country operation to apprehend DHD (J) leaders. On 4 June 2009, Assam Police officers managed to capture DHD (J) chief Jewel Garlosa and two of his associates. The central government took a tough stand asked the DHD (J) to surrender by 15 September 2009, adding that the government would consider talking peace with the group only if its cadres laid down arms before that deadline and agreed to stay in designated camps, end extortion altogether, and ensure the presence of all its top leaders at the talks, as and when they commenced. Between 13 and 14 September, 2009, as many as 372 rebels laid down their arms and the outfit formally surrendered on 2 October 2009 in Haflong, the district headquarters of NC Hills paving the way for peace talks. On 30 October 2009, former Intelligence Bureau (IB) Director P.C. Haldar was appointed interlocutor for talks with DHD (J). Talks with DHD (N) were already going on with P.C. Haldar being the interlocutor for this group as well. Finally, on 8 October 2012, a Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) was signed between the government and both factions of the DHD.

#### **1.4 Insurgency and its Sustenance: Root Causes**

There are different contours of insurgency in the region, advocated by different sets of people or groups claiming to represent different communities. The Indian nation-building process has rather been weak which is why struggle for self-determination has been observed in the peripheral regions of the country. Lack of a strong national identity, supported by several other factors, contributed to the rise and continuation of insurgency in Assam. These emerged as the key pull factors for the sustenance of insurgency problem in the State.

##### **1.4.1 greed and grievance theory.**

According to Paul Collier, one of the famous economic authors on greed theory, poverty or lack of economic development is the main cause of an armed conflict. A higher level of per capita income decreases the likelihood of conflict (Collier, 2000). This applies well to the causes of insurgency in Assam. About 150 years back, Assam was in the forefront of development. Way back in 1835, the first tea garden was set up by the British. Export of the first consignment of tea to London took place in 1838. In

this natural resource rich state, the discovery of oil in Makum and establishment of a refinery in Digboi in 1890 laid the foundation for the development of undivided Assam. In 1881, the first railway network began in Assam with the launch of 65-km-long metre gauge line from Dibrugarh to Margherita which was constructed mainly for transportation of tea and coal.

However, the most striking fact remains that the economic and human development indices of the State started falling behind the rest of India after the partition of India in 1947. Partition pushed the entire region to a remote entity which remained linked to the mainland India through a narrow 22 kms wide corridor in Siliguri, popularly known as the ‘chicken’s neck’. The creation of East Pakistan and then Bangladesh restricted land and water transport between Assam and the rest of India and trade and commerce was largely affected by this. The gradual downfall of the economic status of Assam is clearly reflected in the statistics of per capita income and GDP growth. We notice that Assam’s economic position during the period just after Independence was above national average, while there has been a rapid downfall during the following decades [Table 1] (Strategy for Assam's Development).

**Table 1: Per Capita Income (at constant 1980-81 prices)**

Year	1950-51	1960-61	1970-71	1980-81	1990-91	1995-96	1996-97	1998-99
<b>India</b>	1127	1350	1520	1630	2222	2608	2761	3132
<b>Assam</b>	1173	1140	1221	1284	1524	1606	1628	1708
<b>Difference</b>	46(+)	210(-)	299(-)	346(-)	698(-)	1002(-)	1133(-)	1424(-)

Source: Government of Assam Vision Assam 2025

**Table 2: Per Capita Income (at current prices as on 01.03.2012 In Rupees)**

Year	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
<b>India</b>	24143	27131	31206	35825	40775	46117	98719	60972
<b>Assam</b>	16782	18396	19737	21290	24099	27464	30569	33633
<b>Difference</b>	7361(-)	8735 (-)	11469(-)	14535(-)	16676(-)	18653(-)	68150(-)	27339(-)

Source: For Assam—Directorate of Economics & Statistics of respective State Governments, and for All-India—Central Statistics Office (Socio-economic Indicators, 2011)

Table 1 shows that during 1980 and 1990, per capita income grew 20 per cent in Assam as compared to 40 per cent in all India. Between 1980 and 1998 per capita income in Assam grew by 10 per cent compared to 39 per cent growth in national average. But if we look back during 1951 and 1979, we will find that the difference between the State's economic growth and the growth of national economy was not much. The rapid fall in per capita income graph of Assam since 1971 could be viewed in the backdrop of the creation of Bangladesh after which there was a higher rate of population growth due to immigration. Again in a duration of eight years, from 2004-05 to 2011-12, we have seen that the difference between state per capita income and national per capita income is increasing (Table 2).

Evidences based on objective criterion show that the gap between the north-eastern region and the rest of India has been ever widening making it unable to participate in the benefits of an expanding and growing economy. The Assam Human Development Report 2003 states that the pattern of incremental investment in India in the 1990s has been tilted in favour of regions having infrastructural and entrepreneurial environment with availability of skilled workers. The region, including Assam, is left backward precisely in these areas. Lack of development, unemployment and perceived discriminations have contributed to the unrest.

Considering the disadvantageous position the state was thrown into after Partition clearly demanded special attention by the Central government, which, however, did not happen. One cannot deny the root causes of restlessness in the State. The fire caught the imagination of the people with many ethnic and student organizations coming out demanding the rights of people where the notion of identity served well to ignite the fire.

David Keen, another eminent author of the greed theory states that those who initiate an armed conflict attain certain benefits including extortion of individuals, collecting protection money from companies etc. and kidnapping for ransom (Keen, 1998). These kinds of benefits fuel in prolonging conflict and spoiling peace.

Members of several insurgent groups of the region have been involved in such activities transforming insurgency into a sort of money-making business.

An effort at looking into the root causes behind armed struggle here actually finds a theoretical basis if we take a glance of the grievance model. According to the grievance theory, war emerges from the opposition to perceived or actual injustice. Because of oppression, inequality and discrimination people become agitated and resort to fighting. In the grievance literature, there is a distinction between identity driven and ideological or revolutionary wars (Steven Spittaels, Nick Meynen, Filip Hilgert, 2007). The ground for revenge may be based either on political and social injustice or on identity. However, in most of the times, the two sides are merged to form ground for grievance. In Assam, ULFA's struggle for a 'sovereign Assam' is primarily based on political or social injustice while groups like NDFB or other ethnic outfits mainly emerge from their ethnic identity.

#### **1.4.2 ethnic diversity.**

India is a land of ethnic and cultural diversity. This diversity is more intense in the north-eastern region of the country which is a mosaic of 160 Scheduled Tribes and 400 sub-tribal communities. A region of ethnic and linguistic convergence, the Northeast is home to 220 languages in multiple language families, including Indo-Arian, Sino-Tibetan, Tai-Kadai, and Austro-Asiatic. The multi-ethnic and multilingual diversity of the region stood as a challenge to the then government which was engaged in reorganisation of states in 1956. While most of the states were reorganised under the scheme of linguistic regions, states in the Northeast were reorganised neither on linguistic nor on the basis of ethnicity. It was actually based on administrative convenience (Verma, 2001). The advocacy of a single language for homogeneity and cohesiveness has been challenged here at different time periods. Ethnic assertions of socio-cultural and political aspirations of different ethnic groups are a common phenomenon here.

#### **1.4.3 identity question.**

In most of India's Northeast and particularly in Assam, the identity question takes the centre stage around which many other issues are revolving—lack of development,

feeling of alienation, exploitation of resources, discrimination and so on. Political aspirations of different ethnic groups living in the same space or overlapping each other's space may be different from each other, but one thread is common in all non-violent or violent agitations here—a quest for identity and efforts to establish it. Apprehensions and fears among communities of the region for a threat to their identity combined with the continued experience of remoteness and alienation from the Indian 'mainland' found expression in assertion of rights by different groups, political organizations or insurgent outfits. As Dr Udayon Misra states:

Assam today poses a really grave challenge to the entire process of nation-building. With its really complex ethnic situation, the almost unsurmountable problem of influx and demographic change and the backward, almost "colonial" state of the economy, Assam has emerged as the problem state, next perhaps to Kashmir (Misra U. , *The Periphery Strikes Back*, 2000).

Identity, ethnicity and insurgency have developed deep interfaces, with the dividing line between these becoming quite thin at certain points.

### **1.5 Signing of Peace Agreements**

As we have mentioned earlier, insurgency has affected most of the north-eastern region. The Government of India had its hands full engaging in efforts to restore peace in the region. The Government's peace initiatives were largely focused on bringing the rebels to a peace mode in order to find out a settlement to the issues raised by them.

#### **1.5.1 Nine-point Agreement or the Naga-Akbar Hydari Accord, 1947.**

This agreement was signed between the Governor of Assam Akbar Hydari and the representatives of the Naga National Council (NNC). The Agreement recognized the right of Nagas to "develop themselves according to their freely expressed wishes". Nagas assumed that they will gain independence after the stated 10 years period of the Agreement. The central government felt that the terms of the agreement were consistent with the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution (Verghese, 1997).

#### **1.5.2 Sixteen-Point Agreement 1960.**

The Naga moderates under the banner of Naga People's Convention gathered public opinion on the kind of freedom the Naga people would seek. They drafted a 16-point resolution which was accepted by the Government of India and the state of Nagaland came into existence. The NNC refused to recognize the Agreement.

### **1.5.3 Shillong Accord 1975.**

The Government of India signed the Shillong Accord with the representatives of Naga ‘underground organizations’. The agreement stated that the signatory ‘representatives’ have agreed to accept the Constitution of India on their own volition, without condition. But the Accord agreed to provide ‘reasonable time’ to the ‘underground organizations’ (significantly, there was no mention of specific name of the signatories) to formulate other issues for discussion for final settlement—indicating that the accord was not a ‘final settlement’.

### **1.5.4 Mizo Accord 1986.**

In Mizoram, the Government of India signed peace accord with the Mizo National Front (MNF) in June 1986 by making them key players to the electoral politics. Mizoram was declared a state in February 1987 and Laldenga and his party MNF won the first elections to the state legislature.

The Mizo Accord is commonly recognized as one of the most successful accords towards achieving sustaining peace. Several factors could be made responsible for this success. A give and take deal between the parties to conflict is seen when MNF gave up the idea of greater Mizoram, renounced violence and secession and delinked their connection with Tripura National Volunteers and People’s Liberation Army, Manipur on one hand and on the other Mizoram became a state and MNF entered mainstream politics with Laldenga becoming the chief minister. Secondly, the Mizo leadership adopted a more inclusive nature of Mizo identity by mobilizing all sections of society and as Sajal Nag said “reducing an ideological battle into a simple law and order problem” (Nag: 2006). Thirdly, the close collaboration between the government and the civil society organizations in most of the negotiations made the state more responsive. Another important factor for the success of the accord can be attributed to the fact that the peace mediators remained part of the post-accord scenario and were also accountable to both the conflict parties for the consequences of the peace that was created.

### **1.5.5 Memorandum of Settlement with the Tripura National Volunteers, 1988.**

This tripartite peace accord was signed on 10 August 1988 to bring the Tripura National Volunteers (TNV) to the negotiation table. The Memorandum of Settlement declared reservation of three additional seats for Scheduled Tribes in the Tripura Legislative Assembly (out of total 60 LAC seats, now 20 seats are reserved for STs). Discontent among one section of TNV members led to the formation of National Liberation Front of Tripura in 1989 while another section of TNV members formed the All Tripura Tribal Force in 1990. This second group had a further split with the formation of the All Tripura Tiger Force in 1992 which was responsible for raising the level of violence.

### **1.5.6 Memorandum of Settlement with All Tripura Tiger Force (the Agartala Agreement) 1993.**

A Memorandum of Settlement was signed on 23 August 1993 between the All Tripura Tribal Force (ATTF) and the Government. The promises include: sending back all the foreign nationals from Bangladesh who have come to Tripura after 25 March 1971, restoration of alienated land, introduction of Inner-Line-Permit, 25 reserved seats out of 28 in the District Council, and a Bhasa Commission (Tribal Language). Of all these, only the provision of 25 reserved seats in the District Council was implemented (Sukhendu, 2006).

### **1.5.7 Bodo Memorandum of Settlement 1993.**

This accord was signed between the Government of Assam and the representatives of All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) and Bodo Peoples' Action Committee (BPAC) combined. However, the BAC became a failed experiment, as its territory was not fully demarcated, leaving room for all kinds of confusion and resentment among the people.

### **1.5.8 MoS establishing a Bodoland Territorial Council, 2003.**

The second Bodo peace accord, signed by the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT), the Centre and the State Government, on 10 February 2003 led to the formation of BTC (Bodoland Territorial Council). Although the accord resulted in some kind of development in the area, different communities from the BTC area are having a strong

feeling of deprivation. This, along with the proliferation of arms in the area with insurgent groups as well as former militants indulging in killing, kidnapping and extortion, as well as the revival of the statehood demand by different Bodo groups, has kept the situation in the Bodo heartland on the boil.

#### **1.5.9 Memorandum of Settlement with United People’s Democratic Solidarity, 2011.**

On 25 November 2011, the Centre and the Assam Government signed an accord with the United People’s Democratic Solidarity (UPDS). The Centre granted enhanced autonomy to the existing Karbi Anglong Autonomous District Council. The implementation of the accord, however, has been limited to holding of the review meetings. Again, there are two more active armed outfits in the hill district—Karbi People’s Liberation Tigers (KPLT) and Karbi Longri and North Cachar Liberation Front (under ceasefire) (KLNLF), and they are still fighting for statehood.

#### **1.5.10 Memorandum of Settlement with Dima Haram Daogah, 2012.**

The agreement was signed between both the factions of the Dima Haram Daogah (Dilip Nunisa faction and Jewel Garlosa faction) and the Central and State Governments in New Delhi for creation of Dima Hasao Autonomous Territorial Council (DHTC). However, the non-Dimasas living in the area, who constitute more than 50 per cent of the population, felt that their interests have not been taken care of by the agreement.

#### **1.5.11 MoU with UPPK**

On 25 May 2013, the Manipur based United Peoples’ Party of Kangleipak (UPPK) signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Centre and the Manipur Government. UPPK was dissolved by the Government on 4 April 2016(Present Status of Peace Process, 2013).

#### **1.5.12 Agreed Text of Settlement with ANVC.**

In Meghalaya, an ‘Agreed Text Of Settlement’ was inked between the Government of Meghalaya and the Achik National Volunteer Council (ANVC) mainly enhancing autonomy of the existing Garo Hills Autonomous District Council in Meghalaya. On 24 September 2014, the Central government and the Meghalaya government signed



peace settlement with the two factions of the Achik National Volunteers Council (ANVC). The ANVC was in a tripartite ceasefire agreement with the government since July 2004.

#### **1.5.13 Framework Agreement with NSCN(IM).**

A 'Framework Agreement' was signed on 3 August 2015 between NSCN-IM and the Government of India. A timeframe for the negotiation and settlement of the conflict was not fixed but the government of India on 20 January 2016 decided to speed up the process by holding formal talks twice a week (Sahni, 2015). However, the NSCN-IM is not the sole representative of the Nagas. At the same time, the worrying factor has been the discontinuation of ceasefire agreement with another powerful outfit – the NSCN-K and the subsequent ban of the outfit by the government. Along with these, the activities of other fringe outfits in Nagaland are working as deterrent to the much awaited peace in the territory.

#### **1.6 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the present study are:

- a. Critically analyse the strategies and policies adopted by the government to address the insurgency problem, with special reference to the state of Assam.
- b. Analysis of four peace agreements signed in Assam.
- c. To identify the lacunae, if any, in the government's prevailing peace strategy with the militant groups
- d. Explore the validity of the popular perception that the intense feeling of alienation fuels insurgency in the region.
- e. Identify the pre-requisites and point out the parameters which need to be fulfilled to ensure that the peace initiative of the government leads to lasting and overall peace in the region.

#### **1.7 Research Questions**

The study has been interwoven within the parameters of the following research questions:

- 1) Whether the Government lacks a holistic approach in dealing with insurgency and related issues in the north-eastern region of India?

2) Is it true that peace talks with each and every militant group is actually encouraging militancy in the region by making way to formation of splinter groups?

3) Is there a relationship between the government's peace strategy and prolonged militancy and socio-political unrest in the region?

### **1.8 Scope of the Research**

The present study concentrates on:

a) The government's peace policy in signing four peace agreements with different insurgent groups—

i) The 1993 Bodo Accord with the ABSU and BPAC combined

ii) The 2003 BTC Accord with the Bodo Liberation Tigers

iii) The 2011 Memorandum of Settlement with the UPDS

iv) The 2012 Memorandum of Settlement with the DHD and DHD-J combined.

It critically analyses the implementation status of the agreements and attempts to find gaps in the peace policy in the process.

b) The government's strategy and policy while dealing with ULFA and Bodo insurgency in Assam.

Peace is all pervasive and can't be fragmented. The north-eastern region, despite its inherent heterogeneity, emerges as an important conflict zone in Southeast Asia. For the purpose of the present study, the researcher has extrapolated Assam and has chosen to concentrate on the core of the strategies that includes the four peace accords.

### **1.9 Delimitation**

The Study covers the period from 1990 up to 2015, though the seeds of insurgency were sown in the period not mentioned in the study.

### **1.10 Limitations**

1. Some sensitive data and documents, which could not be accessed due to strict veil of secrecy maintained by government

2. The researcher failed to come up with accurate data regarding many important parameters as the definitions of some sensitive concepts were found lacking and not available in public domain.

### 1.11 Methodology

The study has been pursued with the application of qualitative research method in order to explore the underlying reasons and motivations behind the problem of insurgency violence in the region. To develop a concrete, context-dependent knowledge, this empirical study has followed the case study approach as it is especially well suited to produce this knowledge. As subject of case studies, the research has concentrated on four peace accords signed in Assam and critically analyses the implementation status of the agreements and in the process attempts to find gaps in the peace policy. The study has deployed interconnected interpretive practices hoping to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand. It tries to provide insight into the problem and help to develop ideas on finding a way to the solution of the problem. Data is used to support the arguments and give authenticity to the statements. Both primary and secondary sources of data has been gathered, analysed and interpreted in the study.

**Secondary Data:** The secondary data has been collected through visits to relevant departments, websites and institutional libraries. The secondary sources of data for the present study are:

- Books, Periodicals and Journals
- Media reports
- Monographs and Annual Reference Works such as Annual Reports of the Ministry of Home Affairs
- Published and unpublished dissertations/theses of various universities and research institutions
- Documents published by Intergovernmental and International Organizations
- Government websites for various departments

**Primary Data:** Primary information has been collected through interviews and interactions with different stakeholders of insurgency and peace in Assam. Visits to different government departments were also made to collect certain documents that are not in public domain.

**Interviews with stakeholders:** Interviews were conducted in a free, focused and interactive manner, through a semi-structured interview schedule using open ended questions to elicit views and comments from the individuals interviewed. The selection of respondents was purposive as the idea was to document different dimensions of elusive peace in the region. The target respondents were former rebel leaders, civil society leaders associated with the peace process, community leaders, serving/former police officers, other government officials, senior journalists, academics, leaders of students' organizations, social activists, etc.

**Documents:** Government studies and reports such as the minutes of meetings to review implementation status of the peace accords, Census Reports, Human Development Reports, non-government reports, police records and two peace agreements (MoS with UPDS and MoS with DHD) that are not available in public domain.

### **1.12 Research Design**

Based on the objectives, the following analysis has been carried out for the study.

i. To subject the observations and viewpoints on the peace accords through a rigorous academic exercise, the study has adopted the concept of a matrix of peace accords from the Peace Accords Matrix (PAM)<sup>5</sup>, established by Kroc Institute for International Studies, University of Notre Dame. The PAM database is a unique source of qualitative and quantitative longitudinal data<sup>6</sup> on the implementation of 34 Peace Agreements negotiated between 1989 and 2012. However, this study is concerned only with qualitative data and except some of the themes for different clauses of accords, the rest of the matrix framework is original. Here one can find a clause by clause analysis of implementation or otherwise of the provisions of the peace agreements signed. The study has reviewed the peace accords in this context and format so as to present an objective picture.

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<sup>5</sup> Peace Accords Matrix (Date of retrieval: (12/10/2016), <http://peaceaccords.nd.edu/about>, Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame.

<sup>6</sup> A longitudinal study (or longitudinal survey, or panel study) is a quasi-experimental research design that involves repeated observations of the same variables (e.g., people) over long periods of time, often many decades (i.e., uses longitudinal data).

ii. Considering the fact that the present study is limited to the Northeast region of India, especially to the state of Assam, 11 provisions present in PAM are not included in this matrix as they are considered redundant or not relevant in the present context. On the other hand, new provisions have been added in this matrix in view of their relevance in the context of this research study. For example, the provision of Participation of Civil Society Groups as Witness Signatories in the Accord and the provision of Representation and Participation of Women have been added.

iii. For a systematic analysis, the matrix under the study consist 33 provisions. Different clauses of the peace accords are placed under appropriate provisions in the matrix. Against each provision, the research has viewed different levels of application or implementation and has made observations in the light of the implementation status of the provisions.

iv. Field-based interviews of experts formed an integral part of the study.

### **1.13 Structure of the Study**

The report is divided into six chapters.

#### **1.13.1 Chapter 1: Introduction.**

The chapter provides the statement of the problem in the context of Assam and the north-eastern region. It outlines the rise of insurgency in Assam and brings out the root causes of insurgency with special reference to ULFA, Bodo, Dimasa and Karbi insurgency in Assam. It also provides a brief on the peace accords so far signed in the Northeast. The chapter presents the objectives of the research, research questions, methodology, delimitation of the research, limitations of the study, research design, scope of the research work, as well as structure of the study.

#### **1.13.2 Chapter 2: Review of Literature.**

This chapter brings out the status of the conceptual aspects and theoretical issues with reference to the existing studies related to insurgency and government's peace policy and strategy in the region. In the process it finds the research gap in the concerned area of study.

### **1.13.3 Chapter 3: Materials and Methods**

This chapter tells about the participants of the study, the sampling procedures, measures of the study, the research design, data collection procedures and data analysis. The chapter takes the four peace agreements as case studies and observes the implementation process with the help of a tool of analysis in the form of a matrix. A clause by clause analysis of implementation status of the peace accords gives a clear idea about the ad hoc approach on the part of the government while dealing with the insurgency conflict in the state.

### **1.13.4 Chapter 4: Results**

In the search for a comprehensive peace policy, the chapter takes cue from the field interviews taken with the help of a semi-structured open ended common questionnaire schedule as well as the existing insurgency and peace related policies of the government to critically analyse the problem at hand. The chapter throws light into the causal factors of the insurgency problem and gradually explores the issue of peace policy in the light of the field experience.

### **1.13.5 Chapter 5: Strategies for Approaches to Peace**

This chapter provides critical analysis of the strategies and policies of the government while dealing with the insurgency issue. Tools used for this qualitative data include, interview transcripts, informants' texts (e.g. diaries and blogs) and field notes. It discusses definition of peace, its theoretical insights with reference to what is followed by the government. The chapter discusses different peace strategies of the government such as counterinsurgency, coercive diplomacy, ceasefire, peace process, dialogue and negotiations, peace agreements, elections and so on. The chapter observes how development of the region has been used as a peace building strategy. It refers to the government's rehabilitation policies for the surrendered insurgents as well as views how structural changes in administration have been adopted by the government as a strategy to address the insurgency problem. The chapter also focuses on gender perspective as well as the significance of participation of civil society organisations in the peace process. The chapter found that institutionalisation of the peace process would help the government to form a structured peace policy to address

the insurgency issue. It was established that the Government of India lacks an institutionalised peace process mechanism.

#### **1.13.6 Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter provides a summary of the research findings, implications and significance of the findings, limitations of the study and recommendations for future research. It brings back the argument of the study that sustenance of the problem of insurgency is related to the policies practised by the government and has pointed out certain gaps in the prevailing peace strategy of the government. The chapter ends with certain policy recommendations. The emphasis on institutionalisation of the peace process is expected to help all the stakeholders to address the problem in a more systematic and holistic manner.